



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – KUEHN FELLOWSHIP
(Updated 1/24/2021)

General Statement Regarding COVID-19 and the Fellowship

KCF has elected to continue the Kuehn Fellowship for 2021 retaining as much as possible of the program from past years. KCF acknowledges we are all challenged in this time, and that support for affordable housing is even more important. As of early 2021, it appears highly likely that 2021 Fellows may at least begin work remotely. Fellows will need to be physically located in the Greater Boston area by the end of June, 2021 whether or not their workplace is remote.

Additionally, KCF assumes all interviews and the Fellow/host matching event will occur online.

KCF appreciates everyone’s patience and understanding given current conditions. KCF reserves the right to modify any aspects of the program necessary during this unusually uncertain time. Please refer to the KCF website regularly for updates.

1. What is the best place to get information on the Fellowship process?

The KCF website and FAQ are the best resources.

Please review this FAQ for commonly asked questions ahead of contacting us with your specific questions. In general, we will not respond to individual questions after February 1, 2021.

2. What are the goals of the Kuehn Fellowship?

The goals of the Kuehn Fellowship are twofold: to inspire and equip women and men at the start of their careers to follow Bob Kuehn’s vision and vocation in affordable housing, and to add to the capacity of Massachusetts non-profit affordable housing organizations.

3. Who are the Fellows? Who are the hosts?

Kuehn Fellows are recent master’s degree level graduates (graduating within last five years) from a variety of backgrounds (business, urban planning, policy, design, social work, etc.) and a particular interest in affordable housing as a career path. Hosts are Boston-area organizations working in affordable housing. The 2021 host organizations are listed on the website.

2021 Fellowship Key Dates

By January 4, 2021 – Fellowship application opens

February 12, 2021 – Fellowship application due by 11:59pm EST

Weeks of March 1 & 8, 2021 - Interviews

Week of March 15, 2021 – Fellows notified of selection

April 6, 2021 – Matching Event 9 am to 1 pm; over Zoom required, details TBD

June 29 & July 1, 2021 – Fellows’ Orientation (date tentative)

July 5, 2021 – First day at host



4. How does the Fellowship work? How are Fellows chosen?

Fellowships are intended to be practice-based jobs in community development, not research internships. The cohort of Fellows each launching a career at the same point provides additional support, formally and informally. Fellows will be chosen following a selective process, beginning January, 2021 for the 2021 fellowship cohort. Check the website for full details on schedule. The vetting process for Fellows includes a written application including a written work product, an interview in early March, 2021 and contact with references. Selected hosts and Fellows will meet each other in an online interview process (Matching Event) where attendance will be mandatory for chosen Fellows and hosts. Following the event, hosts and Fellows will be polled for their respective top choices and will be matched by KCF. It is expected all interviews and the matching event will occur online for this cohort. Fellows will be required to be located in the Boston area by the date of the Fellows Orientation in late June, 2021.

5. Are the Fellows employees of the hosts? How does the stipend work? How are Fellows otherwise compensated?

Fellows are employees of the host organization subject to the same workplace guidelines, codes of conduct, and benefits (health care, vacation) as any other employee.

The Foundation provides host organizations an annual stipend, pro-rated into monthly installments paid in advance, to be granted to the organization under a grant agreement. The starting stipend for 2021 Fellows will be \$69,500 with a second-year salary of \$71,000. The host organization will employ the Fellow and pay the stipend to the Fellow over the year as regular wages. The Foundation will additionally provide a stipend of up to \$2000 for reimbursement for the costs of professional development and training activities to be chosen by each Fellow and his/her supervisor. Fellows are not eligible for a bonus from the host organization.

Please note we are unable to assist with visas for these positions. At the time of application, Fellowship applicants must have permission to work in the United States during the two-year Fellowship period.

6. What are the monthly gatherings? What training and support does KCF provide?

KCF will kick off the Fellowship with a cohort-building and training session ahead of the Fellows' first day of work at the host organization. After that, Fellows attend a gathering about once a month, usually in the late afternoon or early evening. Subject areas for gatherings evolve from a list suggested by host organizations, mentors, KCF and the Fellows themselves with prioritization by the Fellows.

As noted, there will be a \$2000 professional development stipend additionally available to each 2021 Fellow. In conjunction with his or her supervisor, the Fellow may request reimbursement for local trainings, seminars, professional memberships and coursework. Historically, Fellows have chosen courses including day-long seminars on the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, semester-long courses on construction management, seminars on green building, LEED AP courses, etc.

