



The Bell Policy Center

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The Bell Economic Mobility Fellowship

A program of the Bell Policy Center

2024-25 Request for Proposal

Applications Due October 24, 2024

The Bell Policy Center invites applications for its second **Bell Economic Mobility Fellowship**, which supports conversation-changing research and analysis on topics related to one or more of the Bell's four economic mobility policy priorities. Established through a generous grant from a longtime donor, the Fellowship seeks to support research efforts that explore new perspectives on economic mobility in Colorado, drive new economic mobility conversations, and advance actionable, equitable solutions to our economic mobility challenges.

About the Fellowship

The Fellowship is a one-year program centered around new, conversation-changing research related to one or more of the Bell Policy Center's economic mobility policy priorities:

- Public Funding for Economic Mobility: Ensure public funding for key levers of economic mobility in Colorado;
- Strengthening the Care Economy: Elevate and strengthen the caring workforce (workers and caregivers providing child care, or direct care for older adults and people with disabilities) and the families they serve;
- Closing Equity Gaps: Address structural barriers in economic mobility systems, particularly housing, asset-building, credit, and financial services, postsecondary education and workforce development, and aging;
- Telling the Economic Story: Tell Colorado's economic story through the lenses of tax fairness, racial equity, and economic mobility.

The fellowship will include three main components:

- Research: A research project culminating in a major report or series that explores a specific issue, policy/ies, or constituency/ies. (To provide a sense of scope, one example of a final product could be a research report of 20-40 pages on a specific issue or research question.) We welcome a wide range of research types, approaches, and topics, but the research should offer a sound approach to exploring one or more clearly-defined research questions and have the potential to bring new perspectives, knowledge, and ideas to the Colorado policy conversation. (See **Research Standards and Project Examples** below for more detail.) Community-engaged research and meaningful involvement in the research by affected communities is a high priority, as is the use of an intentional racial and gender equity lens.
- Shared Learning and Community: To facilitate shared learning and the development of a community of colleagues with an interest in economic mobility for every Coloradan, fellows will be expected to participate in a minimum of two convenings with other fellows over the course of the fellowship, as

well as regular (every other month) meetings to connect with members of the Bell Policy Center team. Overall time commitment will be limited to a maximum of 2-4 hours per month.

- **Promotion and Dissemination:** Each fellow will identify a key audience for sharing their research and primary findings and work with the Bell Policy Center team to develop an event or communications strategy to reach that audience. Fellows may also be asked to participate in 1-2 events or communications activities planned by the Bell Policy Center team to promote the fellowship and their research. These could include public in-person events, webinars, convenings with policy or academic leaders, research briefings, donor events, or participation in conferences or convenings within or outside Colorado.

Timeline

The fellowship term will begin in December 2024 and conclude in November 2025. The first six to nine months will focus primarily on research and writing, with dissemination and promotion activities taking place over the remainder of the fellowship year. Shared learning and community activities may occur throughout the fellowship, and the Bell Policy Center team will work with fellows to coordinate these activities with their schedules.

Responses to this request for proposal are due by October 24, 2024 (see **Selection Process** below for application process and instructions).

Fellowship Stipend

Fellows will receive a stipend of \$50,000 per *project*, to be paid in four payments of \$12,500 each over the course of the fellowship year. Fellows will be considered independent contractors and will be responsible for any taxes or related expenses on their stipend.

Eligible Applicants and Projects

A fellowship may be awarded to an individual or to a team or organization, although the fellowship stipend is awarded per project, so team projects will share a single stipend.

We deeply value the contributions of our organizational colleagues in the Colorado policy research space, as well as the many journalists who contribute to the policy conversation, but this fellowship is intended to expand beyond those areas to include new avenues of expertise, so those organizations and individuals are not the focus of this opportunity.

We are interested in projects and fellows who bring a range of perspectives, approaches, knowledge, and expertise to exploring economic mobility and policy in Colorado. This could include fellows with a history of working in direct service or in organizing with affected communities on a set of issues, lived experience with the issue, a history of working in policy as an elected official, an academic background in a relevant issue, or a team combining different types of expertise and research experience.

