



Vital Village Community Food Systems Fellowship

an initiative of Vital Village Networks at Boston Medical Center

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 generous grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

Award Information

Up to **10 community leaders** will be selected by November 22, 2021 to receive a Fellowship and associated funding.

Key Dates and Deadlines

September 24, 2021 at 12 pm ET	Applications Open
October 5, 2021 at 12pm ET	Optional Informational Webinar
October 29, 2021 at midnight ET	Deadline for Fellowship Application
November 2021	Finalist Interviews
November 22, 2021	Selection of community fellows
December 2021 – December 2022	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](#)

Register for the Optional Webinar

Register for the optional informational webinar [here](#)

Contact Information

Please direct inquiries to: vitalvillage@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 developing a roadmap for community-powered food systems and to learn how to better capture impact for those 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 generous 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.

Program Details

The fellowship will involve a series of interactive action labs and learning sessions to support their local efforts and contribute to a community-powered local food systems framework and accompanying capacity building roadmap.

Community Fellows will receive a \$2,000 honorarium and may also apply for project funds.



Participation in the Community Food Systems Fellowship includes the following:

- **Community Design Labs:** Participation in two Community Design Labs focused on participatory research skills (December 2021 and May 2022) These workshops will be held virtually over 3, 90-minute sessions. Tentative dates include:
 - December 1st, 8th, and 15th, 2021 from 1:30-3pm ET
 - May 12th, 19th, and 26th, 2022 from 1:30-3pm ET
- **Monthly Virtual Learning Sessions:** Learning sessions will take place once a month. Fellows will convene for learning sessions that including webinars and peer-led sessions that allow fellows to dive into a particular subject and learn from and with one another around key topic areas, such as:
 - Data storytelling for social change
 - Local food systems assessment tools
 - Community-based approaches to evaluation
 - Participatory and inclusive data planning, collection, and analysis methods
 - Community engagement
 - Participatory Research approaches
 - Research plan development
 - Community co-design
 - Collaborative leadership and sustainable leadership pathways
 - Mindsets, frameworks and narrative change strategies
- **Monthly individual check-in sessions:** with members of the Vital Village Networks team and/or a peer mentor
- **Virtual National Convening:** participation in a project stakeholder convening and cumulative project showcase during the 2022 National Community Leadership Summit, planned as a virtual meeting for October 2022. The convening will focus on key areas of community capacity building. Tentative dates include:
 - October 17-18, 2022 (virtual meeting)

Community Fellowship Program Outcomes

Community Food System Fellows will:

- Gain knowledge, skills, and resources to engage a broad and diverse group of stakeholders within their communities in telling the story of their local food systems impact
- Strengthen their 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 their local food systems work and impact, using both qualitative and quantitative methods
- Build and strengthen their relationship with local stakeholders and develop a communications plan to share learnings



- Develop and implement a participatory research plan to improve understanding of their local food system

Application Process and Award Information

Vital Village Networks will accept applications for Community Fellows from September 24, 2021 through October 29, 2021. An informational webinar will be held on Tuesday, October 5, 2021 from 12-1pm ET, to provide an overview of the fellowship program and interview process. Interested applicants have the opportunity to submit questions to vitalvillage@bmc.org in advance of the webinar by Friday, October 1, 2021. The webinar will be recorded and link shared by Friday, October 8, 2021. Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee. Finalists will be invited to participate in virtual interview between November 1-12, 2021. Selected Community Fellows will be announced on Monday, November 22, 2021.

Key application and selection process dates include:

- **Deadline to Submit Questions for Webinar:** Friday, October 1, 2021
- **Optional Informational Webinar:** Tuesday, October 5, 2021, 12-1pm ET
- **Virtual Interviews with Finalists:** November 1-12, 2021
- **Selected Community Fellows Announced:** Monday, November 22, 2021

Innovation Pilot Fund Budget

Selected fellows will be able to apply for an innovation grant to support their food systems research. 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 Communities Fellows will be selected** to ultimately receive the fellowship, pilot funding, and supports described above. 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 Fellowship must complete an [online application](#) by 11:59 p.m. EST on October 29, 2021.

The application is available here: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4934099>. Vital Village Networks will invite finalists to participate in a virtual interview.

Direct questions to vitalvillage@bmc.org. Questions received before October 1, 2021 will be addressed on a national webinar to be held on October 5, 2021 at 12pm ET. Please register for the webinar at this [Optional Informational Webinar link](#).



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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.