

ECHOING GREEN FELLOWSHIPS

2015-2016 APPLICATION HELP GUIDE

The contents of this resource are designed to help you successfully complete your Echoing Green Fellowship application. Before you begin your application, **we strongly encourage you to read the following resources and tips**. These guidelines will help you feel prepared to write clear and compelling responses to the application questions.

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If you have general questions about the application process, please consult our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section on our website. Any specific questions can be directed to fellowship@echoinggreen.org.

Application Submission Policies

1. Submit your final application using Echoing Green's application website.

Do not mail, fax, or email your application – Echoing Green will not accept it if it is not submitted through the application website. No exceptions! Remember, the application will be accessible online from October 5 – November 17, 2015 here: echoinggreen.org/apply

2. Do not send supplemental materials via email or postal mail.

All application materials requested by Echoing Green must be submitted directly through the application website. Echoing Green will not review or evaluate any additional materials sent via email or post. *These materials will not be returned if received.*

3. Your application must be received by 2:00 PM (14:00), November 17, 2015.

Without exception, if Echoing Green receives your application after this deadline, *regardless of technical difficulty*, your submission will not be considered for the 2015-2016 Fellowship application cycle.

4. Applications cannot be revised once they have been submitted.

Once you submit on Echoing Green's application website, no changes can be made, even if time remains before the final deadline.

5. You may only submit one application.

Any applicant(s) who submits multiple applications for the same project or single applications for different projects in the same application cycle will be automatically disqualified from consideration.

6. Partnerships must submit a joint application for their project.

Partnerships are Echoing Green Fellowship applicants who lead the same organization. These applicants must complete *one* application together. Partners who submit separate applications for the same project will be automatically disqualified from consideration.

Application Tips

✓ **Review the Echoing Green website.**

The Echoing Green Fellowship [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section provides answers to common questions about the Fellowship application.

✓ **Don't wait until the last day to start an application.**

The best answers are well-thought out, reflective, and concise. Build in time for several rounds of proofreading and review. Submitting your application before the due date gives you time to deal with any unforeseen technical issues.

✓ **Request your recommendation letters as soon as possible!**

Echoing Green now uses an automated function to send letter of reference requests to your contacts in support of your application. Letters of reference should come from people who can speak to your professional abilities. It is your responsibility to ensure letters of reference are submitted by the application due date of November 17, 2015 at 2:00 pm (14:00) ET.

✓ **Be specific!**

Many applications do not advance to the next stage of consideration because the answers lack clarity. Don't just write that you're going to save the world – describe to us how you plan to do it! Avoid vague generalizations in your responses. Instead, provide concrete examples and statistics to establish a clear connection between the work you do and your goals and objectives.

✓ **Be straightforward – use plain language.**

Avoid the use of jargon – when you write your responses, assume they will be read by someone with limited knowledge of your field or industry.

✓ **Show why you are addressing the challenge.**

While Echoing Green wants to know *what* your organization does and *how*, we also need to understand why you are the right person for the job. Your application should demonstrate your personal connection to the community you will serve.

✓ **Read the Help Text on the Application Website**

Many questions in the application are accompanied by “help text” (in italics, below each question) to help you strengthen your responses. The “help text” provides clarification, rules, suggestions, and context to clarify the application questions.

✓ **Use the Short Answer Worksheet to draft your answers offline.**

The Short Answer Question section of the Application has strict character limits for your responses; these limits include spaces. Any answer over the character limit will be truncated. Check all character limits in a word processor prior to submission so your answers don't get cut off.

✓ **Make sure your resume or CV is relevant.**

The content of your resume should demonstrate your qualifications to be the leader of the organization. Echoing Green does not expect applicants to have started an organization previously nor do we require they have formal education in their program area. However, we do seek applicants who have demonstrated their interest, passion, and leadership abilities through their previous work as well as their academic and volunteer experience. Include relevant skills and experiences that demonstrate your qualification.