7. What is the role of the mentors?



Mentors may take on a variety of roles for Fellows: advisor, connector, career path sounding board, subject-matter expert, etc. Typically, they are locally-based, experienced practitioners in the community development field with a strong tie to the host organization and desire/ability to meet regularly with a young person starting out in the field. KCF kicks off the mentor/Fellow relationship with a group breakfast within the first few months of the program. After that, mentors and Fellows schedule meetings at their individual convenience for the first year of the program. Each host organization preliminarily identifies mentor(s) in its applications which will be available to 2021 Fellows after they are chosen.

8. What oversight does KCF provide during the fellowship?

KCF stays in touch with both hosts and Fellows including seeing each Fellow monthly at the Fellows gathering. Hosts will be expected to update and provide a final workplan, based on input from their Fellow within 60 days after the Fellow starts. We check in with both hosts and Fellows within 3-4 months of the start date and on the first-year anniversary. Both hosts and Fellows are encouraged to contact KCF pro-actively if issues arise.

9. Are there any other aspects of the Fellowship?

The Foundation additionally provides the Fellows the unique opportunity to learn directly about philanthropy early in their careers through the Fellows' Gift. Collectively, the Fellows choose an area of interest, investigate nonprofits working on those issues, and after extensive due diligence, designate a recipient for the Fellows' Gift from the Foundation. The 2015 Fellows chose financial readiness and asset building as their area of interest. Family Independence Initiative was their grant recipient. The 2017 Fellows focused on the hardest to house and designated ROCA for their gift.

What should I submit as a nomination letter?

The nomination letter should come from a professor or other professional associated with your degree program. It need not be lengthy but should describe why the nominator believes you would be a good fit for the Fellowship. The nominator may also be a reference or you may choose to add other references as contacts for us.

What should I submit as a writing sample?

We are looking for short written work product that demonstrates your ability to analyze and communicate in a written format. We are flexible on what is submitted, preferring that it be targeted for a professional rather than academic audience. Past applicants have submitted memos, class reports, excerpts from longer reports and papers, etc.

Are more Fellows chosen than hosts and then only some match at the Match Event?

After the interview process, we choose the Kuehn Fellows equal to the number of hosts. The Match Event matches Fellows and Hosts; no one is eliminated after the Match Event.



What are the interviews like? Who does them?

KCF interviews with 2-3 interviewers including the KCF Executive Director, the Trustees and advisors to the Fellowship who are Boston-based professionals in housing. It is expected interviews and the matching event will be virtual for this cohort.

How do Fellows use the stipend ?

The stipend is for longer and more costly professional development opportunities typically over \$100 and under \$1500. Fellows have used stipends for a variety of courses—semester-long classes on technical subjects like plan reading or construction management, training toward becoming LEED certified, day-long intensives on using tax credits to finance housing, meeting facilitation, etc.

Does the Fellowship include health insurance?

The Fellows become employees of their host and receive the same benefits as any employee of that hosts. All hosts offer health insurance. Prior to the Match Event, the selected Fellows will get a package with detail on each host including more on benefits.

I won't be finished with my degree by summer, 2021. Can I still apply?

The Fellowship offers a full-time working position which is not a fit if you have school commitments during work hours. You must have completed all coursework. In rare circumstances, we will accept applications if you have completed all coursework and only have a thesis or capstone to write which will not require any time during regular work hours. You graduation date must be no later than December 2021. You should use your application to explain your situation and be aware that applicants who will complete all degree requirements, including any thesis or capstone, ahead of summer 2021 will have priority.

I applied in the past, can I apply again?

Yes, you may apply as long as you meet the other criteria. The process will be the same as for a first-time applicant.

What kind of prior affordable housing experience do you look for in a candidate?

We definitely look for something that indicates a real interest in the affordable housing field, but we do not require previous work experience within the field. It is helpful when applicants call attention to what draws them to affordable housing and/or what work or schooling they have done that is similar or related in their application and interview.

Are there any structured or unstructured opportunities for fellows to interact with alumni?



Yes, both structured and unstructured. When this cohort starts, there will be 25 Fellows/Alumni. Most are still in the Boston area, and the network is strong. We provide opportunities for the network to connect and encourage members to do so as well.

Are Fellows typically interested in staying in Boston after the fellowship? Is connection to the Boston area something you look for in candidates?

Given the goals of the Foundation, which is to help build the bench of experienced professionals in affordable housing in Boston, our preference is for someone who is interested in staying in Massachusetts post-Fellowship. We are open to candidates who live elsewhere and are interested in leveraging the Fellowship to explore a future here. However, if you don't have any intention of staying in the area beyond the Fellowship, this is unlikely to be the right fit for you.

The brief said that relocation to the great Boston area was required by June 2021. Given that everything is remote at the moment, is that requirement because of the need to be on construction sites? And would commuting in from Providence or Salem, MA qualify?

You would need to be able to get to the office of your host org once it transitions back to in-person work. If you could commute from Salem or Providence, that's fine. The requirement is that you be in this area by the time the Fellowship starts.