
Frequently Asked Hosting Questions 2018

About Community Solutions Fellows

1. Is a “leader” or “fellow” the same thing as an “intern”?
2. How much professional experience do leaders have?
3. Do leaders speak English?
4. How are leaders selected for the program?
5. Are host organizations involved in the selection process?

Host Organization Responsibilities, Roles and Requirements

6. What is the timeline for hosting a fellow?
7. What are the responsibilities of the practicum organization?
8. What are the programming requirements for hosting a leader?
9. What is the difference between a host supervisor, a peer learning counterpart, and a community liaison? And can the same individual take on all of these roles?
10. What is the weekly time commitment for hosting a fellow?
11. Does the community liaison need to work for a host organization?
12. Are the host supervisor and peer learning counterpart expected to assist the leader in securing housing?

Fellow Matching Process

13. Can a host organization choose their own fellow, or where their fellow comes from?
14. Can an organization host more than one leader?
15. Will other fellows be placed in my city?
16. Is there a cost associated with hosting a fellow?

Community Leadership Institute and Holistic Leadership Development

17. Why do leaders only work 35 hours/week?
18. What is the Community Leadership Institute (CLI)?
19. Can practicum supervisors participate in the online CLI courses as well?
20. How can I use the CLI as a host?
21. Should my fellow be working on their CLI coursework during business hours?

Supporting a CSP Fellow During the Practicum

22. What are the components of a successful fellowship?
23. Can my fellow drive while in the United States?



24. Will my fellow bring a laptop to use at work?
 25. What should I do if I experience a conflict with my fellow during the practicum?
 26. What should I do if my fellow is experiencing homesickness or other personal issues during the practicum?
 27. What if my fellow experiences an emergency during their practicum?
 28. What resources and support are available to me throughout the fellowship?
-

About Community Solutions Fellows

1. Is a “leader” or “fellow” the same thing as an “intern”?

A Community Solutions leader is a community development professional with at least two years of experience, although most Community Solutions leaders have an average of six years of experience. They are seasoned professionals who are ready and able to take on projects and roles that go beyond the capacity of an intern. Past leaders have worked on such projects as: drafting an organization’s strategic plan, developing new education curriculum and training programs, working on personnel management plans, leading community workshops, facilitating new outreach projects, and developing a social media presence and framework, among others.

2. How much professional experience do leaders have?

All Community Solutions Program leaders have a minimum of two years of professional experience in their fields; for the past two years, Community Solutions leaders averaged six years of experience. Many leaders already hold leadership positions in their organizations and will be able to substantially contribute to, as well as learn from, the host organization.

3. Do leaders speak English?

Yes. All application materials are written in English, and all interviews are conducted in English. Also, all applicants take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or an equivalent exam, to ensure their English proficiency allows for contributing to a U.S. work environment.

4. How are leaders selected for the program?

Competition for the program is merit-based and open to community leaders, ages 25-38, who currently engage in community projects in their home countries and have a minimum of two years of professional experience. For the 2018 program, over 5,000 eligible applications were reviewed scored by an independent selection committee, from which over 400 semi-finalists were passed to an outside interview panel and tested for English proficiency. IREX verifies that all applicants are eligible and conducts reference checks with the leaders’ home organizations, ensuring that all participants are professional, talented and driven community leaders.

5. Are host organizations involved in the selection process?

Host organizations are not involved in the selection process of program finalists and alternates. Host organizations will be provided with the profiles and resumes of leaders that IREX feels may be an appropriate match. Organizations are required to conduct at least one Skype-based interview with the leader prior to signing a Terms and Conditions Agreement with IREX to ensure that the host is receiving a fellow that is the right match for their organization.

Host Organization Responsibilities, Roles and Requirements

6. What is the timeline for hosting a fellow?

Fellows will arrive in Washington, DC on July 29, 2018 and will attend a four-day orientation program. Leaders will then travel to their U.S. communities for their four-month practicum on August 2, where they will be welcomed by their community liaison(s) and practicum organization. All leaders will return to DC on November 27, 2018 for a close of program workshop before departing to their home countries. The program timeline is as follows (includes approximate dates):

August 2, 2018 – Leaders arrive at U.S. community

August 2 – 5 – Leaders, with assistance from community liaisons, situate in new US community

August 6 – 10 Leaders begin work at U.S. organization (*leaders may begin earlier or within the next week as agreed upon depending on the arrival situation)