✓ **Upload supplemental files with the appropriate file names.**

Use only plain letters and numbers in the names of any files you submit. Including non alphanumeric characters such as an apostrophe or “&” in your file name can create technical problems for you and for our judges. Use the following file naming conventions for your attachments:

- Resume: RESUME_LASTNAME
- Optional Supplementary Materials: SUPP_LASTNAME (of the primary applicant)
- Optional Supplemental Video: VIDEO_LASTNAME (of the primary applicant)

✓ **Ask several people to proofread your application.**

Have a good editor read for mechanics (style, structure, spelling), have a content area expert read for feasibility (logic and persuasion), and have someone who knows nothing about your idea read for coherence and clarity. After reviewing your answers, ask each person to pitch your idea back to you to see if your application is conveying your idea accurately.

How Does Echoing Green Define Program Areas?

On the Fellowship application you will be asked to select the program area category that best describes your organization. Review the examples below to help you determine which best fits your organization. The examples under each category **are not exhaustive** but should give you an idea of which category your organization fits into.

Arts & Culture

- Media and Performing Arts
- Preservation

Civil & Human Rights

- Access to Legal Service
- Humanitarian Relief
- Legal Advocacy
- Peacebuilding

Education

- Programs/Services
- Reform/Advocacy
- Tools/Software
- Mentorship/Leadership

Environment

- Clean Tech/Alternative Energy
- Green Building
- Green Jobs
- Protection/Conservation

Food & Agriculture

- Agriculture
- Food Systems
- Nutrition

Health & Healthcare

- Access/Health Service Delivery
- Prevention/Treatment

Poverty Alleviation & Economic Development

- Access to Capital
- Employment/Job Training
- Entrepreneurship

Public Service & Civic Engagement

- Citizen Advocacy
- Volunteerism

Short Answer Questions and Help Text

Please review the short answer questions in this section. The information under each question is included to help you focus your answer. Consult this help text before completing the application.

Take careful note of the character limits for each essay question and be sure you don't exceed this number in your response. (Character limits *include spaces*- you may wish to use wordcount.us to help count characters.) Keep your responses concise and focused – each word should be important!

Don't lose your work! We recommend you draft your essay responses¹ in a [word processor offline](#). You can copy and paste your answers into the online form when you are ready.

Section 1: Overview

In this section, we will ask you to give us an *overview* of the problem you've identified, the people you hope to help, and how you will solve this problem. We ask you to keep your responses in this section as concise as possible. We ask more detailed questions later in the application, so use this overview section to introduce us to the issue.

Briefly describe the problem your organization will address (250 characters).

Help Text: A successful answer will tell us what the problem is, and note where it occurs. Be brief – keep your response to a maximum of two sentences, and only include the most important details.

Briefly describe who or what your organization will help (250 characters).

Help Text: A successful answer will introduce who your organization is helping – this could include people, agencies, environments, etc. Be brief – keep your responses to a maximum of two sentences, and only include the most important details.

Briefly describe how your organization will solve the problem described above (250 characters).

Help Text: A successful answer will tell us what your solution is, why it is innovative, and what change it will create. Be brief – keep your response limited to a maximum of three sentences, and only include the most important details.

- Imagine that a friend who knows little about your field of work asks you to explain your organization. How would you describe your organization to them? You may also think of this as your “elevator pitch”; if you only had a brief moment to describe your organization to someone during an elevator ride, what would you say to sell them on your organization?

Section 2: The Problem

In this section, we ask you to give us a *detailed explanation* of the problem you hope to address. Be as specific as possible, and use evidence to support your assertions. Be prepared to discuss the cause, size, and importance of the problem.

Describe the problem your organization will address in detail (750 characters).

Help Text: A successful answer will provide evidence that the problem exists and a compelling explanation of why this issue is important to resolve. Provide as much numeric / statistical evidence as possible.

- Identify the problem that you intend to address and explain why it's significant. If possible, provide information substantiating that the need exists through the use of statistics from experts or constituents. Tell us about the lives of the population your organization will serve. Because your response is limited in length, it is acceptable to identify your references without providing the full level of detail that you would provide

¹ The online application website will not allow you to include any rich text formatting. This includes bullets, bold text, color, etc.

in a footnote (for example, you do not need to include publisher, volume number, page number, etc.).

- One common mistake made by applicants is stating the need without sufficient statistics, sources, or examples to support the claim. Another common mistake is presenting a need that is a market opportunity but not a true social challenge. Show us that you have done your research and understand those you intend to help.

