

10 Helpful Hints for Fellowship Applicants

1. Start early and plan ahead.

- Begin your application early so you will have ample time to complete all steps prior to the deadline. The application includes many components, including a personal statement, proposal, and related questions.
- Referees cannot submit letters of recommendation until you complete Application Steps 1-3. Submit your application well before the deadline to leave time for your referees.

2. Identify and approach appropriate referees.

- Choose your referees carefully and give them advance notice about competition deadlines. Referees should know you well enough to discuss the strength of your proposal and the potential impact of your work in your community or country.
- Referees **should not** send a cursory note restating your accomplishments or certifying that you attended a course.

3. Save your work!

- Type your answers into a word processing document before copying and pasting them into the Online Application System.
- Save a backup copy in case of technical difficulties.

4. Clarify your fellowship goals up front.

- State your goals clearly at the beginning of your proposal and throughout your application. Be specific. This helps the selection committee understand your goals and evaluate your application.
- Don't be afraid to express your passion for democracy and the importance of your proposed project. The application is your only opportunity to express your commitment to your field of work.

5. Be sure your proposal is feasible in the fellowship period.

- Think about the timeline of your proposed project and show that you will be able to complete your proposed work during the five-month fellowship period.
- If your proposal is part of a broader project, clarify and explain this distinction.

6. Provide sufficient information.

- Be sure to meet the minimum word count for each question. Word counts are carefully calculated to ensure that applicants answer each question in sufficient detail. The Online Application System will not let you proceed until you meet the minimum word count required for each question.
- Do not repeat sentences or include filler material in order to meet the minimum word count; this will not reflect well on your overall application.

7. Explain your project's impact.

- How is your project going to make a difference to your country, your community, and yourself? The most successful applications show how a project will contribute to strengthening democratic institutions and values. They also explain how the fellowship will contribute to the candidate's ability to promote democratic change.

8. Submit original work.

- Your project proposal should reflect your own original work. The program has zero tolerance for plagiarism and checks all applications for evidence of unacknowledged material. Cite sources if you include quotes or draw on reference materials.
- **Note:** Scholarly track candidates should include a bibliography as part of the application.

9. Show why you need to be in Washington, DC.

- Why is a five-month stay at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. necessary to conduct your project? With advances in technology and broad access to information, much work can be done remotely. Explain how being in Washington, D.C. adds value to your project.
- Remember—the fellowship doesn't fund fieldwork outside the U.S. or Washington, DC.
- List key resources and people you have identified to carry out research, conduct interviews, and achieve your goals.

10. Get feedback, revise, and proofread your application.

- Ask trusted friends or colleagues to read a draft of your application and offer candid feedback. Take time to revise and edit early versions. The most successful proposals are those that have gone through several drafts.
- Proofread carefully one final time before submitting your application.



We hope these suggestions prove useful as you complete your application. Thank you for your interest in the Reagan-Fascell program!