USDN 2021 Summer Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Program
Host Office Sponsorship Application

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Timeline

Launch Date of the Host Office Application:	Tuesday, December 22, 2020
Due Date for Host Office Proposals:	Monday, February 1, 2021
Host Office Selections:	Mid-February 2021
Launch Date of Fellowship Applications:	Early March 2021
Fellowship Decisions:	Early May 2021
Fellows Begin Work:	June 2021

Program Overview

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Fellows program helps build the pipeline of diverse sustainability professionals and leaders. This program stems from USDN's commitment to using our positional power and influence to attract, train, and retain members from communities underrepresented in the sustainability field, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color practitioners.

The USDN EDI Summer Fellowship Program advances equity, diversity, and inclusion by supporting the network members to work toward the following goals:

- Develop a pipeline of talented, high-skilled, diverse professionals to serve in local government sustainability programs, and use what is learned through USDN member and fellow experiences to increase recruitment, hiring, and retention of candidates from populations currently underrepresented in the sustainability field.
- Assist USDN members to dismantle the cultural and systemic barriers to inclusion for people of color in sustainability positions while completing important sustainability projects that are responsive to diverse community needs;
- Help USDN members learn methods for effectively advancing equity through a project.

This RFP and application is for USDN members who are interested in sponsoring a fellow in the USDN 2021 Summer EDI Fellows program. ***Up to 5 USDN member offices will be selected to host a 2021 summer fellow with the USDN covering up to $5,000 of the fellowship cost for each fellow and providing health insurance coverage for fellows. USDN is able to cover the entire cost for 1 of the top 5 applicants to host a fellow.*** An EDI Fellowship Advisory Committee made up of USDN members, past fellow supervisors, and past fellows will recommend finalists to USDN staff, who will interview finalists and confirm their ability to perform host office duties.

The summer fellowships will be full time (40 hours/week). USDN generally wants the fellowships to be 12 weeks with fellows placed by May 2021, working from June to August 2021. However, fellowships can be up to six months long if hosts have funding to cover salary and benefits for an extended timeline.

Before filling out the application to host a fellow, interested USDN members should review this RFP, the Host Office Roles and Responsibilities Agreement (Attachment 1), the FAQ (Attachment 2), and the [USDN Equity in Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Fact Sheet](). Host applicants should also plan to attend or watch the recording of the and the January 19, 2021, [USDN Equity in Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Webinar]().

Expectation of Host Offices
- USDN is seeking Host Offices that are committed to increasing diversity in the field of sustainability and advancing their own capacity to be effective and inclusive managers and mentors.
- In addition to hosting the fellow, selected members will be expected to assist in promotion of the program to diverse local applicants, provide support and mentorship for fellows, and contribute a sponsorship fee, which will be applied to overall program costs, including a portion of fellow stipends.

Benefits for Host Offices
- USDN is providing funding of up to $5,000 each for up to 5 fellows, which will be combined with a sponsorship fee from each Host Office. (See pp 7-8 for host fee calculation.) USDN is able to cover the entire cost for 1 of the top 5 applicants.
- A dedicated summer fellow to support an equity-focused sustainability project.
- Direct participation in the selection of the fellow.
- A peer learning cohort for the fellows.
- Professional development training and mentorship support to supervisors to help recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Benefits for Fellows
- Professional sustainability work experience.
- A living wage fellowship.

- Access to mentorship, professional development, and peer learning.
- Access to the USDN network of professionals.
- Virtual attendance at the USDN 2021 Annual Meeting.
- Participation in an informal network of past and current fellows.