Explain the causes of this problem and why the problem still exists (500 characters).

Help Text: A successful answer will provide evidence of the factors which create this problem and why no one else has tried to or succeeded in solving the problem.

Section 3: The Solution

In this section, we ask you to tell us how you intend to solve the problem you have identified. Be as specific as possible and use evidence to support your assertions. Be prepared to explain how your program is innovative, your financial needs and what your long-term goals are. We will also ask you to describe competitors in your field and how your solution is different.

Describe the specific product(s) or program(s) your organization will implement to solve the problem (1,000 characters).

Help Text: A successful answer will provide the details of the solution your organization will implement and evidence to support that the solution will be effective.

- What will your work look like? What will you or your staff do on a daily/weekly/monthly basis? Think about a member of the population served by your organization, and tell us how they will experience your products or programs. Be specific enough that you are not just repeating the idea behind your organization over again, but actually explaining how your organization will carry out that idea in reality.

How is your idea innovative compared to others addressing the problem? (1,000 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will explain the current methods used to address this problem and why they have been ineffective. It will also explain why your organization will succeed where other organizations have not.

- It is very likely that there are a wide variety of organizations and entities, from local community organizations to governmental agencies, which deliver services to the constituency/community that you have identified. It is also possible that one or more organizations are focused on the same area of need, either in your community or outside of your community.
- How is your idea for social change different from the ideas already at work? Name specific organizations working in your field. How is your organization a significant improvement on existing models? Why do you think your organization will be more successful than the others? Feel free to quote experts or publications that validate your assertion. This question offers you the opportunity to give us a small peek into the research you have done on your competitors and peers.

How will the lives of the target population be better because of your organization's work? (1,000 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will show how your organization or idea will positively affect the lives of your constituency. Please use evidence, data, or examples to demonstrate how their lives will improve.

- If you're able to give us specifics, please include those here. For example, if the work of your organization is to tutor low-income high school students to improve their college attendance rates, one output might be 500 hours of tutoring sessions over a year, while one outcome might be a twenty percent increase in college attendance among the targeted

students. A measurement system for this project might include weekly reports from tutors on the number of tutoring hours logged and quarterly surveys of past participants in the program to determine their current education status.

- However, if you are still figuring out what your desired outcomes might be, that's okay as well. Walk us through what you think you might measure five or ten years from now to know whether you've done a good job. For example, if you were earlier along in the development of the example above, you might know that you want to increase college attendance but might not yet know what target number you're aiming for. Similarly, you might know you want to follow up with students after they leave the program but might not yet know what that follow-up system will look like. It's okay if you don't have all the details figured out, just explain what you're currently thinking in terms of measuring your impact.

How will you measure the success of your organization? (500 characters)

Help Text: Your response will help us understand what factors you believe will define the success of your organization. For example, an organization focused on distributing a product may measure success by the number of products distributed and how those products will benefit their recipients.

- Now that you told us about the impact you hope to achieve, tell us how you might measure this impact. In five or ten years from now, what specifically will you measure to determine what effect you've had on the world? It's okay if you don't have all the details figured out, just explain what you're currently thinking in terms of measuring your impact.

Section 4: Budget

Don't worry if you have yet to raise any money or develop a sophisticated budget. We fund entrepreneurs at all points within the start-up phase, but we want to get a sense of where your organization currently stands. The purpose of these questions is to force applicants to seriously consider their organizational costs, so they know approximately how much money will be needed for their program to function and be sustainable.

Describe how you expect your organization to grow over the next two years (1,000 characters).

Help Text: Organizations can grow in a variety of different ways. For example, an organization may hire more staff, hold more events, or franchise its model. A successful answer will describe your anticipated growth, and provide a realistic plan for how you will achieve this growth.

How much money do you anticipate you will need in two years to reach the level of growth you described?

Help Text: Echoing Green would like to know what you expect your budget to be in 2018. Your response to this question will help us better understand your aspirations for growth.

