Ripe for Creative Disruption

An Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship

In coordination with Environmental Justice (EJ) leaders from across the country, The New School is launching Ripe for Creative Disruption: An Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship (EJMF). The unprecedented speed, magnitude, and impact of climate change requires redesigning our global economic, social, and political systems. Incremental, reformist climate change responses have been ineffective. What the world needs now are solutions that transform the extractive systems that cause environmental harm. The EJ Movement’s critique of political, social, and economic systems and focus on frontline solutions for those most vulnerable to climate change make it prime to disrupt the status quo and advance transformative climate solutions.

Fellowship purpose: The Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship will support and grow the capacity of movement leaders to design innovative and disruptive strategies that advance a transformative climate justice agenda on a local, Tribal, national and global scale. The aim of this fellowship is to nurture, test, and deploy contentious, creative, and scalable solutions. We seek to co-create the conditions and curriculum that can best support groups of movement leaders in their efforts to generate and pilot these strategies for movement impact.

Who Should Apply?
The Fellowship is currently open to groups of 2-4 environmental justice leaders. We are looking for environmental justice leaders who are doing different things and doing things differently. The Environmental Justice movement is ripe for innovation and its leaders are at the frontlines of designing and implementing transformative, systemic solutions for a more just future. EJ leaders know that to build new, regenerative systems, we need to dismantle and radically redesign the social, political, and economic systems that cause the root problems of environmental and climate injustices. If you are part of a group of EJ leaders looking for space to design, test, and un/co-learn with other leaders; if you’re in love with the problem and not tied to a solution but instead itching to test out new ideas or break get out of the norm; if you want to try something
new, and scale bold ideas, this is the space for you. We are looking for groups of leaders who are prepared to utilize a strong circle of support to disrupt and design innovative responses that can match the urgency and scale of the intersecting crises that face EJ communities around the world. We want to hear about the problem you’re working on; the fellowship is the space to explore solutions. BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income and women leaders in the environmental justice movement are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Focus Areas:** We are specifically seeking groups working in the areas of Climate Justice, Environmental Health, Energy Democracy, and/or Just Transition. Our Landscape Assessment, which included 48 interviews and 167 surveys with movement leaders, identified these four areas as key themes for urgent and long term intervention, as well as areas of work ripe for experimentation and disruption. We are looking for groups whose work is rooted in decolonial, liberation, and regenerative just transition frameworks and mindsets that impact social movements.

**Eligibility requirements**
The Fellowship is currently open to groups of 2-4 environmental justice leaders who are working together in the areas of Climate Justice, Environmental Health, Energy Democracy, and/or Just Transition.

All groups members must be:
- 18 years old or older
- Part of a grassroots organization that is actively engaging with the environmental justice and climate justice movements, or allied social movements (this may include board membership and volunteer and advisory roles). If selected, groups will need a fiscal sponsor or affiliated 501(c)(3) organization to receive funds on their behalf.
- Work is based in and substantially focused in the United States, Indigenous Communities on Turtle Island as well as other US affiliated territories (Including Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands)
- Committed to contributing to collective and collaborative leadership and supporting disruptive and innovative solutions in the environmental justice movement
- Committed to practicing and uplifting the EJ Principles of Working Together and Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing
- Committed to participating in all fellowship activities including, virtual and in-person retreats, coaching sessions, evaluation activities and in-between prep and group work (see below).

Individuals can apply as part of multiple groups, but we kindly ask that you note on your application if you are doing so.
**Fellowship Experience**

The fellowship is a **2 year experience, made up of four 6-month phases**. Fellows will participate in a combination of virtual and in-person retreats, plus group coaching sessions, ideation to scaling phases, monitoring and evaluation processes, and other group work. We kindly request that only groups who can commit to participate in the full fellowship experience apply.

Continue below for more information about the application and selection process. Please contact Marouh Hussein at husseinm@newschool.edu with any questions.

**Selection Process Overview**

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<td>Aug 25 to Sept 26, 11:59 pm PT: Group applications open</td>
<td>October 2021: Semi-final groups will be invited to a group interview</td>
<td>November 2021: Selected groups notified and virtual kickoff event</td>
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For more information, sign up to attend one of our informational sessions:

- Sep 7, 2021  3:30 - 4:30 pm ET - Click here to register
- Sep 14, 2021  3:30 - 4:30 pm ET - Click here to register

Group Application

Eligible groups can complete an application using this link. The application will take approximately 1.5 to 2 hours to complete. Only one submission is required per group.

