



2023 Community Food Systems Fellowship
an initiative of Vital Village Networks at Boston Medical Center

Request for Applications

Fellowship Overview

Purpose

The primary goal of the Community Food Systems Fellowship program is to help center community leadership and the agency of caregivers, parents and families in efforts to promote community ownership of local food systems. Fellows will lift up evidence of community powered food systems and the fellowship will expand leadership opportunities. Vital Village Networks at Boston Medical Center approaches achieving a culture of health by ensuring effective implementation of community-based strategies, uplifting strengths-based narratives, and fostering sustainable community engagement and leadership. The Community Food Systems Fellowship is made possible by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

Award Information

Up to **10 community leaders** will be selected by December 2022 and invited to participate in the Fellowship program.

Key Dates and Deadlines

September 30, 2022 at 12 pm ET	Applications Open
October 6, 2022 at 12pm ET	Optional Informational Webinar
October 25, 2022 at 4pm ET	Optional Informational Webinar
November 7, 2022 at midnight ET	Deadline for Fellowship Application
November 2022	Finalist Interviews
December 16, 2022	Selection of Community Fellows
January 2023 – December 2023	Fellowship Period

How to Apply

We invite you to submit your Fellowship Application online by selecting this [APPLICATION link](#) to begin. Nominate a fellow at this [NOMINATION link](#).

If you would like to submit your application orally, please email villagefood@bmc.org to schedule an oral application intake session.

Contact Information

Please direct inquiries to: villagefood@bmc.org.



Register for the Optional Webinar

Register for the optional informational webinar at the following links:

- [October 6, 2022 @ 12pm ET](#)
- [October 25, 2022 @ 4pm ET](#)

To submit questions ahead of the informational webinars, please email villagefood@bmc.org.

About the Community Food Systems Fellowship

The Community Food Systems Fellowship is a leadership pipeline to increase opportunities for diverse leaders to build skills, capacity, and networks. Emerging leaders who are committed to food justice and equity and are seeking advanced tools to measure and share the impact of local work are a good fit for the Community Food Systems Fellowship.

The fellowship is an opportunity to contribute to a living, collective fellowship roadmap for community-powered food systems and build capacity around participatory data to capture impact and narrative storytelling strategies. We encourage applicants who are committed to:

- working to develop resilient and equitable local food systems
- community leadership, engagement, and the leadership of caregivers and families
- food justice, nutrition justice, racial equity and social transformation
- developing skills to measure impact and success of local food systems
- developing collaborative leadership skills

We actively seek to spotlight community-powered food systems and inform and advance community leadership in local food systems. We are committed to supporting self determination of communities of color and the advancement of diverse community leaders. We encourage prospective fellows committed to justice and equity and improving local food systems to promote child, family and community wellness to apply. We invite stakeholders representing diverse voices across the food system (e.g. agriculture, labor and food chain workers, food service, public health, environmental justice, economy and entrepreneurship, education, early care and education, immigration, and arts, culture), to apply.

The Community Food Systems Fellowship is made possible by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to advance the vision that every child, regardless of race/ethnicity or family income, achieves equitable health, development, and education outcomes and mindsets, social and structural conditions, and systems contribute to these outcomes. Vital Village Networks at Boston Medical Center approaches achieving a culture of health by ensuring effective implementation of community-based strategies, uplifting strengths-based narratives, and fostering sustainable community engagement. We can more effectively identify root causes, mobilize neighborhood resources, and scale community identified solutions through comprehensive cross-sector partnerships between residents, nontraditional partners, and entities that provide services or make decisions on behalf of children of color and families.



Community Fellowship Program Outcomes

Through this year-long program, participating Community Food System Fellows will:

- Build meaningful relationships, foster connections, and co-create a peer learning space with other food systems leaders across the country
- Gain knowledge, skills, and resources in telling the story of your local food systems impact through narrative change and participatory storytelling
- Strengthen ability to use healing-centered, trauma-informed and resilience frameworks to advance local food systems work
- Build capacity to leverage data to tell the story of your work and impact, including developing and implementing a participatory research plan
- Build and strengthen engagement with local stakeholders, including parent and caregiver leaders in your local community
- Together, work collaboratively with the fellowship cohort to refine a roadmap of collective actions to advance community powered food systems.