Fellowship projects should be able to be feasibly completed and findings and culminating research products released by the close of the fellowship year in November 2025. If research expenses needed to conduct the project exceed the amount of the stipend, the fellow must outline in their application a plan

for funding the remainder of the expense and have firm commitments for any supplemental funding confirmed before a fellowship is awarded.

While fellows will have a high degree of independence in completing their projects, research products will be expected to meet standards outlined in the **Research Standards and Project Examples** section below with minimal support from the Bell Policy Center team, including use of a robust methodology and writing that conveys their ideas and findings clearly to the outside audience. The Bell Policy Center reserves the right to decline to publish fellowship products that do not meet those standards.

Due to the Bell Policy Center's status as a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501c3 organization and the nature of this fellowship, no lobbying activities or partisan political activities can be associated with the fellowship, included in fellowship activities, or funded by the fellowship stipend. Partisan organizations are not eligible.

Research Standards and Project Examples

We will consider a variety of research approaches, including those that do not adhere to formal academic standards. However, we expect that the research products produced will provide new information, have some level of ability to be generalized, be grounded in prior research and/or findings, and use a robust methodology.

Similarly, we will consider a range of research methods, including those of a qualitative nature. We especially encourage research projects that center the voice and perspectives of those who are not often included in public conversation, or who are often talked *about* and researched *on* in a more extractive way. For projects that employ a case study or other qualitative approach, applicants should be sure to detail how they will ensure a range of varying perspectives are incorporated into their research (i.e. discuss who will you be speaking with and why); how they will analyze the information to ensure relevant findings are accurately captured; and how their methodology will ensure findings are additive to current conversations.

A few examples of topics or projects that might be of interest (not an exhaustive or prescriptive list):

- Case studies of one or more regions' or communities' approaches to housing access and affordability
- Community-centered work to build intergenerational wealth in historically marginalized communities
- The impact of private equity or major corporate players on home health care and/or housing in Colorado
- How are local taxes, particularly unique taxes like the Real Estate Transfer Tax, used in local communities?
- Exploring initiatives that strive to build greater racial, gender, and/or economic equity in Colorado's postsecondary ecosystem
- How could the concept of equal pay for comparable work be implemented to strengthen the care economy (and other sectors in which pay scales have been devalued along racial or gender lines)?
- Comparison of universal vs. targeted economic relief programs

Selection Process and Timeline

Fellows will be selected in a hybrid process, including from among responses to this Request for Proposal as well as by invitation. Three fellowships will be awarded for 2024-25. Timeline is as follows:

Date	Milestone
August 29, 2024	Request for Proposal (RFP) for the fellowship opens
October 24, 2024	RFP responses due to the Bell Policy Center
October 25 – November 21, 2024	Review process Additional information may be requested from and/or brief interviews conducted with some candidates
By November 30, 2024	Invitations extended to fellows
Early December 2024	Fellowship agreements finalized and signed Initial payment goes out to fellows
December 15, 2024	Fellowship term begins
January 2025	Project kickoff meetings between fellows and Bell Policy team
November 30, 2025	Fellowships conclude

How to Apply

To apply for a Fellowship, **please submit the following materials to fellowship@bellpolicy.org by October 24, 2024** (please include the words “2024 Fellowship Application” in the subject line of your email):

- 1) A one-paragraph biography and a resume/CV. Please use this material to summarize key areas of background and expertise (which could include academic experience, work experience, lived experience, or some combination) with the proposed research topic or approach. If this is a joint fellowship application, please provide the bio and resume/CV for each of the team leads.
- 2) A writing sample of at least five pages in which the Fellowship applicant(s) is the primary author. The sample can be any type, but should demonstrate your ability to convey complex ideas to your audience in a clear, thoughtful way.
- 3) A two-page letter of interest following the outline below.