- Your response must be written in U.S. Dollars (USD) currency. Numbers, periods, and commas are accepted. Letters and symbols will not be accepted.
- Accepted: "2,500.00" or "2500.00"; Not Accepted: "\$2,500" or "2,500 USD"

Section 5: Fellowship Specific Questions

Echoing Green runs three Fellowship tracks: Black Male Achievement, Climate, and Global. You may choose to be considered for any of these Fellowships in the online application. Carefully review the information below, which describes each of the tracks, to make an informed decision about which makes best sense for you and your organization.

Black Male Achievement Fellowship

This Fellowship is awarded to social entrepreneurs working on innovative ideas for new organizations focused on improving the life outcomes of black men and boys in the United States. Your organization must be focused on addressing issues facing black men and boys in the United States.

Climate Fellowship

The Climate Fellowship is awarded to social entrepreneurs who are starting new organizations that innovatively approach climate change through mitigation, adaptation, or policy. Your organization may be located anywhere across the globe. Your organization must be focused on innovations in climate adaptation, mitigation, or policy initiatives.

Global Fellowship

This Fellowship is awarded to social entrepreneurs who are deeply connected to the needs and potential solutions that may work best for their communities. Your organization may be located anywhere across the globe. Your organization or idea may be focused on innovations across any program area.

Black Male Achievement Fellowship Applicants ONLY: Why are you dedicated to improving the life outcomes of black men and boys in the United States? (500 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will explain why this issue is important to you as an individual, and describe past experiences which have led you to be passionate about this issue.

- Partners, this answer should reflect both individuals.

Climate Fellowship Applicants ONLY: Why are you dedicated to the issue of climate change? (500 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will explain why this issue is important to you as an individual, and describe past experiences which have led you to be passionate about this issue.

- Partners, this answer should reflect both individuals.

Section 6: The Applicant

In this section, we'll ask you to tell us why you should be an Echoing Green Fellow. This section will help us understand why you are the leader(s) to do this work. If applying as a partnership, please respond to these questions with both applicants' perspectives included.

When and how did you come up with the idea for the organization? (500 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will help us understand how the idea for this organization originally started. This includes a description of who was involved, how and when the idea occurred to you, and what motivated you to pursue the work.

- Partners, this answer should reflect both individuals.

Explain why you are so passionate about the problem and the population you described above. (1,000 characters)

Help Text: Starting a new organization or business can be a risky and time-consuming task. A successful answer will help us understand what motivates you to do this work, and why you are dedicated to resolving this problem.

- Although a strong personal passion to solve a problem is not sufficient in itself, it can certainly help overcome many of the obstacles start-up leaders face. In this response, we are less interested in your passion for the particular technical solution you are proposing, and more interested in learning about your passion for working in this place, with this population, on this particular problem. If you have a strong personal connection to this community that has motivated you to take action, we want to hear about it. Your answer

should NOT be that “the problem is so huge, I had to act.” Most people are not choosing to act on this problem. So what is your own personal motivation?

- Partners, this answer should reflect both individuals.

What skills or experiences demonstrate that you will be able to attract money, people, and other resources to your organization? (1,000 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will showcase a specific example of how you have been able to gather outside resources to help you complete a goal. Your example does not need to be related to this organization – any example from your past which highlights your ability to attract resources is acceptable.

- Provide us with examples that show you possess skills to attract resources to your organization. Think about your experiences and describe a time when you were able to start something new or when you influenced others to join you in a challenging endeavor.
- Partners, this answer should reflect both individuals.

Describe an example of your entrepreneurial spirit. (750 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will provide an example of something you have done in your life that demonstrates your ability to launch something new.

- Being a social entrepreneur sets you apart from most people. Even among passionate people, very few are willing to give up the security of a traditional job and paycheck to start a new organization. What makes you comfortable with these risks that most people choose not to take?
- Partners, this answer should reflect both individuals.

Provide one or two examples of your ability to overcome adversity. (1,000 characters)

Help Text: Launching a new organization is hard work. A successful answer will provide an example of an instance when you persevered despite setbacks. What was the adversity you faced, and how did you overcome it?

- Describe a time in your life when you were faced with challenges that compromised your success and how you managed the situation. Your answer should help us understand how you deal with difficult situations and could even highlight a time that you failed.
- Partners, each individual should list at least one personal example of adversity.