The Application includes 3 steps:

1. Basic Eligibility
2. Demographic Information
3. Fellowship Questions

Saving your work: The platform will automatically save your application as you work, but in order to pause and come back to your application at a later date, you must use the same computer and internet browser. For a more collaborative, offline experience, we’re including the fellowship questions below. To view the full application, including demographic questions, click here. We recommended drafting your answers with your group before entering them into the application platform and submitting. Once submitted, you will not be able to return and edit your application. For technical questions, please contact husseinm@newschool.edu.

Fellowship Questions

Groups can submit their answers to the following questions in written, video, or audio formats. Questions 1-3 should be answered on behalf of the whole group. Question 4 should be answered from the perspective of the person(s) completing this form.

For written responses 300 words is recommended. The maximum file size for audio and video responses is 1GB. Multiple files can be uploaded per question, but video and audio answers should total no more than 3 minutes per question.

Q1. EJ MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP

How have you contributed leadership to the environmental justice movement and/or to climate justice solutions in the past? Give us a sense of the relationships and roots you have in and with the EJ movement or beyond.
Q2. OPPORTUNITY OR PROBLEM RIPE FOR DISRUPTION/HARVEST

What environmental justice or climate justice problem or opportunity are you addressing in this group formation and for whom specifically? What are the political, social, or ecological windows of opportunity or emerging threats that make this opportunity "ripe" for harvesting or disrupting? Who does this problem impact? How is the problem or opportunity connected to your approach to change and what is its potential impact? What will success look like and for who? Tip: Focus on the problem more than the solution. The fellowship will be a space to explore solutions.

Q3. GROUP DYNAMICS

Who are you choosing to be part of this group? Why this grouping? What does each person bring to the whole and how do you complement each other? Where are you willing to take risks or be bold and help each other grow?

Q4. INDIVIDUAL

How do you like to work in a group? Share a time when you had to work outside of your comfort zone for collaboration or in the face of challenges, failures, or conflict transformation. Where are you shining in your own leadership currently and where would you want to grow or take risks in leadership? Provide examples of any successful leadership groups or initiatives you have led or been a part of.

Group Interviews

If your group is invited to the semi-final round, you’ll be asked to participate in a group Zoom interview with fellowship staff and the design team. All group members must attend. This stage is about getting to know the full group better and hearing about how you’ve been working together, your hopes for your participation in the program, and a chance to ask us any questions you may be curious about. Interview questions may include:

1. What is the natural conflict style you gravitate towards?
2. What are you looking forward to in the fellowship? How can participating in the fellowship contribute to your work together?
3. Tell us more about your team. How long have you been working together? What’s your special sauce?
4. What is important to you in entering a cohort? What perspectives, ideas, and voices do you want to deepen and learn from?
5. How would you like to contribute to a collaborative, co-designed cohort experience? What might you offer to this learning, unlearning, and co-learning process?
6. Discussion of participation obligations: retreat dates, time outside of retreats, participation in coaching and monitoring and evaluation activities.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Can individuals apply for the fellowship?

   At this time the fellowship is only open to identified and self-formed groups of 2-4 environmental justice leaders.

2. What are the goals and intended outcomes of the fellowship? How will I know if I am a good fit?

   Ripe for Creative Disruption: An Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship supports and grows the capacity of movement leaders to design innovative and disruptive strategies that can advance a more transformative climate justice agenda on a local, Tribal, national and global scale. If you are part of a group of EJ leaders looking for space to design, test, and un/co-learn with other leaders; if you’re in love with the problem and not tied to a solution but instead itching to get out of the norm, try something new, and scale new ideas this is the space for you. The Fellowship is a space for leaders to reimagine, prototype, and scale solutions. For more about the eligibility requirements, click here.

3. What is the structure of the fellowship? Will it be in person or virtual?

   The fellowship will consist of retreats, group coaching, and additional support provided by our team. The retreats will be a hybrid model of in-person and virtual events. Community is at the center of the fellowship's values and our expectation is that all group members be able to participate in all fellowship activities. As part of the application process, you can let us know if there are any barriers that would prevent you from being back to participate fully in the fellowship. Accessibility is core to our values and we will make every effort to make accommodations if/when possible. For a full schedule of retreats, click here.