The 2023 fellowship will have a specific focus on collective action, strategizing, and capacity building in the following three areas:

- Harnessing Cooperatives Strategies towards Food Sovereignty, Healing, and Resiliency
- Dismantling White Supremacist Organizational Practices and Power Structures in the Food System
- Parent and Caregiver-Led Movement Building Strategies to Advance Community Powered Food Systems

Program Details and Requirements

The fellowship will involve a series of interactive virtual meetings and peer learning sessions to support their local efforts and refine a roadmap of collective actions to advance community powered food systems centered on healing, resiliency, and parent and caregiver leadership.

Community Fellows will receive a \$2,000 stipend and have the option to apply for up to \$2,000 in additional pilot project funds.

Participation in the Community Food Systems Fellowship includes the following requirements. While unforeseen circumstances arise, we ask that participation fellows commit to consistent participation in all fellowship activities to the best of their abilities to ensure a rich, collective learning experience for all fellows.



A) Community Design Labs: Participation in two sets of Community Design Labs in January 2023 and May 2023, focused on a facilitated co-design process to identify areas of collective action and momentum around key fellowship goals. These workshops will be held virtually over three(3), 90-minute sessions, and build on the collective roadmap developed by the 2022 fellowship cohort to develop a collaborative learning tool or resource to share with other leaders in the field. Meeting dates include:

- **Wednesdays, January 11, 18, and 25 from 1:30-3:00pm ET**
- **Wednesdays, May 10, 17, and 24 from 1:30-3:00pm ET**

B) Monthly Group Learning Sessions: Virtual learning sessions will take place once a month and include active peer-led components to support learning, and capacity and knowledge building around key topics.

Examples of topics discussed in past fellowship meetings and sessions include but are not limited to:

- Data storytelling for social change
- Local food systems equity assessment tools
- Participatory approaches to research, data planning, collection, and analysis methods
- Community engagement strategies
- Community co-design approaches
- Healing centered strategies
- Parent and caregiver leadership
- Collaborative leadership and sustainable leadership pathways
- Digital media and narrative storytelling training

Monthly meetings will be held from February 2023 to December 2023, on the **3rd Wednesday of the month from 1:30-3pm Eastern**, with the exception of May and October 2023 (no monthly meeting due to Design Labs and Summit) and December 2023, which is scheduled for December 6, 2023. Fellowship meeting dates are listed in the 2023 Fellowship Calendar below.

C) Quarterly individual check ins / coaching sessions: with members of the Vital Village Networks team, from February to November 2023. These regular check in's will be held quarterly (**February, April, August, and November 2023**) on the **first and second Thursdays and Fridays of the month**. Fellows schedule one, 1-hour time quarterly. .

D) Virtual National Convening: Participation in a project stakeholder convening and project showcase during the 2023 National Community Leadership Summit, planned as a virtual meeting for October 2023. The convening will focus on key areas of community capacity building. Tentative dates include:

- **October 16-18, 2023 (hybrid and/or virtual meeting)**



- E) Optional opportunities for connections with fellowship alumni and other informal group gatherings

2023 Fellowship Calendar: Overview of Key Dates

Please consider these dates as you apply for our 2023 program. While unforeseen circumstances arise, we ask that participation fellows commit to consistent participation in all fellowship activities to the best of their abilities to ensure a rich, collective learning experience for all fellows.

Date	Time	Session
January 11, 18, and 25, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	<i>Community Design Labs, Part 1: Fellowship Welcome and Co-Designing the Fellowship Experience</i>
February 2, 3, 9, or 10, 2023	Fellows select a 1 hour time block	<i>Quarterly Fellows Check In's</i>
February 15, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
March 15, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
April 6, 7, 13, or 14, 2023	Fellows select a 1 hour time block	<i>Quarterly Fellows Check In's</i>
April 19, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
May 10, 17, and 24, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	<i>Community Design Labs, Part 2: Collective Action Planning</i>
June 21 , 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
July 19, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
August 3, 4, 10, or 11, 2023	Fellows select a 1 hour time block	<i>Quarterly Fellows Check In's</i>
August 16, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
September 20, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
October 16-18, 2023 (tentative dates)		<i>Showcase at VVN National Community Leadership Summit</i>



November 2, 3, 9, or 10, 2023	Fellows select a 1 hour time block	<i>Quarterly Fellows Check In's</i>
November 15, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Monthly Fellowship Learning Session
December 6, 2023	1:30-3pm ET	Fellowship Wrap up and Celebration

Application Process and Award Information

Vital Village Networks will accept applications for Community Fellows from September 30, 2022 through November 7, 2022.

