



Opportunity to host a Civic Science Fellow: Neuroscience and Society

I. The Civic Science Fellowship and Civic Science Community

The [Civic Science Fellows](#) program is building a network of leaders working to ensure that advances in science, health, and technology benefit all people. The program connects science with policy, communities, and evidence to bring innovative approaches and solutions to collective challenges. The program aims to catalyze a culture of civic science—where new forms of collaboration create a future powered by science and community dialogue.

The Civic Science Fellows program aims to build a vibrant cross-sector community through the engagement and participation of different partners, who work together to strengthen the field of civic science. The network includes:

- **Civic Science Fellows**, who are early career leaders from diverse demographic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. They have expertise in disciplines relevant to civic science and are poised to work effectively across communities and stakeholders. They may come from any number of professional backgrounds, including biological, physical, or social sciences; math, technology, or engineering; media, journalism, or communication; formal or informal science education; science funding; community organizing; or public policy.
- **Host partners**, who host Fellows for approximately 18 months as they pilot cutting-edge civic science projects. Hosts are innovative organizations with high potential for leverage across different spheres and disciplines. They may include media organizations, community organizations, scientific societies, academic institutions, philanthropic associations, and nonprofits, among others.
- **Funding partners**, who provide financial support to host partners for Fellowship positions and invest in building the program and network. The Fellowship is organized by the Rita Allen Foundation, with other partners including The Kavli Foundation, Dana Foundation, Doris Duke Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, John Templeton Foundation, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, and others.
- **Advisors and Civic Science Advisory committee members**, who are experts and practitioners across a variety of fields and sectors. Drawing on their knowledge and relationships, they strengthen the work of the Fellows and link the program to other relevant efforts.
- **The broader Civic Science community**, including Fellows and partners from the first two Civic Science Fellowship cycles, experts contributing to the Fellows' learning program, and a number of adjacent programs and organizations with shared connections and insights.

II. What Fellows Bring to Host Organizations

As part of the Civic Science Fellowship program, Fellows are hired by a variety of innovative host institutions to pilot civic science projects in partnership with diverse communities. These projects are co-developed by the Fellow and the host partner. Fellows will contribute as active participants in the intellectual life and work of the organizations that host them. Over the course of their Fellowship, Fellows will:

- Lead the co-design and implementation of a Fellowship project in close collaboration with their host institution.
- Create at least one substantial, concrete civic science work product to capture new knowledge and share it with a broader community by the end of their Fellowship term. Products may include media or content, community events, learning experiences, pilot programs, prospectus or research guidelines, research, and tools, among others. Products should have the potential for contributing significant new knowledge to both the field and host institution.

A Civic Science Fellow's project is shaped around central learning questions of importance to the host organization, funding partner(s), and their community. These questions are refined in collaboration with a Fellow once they have been selected and begin their work. For more on the focus of the potential themes of this Fellowship opportunity, see section IV. The program focuses on anticipatory, emerging societal issues related to science and technology, where there is large potential benefit in proactive civic science approaches, including engagement with communities underrepresented in scientific fields.

Fellows are selected by host partners for their experience relevant to civic science, their domain experience relevant to a host organization's specific project, their ability to engage individuals historically underrepresented in scientific fields and underserved by science outreach efforts, and their demonstrated commitment to addressing issues at the intersection of science and society. Profiles of the current [cohort of Civic Science Fellows](#) are available on the Civic Science Fellows website.

Fellowships are typically 18 months, including a core 12-month cohort learning period, and 6 months dedicated to finalizing their Fellowship project. During the core 12-month cohort learning period, Fellows will spend approximately 75 percent of their time (~30 hours/week) on carrying out the project co-designed with their host institution, and 25 percent of their time (~10 hours/week) on shared learning and networking activities outside of their direct work with the host institution, including periodic convenings.

III. What Host Partners Contribute

Institutions that host Civic Science Fellows identify, hire, and support a Civic Science Fellow for the duration of their Fellowship. As part of this, host partners agree to:

- **Provide an environment and other support conducive to a productive Fellowship experience**, from physical resources to ongoing mentoring. Hosts can serve as coaches and mentors or connect Fellows to others who can fill that role. Hosts should also establish opportunities for regular check-ins with their Fellows.