August 6 – November 23 – Leaders work with host organizations on areas of mutual interest

November 27, 2018 – Leaders depart host organizations for closing workshop in DC

November 27 – December 1, 2018 – Leaders participate in closing workshop in DC

December 1 – Leaders return to their home countries

January – June, 2019 – Leaders work on follow-on projects with mentoring from practicum organizations

7. What are the responsibilities of the practicum organization?

Practicum organizations play a crucial role in the success of the Community Solutions Program. Host organizations are where leaders observe organizational leadership in action on a daily basis and where they put into practice what they learn through the Community Leadership Institute. Below is a step by step summary of what is required of practicum organizations that are selected to host Community Solutions Program leaders.

APRIL – AUGUST: PREPARATION

Background Information: After signing the Terms & Conditions Agreement, the practicum supervisor will send the matched leader background documents about the organization, including but not limited to:

- policy or human resource manuals,
- summary of the organization's activities,
- relevant program documents,
- documents to help the fellow adjust to the host organization and to develop necessary background knowledge on assigned projects.

Sharing this information in advance helps to build the relationship between the organization and fellow before arrival and facilitating the fellow's ease of transition into the practicum experience.

Host Orientation: Before the leaders arrive in the U.S., all practicum supervisors and peer learning counterparts are required to participate in a virtual host orientation and cross-cultural training. This session ensures that hosts starts the fellowship with the same expectations and understanding of the process and will facilitate networking among organizations across the U.S.

Scope of Work: IREX will provide practicum supervisors guiding questions to start the conversation with the leader around his/her scope of work and expectations during the fellowship period. IREX strongly encourages hosts to conduct these conversations via Skype or over the phone, prior to the fellows' arrival, to ensure that the process is collaborative. A draft scope of work will be due to IREX at the time of the Terms and Conditions signing prior to the leader's arrival to the U.S.

AUGUST – DECEMBER: U.S.-BASED FELLOWSHIP

Logistics: Practicum organizations will provide office space (including a computer with internet, and access to telephone, fax, printer and other office supplies that are standard within the organization), a supervisor within the organization, and a community mentor who can give guidance on finding housing and introduce the leader to life in the wider community. The Supervisor and Mentor(s) should communicate often with the leader before and during the fellowship to ensure he/she is adjusting well to the new U.S. community and work place.

Work Plan: After the fellow's practicum placement is confirmed, the practicum supervisor and fellow should work together to create a detailed work plan that includes activities mentioned in the original draft scope of work. The work plan will also incorporate the leader's professional goals, how they will contribute to the capacity of your organization, and how they will gain experience in your organization to inform their Community Action Follow-on Projects which they will implement upon returning home. It is important that deliverables and deadlines are specifically laid out in the work plan, including interim deadlines on larger projects. The work plan should be finalized shortly after the fellow's arrival in the United States, and should then be submitted to IREX for feedback and recommendations.

Training Opportunities: Practicum organization representatives are encouraged to lead or participate in training sessions and discussions throughout the program. During Host Orientation on the CLI, hosts will learn how to contribute to or engage in training opportunities.

JANUARY – JUNE 2019: COMMUNITY ACTION FOLLOW-ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Community Action Follow-on Projects: In addition to the framework described above, practicum organizations will assist leaders in developing and refining the follow-on community development projects proposed in their program applications. The work that leaders conduct while at your organization should help inform their project planning. After leaders depart for their home countries, host organizations will continue to provide mentorship and expertise as leaders implement their follow-on projects in their home countries; IREX does not require that host organizations contribute financially to the leader's follow-on project. Host organization representatives will also have the opportunity to apply for the *Partnering for Stronger Communities Travel Grants Program*. The Partnering grants allow a member of the host organization will travel

to his/her leader's home community for two weeks to assist in the implementation of the leader's follow-on project.

8. What are the programming requirements for hosting a leader?

Host organizations must be U.S.-based organizations that are actively engaged in community development projects domestically and in the following thematic areas: 1) Transparency & Accountability; 2) Tolerance & Conflict Resolution; 3) Environmental Issues; and, 4) Women & Gender Issues. There isn't one type of organization. Past host organizations have included community-based non-profit or other grassroots organizations, government offices or legislative bodies civic organizations, government watchdog groups, social incubators, among others focusing on community development issues. Organizations may also focus on international issues, but the CSP fellow's work should focus primarily on U.S. domestic issues.

