

# Democracy Fellows Inaugural Class Application



**DEMOCRACY  
FELLOWS**  
Learn. Connect. Achieve.

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## *WELCOME & INSTRUCTIONS*

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Welcome to the application for the Open Buffalo Democracy Fellows Program. We are delighted that you are interested in being a part of our change-maker family!

The Democracy Fellows Program is an intensive, yearlong leadership development program designed to empower residents in the city of Buffalo with the skills and resources required to drive organizations and institutions toward equity, inclusion, and long-term systems change. Democracy Fellows will receive in-class instruction on myriad community-based skills, in addition to working directly in the community, to develop a community-based project that will be presented at the end of the fellowship.

Fellows will use innovative strategies and community-building tactics to develop one policy report, community program, training module, or artistic or documentary video that will help create lasting impact in Buffalo. Fellows will commit 25-30 hours a month toward completing their project.

In addition to the one year commitment of the intensive Democracy Fellows Program, the 2017 inaugural class will commit to serving as an ongoing advisory committee that help to shape future classes of democracy fellows.

The ideal candidates will be passionate leaders with in-depth knowledge of systemic issues that impact communities. Democracy Fellows will be selected based on **demonstrated leadership skills**, with a minimum of two years experience in social change work, and ability to perform as intersectional movement thinkers. The ideal fellow has a strong track record of **community and coalition building** and can work to connect different racial and socioeconomic constituencies.

We value inclusion and diversity in our movement, therefore, ***people of color, women, LGBTQI individuals, people with disabilities and formerly incarcerated people are strongly encouraged to apply.***

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### ***TUITION***

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If selected, a Democracy Fellow will receive a \$25,000 scholarship. The scholarship covers the cost of the program and a \$12,000 stipend directly to the fellow to cover expenses related to carrying out their project.

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### ***HOW TO APPLY***

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To apply, please complete this online application form, which includes identifying the people who will be submitting your two references.

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### ***BEFORE YOU BEGIN***

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We expect the full application to take approximately 2 hours to complete.

If you have any questions about the application or the Open Buffalo Democracy Fellows Program, please contact the Open Buffalo Executive Director, Franchelle Hart, at [Franchelle@openbuffalo.org](mailto:Franchelle@openbuffalo.org) at or 716-243-8777 EXT 101.

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*I. PERSONAL INFORMATION*

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**1. Contact Information**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Media  
Links: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Current Mailing Address**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Demographic Information**

Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_  
Self-Identified \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender Pronoun \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Democracy Fellows are expected to commit 25-30 hours per month, and will be required to participate in orientation and closing retreats. These sessions will require occasionally committing a full business day or a weekend. (A finalized schedule will be available soon.) Please confirm that you expect to be available on these dates, and that your schedule has some flexibility required for full participation.**

**5. Do you speak languages other than English? Please rate your ability in each language (i.e. understand, speak, read, write). Some organizations who need language capacity may conduct language assessment as a part of the interview process.**

*Example:*

Spanish: fluent in reading, writing, and speaking

Cantonese: conversational speaking only

Language	Oral Ability	Literacy (Reading & Writing)

Would you require language translation headsets to fully comprehend presentations and classes in English?

*II. Short Response Questions*

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Please keep all responses under 250 words.

1. What is your vision of an ideal Buffalo, and how does it compare to what we have today?
2. What in your life experience has influenced your views of social change and your desire to become an activist, organizer or change agent?
3. What do you hope to gain by participating in this fellowship? Describe which skill areas you hope to develop most, and what makes you a compelling candidate for the program?
4. How will you utilize the tools you have gained for the common good?
5. What type of work do you want to pursue in the future and why?
6. Describe in detail your current and past involvement with community, religious/spiritual, political, social justice, and other groups.
7. Describe a time/experience in your life when you have displayed leadership.
8. Please describe (in detail) your ideal mentor or coach.
9. How did you hear about the fellowship?

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**III. PROJECT PROPOSAL**

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Open Buffalo is a coalition of community advocates and organizations seeking social and economic justice for ALL in Buffalo. We are working toward creating a more just region by actively working in the following areas:

- High Road Economic Development (HRED)
- Justice and Opportunity
- Leadership Development
- Art Integration
- Crossroads Collective & Just Transition
- Innovation Lab
- Restorative Justice

**In two pages or less please indicate which campaign area you would be interested in working on and why. Your project proposal should include the following: how your research or project would contribute to the movement in Buffalo; how you would ensure that your project could live on after your year in the program; and a brief proposal on what you would like to your project focus on.**

**Excerpt from a sample project proposal:**

*“My name is Maria Rivera and I consider myself to embody the intersection of Art and Activism. I have been working for over a decade on issues of economic insecurity as it impacts the West Side of Buffalo. Over the last year, I have narrowed my focus specifically to examine the impact of gentrification and displacement in Buffalo. I hope that by working with the High Road Economic Development campaign I can create a documentary on Buffalo gentrification that can be used for teaching fellow community members about gentrification and as a campaign tool for organizers working on public policy...”*