Program Requirements
To be considered to sponsor a USDN fellow, applicants for Host Office must:
- Include the USDN core member in development of the project scope for the fellow.
- Confirm that the member's human resource requirements will allow the sustainability office to host a fellow who will be a USDN employee.
- Supervisor has completed USDN's Equity Foundations training prior to fellowship start.
- Commit to the steps described under Roles (Attachment 1). The most important of these steps are to show that you are prepared to:
  - Offer your fellow a clear and detailed project scope of work;
  - Generate a strong pool of candidates, prioritizing diversity;
  - Create a supportive work environment for fellows, including mentorship.
- Offer a project that involves developing a policy, plan, or program.
  - Apply a racial equity approach that seeks to establish norms differing from the business as usual of their home institution. Applicants should understand and be committed to an approach that acknowledges and seeks to address the harm and injustice of systemic racism on BIPOC.
  - If the fellow will be involved in community engagement, staff from the host office should be closely involved so that the office can maintain new relationships after the completion of the fellowship.
- Agree to complete the final evaluation described under Roles.
- If selected, provide the sponsorship fee unless you receive a waiver.

Examples of past USDN EDI Fellow Projects
- *City of Austin:* The City of Austin was initiating a community resilience planning process in partnership with community organizations and stakeholders to build climate resilience in traditionally underrepresented and under-engaged neighborhoods in Austin's Eastern Crescent. The fellow worked with Office of Sustainability staff to reach out to community leaders and create partnerships with established neighborhood organizations, formulate an engagement plan, and conduct outreach in historically underserved neighborhoods.
- *City of Eugene:* The City of Eugene was developing a Community Climate and Energy Action plan. The EDI fellow contacted other USDN members to learn about their efforts to incorporate equity into their climate planning process, conducted interviews and surveys of groups participating in the CCEA planning, leading to recommendations for how to improve equity initiatives and increase access and inclusion of diverse voices in

the Community Climate and Energy Action plan, and helped to develop a new internship model to recruit and support a diverse intern population.

- *City of Fayetteville:* The City of Fayetteville made its fellow a core member of an Equity Assessment team. The Equity Assessment, driven by a diverse group of community members, explored how community members from diverse backgrounds are impacted by socio-economic systems, policies, and practices and implications for future city projects and programs. The Fellow collected data conducted interviews, analyzed data, and created a public report on equity gaps and barriers.

How the applications will be evaluated

Requirements:
   • The USDN core member sustainability director or another permanent employee led development of the project scope for the fellow and will supervise the fellow.
   • The Host can meet the minimum requirements for creating a supportive work environment for a fellow.
   • The supervisor has completed USDN's Equity Foundations training prior to the fellowship start.
	Y or N
	
	Y or N
	
	Training Year
	_____

1. **Goals and Racial Equity Approach:** Does the project use a racial equity approach? Is the project focused on changing outcomes for/with BIPOC communities?	20
2. **Roles and Responsibility:** Is there a clear opportunity for the fellow to make a substantive impact? Will the fellow work with a team?	20
3. **Work Plan and Timeline:** Is the project timeline feasible to accomplish the project deliverables? Does the work plan include a final project to mark the end of their fellowship? Will the fellow have professional growth opportunities like presentations, facilitation, and/or publication?	15
4. **Recruitment and Hiring Strategy**: Have you created a thoughtful, multi-pronged strategy to generate a strong pool of diverse candidates?	15
5. **Management & Mentorship Plan**: Is there a clear plan for management and supervision? Will the supervisor be available for the duration of the fellowship? Does the support plan address navigating government, professional development, emotional support, and building relationships across the team and government? Will mentorship be available throughout the fellowship? Does the support plan include COVID-19 considerations?	30
TOTAL	*100*

USDN 2021 EDI FELLOW HOST OFFICE APPLICATION FORM

Applications for host offices and the Host Office Roles and Responsibilities Agreement are due on Monday, February 1, **at 5 pm Pacific** to Sarah McKinstry-Wu (sarahmckinstrywu@usdn.org) and Celía Burke (celiaburke@usdn.org) in a Word document. The application should answer the following questions in 6 or fewer pages[1], and in the following order:

1. **Basic Information**
   USDN Core Member Name: _____
   Supervisor Name (if different from Core Member, must be full-time employee):
   _____
   Jurisdiction:_____
   Title of the Fellowship: _____

2. **Minimum Requirements Y/N**

   ☐ I have confirmed with my human resources department that I am able to host a fellow who will be a USDN employee.