Host organizations must be willing and able to host, mentor and guide Community Solutions Program leaders for the entire four months that they are placed at the organization. Host organizations will be asked to provide:

- a 35 hour/week workload on relevant projects;
- experiential learning and networking opportunities;
- a work space with computer and internet access;
- a host supervisor within the organization who regularly meets with the leader in-person, oversees his/her workload, mentors the leader in career development, connects the leader to relevant resources, and shares best practices in his/her area of expertise;
- a peer learning counterpart who can welcome the fellow to the host organization, collaborate on one or more projects, and provide insight into professional development and networking opportunities in the fellow's technical field of interest.
- follow-on community development project design support.

9. What is the difference between a host supervisor, a peer learning counterpart, and a community liaison? And can the same individual take on all of these roles?

Practicum organizations assign two separate individuals to fulfill the roles of practicum supervisor and peer learning counterpart. These are two separate roles to ensure each individual is able to support the fellow fully in their designated role. A **supervisor** should be a full-time mid- or high-level employee of the organization who has experience as a manager who will introduce the leader to the organization (staff, policies, general background knowledge, etc.), and oversee the work of the leader during his/her four months at the host organization. He/she also must have the flexibility to work closely with the leader throughout this time period, providing regular check-in meetings, general work-related support, guidance and mentorship as needed. Supervisors should expect to spend an average of 3 hours per week in this role.

The **peer learning counterpart** is a full-time early to mid-level staff member who will collaborate with the fellow on one or more projects, share resources and professional development opportunities of mutual interest, and help the fellow network inside and outside of the organization. Peer learning counterparts should expect to spend an average of 2 hours per week in this role.

The **community liason(s)** can be one or more people who are responsible for providing the core cultural support for the fellow. Community liaisons are passionate about global connections and

cross-cultural communication, and are well-connected to their communities. They are responsible for connecting with fellows and host organizations before the fellow's arrival, and facilitating monthly cultural or networking opportunities to foster a close-knit community network among fellows and host organizations in each city.

To ensure that fellows receive the full support needed to succeed on the program, **IREX requests that the three roles above be fulfilled by three separate individuals.** The supervisor and peer learning counterpart should be based at each practicum organization. IREX will arrange the Community Liaisons and connect host organizations with their city's Community Liaisons prior to the fellows' arrival.

10. What is the weekly time commitment for hosting a fellow?

The time commitment varies for hosting a leader. The **Host Supervisor** should plan to spend a minimum of one hour per week in a personalized one-on-one meeting with the fellow to review projects, progress and goals. During the first three weeks of the practicum, the Host Supervisor should expect to spend a few hours per week engaging with the fellow and ensuring they have sufficient materials and information to conduct their work and have a well-developed work plan. Supervisors are highly encouraged to mobilize the other staff and volunteers in their organization to guide, direct and train the fellow. Doing so helps to balance the time the supervisor spends directly with the fellow while allowing the fellow to integrate well into the work environment. More information on this will be provided during Host Orientation.

The Peer Learning Counterpart should expect to spend a few hours with the fellow during the first week of arrival, including introducing them to colleagues in the office and organizing a welcome lunch, for example. After the first week, the Peer Learning Counterpart should plan to spend an average of 2 hours per week with the fellow. This time would involve collaborating on one or more projects for the practicum organization, attending professional development or networking events, and exchanging knowledge on technical areas of mutual interest.

11. Does the community liaison need to work for a host organization?

No, since community liaison(s) are primarily responsible for providing cultural support and community engagement to fellows, they are not required to work at a host organization. In many cases, community liaisons will be active and engaged community members who are interested in cross-cultural exchange but are not hosting a fellow. However, a host organization staff member is permitted to serve in the community liaison role as long as they are *not* also serving as a host supervisor or peer learning counterpart for a fellow.

12. Are the host supervisor and peer learning counterpart expected to assist the leader in securing housing?

Host organizations are not obliged to assist their fellow in securing housing. This is the primary responsibility of your fellow in collaboration with the community liaison(s) for your city (see question 9 for more information on community liaisons). However, since it may be the first time many fellows have lived in the United States, they will appreciate any support you can provide to help secure suitable, safe, accessible and cost-effective housing. We encourage host organization staff to assist in the process of finding housing by reaching out to your local networks to see if you

know anyone who has a room available for rent or who would like to host a global leader for a homestay.