- **Support the co-design of a Fellowship project**, a process which will be led by the Fellow in close collaboration with their host throughout the duration of the Fellowship term.
- **Center best practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion** in their Fellow selection process and in their workplace environment and culture. Successful civic science requires the inclusion of people from diverse demographic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. Recruitment of Fellows should seek to develop a diverse group of leaders poised to effectively work across communities and stakeholders. Host partners are expected to conduct a diverse and inclusive search for a Fellow. Receiving Fellowship funds is not a means to support existing staff.
- **Contribute financial, administrative, technological, and other necessary resources** to select, onboard, and compensate a Fellow for the Fellowship term. The Dana Foundation and The Kavli Foundation will provide grant(s) to the selected host institution to support a Fellow's stipend (the Fellowship recommends a stipend of \$80,000-\$85,000 per year), fringe benefits, and fundamental administrative expenses (computer and modest travel stipend). Grant funds may also be used to support other necessary expenses such as consultant fees, for instance, to ensure expertise in public engagement is available for the project. For additional information, see section V below.
- **Provide logistical support needed for the Fellow to attend virtual and in-person Fellowship Convenings.** These include weekly virtual Fellows Labs from February 2024–February 2025, as well as a closing in-person convening of Civic Science Fellows and Partners in February 2025.

IV. Areas of Interest for a Potential Civic Science Project

The Dana and Kavli Foundations seek to support two partner organizations to each host a Civic Science Fellow in the area of “Neuroscience and Society.” As the neuroscience field continues to rapidly advance, new research models and discoveries are pushing the frontiers of our understanding of the brain and nervous system. Our use of neuroscience knowledge and technologies has the potential to benefit humankind, while also potentially creating new challenges and inequities. The Dana Foundation and The Kavli Foundation recognize critical opportunities and challenges around how neuroscience connects with society. Below are two separate opportunities for host organizations; a prospective host organization can apply for one or both opportunities.

a. Opportunity: Civic Science Fellow focused on “Neuroscience and Society” (co-funded by the Dana and Kavli Foundations):

The Dana and Kavli Foundations will jointly support a Neuroscience and Society Fellow whose project explores the ethical and societal implications accompanying a basic neuroscience discovery, and bidirectionally engages diverse public(s) on these issues to deepen trust and inform research or policy. The specific neuroscience focus topic is intentionally undefined but should be related to basic/discovery aspects of neuroscience. The host partner and the Fellow, once selected, can develop the specific neuroscience focus. For example, the thematic focus of this Fellowship could be on exploring the ethical implications of—and opportunities for public engagement related to—emerging fundamental discoveries in the following areas:

- Neurobiology of brain organoids and chimeras as research models.
- Brain-machine interfaces.
- Disorders of consciousness.
- Genetics and epigenetics of brain diseases and disorders.
- Other areas at the frontiers of neuroscience discovery and of interest to the host organization.

b. Opportunity: Civic Science Fellow focused on “Neuroscience, AI, and Society” (funded by the Dana Foundation):

The Dana Foundation will support a Neuroscience and Society Fellow whose project explores the ethical and societal implications accompanying developments at the intersection of neuroscience and artificial intelligence (AI), and bidirectionally engages diverse public(s) on these issues to deepen trust and inform research or policy. The specific focus topic at the intersection of neuroscience and AI is intentionally undefined and the host partner and the Fellow, once selected, can develop the specific topical focus. Potential topics of exploration for the Fellowship could include:

- How the human brain is affected by interacting with information created or curated by AI.
- Use of AI for drug discovery in neuroscience.
- The emerging field of organoid intelligence.
- Use of AI in predicting and/or diagnosing brain diseases and disorders.
- Use of AI to analyze neural data sets and make predictions about human perception, emotion, cognition, or behavior.
- Other areas at the intersection of neuroscience and AI and of interest to the host organization.

A set of guiding principles and conditions inspires the vision of the Dana and Kavli Foundations for Civic Science Fellows:

- There is a desire to consider ethical and societal issues more proactively than has traditionally been done. Bringing in these perspectives earlier in the discovery process, rather than during application phases, would strengthen long-term outcomes of research and technology development.
- When publics engage in discussions about ethical issues in science, rarely are their thoughts or opinions discussed or shared directly with those in the scientific community making discoveries.
- Scientists making discoveries often do not have the resources, connections, or support to examine the ethical implications of their research, let alone to engage public(s) or implement effective bidirectional public engagement to explore and discuss these implications.
- Ethicists, scientists, and scholars of science communication and public engagement often do not proactively collaborate to address ethical implications and consider public perspectives about breakthrough discoveries.

The Dana Foundation and The Kavli Foundation will not entertain proposals that:

- Utilize primarily unidirectional approaches for public engagement on neuroscience or operate from an information deficit model perspective.

- Lack clear public engagement goals and a strategy to select evidence-based methods that achieve those goals.
- Lack clear impacts beyond a siloed, one-off discussion or publication(s).
- Lack a component that connects public views to the neuroscientific community in some bidirectional capacity.

