

## Frequently Asked Questions

### APN Individual Research Fellowships

#### ELIGIBILITY

##### **Who can apply for an APN research fellowship?**

All applicants must be African citizens currently residing in an African country and either an academic, a policy analyst, or practitioner. **Women are strongly encouraged to apply.**

Academic applicants must hold a faculty or research position at an African university or research organization and have a PhD obtained no earlier than January 2011.

Applicants who are policy analysts and practitioners must be based in Africa at a regional or sub-regional institution; a government agency; or a nongovernmental, media, or civil society organization, and should have obtained at least a master's degree before January 2016, with at least five years of proven research and work experience in peacebuilding-related activities on the continent.

##### **Can I apply as part of a research group/team?**

No. The APN Individual Research Fellowship competition only welcomes proposals from individual applicants.

##### **Is there an age limit?**

No. However, preference will be given to early- to mid-career academics, as well as experienced practitioners and policy analysts. Academic applicants must hold faculty or research positions in African universities or research organizations and are expected to have a PhD at the time of application obtained no earlier than January 2011.

##### **Am I eligible if I do not hold a PhD?**

Academic applicants must hold a PhD by the time of application, obtained no earlier than January 2011. However, practitioner and policy analyst applicants may apply without holding a PhD so long as they have a master's degree of no less than five years (obtained prior to January 2016), with at least five years of proven work experience, preferably in the area of peacebuilding.

##### **I am an African citizen, but I currently hold a faculty position at a university outside Africa. Am I still eligible?**

No. Academic applicants must hold faculty positions at universities in Africa. Practitioner and policy analyst applicants must be based at an institution or organization in Africa.

##### **I am a researcher based outside Africa, but currently working with a partner at a university in an African country. Are we eligible to apply as a team?**

No. You are not eligible to apply as part of a team.

**I have full-time employment in Africa, but I am temporarily stationed outside Africa. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes. However, you must supply the APN with a letter of employment in Africa at the time of application as proof of your stationing.

**Will the program support outside scholarships or enrollment in a degree-awarding program at a university?**

No. APN Individual Research Fellowships support only APN-specific research, including fieldwork and related networking activities.

**What disciplines are eligible?**

APN Individual Research Fellowships are open to researchers from all disciplines and fields. However, successful proposals will demonstrate a solid grasp of social science literature, tools, and research methodologies, and be focused on an issue related to African peacebuilding.

**What themes or topics are more likely to be successful?**

All themes and topics related to peacebuilding in Africa are welcome. However, you are advised to take a look at the [list of issues that are considered relevant to the APN Individual Research Fellowship competition](#) before deciding on a topic for your proposal. Applicants are advised not to replicate projects that have been [supported in the past](#), over-researched or already published elsewhere. Original and innovative topics are more likely to be successful.

**I have applied for an APN research fellowship in the past but was unsuccessful. Am I still eligible to apply?**

Yes. If you have applied for an APN fellowship in the past and were NOT accepted, you may apply on condition that you meet the other eligibility requirements. You must indicate on your application that you have previously applied and the year(s). The APN strongly encourages those who have not received an APN award to apply. Please use feedback from reviewers comments on your previous application(s) as a guide in preparing your current application/proposal.

**I am a former APN fellowship award recipient. Am I still eligible to apply?**

Yes. However, preference will be given to those who are not former recipients of the award.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

**How do I apply for an APN Individual Research Fellowship?**

Applications must be completed using our online portal: <https://ssrc.secure-platform.com/>. You will be asked to create an online user account and password. We recommend that you fully review the guidelines, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, and application and award timelines before proceeding with your application.

**What are the application requirements?**

All applicants will be required to submit the following:

1. Completed Application Form
2. Research Proposal & Bibliography
3. Expected publication(s)
4. Current CV
5. Proposed Research Timeline
6. Proposed Research Budget
7. Two (2) Reference Letters
8. Language evaluation(s) (if applicable)

If you encounter any difficulties accessing the online portal, please contact APN staff at [apn@ssrc.org](mailto:apn@ssrc.org), or by telephone at (+1) 718-517-3669.

### **How do I submit my application?**

The APN requires all applications to be uploaded through our online application portal: <https://ssrc.secure-platform.com/>. Please ensure that all relevant information is included in your application, as any incomplete application will be automatically disqualified.

### **Should all application materials be submitted at once?**

Yes. The application form, research proposal and bibliography, CV, proposed research timeline, and proposed research budget must all be submitted at the same time. Reference letters and language evaluation(s) may be submitted separately, but are required before the deadline.