Please also note that fellows have the option of signing up for a homestay through Homestay America if they are placed in the following locations: Atlanta, New York (Manhattan), New Jersey, Seattle, Chicago, Orlando, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. For the 2018 program, these are the only cities that have this option available.

IREX works with the leaders prior to their arrival to set expectations regarding reasonable housing options, and will review housing during Host Orientation.

Fellow Matching Process

13. Can a host organization choose their own fellow, or where their fellow comes from?

Host organizations do have the opportunity to choose their own fellow, and IREX does not assign fellows to host organizations. IREX will curate a selection of fellows whose background and interests closely align with the necessary expertise, characteristics, and preferences that host organizations state in the online [Practicum Matching Application](#). Host organizations also have the choice to state their regional and country preferences in this application, though IREX cannot guarantee a fellow will be participating in the program that year whose work aligns with the host organization, and who is also from the preferred country.

14. Can an organization host more than one leader?

If an organization has the interest and capacity to effectively support and engage multiple leaders, IREX will consider placing up to two leaders at that organization. To be considered for multiple leader placements, the practicum organization must be ready to provide a unique supervisor and peer learning counterpart for each leader, and have specific and separate projects and scopes of work in mind for each. IREX also encourages practicum organizations to outreach to partner or collaborative organizations in their community to serve as practicum organizations for other CSP fellows.

15. Will other fellows be placed in my city?

We would love to place multiple fellows in each host city! CSP believes that collaboration and positive community change comes from a close-knit community network of passionate individuals and organizations working to support the fellows and each other. Community Liaisons (see question 9) are also an integral part of this community network model. If your organization is in a larger city such as Washington, DC, New York, Chicago, or Atlanta, it is very likely that other fellows and practicum organizations will be based in your city. If you are located in another city, this may vary from year to year. We encourage you to reach out to your IREX point of contact to discuss the number of fellows placed in your city, and we welcome any recommendations for outstanding community-based organizations who may be interested in hosting a fellow.

16. Is there a cost associated with hosting a fellow?

No. There is no application or hosting fees associated with the Community Solutions Program. Community Solutions leaders are fully sponsored through the Community Solutions Program, a program of the U.S. Department of State to promote mutual understanding, collaboration, and

positively impact U.S. communities across the United States and the world. Community Solutions is implemented by IREX. Travel costs to and from the leaders' home countries to their practicum organizations in the U.S. are fully covered by the program. Through the program leaders are provided with funds to cover room, board and incidentals. Leaders are also covered under the U.S. Department of State's accident and sickness program. Information on the accident and sickness program will be available to host organizations during Host Orientation.

Community Leadership Institute and Holistic Leadership Development

17. Why do leaders only work 35 hours/week?

While leaders are working with their practicum organizations, they are also participating in intensive online training on leadership and management skills through the Community Leadership Institute (CLI) including completing a Personal Leadership Plan document and receiving leadership coaching. IREX anticipates that CLI sessions and coursework takes an average of 10 additional hours of work per week outside of the US Practicum Experience. Because of the intensive nature of these courses, IREX requires practicum organizations to limit the hours per week to 35, so leaders can participate in live lectures, group assignments, and other requirements of the Online CLI. **The live lecture component will take place during work hours which will require that the fellow be online during the work day for about 60 minutes twice per month.** IREX will notify the host organization of the CLI calendar during the Host Orientation in June. The 35-hour work week can include networking, meetings, workshops and activities as decided upon between the supervisor and fellow.

18. What is the Community Leadership Institute (CLI)?

The CLI is an intensive program in leadership and management that requires significant effort on the part of the Community Solutions leader. The innovative CLI online platform is developed and run by IREX in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State and provides online instruction in core leadership areas: personal leadership planning, leadership styles, strategic planning, ethical leadership, communications and networking, motivational leadership, conflict management, and cross-cultural communication. IREX recruits experts in each of these fields to lead courses that include outside reading, a live discussion, and an applied learning activity. IREX also invites host supervisors to contribute to leaders' learning on the CLI by leading guest lectures and/or discussions on topics within their area of their expertise.

19. Can practicum supervisors participate in the online CLI courses as well?

For the 2018 Community Solutions Program, IREX will open certain parts of the Community Leadership Institute for general participation within the CSP community. Host supervisors will be able to view the leaders' courses and course materials. Participation in live sessions and assignments will be limited to the 2018 leaders.

