



Community Solutions Program Host Organization FAQs

Community Solutions Program (CSP) host organizations are community-based organizations, nonprofits, government offices, and private entities that actively engage in community development projects within the United States and are passionate about developing global connections and cross-cultural exchange.

When is the 2023 CSP practicum?

Host organizations collaborate with CSP fellows for 32 hours per week from **August 7 - November 22, 2023**.

What are the benefits of hosting a CSP fellow?

- Co-create innovative solutions to community challenges with international experts
- Strengthen your organization's capacity and professional development opportunities
- Gain new perspectives and insights on issues you are working to address
- Cultivate long-lasting relationships
- Expand your professional global network
- Increase community engagement
- Support development projects in the U.S. and abroad

Does it cost to host a CSP fellow?

No, IREX provides complete financial support to cover all fellows' needs during the program (housing, transportation, food, etc.) and manages all aspects of the visa and travel process for fellows.

What are the responsibilities of a CSP host organization?

CSP host organizations have three main responsibilities:

1. Collaborate on substantive projects of mutual interest, share knowledge, and support fellows in achieving their learning goals;
2. Designate a host collaborator and peer collaborator to support your fellow's leadership journey and provide a workspace for the fellow;
3. Provide fellows with professional development and networking opportunities within your city to facilitate your fellow's experiential learning.

What is the difference between a host collaborator and a peer collaborator?

The **host collaborator** professionally coaches and oversees the CSP fellow's work. They collaborate with the fellow for at least 2-3 hours per week from August through November, checks in with the fellow weekly, and co-creates the fellow's work plan.

The **peer collaborator** welcomes the fellow to the organization and offers support, has lunch or coffee with the fellow twice per month, and connects the fellow to other professionals and networks at your organization and externally. This time commitment is approximately 1-2 hours per week.



Can I host a fellow in a hybrid format, or does it have to be fully in-person?

While in-person practicums are preferred, hybrid placements are possible. With a hybrid placement, the host must meet with the fellow in-person for at least one hour per week and create a plan for community engagement so the fellow can still have face-to-face interactions.

What is the difference between a CSP fellow and an intern?

CSP fellows are mid-career professionals with significant professional experience. It is important to assign fellows substantive projects that are complex enough to challenge them and support their professional growth. While some administrative tasks are expected, fellows should spend most of their time supporting meaningful project goals and objectives.

IREX will facilitate introductory calls between host organizations and fellows prior to their arrival to better understand their professional experience, explore opportunities for collaboration on significant assignments and finalize a practicum work plan.

Why has CSP changed its practicum matching process?

The CSP team is streamlining the matching process to make it more efficient and effective. To simplify the process, CSP is replacing the interview with project-based placements to ensure that fellows and hosts will have substantive work of mutual interest to collaborate on during the practicum.

Based on feedback from fellows and hosts, the target practicum placement cities have been modified to further promote a safe, encouraging, and meaningful practicum experience, a greater sense of community, and more networking opportunities for both fellows and hosts. The CSP team is placing fellows in 10 target cities to create CSP community hubs with fellows and host organizations and increase collaboration on projects within organizations.

What are the 2023 target cities?

1. Chicago, IL
2. Cleveland, OH
3. Houston, TX
4. Miami, FL
5. Milwaukee, WI
6. Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
7. New Orleans, LA
8. New York City Metro Area
9. Portland, OR
10. Washington, DC Metro Area

How can I remain involved in CSP if my organization is not in a target city?

If your organization is not within a 2023 target city, there are still many ways to stay involved with the Community Solutions Program! You can:

1. Share the matching interest form with your contacts within our target cities who you think would be a good fit or would be interested in hosting a fellow
2. Serve as a thematic host recruitment ambassador for one or more of the ten target cities
3. Apply for the Collaboration for Community Impact grant to support a fellow or alum's project abroad
4. Serve on the Selection Committee and score applications for future CSP applicants
5. Contribute to the CSP curriculum and share your expertise with fellows

**Will I have to help the fellow find housing?**

Though your support in helping fellows find housing is appreciated, it is not required. The CSP team as well as community liaisons (local volunteer partners in target cities) assist fellows with their housing search, though it is ultimately the fellow's responsibility to identify and secure housing. Furthermore, we are hopeful that the new target city approach will allow fellows to navigate the housing search process together and find group housing, making it easier and less stressful.

What resources and support will be available to me throughout the fellowship?

The CSP team provides a variety of resources to prepare you for your fellow's arrival and support you throughout fellowship. Some key resources include:

- Virtual Partner Orientation prior to fellows' arrival
- Host Organization Handbook covering topics such as setting expectations, cultural adjustment, safety and security, and more
- Your designated IREX adviser who will check in with you and your fellow monthly via email or phone
- Other host organizations, including host and peer collaborators, in your city who are also hosting CSP fellows
- Community liaisons in your city who will provide housing and cultural support to fellows and host events for the city network

What are the key components of a successful fellowship?

They key components of a successful fellowship are open communication, flexibility, care, and a learning mindset from both fellows and hosts. Early, clear, and open communication about practicum expectations, goals, and organizational culture are necessary for mutually beneficial fellowships. Fellows hope to learn transferrable skills and bring their expertise, experiences, and knowledge to your organization for a positive exchange experience.

What are the next steps in the matching process after I fill out the matching interest form?

After you fill out the matching interest form, a member of the CSP team will follow up with you beginning in late April to share details of the fellow(s) you have been matched with and connect you with the fellow(s) for an introductory call to discuss goals, expectations, and work plans. Any concerns related to the matched fellow, expectations, or collaboration can be shared confidentially with the CSP team after the introductory call.

If you have any additional questions, please email hosts.csp@irex.org and a member of the CSP team will respond as soon as possible.