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Eligibility

Q: What kind of formats are eligible?

E.g. podcast episode, long-form interview, video, vertical reel, written piece, etc

A: We welcome journalism across a range of formats, including written articles, audio, video, and other digital storytelling formats, as long as the project is grounded in fact-based reporting with a clear editorial purpose.

Q: Can podcast episodes or audio projects be eligible?

A: Yes, if they include original reporting and interviews. Informal conversations are not a fit, but long-form interviews, reported audio features, and documentary-style episodes are eligible.

Q: Can video or social media storytelling formats be eligible?

A: Yes, if the format is used to tell a reported, journalistic story. We are open to digital-first and non-traditional formats, including video and social media storytelling, as long as the work is grounded in reporting and verification.

Q: What stage should the story be in?

A: Your story should not be finished. It should be in a proposal state. If you have already reported on this community or issue or theme in the past, that's great. But the story itself cannot already be produced. You will be in community with the other fellows as you all work through story pitch to reporting to publication phases.

Q: Can a proposal be part of an existing series? Or does it need to be a standalone/new piece?



A: Proposals may be standalone stories or part of an existing series, provided the proposed work is clearly defined and can be completed within the fellowship period.

Q: What counts as “journalism”?

A: We use journalism to mean work that involves original reporting, fact-checking, and publication through a recognized outlet or platform involving more than one person. We recognize that some applicants may not describe themselves as journalists, especially freelancers or independent creators, but may still be doing journalistic work.

Q: Can the fellowship support creators or content producers who don’t usually call themselves journalists?

A: Yes, if the proposed work meets the criteria of journalistic ethics, reporting, fact-checking and publication in a news or information publication.

Q: Does the story need to have a plan for being published in a media outlet?

A: Yes. In a second phase of the application process, shortlisted applicants will be asked for a letter of agreement from a media outlet indicating an interest in publishing the work.

Q: What qualifies as a valid outlet?

A: Any publication involving more than one person, with a fact-checking process, may be eligible. In some instances, self-publishing on digital platforms (TikTok, YouTube, etc) may be eligible as long as there is a fact-checking process and colleague identified.

Q: Are opinion pieces eligible?

A: We prioritize reported, fact-based work. Opinion pieces may be considered if they are clearly rooted in reported facts.

Q: Do projects need to be fact-checked?

A: Yes. We expect all projects to have a fact-checking process appropriate to the format and outlet.

Q: What if my outlet does not have an in-house fact-checker?

A: Applicants may use fellowship funds to support freelance fact-checking if needed, as long as this fits within the project budget.

Q: What kinds of projects are not a fit?



A: Projects that are primarily informal conversation, lack original reporting, or do not have a clear editorial/publication plan are generally not a fit.

Q: Is this open to journalists from any country?

A: No. You should be living and working in an [ODA-recipient country](#) and be reporting on your own community or geography.

Q: I'm a full-time journalist in a newsroom. Can I apply?

A: Yes.

Q: I'm an independent, freelance journalist. Can I apply?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there an age requirement?

A: No.

Q: Are current Equality Fund grantee partners eligible to apply?

A: Yes. We do not prioritize, or disqualify, candidates based on any prior grant or working relationship with the Equality Fund. Journalism grantee partners of Equality Fund will be assessed with the same criteria as all other applicants.

Q: I am a journalist in exile. I come from a country that is ODA-eligible but currently live elsewhere. Can I apply?

A: Yes, but it depends. We are looking for stories reported by journalists reporting on their own communities in ODA-eligible countries. If there is a way for you to do this, from your new home country, include this information in your story proposal.

Q: Can I work with another journalist or submit a team proposal?

A: Fellowships are for individual journalists but you are permitted to work with others in order to get the project through to publication. If you are leading a small, defined team, this should be disclosed to Equality Fund.

Q: Can I submit more than one story pitch?

A: No. One proposal per person.

Q: Can I use AI?



A: Use of AI in the story proposal and application process is not allowed. Use of AI in the reporting of the story needs to be disclosed and approved beforehand. We look to AI and journalism policies such as this one from the [Investigative Journalism Foundation](#).

Travel

Q: What do you mean by optional travel opportunities?

A: We may have an in-person convening at a journalism conference. This would require travel. Expenses would be covered.

Q: Are fellows required to attend the in-person convening to be eligible for the fellowship?

A: No, fellows are not required to travel and the ability to travel does not impact eligibility and selection.

Q: What if I don't have a passport? Will I require special visas for travel? It's not in my budget to travel.

A: For international travel, you would require an up-to-date passport. If you require a visa, we will provide assistance, financial and administratively, as much as possible. Travel costs (flight and accommodation) will be covered by the Equality Fund.

Stipend/Payment

Q: Can I keep my regular salary or freelance fee?

A: Yes. You can keep your regular salary or freelance fee and also accept the fellowship stipend and reporting expenses budget.

Selection Process and Criteria

Q: How many fellowships are awarded?

A: Up to five.

Q: What criteria will be used to evaluate applications?

A: We will be assessing the story based on how closely it follows the mandate of this fellowship, to surface stories of local solutions to global challenges, with a focus on gender. We will also assess based on factors such as feasibility, news relevance, access to sources, past work.



Q: What is the judging process?

A: A jury composed of Equality Fund staff and journalists will be convened. Applications will be reviewed by the jury at which point a short list of applicants will be contacted for a virtual interview and to provide a letter from a media outlet that indicates interest in publishing the story.

Q: Will feedback be provided to unsuccessful applicants?

A: No. We regret that we cannot respond individually to all applicants.

Q: When will applicants be notified of decisions?

A: Successful applicants will be notified by January 2027.

Accessibility/Language

Q: Are you only accepting applicants whose journalism work is published in English?

A: No. Your journalism work can be reported and published in another language. However, you must be fluent in English (written and oral) in order to work with the team at the Equality Fund and fully participate in the cohort.

Q: What accommodations are made for applicants with disabilities?

A: The Equality Fund is committed to accessibility and a barrier-free environment to ensure equal access, opportunity and participation. If there are accommodations you would like to include in your application, you may do so to the extent that you wish to disclose. Read more about [our accessibility commitment here](#).

Q: Are extra resources available for translation or interpretation?

A: Translation and interpretation would fall under reporting expenses, for which each fellow has up to \$500 CAD.

Fellowship Operations & Logistics

Q: What is the expected time commitment for the duration of the fellowship?

A: The fellowship consists of 6 months of programming from January to June 2027 consisting of 1-2 hours monthly for mentor meetings and workshops, and up to 7 days availability in April 2027 for travel to an in-person convening. There are an additional 3 months to finish reporting and see the story through to publication. All fellowship work is expected to be finished by September 2027.



Q: Is the fellowship in-person, remote or hybrid? What travel may be required?

A: The fellowship is remote, with 1 in-person gathering.