

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the APN Residential Postdoctoral Fellowship Competition**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

#### **Who can apply for an APN Residential Postdoctoral Fellowship?**

All applicants must be African citizens and resident in an African country. They must currently hold a faculty or research position at an African university.

#### **Can I apply as part of a research group/team?**

No. The APN residential postdoctoral fellowship is only open to individual applications. Please note that joint applications will not be accepted.

#### **Is there an age limit?**

No. However, preference will be given to PhDs based in African universities who are in the early phase of their careers. All applicants should not be more than 7 years out of a PhD program by December 14, 2014 (must have graduated/obtained their PhD no earlier than December 14, 2007).

#### **Am I eligible if I do not hold a PhD?**

No. You can only apply if you have a PhD.

#### **I currently hold a PhD but do not have a faculty position at a university. Am I eligible?**

No. The APN fellowship award is only for academics that hold faculty or research positions at universities in Africa.

#### **I am an African academic working full-time in a university outside Africa, but currently also work with a partner at a university in an African country. Are we eligible to apply as a team?**

No. You are not eligible to apply as part of a team.

#### **I have full-time employment in an African university, but I am temporarily stationed outside Africa. Am I eligible?**

Yes, you can apply.

#### **Will the program support my enrollment in an academic program at a university?**

No. APN fellowships only support research and networking activities.

### **What disciplines are eligible?**

The APN residential postdoctoral fellowship is open to academics from all disciplines and fields. However, successful proposals will demonstrate a solid grasp of social science literature, tools, and research methodologies, and be related to African peacebuilding.

It is important to note that the fellowship is meant to support the completion of on-going research, and not to initiate new research.

### **I have applied for an APN postdoctoral fellowship in the past, and have either received the award or was denied. In either case am I still eligible to apply for this round?**

Yes. If you have applied for an APN Postdoctoral Fellowship in the past and were NOT accepted, you may apply on condition that you meet the academic requirements. The APN strongly encourages those who have not received an APN award to apply.

Those who *have* received an APN award in the past may also apply, although preference will be given to those who are not former recipients.

## **WORKSHOPS**

### **If I receive an APN residential fellowship, is it compulsory that I attend the APN Writing workshop?**

Yes, attendance at the writing workshop, for which you will be asked to prepare specific materials and presentations linked to your research, is mandatory. Failure to attend can lead to the termination of your fellowship.

### **Do I have to pay my way to attend and participate in the workshop?**

No. The APN will make all necessary arrangements and cover your travel, accommodation, and living expenses. The APN will make all necessary arrangements and cover all costs related to the workshop attendance, and these need not be included in the project budgets. In special circumstances, fellows will be reimbursed the full costs of independently arranged travel.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **How do I apply for an APN residential postdoctoral fellowship?**

Application guidelines and materials are available on the APN website under the respective competition link (<http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/residential-postdoctoral-fellowships/>). We

recommend that you fully review the guidelines, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, and application and award timeline before proceeding with an application.

If you encounter any difficulties using the online portal or have questions about the application process, please contact APN staff at [apn@ssrc.org](mailto:apn@ssrc.org), or by telephone at (+1) 212-3700-2700, ext. 3703. Unfortunately, due to the volume of applications we receive, no mailed materials will be accepted.

### **How do I submit my application?**

The APN requires all applications to be uploaded through our online portal: <http://soap.ssrc.org/>. Please ensure that all relevant information is included in your application, as any incomplete application will be automatically disqualified.

### **Should all application materials be submitted at once?**

Yes. All application materials, except reference letters and the language evaluation, must be submitted at the same time, either through the online APN application portal or via mail as one package.

### **Do I need to submit my application in English?**

Yes, applications must be in English.

### **When is the deadline for the 2015 APN Residential Postdoctoral Fellowship Competition?**

All applications, reference letters, and language evaluations are due by 9 pm EST, December 14, 2014.

### **Do you have samples of previous proposals that have been awarded APN fellowships?**

No. Applicants can consult the SSRC publication *On The Art of Writing Proposals* for advice on writing proposals and preparing project statements (free download available at <http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/>).

## **APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

### **How many letters of reference do I need, and whom should I ask to write them?**

You need two letters of reference. One should be written by your department head or an administrative supervisor of similar standing, while the other should be written by a senior academic or practitioner who is very familiar with your research or work.

**Should my references send in their letters on their own, or can I include them in the application that I submit to the APN?**

References must submit their letters on their own directly to the APN through the referee portal (<http://soap.ssrc.org/reference/>).

Confirm the e-mail addresses of your two references and then add them to the “References” section of your application in the APN online portal. Your references will be notified via e-mail that you have requested a reference letter and given instructions for submitting their letter online. Materials submitted by your references will then be automatically added to your application. Please note that since letters of reference are to be submitted on their own, kindly encourage those writing your reference letters to submit them by the APN deadline. It is not the APN’s responsibility for late submissions.

**Do I need to submit a sample of my published work?**

Yes. You will be contacted by the APN to email a sample PDF version of your published work (from peer-reviewed journals, books, etc.) to [apn@ssrc.org](mailto:apn@ssrc.org), only after your application scales through the first round of the selection process.

**Do I need to submit a language evaluation?**

Only those applicants completing research in a national, officially recognized language that is different from their own are required to submit a language evaluation. Such an evaluation should be conducted by a qualified evaluator and must test and clearly state the applicant’s level of language proficiency.