   ☐ The fellow's supervisor has completed USDN's Equity Foundations training prior to the fellowship start. Year _____

3. **Scope of Work**
   The project must involve policy, plan, or program development using a racial equity approach. A racial equity approach seeks to establish new norms from the business as usual of institutions. Applicants should understand and be committed to an approach that acknowledges and seeks to address the harm and injustice of systemic racism on Black and Indigenous Communities and People of Color.

   a. Project Context: *What are the project goals? Why now? How will this project advance racial equity? What are the demographics of your city/county and how has this influenced the project? Is this a new project or a project already underway? How did it come about? Provide links to available supporting information.*

   b. Process & Project Outcomes: *What are the proposed process and project outcomes and the strategy for achieving them? How are you incorporating racial equity in your approach to the project (see definition above)?*

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[1] It is fine to make additional space by deleting all text *in italics*.

c. Roles and Responsibilities: *What are the roles and responsibilities of the fellow in the project and how will they work within a broader project team? If the fellow will be engaged in community engagement, what is the plan for the staff to be involved to ensure relationships last beyond the fellowship? What opportunities will they have to make their work public (presentations, articles, etc)?*

d. Work Plan & Timeline: *What is the work plan and timeline for the fellow's role and the overall project? (Focus should be on creating a feasible 12 week plan).*

4. **Your Lessons From the USDN Equity in Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Fact Sheet and Webinar Training**
   a. Reflection
      Please provide 2 or more paragraphs that reflect on the USDN Equity in Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Fact Sheet (https://www.usdn.org/documents/25323) and the January 19, 2021, USDN Equity in Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Webinar.

   b. Inclusive outreach and promotion
      a. How will you generate a strong pool of diverse candidates?
         (It is fine for you to primarily work with one partner on recruitment, but you still need to have a diverse strategy for recruitment.)
      b. How will you ensure that the qualifications in your job description do not unnecessarily exclude diverse candidates?
         (For example, how will you avoid using educational requirements as a proxy for specific skills that could be attained through some other means?)

5. **Management and Mentorship Plan**
   a. Who was involved in the development of this application and what will be their roles during the fellowship? *Include who will track hours and deliverables, and be the primary contact for USDN.*

   b. Who will mentor the fellow, and what specific mentorship will they provide? *For fellows who are people of color, provide a mentor who is a person of color, if feasible.*

   c. Can you meet these minimum requirements for creating a supportive work environment for your fellow? Y or N
      i. *Provide workspace, a supervisor, and project support for the fellow.*
      ii. *Provide an orientation to the office and programs.*
      iii. *Include fellows as part of the project team.*
      iv. *Provide specific directions for how to complete the project and consistent feedback on progress.*

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<i>
    v.   Check in with the fellows on how they feel about the work environment.
    vi.   Participate in USDN learning opportunities and engage in ongoing learning for managing in a diverse workplace.
    vii.   Encourage the fellow to engage in USDN network learning activities and opportunities.
    viii.   Arrange for the fellow to do a presentation to the Host Sustainability staff and others at the end of their fellowship
</i>
</blockquote>

    d. What more will you do to create a supportive work environment for the fellow? *Please add considerations for your local working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

6. **Sponsorship Fee Calculation.**

   USDN is committed to fellows receiving a living wage. If your local government has adopted a living wage, please use that as the floor of the hourly wage you will offer your USDN EDI Fellow. Members can also use the MIT Living Wage Calculator (http://livingwage.mit.edu/) to explore a living wage for your jurisdiction.

   You must pay your USDN summer fellow at least $15/hour. Many Hosts have paid their USDN summer fellows more. If you are using the MIT calculator, please consider using the living wage for "2 Adults (1 Working), 0 Children" as the floor of the hourly wage you will offer your USDN EDI Fellow.

   The summer fellowship will be full time (40 hours/week). We generally want the fellowships to be approximately 12 weeks with fellows placed by May 2021, working from June to August 2021. However, fellowships can be longer.