### **Do I need to submit my application in English?**

Yes, all application materials must be written in English.

### **When is the deadline for the 2021 APN Research Fellowships Competition?**

All applications, reference letters, and language evaluations are due by **11:59pm (EST) on February 1, 2021**.

### **Do you have samples of previous proposals that have been awarded fellowships/grants?**

No. Applicants can, however, consult the SSRC publication “On The Art of Writing Proposals” for advice on writing proposals and preparing project statements (free download available at <http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/>).

You may also refer to our lists of past recipients (by year), whose names, biographies, and project titles are available for viewing on our website here:

<https://www.ssrc.org/search/?t=fellows&sort=year&fellowship%5B%5D=APN%20Individual%20Research%20Fellowships>

## APPLICATION COMPONENTS

### **How many letters of reference do I need, and whom should I ask to write them?**

You will need two (2) letters of reference. One should be written by your academic department head or an administrative supervisor of similar standing, while the other should be written by a senior academic or practitioner who is very familiar with your research or work.

The APN will accept reference letters written in either English, French, or Portuguese. Letters not written in English should be accompanied by a translation. All other application materials, however, must be submitted in English.

### **Should my referees send in their letters on their own, or can I include them in the application that I submit to the APN?**

Referees must submit their letters on their own directly to the APN through the application portal (<https://ssrc.secure-platform.com/>).

Confirm the email addresses of your two references and then add them to the “References” section of your application in the APN online application portal. **Please make sure these emails are correct. It is your responsibility to notify your referees of the submission date and request.** Your referees will be notified via email that you have requested a reference letter and given instructions for submitting their letter online. Materials submitted by your references will then be automatically added to your application.

Please note that since letters of reference are to be submitted on their own, kindly encourage those writing your reference letters to submit them before the APN deadline. It is not the APN’s responsibility for late submissions. Applications will not be considered complete until both references have been submitted.

### **Do I need to submit a language evaluation?**

Only those applicants conducting research in an officially recognized national language that is different from their native language(s) are required to submit a language evaluation. Such an evaluation should be conducted by a qualified evaluator and must test and clearly state the applicant’s level of language proficiency. If you are conducting research in your native language, you are not required to submit a language evaluation.

### **Should the language evaluator send in the report of my level of language proficiency, or can I include it in the application that I submit to the APN?**

Language evaluators must submit their evaluations on their own directly to the APN through the relevant portal.

Confirm the email address of your language evaluator and then add the evaluator to the “Language Evaluations” section of your application in the APN online portal. The evaluator will be notified by email that you have requested an evaluation and given instructions to complete the evaluation report online. Materials submitted by your language evaluator will be automatically added to your application. Since language evaluations are to be submitted separately from your online application, please encourage the

language evaluator to submit their evaluation by the APN deadline. It is not the APN's responsibility for late submissions.

**Do reference letters and language evaluations need to be submitted in English?**

The APN will accept reference letters written in either English, French, or Portuguese. Letters not written in English should be accompanied by a translation into English. Language evaluations and all other application materials, however, must be submitted in English.

**Can I send in my application even if my reference letters and language evaluation have not been received?**

Yes. You are strongly advised to upload your completed application well in advance of the submission deadline. Do not wait for your reference letters and language evaluation to be received by the APN before you submit your completed application. They will be automatically added to your application upon receipt.

**Can my language evaluation(s) be written by my referee?**

No, your reference letters and language evaluators may not be written by the same person.

**Are there formatting requirements for the research proposal?**

Yes. The research proposal, including the bibliography, should not exceed nine (9) pages and must be collated as a single document. Proposals must use Times New Roman, 11-point font, be double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. All pages must be numbered and have the applicant's name in the upper right-hand corner. Proposals must be uploaded in Portable Document Format (.PDF).

**Can photographs, charts, and graphs be included in the research proposal?**

Yes, but these must fit within the nine (9) pages allowed for the entire proposal.

**Do I need to submit academic transcripts with my application?**

No, academic transcripts are not required for your application. However, if nominated, the program will request a photocopy of the applicant's highest university degree.

**AWARDING OF FELLOWSHIPS**

**When will the research fellowship awards be announced?**

All nominees and waitlisted candidates will be informed about their status no later than May 2021.

