

Civil Society Fellowship

A Partnership of ADL and the Aspen Institute

Background

We currently stand at a pivotal point in American history. The political landscape appears more riven than ever by extreme partisanship despite the fact that we face a series of complex challenges that demand broad-based solutions. In today's highly polarized environment, there is an urgency for new approaches and bold ideas that go beyond coarse partisanship to bring people together and generate the paradigm shift our country needs. We believe most of America seeks, indeed craves, respectful dialogue and a civil exchange of ideas.

Our country has seen a revival of political activism and civic energy in recent years. However, these bursts of energy seem to reinforce existing divides rather than unite the country. Indeed, many leaders seem to have abandoned any desire to speak with those who hold different ideas. While change generated at the ballot box has earned headlines, it has done little to create durable coalitions or generate lasting results. Our nation seems more fragmented than at any point in recent memory.

Concept

In this moment, we believe our nation's next generation of community and civil society leaders would greatly benefit from the opportunity to refine and hone their leadership skills while building relationships across movements. To address this need, ADL and the Aspen Institute have launched the *Civil Society Fellowship: A Partnership of ADL and the Aspen Institute (CSF)*.

The CSF is modeled on the Henry Crown Fellowship, the premier leadership development program at the Aspen Institute that moves leaders from "success to significance." The CSF intends to build on the Henry Crown approach of recruiting a "mosaic" of participants that represent the breadth of our country's diversity and commit them to intense introspection and dialogue. Each emerging CSF class of leaders will have the opportunity to engage with one another through experiential learning, building trust based on shared insights and mutual respect through informed dialogue.

Candidates

Candidates for the CSF would be individuals between 25 to 45 years old who have demonstrated a capacity to build a community, movement, organization or idea. These individuals will have reached an inflection point in their professional development and will be open to the kind of facilitated introspection that a fellowship can provide. Ideally such candidates would benefit from a process of intellectual exploration augmented by the kind of networking and resources that ADL and the Aspen Institute can provide.

Each CSF class will be comprised of a varied grouping of 20-23 individuals based on a range of attributes including gender, geography, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, ideological perspective and political affiliation. Diversity is a critical goal and ADL expects, and will encourage, Fellows to challenge one another's ideas respectfully.

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Structure

The CSF is structured around a series of seminars. Each class will participate in five seminars over a period of two-and-a-half to three years. The seminar experience will be based on the classic Aspen Institute model. Content will include the renowned *Aspen Seminar* as well as *The Challenge of Leadership*, based on the Henry Crown model. These two seminars will ground Fellows in the Aspen Institute's unique pedagogy and serve as the basis for the Aspen Global Leadership Network's (AGLN) theory of leadership.

In a departure from the traditional Aspen Institute model, these seminars will be complemented by three location-based sessions that will take place outside of Aspen. These destination-based seminars will be designed to provide experiential learning for the participants that combines text-based engagement with on-site visits. They will be created and curated by ADL, in collaboration with the Aspen Institute and will take place in specific locations in North America, Western Europe and the Middle East.

Partners

Both ADL and the Aspen Institute share a deep concern for the core values of our democracy and a strong desire to ensure that we live up to them as a country. ADL is an effective advocate on matters of justice, while the Aspen Institute masterfully identifies and cultivates emerging leaders. By tapping into the complementary capabilities of both organizations, this collaboration has the potential to enable ADL and Aspen to magnify the impact of our Fellows to make progress on some of the most important issues of our time.

ADL and the Aspen Institute will also recruit additional organizational partners that will bring expertise and ensure a balanced experience in the Fellowship's on-site trainings, particularly in our sessions abroad and in the American South. These prospective partners will enhance the programs in specific areas: leadership development, civic engagement and legislative action. Such partnerships will offer CSF participants mentoring and networking opportunities that will enhance their experience.

Oversight

The Executive Committee will be charged with oversight of the program. They will meet twice per year to review progress, discuss challenges, evaluate program goals and identify new opportunities for growth. The Executive Committee is charged with oversight of the program while the Advisory Committee of national leaders representing diverse perspectives will help in recruiting nominees for each cohort.

- **Jonathan Greenblatt***, CEO, ADL
- **Nike Irvin***, Managing Director, Civil Society Fellowship
- **Hilary Pennington**, Executive Vice President for Program, Ford Foundation
- **Dan Porterfield**, President and CEO, The Aspen Institute
- **Marc Rowan**, Co-Founder, Apollo Global Management

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Additionally, an Advisory Committee, including former Henry Crown Fellows, members of the Aspen Global Leadership Network (AGLN) and national leaders will serve to identify and nominate Fellows for each cohort. The Advisory Committee currently includes:

- **Abdullah Antepi**, Chief Representative of Muslim Affairs & Adjunct Faculty of Islamic Studies, Duke University
- **Lanhee Chen**, Director of Domestic Policy Studies, Public Policy Program, Stanford University & Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution
- **Mindy Finn**, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Stand Up Republic
- **Dolores Huerta**, Activist & Founder, Dolores Huerta Foundation
- **David Krone**, Former Chief of Staff to Senator Harry Reid
- **Johnnie Moore**, Founder & CEO, The KAIROS Company
- **Farah Pandith**, Senior Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School Harvard University & Adjunct Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations
- **Jonah Pesner**, Senior Vice President, Union of Reform Judaism & Executive Director of the Religious Action Center of the Union for Reform Judaism
- **Sonal Shah***, Founder & Executive Director, Beeck Center for Social Impact, Georgetown University
- **Trabian Shorters***, Activist & Founder, BMe Community
- **Shamina Singh***, President, Center for Inclusive Growth & Executive Vice President of Sustainability Mastercard

* Denotes Henry Crown Fellow / AGLN Member

Conclusion

ADL and the Aspen Institute believe the CSF can amplify its Fellows' individual causes to generate a more lasting impact on American society. Through a series of deep investments in the mind and spirit, we hope to build trust and cultivate skills among the next generation of leaders and catalyze the post-political paradigm shift that our country so desperately needs. By guiding our fellows through a series of highly curated experiences that enable shared learning and deep relationships, we hope CSF participants can move from outrage to impact and change the future of America.