   Proposed Wage Per Hour: (min $15) _____

   Total Proposed Hours: (12 weeks @ 40 hours/week would be 480 hours. Hosts can choose to hire their fellows for a longer period.) _____

   Total Wages (Wages per Hour Multiplied by Total Hours): _____

   Host Sponsorship Fee (Total Wages less USDN contribution, up to $5,000):

   _____

   USDN is able to cover the sponsorship fee for 1 of the top 5 applicants to host a fellow for 12 weeks. If you apply for a waiver from the sponsorship fee and do not receive it, you will not be eligible to host a fellow. Please check off whether you meet the requirements to apply for a waiver from the fee:
   - My jurisdiction has **not** already hosted a USDN summer fellow.
   - I requested budget support but cannot obtain the required Host Sponsorship Fee of $_____ for a USDN summer fellow.

If you meet the 2 requirements to apply for a waiver, describe why you cannot obtain the required Host Sponsorship Fee for a USDN EDI fellow, including what steps you have taken to obtain funding and why they were not successful.

7. Please provide any additional information that should be considered in evaluating your application to host a fellow.

Attachment 1. Host Office Roles and Responsibilities Agreement

To support the success of USDN Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Fellow placements with host offices and advancement of the overall program goals,

USDN will:
- Provide input to Host Office on the fellowship job description and candidate criteria.
- Assist with recruitment of fellows, although the Host Offices will take the primary role in recruitment.
- Receive all fellow candidate applications and then send them to each of the Host Office local governments.
- Strongly consider the 2 top candidates ranked and recommended by the Host Offices in choosing the fellows for each of them.
- Onboard the fellows for a short term engagement and manage payroll including withholding taxes and worker's compensation coverage for fellows, providing a monthly technology stipend of $125, and offering health insurance coverage.
- Provide mentorship, including ensuring fellows and their supervisors have clarity about initial project expectations and tools to evaluate progress.
- Provide regular peer learning opportunities for participating fellows, including access to the USDN.org website (with strict privacy policy agreement), a learning cohort, and virtual attendance at the USDN 2021 annual meeting.
- Provide mentorship for participating supervisors in how to support fellows and enhance their ability to manage racially diverse staff as needed.
- Promote USDN-wide learning on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Host Offices will:
- With input from the USDN, develop the fellowship job description and candidate criteria.
- Generate a strong pool of diverse candidates by promoting the fellowship opportunity to local community networks and to national and professional networks for people of color. For example:
  - Historically Black Colleges and Universities
  - Professional Associations or Student Organizations for Students of Color
  - National Urban Fellows Public Sector Leadership Diversity Program
  - Networks of colleagues who are people of color
- Form a selection committee that includes at minimum the USDN core member and proposed fellow supervisor and at least one person of color to review the applications forwarded by USDN and choose their top three candidates to recommend to USDN for engagement.
- Provide a sponsorship fee to USDN unless USDN waives this fee.

- Attend USDN Host cohort support calls.
- Create a supportive and inclusive work environment for fellows.
    - Provide workspace, a supervisor, and project support for the fellow.
    - Provide a mentor (for fellows who are people of color, provide a mentor who is a person of color, if feasible).
    - Provide a supervisor-led orientation to the office, colleagues, programs, and work expectations at the start of the fellowship.
    - Include fellows as part of the work team.
    - Provide specific directions for how to complete the project and consistent feedback on progress.
    - Check in with the fellows on how they feel about the work environment.
    - Participate in Host learning opportunities and engage in ongoing learning for managing in a diverse workplace.
    - Arrange for the fellow to do a presentation to the Host Sustainability staff and others at the end of their fellowship.
    - Encourage fellow to engage in USDN network learning activities and opportunities.
    - Complete a program evaluation at the conclusion of the fellowship, including lessons for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff.

If I am selected as a Host Office, I commit to provide a sponsorship contribution (unless I am offered a waiver), undertake inclusive recruitment, generate a strong pool of diverse candidates; review applications forwarded by USDN and recommend 2 candidates for USDN to onboard for short term engagement; host a USDN-engaged fellow in the sustainability program; and create a supportive and inclusive work environment for the fellow.

