



## The Bell Economic Mobility Fellowship

*A program of the Bell Policy Center*

**2023-24 Request for Proposal**

**Applications Due November 2, 2023**

The Bell Policy Center invites applications for its inaugural **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

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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 (approximately 20-40 pages total) that explores a specific issue, policy/ies, or constituency/ies. 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:** Fellows will actively participate in a series of events and communications to share key findings, promote their research, collaborate with other fellows, or build out conversations spurred by the research and its findings. 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. Fellows may also be asked to advise the Bell Policy Center’s communications team on content for visual or multimedia pieces bringing their research into the policy conversation.

### **Timeline**

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The fellowship term will begin in December 2023 and conclude in November 2024. 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 will 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 November 2, 2023** (see **Selection Process** below for application process and instructions).

### **Fellowship Stipend**

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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**

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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 legal background, 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 report released by the close of the fellowship year in November 2024. 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.

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**

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A variety of research approaches will be considered, including those that do not adhere to formal academic standards. However, it is expected that the report(s) 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, a range of research methods will be considered, including those of a qualitative nature. In particular, methods that center the voice and perspectives of those who are not often included in public conversation are encouraged. For those 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 two regions’ approaches to housing, childcare, and transportation affordability
- How much does private equity or major corporate players control home health care and/or housing?
- What is the economic contribution / impact of the informal caring economy?
- How are local taxes, particularly unique taxes like the Real Estate Transfer Tax, used in local communities?
- How have TABOR and our various fiscal intricacies affected the Colorado public's perception of value in return for taxes paid?
- How can we promote greater equity in the workforce training ecosystem beyond two- and four-year degrees?
- 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**

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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 2023-24. Timeline is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
October 5, 2023	Request for Proposal (RFP) for the fellowship opens
November 2, 2023	RFP responses due to the Bell Policy Center

November 3 - 17	Review process Additional information may be requested from some candidates
By November 30, 2023	Invitations extended to fellows
Early December 2023	Fellowship agreements finalized and signed Initial payment goes out to fellows
December 15, 2023	Fellowship term begins
January 2024	Project kickoff meetings between fellows and Bell Policy team
November 2024	Fellowships conclude

**How to Apply**

To apply for a Fellowship, **please submit the following materials to [fellowship@bellpolicy.org](mailto:fellowship@bellpolicy.org) by November 2, 2023** (please include the words “2023 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 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): What will be gained from the research? How does the proposed research advance the objectives of the fellowship? 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?
- Research approach and activities (1+ pages): What is the research topic, what research question(s) will you examine, and how will you examine them? To what extent and how will you employ a racial and gender equity lens in this research? What plans do you have to engage affected communities in the work in a meaningful and authentic way? This section should include a summary of the research approach, methods, and data to be used, equity considerations, anticipated types of findings or results, and what areas of knowledge you expect to cover in your final product. 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): What areas of expertise do you anticipate being able to share and 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? Can you commit to the shared learning and dissemination components of the fellowship? If this is a joint application, please indicate how duties of the fellowship will be shared.

## Selection Considerations

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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 examine an issue from a legal research perspective, incorporate public opinion research into a larger research project, or make use of participatory or community-driven research strategies.
- **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 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

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Andrea Kuwik, Senior Policy Analyst, will be the primary contact for the Fellowship program. Questions regarding the Fellowship program or research considerations can be directed to her at [kuwik@bellpolicy.org](mailto:kuwik@bellpolicy.org).

For questions regarding the application process, please contact Julie Pecaut, Director of Strategy and Operations, [pecaut@bellpolicy.org](mailto:pecaut@bellpolicy.org).

## About the Bell Policy Center

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Based in Denver, Colorado, the Bell Policy Center's mission is 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](http://www.bellpolicy.org).