An informational webinar will be held on [Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 12pm ET](#), and [Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 4pm ET](#), to provide an overview of the fellowship program and interview process. Interested applicants have the opportunity to submit questions to villagefood@bmc.org in advance of both webinars. The webinar will be recorded and the video link shared upon request.

If you would like to submit your application orally, please email villagefood@bmc.org to schedule an oral application intake session.

Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee. Finalists will be invited to participate in a virtual interview between November 2022.

Selected Community Food Systems Fellows will be announced in early December 2022.

Key application and selection process dates include:

- **Optional Informational Webinar 1:** Thursday October 6, 2022 at 12pm ET: [Register here](#)
- **Optional Informational Webinar 2:** Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 4pm ET: [Register here](#)
- **Deadline for Fellowship Application:** November 7, 2022 at midnight ET
- **Virtual Interviews with Finalists:** November 2022
- **Selected Community Fellows Announced:** Friday, December 16, 2022

Innovation Pilot Project Funds

Selected fellows will be able to apply for an innovation grant to support participatory research and co-design strategies connected to their local food systems efforts, in partnership with a local community-based organization, coalition, or group. During the fellowship, fellows will be asked to submit a proposed budget and budget narrative for up to \$2,000 for approval. Funds can be used towards the following categories, as established by funding requirements:



- **Participant incentives and engagement:** incentives for participants and honoraria for community champions that participate.
- **Local Travel:** local travel for data collection or to offset participant expenses.
- **Project costs to support innovation pilot:** such as research expenses, data collection or analysis costs, online survey technology, project space.

A budget template and sample budget will be shared during the fellowship program.

Total Fellowship Awards

Up to **10 fellows will be selected**. Through this application, leaders can express interest in the Community Food Systems Fellowship.

Eligibility Criteria

All applications will be screened for eligibility prior to their review.

- The fellow must be based in the United States or one of the US territories
- The fellow must have an established partnership with a nonprofit organization, coalition, network, group, cooperative, business, or institution that has a strategic focus on local food systems.

Selection Criteria

In reviewing Fellowship Applications, reviewers will consider the following selection criteria:

- Commitment to developing resilient and equitable local food systems
- Commitment to community leadership, engagement, and the leadership of caregivers and families
- Commitment to food justice, nutrition justice, racial equity and social transformation
- Commitment to addressing inequities, e.g. racial, ethnic, geographic and economic, in your community or state.
- Interest in developing skills to measure impact and success of local food systems
- Interest in developing collaborative leadership skills
- Ability to leverage the Fellowship Cohort experience to build community capacity
- History of effective collaboration and partnership with organizations, groups, or cooperatives within local food systems.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Statement

Consistent with Vital Village Networks and RWJF's values, this project embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, gender, age, and socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage applicants to demonstrate an awareness and inclusion of the perspectives and experiences of children, families and communities most affected by inequities. We believe the more we include diverse



perspectives and experiences in our work, the more successful we will be as we strive to build a Culture of Health, enabling all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives now, and for generations.

How to Apply

Applicants interested in the Community Food Systems Fellowship must complete an [online application](#) by **11:59 p.m. Eastern on November 7, 2022**.

The application is available here:

<https://connect.vitalvillage.org/community-food-systems-fellowship-welcome>. If you would like to submit your application orally, please email villagefood@bmc.org to schedule an oral application intake session.

Two informational webinars will be held on **October 6, 2022 at 12pm ET** and **October 25, 2022 at 4pm ET**, and applicants may submit questions ahead of time to villagefood@bmc.org. Please register for the Optional informational webinars at these links below:

- [October 6, 2022 @ 12pm ET](#)
- [October 25, 2022 @ 4pm ET](#)

Vital Village Networks will invite finalists to participate in a virtual interview in November 2022. Please direct questions to villagefood@bmc.org.

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About Boston Medical Center Vital Village Networks

Vital Village is a network of residents and organizations committed to maximizing child, family, and community wellbeing. Since 2010, Vital Village has fostered partnerships between residents and organizations aimed at improving the capacity of communities to optimize child wellbeing, prevent early life adversities, and advance equity through coalition building, leadership development, participatory research, data-sharing, and advocacy. Through our grassroots local network in Boston, our national network of peer communities, Networks of Opportunity for Child Wellbeing (NOW), and CRADLE, our participatory research and evaluation lab, we cultivate stronger connections between residents and community-based organizations to co-design community systems-improvement efforts and address structural inequities.