2020 AVAC Advocacy Fellows Program
Frequently Asked Questions for Host Organisations

Application Deadline 20 September 2019
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1. What is AVAC?

AVAC is a global non-profit organization that works to accelerate the ethical development and global delivery of HIV prevention tools as part of a comprehensive and integrated response to the epidemic. Through education, policy analysis, advocacy and a network of global collaborations, AVAC mobilizes and supports efforts to:

- DELIVER proven HIV prevention tools for immediate impact
- DEMONSTRATE and roll out new HIV prevention options and
- DEVELOP long-term solutions needed to end the epidemic

While most of AVAC’s staff is based in New York City, we have team members in Kenya, Malawi and South Africa. AVAC’s programs, projects and partnerships operate globally, focusing particularly on countries where HIV prevention research is conducted and where scale-up of proven prevention methods is ongoing and/or would be most beneficial. More information is at www.avac.org.

2. What is the Advocacy Fellows Program?

The Advocacy Fellows Program is a project of AVAC. It is designed to support emerging and mid-career advocates to design and implement advocacy projects focused on HIV prevention research and implementation in their countries and communities. Advocacy Fellows carry out their projects while based at “Host Organisations” that are active partners in the Fellows Program process. AVAC provides technical and financial support to Fellows—both salary and project budget—for the duration of the Fellowship year (April 2020 – March 2021).

The overall goal of Advocacy Fellows is to expand and strengthen the capacity of civil society advocates and organisations to monitor, support and help shape HIV prevention research and rapid rollout of new effective interventions in low- and middle-income countries with high HIV burdens. The program is guided by the belief that effective, sustainable advocacy grows out of work that reflects country level organisational and individual interests and priorities and is led by passionate advocates who are motivated to bring change. The Fellows Program is implemented through a close collaboration among the Advocacy Fellow, the Host Organisation and AVAC.

Host Organisations are critical partners in the Fellowship, and hosting Fellows is an opportunity for the organisations to further develop their own work in this field.

This round of applications will recruit the eleventh cadre of Advocacy Fellows. Seventy (70) Fellowships have been awarded from 2010 to 2019. The 2019 Fellows are currently
implementing their advocacy projects. To learn more about alumni and current Fellows and their projects, please visit [www.avac.org/fellows](http://www.avac.org/fellows).

For more general information about the Advocacy Fellows Program, its goals and scope – please see the [Advocacy Fellows Program Information Packet](#).

3. **How long is the 2020 HIV Prevention Advocacy Fellowship?**

The Advocacy Fellows Program will run for one year, from April 2020 to March 2021. Selected Advocacy Fellows should also plan to spend a few days working closely with AVAC and their hosts to develop their work plans before the Fellows Program year begins.

4. **What role does the Host Organisation play in the Fellowship Year?**

*Physical and programmatic “home” and supervision for the Advocacy Fellow*

The Host Organisation plays an integral role in the Fellowship. Each Advocacy Fellow is housed at an organisation in her/his country. The Fellowship is implemented through a close collaboration that links the Advocacy Fellow, the Host Organisation and AVAC. The Host Organisation provides a supervisor for the Advocacy Fellow who monitors and supports her/his activities and ensures they are integrated into the broader goals and projects of the organisation. AVAC provides consultative support to the Advocacy Fellows and has regular contact with each Host Supervisor throughout the project year.

*Fiscal and administrative grant partner*

The Host Organisation is the signatory on and administrator of the Advocacy Fellowship grant. The grant includes financial support from AVAC for the Advocacy Fellow equivalent to a year’s salary, an activity budget for Fellow’s project and overhead costs for the Host Organisation.

Overhead or administrative costs are those incurred by the organisation to support all activities (for example, rent, phone, some personnel costs such as executive director, accounting and administrative staff time). Note that these overhead costs cannot be directly attributed to the Fellowship activity. Overhead costs are calculated as 15 percent of the total grant. Please note that the grant does not include any direct funding to support other personnel costs at the Host Organisation, only the Advocacy Fellow.