Describe one past experience or accomplishment that demonstrates your leadership potential. (1,000 characters)

Help Text: A successful answer will explain your leadership style by using a specific example. The specific example does not need to be related to this organization – any example from your past which highlights your leadership ability is acceptable.

- Partners, each individual should list at least one personal example of leadership potential.

Section 7: Previous Applicants

Since you have applied for an Echoing Green Fellowship before, what has changed about you as an applicant since your last application? (500 characters)

Help Text: Please tell us what has changed about you as an applicant since your last application. If you applied for the same organization, we will ask you for details on organizational changes later in the application.

Section 8: Partnership Questions

You might have noticed that Echoing Green supports people who have co-founded the organization they're launching. Echoing Green supports two-person partnerships only when both applicants are truly co-leaders and co-founders of an organization. Partnerships that do not meet these criteria will be disqualified from the Echoing Green application process.

Please note: this section is only required for those applying with a partner.

How did you come to start this organization together? How long have you known each other, and in what contexts? (500 characters)

- Provide a context for your partnership, including how you met, how long you have known each other, how well you know each other, and any previous collaborations. As conflicts are inevitable among partners, how will you and your partner work to resolve problems? Also, tell us who came up with the idea, who started the organization, and what prompted you to work together on it. If there are other founders or organizational leaders not included in the application, please elaborate on both their initial and current roles, including if they are still involved in the organization and the reason why they are not applying for the Fellowship.

Describe your individual roles within the organization and the nature of your working relationship (500 characters).

Help Text: Tell us in what way are your roles similar or different. Give us an example of how you support each other within your organization.

- Like any relationship, a successful partnership requires compatibility in many areas, including delineation of responsibilities. Explain what your respective titles will be and how you chose them (or how you will choose them in the future). When describing your responsibilities, please be extremely precise, explaining which specific tasks will each of you be responsible for within the organization. Explain how your roles complement each other in the leadership of your organization.

Supplemental Materials

Applicant Resume (required)

Each applicant will be responsible for submitting a resume or curriculum vitae. Applicants will be required to use the upload links on the application website.

Help Text: Echoing Green asks that you please use the following naming conventions for your resume: “Last Name_First Initial_Resume.” Example: John Smith “Smith_J_Resume.pdf”

- If you have difficulty uploading your resume or attaching a file to your online application, please [click here](#) for help.

Letters of Reference (Required)

Echoing Green uses the “Recommendations” function in the online application to automatically send letter of reference requests for your application.

- **For individual applicants:** Echoing Green requires two letters of reference for your application, both of which should speak to your professional abilities.
- **For partnership applicants:** Echoing Green requires three letters of reference for your application. One letter of reference should speak to the first applicant’s professional abilities, the second letter of reference should speak to the second applicant’s professional abilities, and the third should speak to the working relationship between the partnership.

Once you send the request, your references will receive an automated email from Echoing Green explaining the request. You will have an option to add a personalized note to this emailed request, but you may want to reach out to your reference requests prior to sending the automated email.

After a reference is sent, an automated reminder email will be sent once a week until the reference has been completed. If you are submitting your reference requests with less than one week until the application closes, we strongly encourage you to follow up with your references directly.

It is your responsibility to ensure letters of reference are submitted by the application due date of November 17, 2015 at 2:00 PM (14:00) ET.

Competitive Analysis (Required)

In this section you will share information related to at least two other organizations working on the same, or a similar, problem. Please use this section to demonstrate how you are different from other organizations, and to showcase what is innovative about your organization or idea. You can share analyses on up to five organizations.

Choose the best 2-5 organizations that are most similar to yours. Complete the worksheet to tell us about your similarities and differences. We ask you to complete this task for two reasons:

- As we evaluate the level of innovative thinking in your proposal, it is helpful for us to benchmark against other organizations that are doing similar things.
- We want to evaluate how thoroughly you have researched your field and learned lessons from other organizations and efforts.

Help Text: The competitive analysis will be reviewed by experts in your field. Therefore, it is in your own best interest to identify similar organizations of the **highest quality**. We want to know how you compare against the best of the others.

When looking for “similar” organizations, consider:

- Target Population – which organizations try to serve the same people you want to help? For example, at-risk teens in the USA or farmers in Uganda.