20. How can I use the CLI as a host?

The CLI can serve as a useful resource for hosts who would like to find out more information about the Community Solutions Program and connect to the range of opportunities the program has to offer. Once you receive a CLI log-in, you can access this platform for the following:

- Virtual Host Orientation (mandatory for all host supervisors to complete prior to fellow's arrival).

- A map of all Community Solutions fellows and hosts across the country and all alumni across the world.
- Access to a Learning Library with webinars and resources related to program thematic areas, leadership, and management topics.
- Information and application instructions for the Partnering for Stronger Communities Grant Program.
- Contact information and discussion forums to connect with other Community Solutions host organizations.

21. Should my fellow be working on their CLI coursework during business hours?

No, Community Solutions fellows have been instructed to complete their CLI coursework outside of the 35 hours/week spent working at your organization, with the following exceptions:

- CLI live lectures, which will take place during business hours for about 60 minutes twice per month.
- The virtual Mid-Program Workshop, which will involve some live lectures and webinars over the course of three days in early October.
- Occasional conversations or consultations with host supervisors and colleagues related to putting CLI coursework into practical application at your organization.

You will receive a schedule and reminders from IREX about any upcoming CLI obligations for your fellow during business hours. If you notice your fellow working on CLI coursework outside of the activities specified by IREX, we encourage you to notify your IREX Adviser.

Supporting a CSP Fellow During the Practicum

22. What are the components of a successful fellowship?

They key components of a successful fellowship include **engaged, enthusiastic, communicative and adaptable** Host Organizations, Supervisors, Peer Learning Counterparts, and CSP Leaders. Hosting a CSP leader is an exciting opportunity for U.S. organizations to collaborate, learn from, and teach an experienced community leader from another country. **Early, clear and open communication around expectations, scope of work, goals and culture** are necessary for successful fellowships from all parties involved.

23. Can my fellow drive while in the United States?

No, Community Solutions fellows do not have a U.S. driver's license, are not covered by automobile insurance, and for these reasons should not be permitted to drive while in the United States.

24. Will my fellow bring a laptop to use at work?

Fellows are not required to bring a laptop from their home country to use during their practicum, so you should not expect your fellow to provide their own laptop to use for work. Practicum organizations should prepare to provide their fellow with a physical workspace including a laptop/computer and phone to use during business hours.

25. What should I do if I experience a conflict with my fellow during the practicum?

Community Solutions fellows come from all world regions and may experience an adjustment period as they assimilate to your work culture, expectations, and organizational structure. During this

period, it is not uncommon to experience minor issues or conflicts related to communication or expectations at your organization. If you experience a major conflict with your fellow or reoccurring issues after the normal adjustment period, please email or call your IREX Adviser so they can provide support and discuss next steps to resolve the situation. We also encourage that all parties refer back to the Guiding Principles when any conflicts arise.

26. What should I do if my fellow is experiencing homesickness or other personal issues during the practicum?

If you observe that your fellow is experiencing severe homesickness or other personal issues (e.g. serious illness, concerns about family in their home country, etc.) that are affecting their mood, ability to adjust to their host community, or their work performance, please reach out to your city's community liaison and CC your IREX Adviser, who can follow up with the fellow to provide personal support and resources based on your fellow's situation. If your relationship with your fellow is such that you feel comfortable discussing these issues, please feel free to do so. However, IREX encourages you to keep your Adviser updated on any significant or reoccurring homesickness, cross-cultural communication, or personal issues so that we may best support you and your fellow.

27. What if my fellow experiences an emergency during their practicum?

If your fellow experiences an emergency during their practicum, they should call the 24/7 IREX emergency number: **1-888-409-6605**. We also recommend that practicum organizations keep this number accessible so they can report an emergency on behalf of their fellow if necessary.

28. What resources and support are available to me throughout the fellowship?

IREX strives to provide practicum organizations a variety of resources to prepare you for your fellow's arrival and support you throughout the process of working with your community leader. Some key resources to reference prior to your fellow's arrival and during their practicum include:

- Virtual Host Orientation on the CLI
- Host Handbook
- Other resources on the CLI (see question 20)
- Your IREX Adviser (via email or phone)
- Your Community Liaison(s) and other hosts in your local community

Please contact csp@irex.org with any additional questions.