The Host Organisation’s finance/administration team plays an important role in preparing the Fellow’s grant and throughout the execution of the project and should be involved as early on in the process as possible.
5. What is the Host Organisation’s role in the application process?

There should be preliminary discussions between the applicant and the proposed Host Organisation to consider the organisation’s interest in Hosting the Fellow and project.

The proposed supervisor (see descriptions below) and/or another key contact at the organisation will be expected to provide relevant information to the applicant to fill the required forms and will complete a letter of support on behalf of the proposed Host Organisation.

As part of the application process, the Host Organisation will be expected to submit information and background documents. These include:

- Host Organisation Information form
- Letter of Support from Host Organisation
- Host Organisation’s proof of organisational registration
- Host Organisation’s two most recent audited financial statements
- Host Organisation’s mission statement or charter
- Host Organisation’s annual budget
- Host Organisation’s organisational or staffing chart
- Host Organisation commitment form

Please also see the Advocacy Fellows Application Form and Advocacy Fellows Program Information Packet for details.

If the applicant makes the short list, the proposed Host Supervisor will also be contacted for an interview with the AVAC team.

Please note that current AVAC grantees (hosting a 2019 Fellow or receiving another project grant) should please contact AVAC first at fellows@avac.org and your key project contact at AVAC) before agreeing to Host an applicant. Existing grantees will only be considered as prospective 2020 Host Organisations in specific circumstances.

Host Organisations can get in touch with the AVAC Fellows team at fellows@avac.org at any time during the application process to ask specific questions and get feedback on the Fellowship, the application process and required forms.

6. Who supervises the Advocacy Fellow?

The Advocacy Fellow has multiple sources of support, consultation and supervision. The Fellow will have a Host Supervisor in the Host Organisation. The Host Supervisor monitors and supports the Advocacy Fellow’s activities. S/he ensures that the Fellowship project and Fellow are integrated into the broader goals and projects of the organisation, are appropriate to the context and are linked to other local/national initiatives and priorities.
The Advocacy Fellow will also work closely with the AVAC Fellows team who will work closely with both the Fellow and the Fellow’s Host Supervisor(s) to provide technical assistance and guidance. The AVAC team is in regular contact with the Advocacy Fellow to monitor progress in her/his work plan and its implementation. The team offers technical guidance and helps link the Fellow to other projects/activities/contacts that will help the Fellow and/or her/his project.

7. A current employee is interested in applying for the Fellows Program. Will s/he become an employee of AVAC?

No. Advocacy Fellows are not employees of AVAC. The Host Organisation signs and administers a Fellowship grant agreement, which includes the Advocacy Fellow’s compensation and applicable benefits (vacation days, medical coverage etc.), through its payroll or other suitable mechanism. Financially and administratively, the Advocacy Fellow is housed at the Host Organisation, with funding for her/his time and activities coming from the Fellowship grant. Description of the Fellow’s role and title at the Host Organisation is decided between Host and Fellow in each case.

8. If offered a Fellowship, can an employee continue with her/his current responsibilities and add the Fellowship responsibilities?

No. The Advocacy Fellow cannot have two jobs or take on extra consultancies. The Fellowship is meant to be the primary focus of the Fellow’s year. Most Fellows devote 100 percent of their time to the Fellowship. However, if the organisation requires a small portion of the Fellow’s time towards ongoing work and/or related projects, AVAC will consider a work plan that devotes up to a maximum of 25 percent of the Fellow’s time to other organisational responsibilities. The Host Organisation is responsible for the proportion of the salary and benefit for any non-Fellowship work responsibilities. These arrangements must be discussed with the AVAC Fellows team prior to signing of the grant agreement, and are considered on a case-by-case basis.

9. The prospective Advocacy Fellow isn’t employed by the Host organisation at present. Do we have to hire him/her for the Fellowship?

Yes. The Fellow is considered to be an employee of the Host Organisation during the Fellowship year. S/he is expected to fit within the organisation’s structure, bound by the same policies and receive the same benefits and support that other employees do.
10. The prospective Advocacy Fellow isn’t employed by the Host Organisation at present. Do we have to hire him/her when the Advocacy Fellows Project year ends?