Letter of interest outline

Your letter should be no longer than two pages, and should include the following:

- **Rationale (1/2 page)**: Please share how your proposed project will advance the purpose and goals of the Bell Economic Mobility Fellowship, answering the following:
 - What will be gained from the research? Which of the Bell’s policy priority areas does this advance, and how?
 - In what ways could this research help drive new conversations and actionable change in Colorado? How will this research impact the mission of economic mobility for every Coloradan?
 - Who is the main audience for this research? How do you plan to communicate or tailor your research to reach this audience?
 - What tangible things, if any, would you like to see come out of this research over the short term? What could you see coming from this research over the long term?
- **Research approach, plan, and activities (1+ pages)**: Please outline your research topic, the specific research question(s) you plan to answer, and a brief plan for how you will carry out the research and

complete your end product(s), including a timeline. We understand that some elements of this plan might change as the project gets underway, but if you're awarded a fellowship, we would expect you to largely follow the plan and outline you propose here. Your plan should include answers to the following:

- What is the research topic, what research question(s) will you examine, and what methods or strategies will you use to examine them?
- What is your timeline – what research and engagement activities will you do, and when?
- If your plan includes qualitative research (e.g. case studies, interviews, community meetings, etc.), whom do you plan to talk with, and how will you reach them?
- If your plan includes quantitative research (e.g. use of census data or other statistical sources), what data sources do you plan to use, and how do you plan to analyze this data?
- For all types of research, how will you use the knowledge and data you are gathering and analyzing to answer the research question(s) you've identified?
- To what extent and how will you employ a racial and gender equity lens in this research? Will your research focus on any other historically marginalized communities, and if so, which ones? What plans do you have to engage affected communities in the work in a meaningful, respectful, and authentic way?
- What do you envision as the final product(s) you will produce? A series of shorter research briefs or articles? A toolkit? A report? Something else? What areas of knowledge do you expect to cover in your final product?
- With whom would you like to share the results of your research, and how would you plan to do it?

If this is a joint fellowship application, please indicate how research duties will be shared. If the research depends on outside funding from other sources, please indicate how much additional funding will be needed to complete the project and where you plan to secure supplemental funding.

- Learning and Knowledge Sharing (¼ to ½ page): Please confirm that you can commit to the shared learning and dissemination components of the fellowship and share what areas of expertise you anticipate being able to contribute to the Bell Policy Center's policy and research team and to other fellows. In what ways do you anticipate sharing and disseminating the results of this research to drive future conversations? What knowledge sharing and communications opportunities do you see for this project? If this is a joint application, please indicate how duties of the fellowship will be shared.

Selection Considerations

Selection considerations will include:

- A diversity of approaches and topics: We are interested in a mix of projects offering different perspectives and approaches on economic mobility issues. For instance, we might look to fund one project bringing new expertise from the field into the policy conversation, another from a former elected official, and another representing a partnership between an academic and someone with lived experience with the given issue. Other interests could include projects that make use of participatory or community-driven research strategies, examine an issue from a legal research perspective, or incorporate public opinion research into a larger research project.

- **Strong research design and capacity:** We seek fellows whose projects reflect a sound and feasible research plan incorporating the elements outlined in the **Research Standards and Project Examples** section above and demonstrated expertise and capacity in the research topic and proposed approach.
- **Equity and community engagement:** We will prioritize research with a strong racial and gender equity lens, as well as research engaging other historically marginalized communities, with a strong preference for research that incorporates engagement of affected communities as participants, contributors, and beneficiaries of the research (rather than simply research subjects).
- **Actionable and conversation-changing:** We seek fellows whose research will generate actionable evidence and information on aspects of economic mobility, and whose contributions can illuminate new findings, drive new discussions, and anticipate new opportunities to advance economic mobility for every Coloradan.
- **Shared learning:** We seek fellows who are interested in working with members of the Bell Policy Center’s policy team and with other fellows in a shared learning community, and who can offer new areas of expertise to this learning community through their fellowship experience.

Primary Contacts

Andrea Kuwik, Director of Policy and Research, is the primary program contact for the Fellowship program. Questions regarding the Fellowship program or research considerations can be directed to her at kuwik@bellpolicy.org.

For questions regarding the application process, please contact Julie Pecaut, Director of Strategy and Operations, pecaut@bellpolicy.org.

About the Bell Policy Center

Based in Denver, Colorado, the Bell Policy Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and advocacy organization with a mission to ensure economic mobility for every Coloradan. Through policy research, outreach, communications, and advocacy, the Bell Policy Center works to ignite a conversation that inspires communities and their leaders to transform Colorado into a state where everyone thrives. More information about the Bell Policy Center is available at www.bellpolicy.org.