**What are the selection procedures?**

APN Individual Research Fellowship applications are reviewed by a selection committee drawn from the APN Advisory Board. Fellowships are awarded based on established peer-review procedures and standards. The APN Advisory Board is made up of internationally distinguished scholars, policymakers, and practitioners.

### **How many fellowships are awarded?**

Up to seventeen (17) APN Individual Research Fellowships may be offered in a given year.

### **What do I do if my application is selected for an APN Individual Research Fellowship?**

Once a nominee has been notified, the following documents are required to finalize award processing:

1. An official letter from the applicant's home institution or organization indicating the acceptance of the terms of the fellowship award and support for the applicant's research project, which must be written on institutional stationery, signed and dated by the relevant head of administration;
2. A photocopy of the applicant's highest university degree;
3. A signed statement by the fellow declaring that all fellowship research will be completed within the time stipulated and that the funding will be used only for research activities proposed in the fellowship award application; and,
4. A copy of the biodata page of the applicant's passport.

Once these documents have been received and approved by the program, an award letter will be sent confirming fellowship award status.

Please note that all selected applicants will be required to submit a detailed budget indicating the funds necessary to complete the proposed research, which is taken into consideration in determining the final fellowship award amount.

You will also be asked to confirm your availability to attend two workshops in June and December 2021.

### **When can I begin my research, if my proposal is selected for funding?**

Fellows are expected to commence their research projects no later than June 2021 and finish by December 2021. However, due to the uncertainties linked to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ways it is impacting lives and research schedules, there is room for flexibility upon request in writing on a case by case basis, to extend research timelines upon request for up to 12 months.

### **What is the fellowship amount?**

APN Individual Research Fellowship awards vary depending on the research activities supported and proposed budget but will not exceed \$15,000 for each fellow.

### **What do APN Individual Research Fellowships cover?**

APN Individual Research Fellowship awards cover relevant books and articles, project design and development support, necessary equipment (within reason), research/fieldwork-related travel, editorial and professional/institutional support for publications, and conference costs and related travel for dissemination activities.

### **What do APN Individual Research Fellowships NOT cover?**

Fellowship awards do not cover university overhead, individual or institutional contributions, salary support, social security, or other insurance programs. They cannot be used for payment on loans, mortgages, other personal indebtedness, or the storage of personal or household effects. Other excluded expenses will be conveyed to fellows during the final budget proposal and review process.

**Does the APN offer administrative support for travel visas and research clearance?**

No. While APN research fellowships cover visa costs, fellows are responsible for obtaining their own visas, official documentation, and research clearances. Fellows will be responsible for consulting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) on their own and having their proposed research approved before any involvement of human subjects may begin.

**If I receive an APN Individual Research Fellowship, is it compulsory that I attend the two Fellows' workshops?**

Yes. Attendance at the two APN training workshops, for which you will be asked to prepare specific materials and presentations linked to your research, is mandatory. Failure to attend can lead to the termination of your award. These will take place in June and December 2021. By applying you understand that, if selected, your presence and participation in both workshops will be required.

**Do I have to pay my way to attend and participate in the workshops?**

No. The APN will make all necessary arrangements and cover your travel, accommodation, feeding, and other expenses related to the workshop attendance. These need not be included in the project budgets. In special circumstances, fellows will be reimbursed for the full costs of independently arranged travel. In the event that the workshop is held virtually, fellows who require special accommodation with access to good internet facilities will be reimbursed for the full costs of such arrangements.

**What kinds of outputs or products are expected from APN fellows at the conclusion of their projects?**

Research outputs/products may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Books
- Policy briefs
- Articles/essays
- Occasional/Working papers
- Blogs and feature/op-ed articles
- Podcasts

**Do Individual Research Fellowships go directly to fellows or are they channeled through the recipient's university or organization?**

APN Individual Research Fellowships are paid directly to the fellows in three separate installments, pending submission and approval of required progress reports at the beginning, in the middle, and towards the end of the project. In addition to the Interim and Final progress reports, fellows are expected to submit a draft publication before the second workshop in December 2021.

**I am currently applying for several research fellowships. Should I be awarded an APN Individual Research Fellowship, can I also accept funding from other sources?**

Yes. However, please note that no awardee may hold two concurrent SSRC fellowships/grants at the same time. Should you receive two different SSRC fellowships/grants simultaneously, you will be asked to forego one of your own choosing.

Past or current beneficiaries of an SSRC fellowship may apply for an APN fellowship only if their current award will be completed by the time the next APN fellowship commences in June 2021.