_____   _____

Name   City/County

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Attachment 2. Frequently Asked Questions

How does the program fit into USDN's equity work?
In 2020 USDN adopted [Equity Principles and Commitments](). USDN recognizes that diversity is an asset. Increasing diversity within the sustainability field, and particularly in decision-making positions within government, will increase the long-term relevance and accountability of our work to communities who have been systematically denied influence. Diverse perspectives produce more sophisticated solutions.

The EDI Fellowship Program is part of USDN's commitment to growing the pipeline of diverse sustainability professionals and developing leaders. USDN is committed to using our positional power and influence to attract, train, and retain members from communities underrepresented in the sustainability field, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color practitioners. We also commit to creating growth and leadership opportunities for these individuals.

How long has the program been in existence?
With support from the Kendeda Fund, USDN piloted the EDI Fellows program in 2016 and offered it again from 2018-2019. The 2020 and 2021 EDI Fellows program is offered as part of [USDN's Equity Leaders Program]().

Who makes Host selection decisions? An EDI Fellowship Advisory Committee made up of USDN members, past fellow supervisors, and past fellows recommend Host finalists to USDN staff, who interview finalists and confirm their ability to perform fellow host duties.

What is a "Host Office?"
The term Host Office describes the selected USDN member that has also agreed to the terms to host a fellow and contribute the program sponsorship fee. Members receive a benefit for their sponsorship, but also have specific host responsibilities to support the overall program goals of the fellowship.

Who engages the fellows?
USDN is the official entity that brings the fellows onboard for this short-term engagement and manages their payroll. For fellows located outside the United States, a Professional Employer Organization or staffing agency will facilitate engagement to ensure compliance with local laws and tax obligations.

Do Host Offices have a say in who is selected as their Fellow?
Host Offices will participate in the development of the job descriptions and promote the program to potential applicants who will submit their application to USDN. USDN will forward candidate applications to the Host Offices, who will form a selection committee that includes at minimum the core member and Fellow supervisor and at least one person of color. The

selection committee will rank candidates and recommend the 2 top to USDN. USDN will make the final decision.

What are the requirements to be a fellow?
USDN prioritizes increasing staff from communities underrepresented in sustainability work, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Fellows must be passionate about sustainability and/or the environment, new to the sustainability field of work, or interested in exploring a career in sustainability.

They need to have the skills required to match the needs of the Host Office. Because the proposed project must be inclusive of underserved and under-represented communities, the job description will require the ability to relate to and communicate with people from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Applicants will be required to complete an application describing how they meet program criteria and how their skills match the needs of the Host Office's project.

How long is the fellowship?
The summer 2021 fellowships are intended to be approximately 12 weeks, 40 hours/week. Fellows will be placed by May 2021 and are anticipated to work from June to August 2021. However, Hosts can hire fellows to work for a longer period of time up to a period of six months if hosts can fully fund the additional time.

What are the program expectations of the fellow?
- Complete their assigned projects
- Actively participate in USDN peer learning and mentorship opportunities
- Complete a brief report and program evaluation form at the conclusion of their fellowship to reflect on the value of and what they learned from their experience
- Make a presentation on their work at the USDN annual meeting
- Become part of an informal network of past and current fellows

How much is the fellow stipend and host sponsorship fee?
Hosts must pay their USDN summer fellow at least $15/hour. Many hosts have paid their USDN summer fellows more. To determine the fellow stipend, proposed Hosts should multiply their proposed wages/hour by the total proposed hours of work. To figure out the Host sponsorship fee, proposed Hosts should subtract the up to $5,000 covered by USDN from the fellow stipend.

USDN is able to cover the sponsorship fee for 1 fellow for 12 weeks. To receive a waiver, a proposed host must not have already hosted a USDN summer fellow and must show that they could not obtain internal funds for a USDN Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) fellow.

NOTE: Any proposed host that applies for a waiver but does not receive it will not be eligible to host a fellow.

Should I apply if my office already employs people underrepresented in the sustainability field?
Yes, this program is to benefit the local Host Office, the fellow, and the network as a whole. Your office may still benefit from the professional development resources, and the network can benefit from learning about successful practices that your office uses to support the success of your fellow.