- Issue Area – which organizations address the same specific problem you hope to alleviate? For example, illiteracy or hunger.
- Methods – which organizations are using the same ways of working? For example, legal advocacy, mentoring, mobile technology or micro-loans.

Supplemental Materials (Optional)

You may share with us ONE document (fewer than five pages) that tells us about your organization. Although it is not necessary to have an existing business plan, budget, overview presentation, or technical specifications, you may choose to share one of those documents with us. Do not create something new for us to review.

Help Text: This is your chance to communicate with us using materials formatted as you prefer. If you have an official business plan or other standard documents, this is a good time to share them. If your organization is dependent on a technology you have invented, this is a good opportunity to show how it works. If you have photos of your idea in action, you might submit them. You might also share a testimonial from people your organization has helped. Do NOT send more information about you. We want to learn more about your organization or the people you work with.

Personal Video (Recommended)

We would like to get a sense of your personality, energy, and passion for this work. If technically possible, please create one new, short video of you telling us about your organization.

Although we strongly recommend sharing a video, we understand that you may face technical challenges. You are therefore *not required* to submit a video.

The video *must*:

- Be one minute or less in length.
- Include only footage of you (and/or your partner) talking directly into the camera about your organization.
 - Do not include any footage of your projects, your programs, props, or anything else besides you talking to the camera.
- No effects should be added to the footage.
 - Do not add text, logos, pictures, slides, charts, or anything else besides you talking to the camera.

Help Text: Think of this as a one minute pitch of your organization. In your video, don't forget to say your name(s), the name of your organization, where you work (or will work) and to clearly state your idea for social change. Aim to keep your pitch as clear and simple as possible, and let your personality shine through! [Read our brief guide to delivering a strong 60-second pitch.](#)

Technical Challenges with Video

If you are having technical issues recording or uploading your video, Echoing Green has only limited resources to help. Your best resource will be a technically savvy friend.

Here are a few tips:

Recording a Video

- Many computers now have a small video camera built-in. You may be able to borrow one from a friend or colleague. Many other computers, especially in Internet cafes and other public locations, have video cameras attached. Alternatively, many people now have inexpensive video cameras or can film video on their mobile phones.
- If you can, set the video to a *low resolution* setting. This will make the file size smaller, and make video upload easier.

- In each case, once the video is recorded you will need to identify the location of the file, so that you may upload it to the Application website.

Uploading the Video

- If you are having difficulty uploading or attaching a file to your online application, please try the following steps:
 - Check the file size: Maximum size allowed is 100 MB.
 - Try a different Internet Browser: If your computer has multiple browser options (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome), try logging back into the application in a different browser to see if you are able to upload. You may also want to download the latest version of the browser to ensure it is compatible with the application website. You can download Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox for free.
 - If you are still having issues, please send an email to fellowship@echoinggreen.org with subject line "Video Help."
 - Describe your challenge in as much detail as you can. If the problem seems straightforward, we will try to help you resolve it. However, because a video is not required, we may not be able to help you. The sooner you notify us of the problem, the more likely we can help.

Advice for developing a powerful 60-second pitch

For your pitch, address the following:

- Who you are.
- What your idea for social change is.
- Why people should care.

Remember, 60 seconds is short, so only include necessary info.

		Our Advice
Personal Pitches...	...are authentic.	Get personal. Show your connection to your work. Consider telling a story.
	...are clear.	Avoid technical language.
	...tap into see/feel.	Evoke the audience to experience the mission through strong body language, descriptive language, use of analogies, etc.
	...inspire action.	Think about what you'd want the audience to feel or do.
	...start and end strong.	People seem to remember the book-ends of a presentation.

Prepare before you start recording.

- Decide your angle and the emotion you want to project. You can go for humor, inspiration, surprise, anger, love, etc. Your personality and the work you're pursuing will influence the emotion you choose to project.
- Write your presentation out in a logical order, and include a short story or analogies—start with a free write of what is meaningful to you, what would be meaningful to your audience, and what you are doing to support your cause.

- Step away from your presentation for 24 hours before revisiting.
- Consider writing them on post-it notes to get a visual representation.
- Practice and feel comfortable with the content.
- Try to come under 60 seconds when practicing your pitch.
- Know your audience.