V. How to Apply

The Kavli and Dana Foundations invite submissions for host partnership proposals to support a Civic Science Fellow in Neuroscience and Society and/or a Civic Science Fellow in Neuroscience, AI, and Society. If you are interested in exploring a partnership to host a Fellow on behalf of your organization, applications should be submitted no later than September 1, 2023. Instructions and a portal to submit your application can be found here: <https://dana.givingdata.com/portal/campaign/Dana2023CivicScience>

The portal will open on July 10, 2023, and remain open through September 1, 2023. In addition to organizational details, you will be requested to submit a proposal (no more than three pages) that includes:

- Proposal focus: “Neuroscience and Society” and/or “Neuroscience, AI, and Society”
- Big picture: Why are you interested in hosting a Civic Science Fellow focused in one of the identified areas? How does the Civic Science Fellows program fit into the change your organization seeks to make in the world?
- With the above areas of interest in mind, what topical focus and key learning questions do you envision a potential Fellow might pursue during an 18-month Civic Science Fellowship? What projects or work products can you imagine emerging, understanding that these will ultimately be shaped in collaboration with the Fellow?
- Overview of the proposed academic/organizational divisions, departments and scholarly infrastructure that would be involved: What could a Civic Science Fellow expect? What format/approach to providing a rich experience for the Fellow would be used?
- Any other relevant considerations of your approach or program positioning that may benefit our review as we seek to identify a partner organization.
- Overview of key personnel: Who would serve as the Fellow’s manager? Who at the organization would contribute as a thought partner, mentor, and/or collaborator? Please provide a brief explanation of why these are relevant colleagues or collaborators to the Fellow.

The submission should also include a high-level budget summarizing costs to support the Fellow for 18 months. This can include 18 months’ salary and appropriate fringe benefits (based on a 12-month, \$85,000 salary), a modest travel stipend (e.g., \$5,000), and equipment (e.g., laptop). Additional expenses a host institution will incur in hosting a Fellow can be included and may be negotiated (such as materials and supplies, software, and consulting services). Include any in-kind contributions the organization can provide, if any, including office space in the same department as the Fellow’s supervisor.

We request that applicants use the budget template provided. However, applicants may use their own templates and forms as long as the documents reflect the components in the template we provide. Note that incomplete forms or documentation may delay your application's review and progress. Please let us know if you have any questions; we can help you complete the budget. Also, please note that funding for the Fellow provides support for 18-months: March 1, 2024-August 31, 2025. For clarity, we reflect both 18-month and annual 12-month funding in the budget template.

Application Review Information

Applications to this RFP will be reviewed for the following elements:

- Alignment between host organization goals and goals of the Civic Science Fellowship.
- Appropriate topical focus on anticipatory, emerging societal issues related to neuroscience and neurotechnology as described in the two opportunities above, with emphasis on bidirectional public engagement between neuroscientists and publics that aims to deepen trust and inform research or policy.
- A host partner's intention to create a Fellowship structure that includes a specific, feasible, impactful project and allows time for professional development opportunities.
- Commitment to hire, mentor, and include a Fellow in the host organization for the duration of the Fellowship in an inclusive manner.

VI. Other Considerations

Eligibility

Institutions in and outside of the United States are eligible with the following requirements:

- To qualify, host organizations must be designated as a tax-exempt organization under the provisions of 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Institutions outside the US must pass an [equivalency determination \(ED\)](#); applicants are encouraged to ensure eligibility prior to submission of an application, based on home organization policies and procedures.
- Institutions must be able to provide additional documentation to support their proposals if shortlisted as a host organization, namely EIN or international equivalent, W8-BEN-E, payment and bank account in the organization's name, recently audited financial statements, list of board of directors and other documents including by-laws, annual budget, and IRS Federal Form 990.

Timeline

- July 10: Application portal opens (via GivingData)
- September 1, 2023, 5 pm PT: Proposals due.
- Mid-late September 2023: Selected applicants will be contacted to participate in Zoom interviews.
- Mid-October 2023: Two organizations will be selected as host institutions. All applicants will be notified of the decisions.
- Late October 2023: Awards issued, contingent upon administrative management.
- December 2023: Each host institution leads selection of a Civic Science Fellow. This will occur in consultation and communication with the Civic Science Fellows program, to

- ensure all calls for Fellows are open concurrently.
- January-March 2024: Selected Civic Science Fellows begin term. Start date may be negotiable due to existing commitments, academic calendar, and other factors.
- March 2024: Civic Science Fellow core learning program begins.

For questions about applying through the GivingData system, including budget-related questions, please contact Celina Sooksatan, Grants Director at the Dana Foundation, at csooksatan@dana.org.

For questions about the content of your application, please contact Science.and.society@kavlifoundation.org and include 'Civic Science' in the subject line of your email.

To see all currently available opportunities to host a Civic Science Fellow, please see the [Civic Science Fellows website](#).