If you are completing research in your own native language, you are not required to submit a language evaluation.

**Should the language evaluator send in the report of my level of language proficiency, or can I include it in the application that I submit to the APN?**

Language evaluators must submit their evaluations on their own directly to the APN through the relevant portal.

Confirm the e-mail address of your language evaluator and then add the evaluator to the “Language Evaluations” section of your application in the APN online portal. The evaluator will be notified by e-mail that you have requested an evaluation and given instructions to complete the evaluation report online. Materials submitted by your language evaluator will be automatically added to your application. Since language evaluations are to be submitted separately from your online application, please encourage the language evaluator to submit their evaluation by the APN deadline. It is not the APN’s responsibility for late submissions.

**Do reference letters and language evaluations need to be submitted in English?**

Yes, all application materials must be in English.

**Can I send in my application even if my reference letters and language evaluation have not been received?**

Yes. You are strongly advised to upload your completed application well in advance of the deadline. Do not wait for your reference letters and language evaluation to be received by the APN before you submit your completed application. They will be automatically added to your application upon receipt.

**Are there formatting requirements for the research proposal?**

Yes. The research proposal, including the bibliography and budget outline, should not exceed ten pages and must be collated as a single document. Proposals must use Times New Roman 12-point font, be double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. All pages must be numbered and have the applicant's name in the upper right-hand corner. Proposals must be uploaded in Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF).

Proposals that do not conform to formatting requirements will not be considered.

**Can photographs, charts, and graphs be included in the research proposal?**

Yes, but these must appear within the ten pages allowed for the entire proposal.

**Do I need to submit academic transcripts with my application?**

No, academic transcripts are not required with your application.

**Am I expected to arrange my affiliation to host-institutions in Africa and the United States?**

Finalists from the selection process will be encouraged to seek places in host-institutions—one in Africa and one in the United States. The finalists should suggest a mentor (preferably a senior academic of a professorial rank) to guide them through the completion of the project. Such host institutions and mentors will provide official letters indicating their acceptance, capacity, and commitment to host a fellow for a specified period of time. These institutions should also provide a conducive working environment with basic research support and facilities, including office space, access to library facilities, the internet, etc. Finalists may contact the APN for advice on potential mentors and host-institutions with whom the program already has relations.

**AWARDING OF FELLOWSHIP AWARDS**

**When will the fellowship awards be announced?**

All applicants will be informed about the outcome of the competition by April 2015.

**What are the selection procedures?**

APN residential postdoctoral fellowship applications are reviewed by a selection committee drawn from the APN Advisory Board, and grants are awarded based on established peer-review procedures and standards. The APN Advisory Board is made up of internationally distinguished scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. For a full list of Advisory Board Members, please click [here](#).

**How many fellowships are awarded?**

Up to four APN residential postdoctoral fellowships may be offered in a given year.

**What is the fellowship amount?**

APN research fellowship awards vary depending on the research activities supported but will not exceed \$20,000 for individual projects.

**What do I do if my application is selected for an APN residential postdoctoral fellowship?**

Once notified by the APN of their award, selected fellows are required to submit a detailed budget indicating the funds necessary to complete and write up the results of their on-going research, which is taken into consideration in determining the final fellowship amount.

The following documents are required to release funding to the fellow:

1. An official letter from the fellow's home institution indicating the acceptance of the terms of the award and support for the residential postdoctoral fellowship, which must be written on institutional stationery, signed and dated by the relevant head of administration
2. A photocopy of the fellow's highest university degree
3. A signed statement by the fellow declaring that all research will be completed within three months and that the funding will be used only for research activities proposed in the application
4. A photocopy of the fellow's biodata page of their passport

**When can I begin my research, if my proposal is selected for funding?**

Grantees are expected to commence research no later than May 2015.

**What do APN postdoctoral residential fellowships cover?**

APN postdoctoral fellowships cover residential costs, institutional support, equipment, books and articles, research-related travel, conference costs and related travel, project completion and editorial support.

**What do APN fellowships NOT cover?**

Fellowships do not cover university overhead, individual or institutional contributions, salary support, social security, or other insurance programs. They cannot be used for payment on loans, mortgages or other personal indebtedness and the storage of personal or household effects.

**Does the APN offer administrative support for travel visas and research clearance?**

No. While the APN postdoctoral fellowships cover visa costs, fellows are responsible for obtaining their own visas and research clearances.

**What kinds of outputs or products are expected from APN grantees at the conclusion of their projects?**

Research outputs/products may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Books
- Policy briefs
- Articles in peer-reviewed journals/open access publications
- Occasional/Working papers

**Do research grants go directly to fellows or are they channeled through the recipient's university or organization?**

APN residential fellowship awards are paid directly to the fellows in installments, pending submission and approval of required progress reports.

**I am currently applying for several research grants/fellowships. Should I be awarded an APN residential postdoctoral award, can I also accept funding from other sources?**

Yes. However, if you are a current beneficiary of an SSRC fellowship/grant, you are not eligible to apply for another SSRC grant at the same time. As well, please note that no awardee may hold two concurrent SSRC fellowships/grants. Should you receive two different SSRC fellowships/grants simultaneously, you will be asked to forego one of your own choosing.