4. How many groups will you select for the pilot cohort? When will you notify selected fellows?

   Four to eight groups (totaling about 16 leaders) will be selected for this pilot cohort. Groups invited to participate in the interview stage will hear from us in October. All applicants will be notified of their status by mid-November. For an overview of the application timeline, click here.

5. Is the fellowship focused on specific areas of environmental justice work?

   We are specifically seeking groups working in the following areas: Climate Justice, Environmental Health, Energy Democracy, and/or Just Transition. Our Landscape Assessment, which included 48 interviews and 167 surveys with movement leaders, identified these four areas as key themes for urgent and long term intervention, as well as areas of work ripe for experimentation and disruption. We are looking for groups whose work is rooted in decolonial, liberation, and regenerative just transition frameworks and
mindsets that impact social movements. BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income and women leaders in the environmental justice movement are strongly encouraged to apply.

6. Who is on the selection committee?

Our selection committee is made up of a seven person Advisory Committee. Our advisory committee members are EJ leaders who have come together to help guide the design and direction of the EJMF. All advisory committee members will be part of the first round of reviews. During interviews, semi-finalists will meet with members of our staff and pedagogical team. You can read more about our advisory committee members, staff, and pedagogical team here.

7. What support will fellows receive for their participation in the fellowship?

Fellows receive individual stipends of $12,000 for their two-year participation in the program. In phase 3, groups will receive between $10,000 to $20,000 seed funding to support their prototypes. Groups will also receive group coaching valued at $30,000. All travel and lodging expenses for in-person retreats will be covered for the fellows. There are also separate emergency discretionary funds available upon request for fellows who may need to cover additional costs in order to participate fully in the program. This may include family care, elder care and other COVID related barriers. If selected, groups will need a fiscal sponsor or affiliated 501(c)(3) organization to receive funds on their behalf.

8. What support will fellows’ organizations receive for their staff’s participation in the fellowship?

The Fellowship is happy to provide $8,000 per fellow to organizations whose staff participate in the program. This resource is meant to offset the cost of a fellow’s participation. If two or more fellows are applying from the same organization, that organization will receive $5,000 per fellow. Organizational support will be capped at $20,000. If your annual organizational budget is $1 million or more, you may consider waiving the organizational support funds. We will then instead use those funds to support fellow prototypes in phase 3 of the program.

9. Tell me more about who is designing the fellowship. Who is involved?

Ripe for Creative Disruption: An Environmental Justice Movement Fellowship is housed at the Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School. The Tishman Environment and Design Center is a university-wide center committed to fostering the integration of bold design, policy, and social justice approaches to environmental issues to advance just and sustainable outcomes. Following the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing, the Tishman Center serves as a hub for climate and environmental justice research and practice, with a specific focus on critical, participatory action-based research produced in collaboration with frontline, grassroots and community based organizations and coalitions. Through our collaborative efforts, we impact research, practice and policy. The Fellowship
was established by co-founders Dr. Ana Baptista, Co-Director of the Tishman Environment and Design Center and Dr. Sujatha Jesudason, Principle at the Social Movements + Innovation Lab. The program was first funded by the NorthLight Foundation, under the direction of Kate Sinding Daly, in 2019. In 2020, The JPB Foundation joined as a second funder.

The EJ movement’s collaboration and support of this project has been integral since its inception. In 2019, we led a Landscape Assessment, which included 48 interviews and 167 surveys with movement leaders, to hear directly from the movement about their strategies, focus areas, aspirations for the movement, and what they’d like to see in a fellowship program specifically for EJ. This year, we were also fortunate to hold two design workshops for EJ leaders to further gather insight on the program’s goals and outcomes. We are also proud to be working with an advisory committee made up of EJ leaders from across the US. and Turtle Island, who will continue to guide the fellowship’s development and implementation. We intend to hold annual EJ workshops to update the movement on the fellowship’s progress and look forward to engaging with the fellowship’s alumni in the future.

10. How can I learn more?

If you have additional questions, we welcome you to sign up for one of our informational sessions, or schedule a 15-minute phone consultation here. You can also reach out to Marouh Hussein at husseinm@newschool.edu with your questions.