No. The Fellows program is designed to build the capacity of the Advocacy Fellows but also strengthen the Host Organisation’s institutional capacity for HIV prevention research and implementation advocacy. We anticipate that Advocacy Fellows will develop and execute projects that are of ongoing relevance to their communities and Host Organisations and, where possible, these projects and the Fellows will be integrated by the Host and continue to develop after the one-year Advocacy Fellowship has concluded. However, the Host Organisation is under no obligation to hire the Advocacy Fellow at the end of the project. While some Fellows have been retained at their respective Host Organisations, others have moved on. During the work planning process, AVAC will work with the Host Organisation to address country-specific issues related to local labour laws—e.g., ensuring that the Fellowship is structured such that at the conclusion of the one-year project, if/when the Fellow moves on, the Host Organisation is not liable for severance pay for the Advocacy Fellow.

11. How to determine Advocacy Fellow’s financial compensation?

Financial compensation is determined on a case-by-case basis with input from the Host Organisation, salary benchmarks for individuals at comparable jobs/experience levels at related NGOs or other organisations in the same country, the Advocacy Fellow’s current salary and considerations for equity across the Fellow’s cadre.

AVAC is committed to providing compensation that is adequate, fair and sufficient for the Fellow to work on her/his project on a full-time basis. Compensation can also include benefits such as medical insurance and social security as mandated by local labour laws and organisational human resources policies. The Host Organisation is responsible for paying the Fellow’s salary or compensation (provided through the grant) and administering her/his benefits. This is commonly done through the Host Organisation’s payroll and benefits program; other financial arrangements such as a consultancy agreement could be considered.

As part of the process for determining the Fellow’s financial compensation, Host Organisations and/or Fellows will be asked to provide information such as payslips, organisational salary structure, human resource policies and other information that confirms the candidate’s salary history or that of individuals within the Host Organisation at comparable positions/experience levels.

We strongly encourage Host Organisations and prospective Advocacy Fellows to have detailed conversations about salary and benefits expectations as early as possible in the Fellowship application process. In an ideal scenario, the Host Organisation and the Fellow
will provide feedback from discussions and expectations as soon as, or shortly after, a Fellowship award offer has been made. This information will be used as the basis for setting final salary and benefits, which takes place during the work plan development period for accepted Fellows. Failure to discuss salary and benefits expectations early in the process can slow the grant-making process and launch of the Fellowship activities. It is important to emphasise that the Fellow’s compensation will only be set after they have accepted the Fellowship.

Every effort will be made to ensure that Fellows receive adequate and fair remuneration at equitable levels across the cadre of Fellows. However, from past experience, some Fellows may receive increased amounts and others may have to take a cut compared to previous salaries.

*Please note that AVAC cannot commit to a specific amount when the Fellowship is offered and the Fellow will have to take this into account when accepting the Fellowship.*

12. **How much work is involved in hosting and supervising an Advocacy Fellow?**

Workload varies. In some instances, Advocacy Fellows work alongside their supervisors at Host Organisations with daily exchanges, management and interaction. In other instances, the Fellow works more independently, checking in with the Supervisor on weekly or other scheduled intervals. At minimum, hosting an Advocacy Fellow involves providing the financial and administrative support for her/his grant including payroll and benefits, cash advances and reimbursement of vendors for Fellowship-related activities, and biweekly or more frequent management on the part of the Supervisor.

After the Advocacy Fellowship has been offered and before it begins in April 2020, the Host Supervisor will be the main contact to the Host Organisation. S/he will be involved in discussions to develop the Fellow’s work plan and budget, in leading the compensation negotiations with the Fellow and ensuring the Host has all the information it needs about the grant to be signed.

The Supervisor is expected to participate in periodic calls with AVAC mentors, quarterly teleconferences with other Host Supervisors and s/he may be invited to AVAC convened-meetings. Supervisors will be expected to participate in the *Fellows’ Orientation Workshop* scheduled at the start of the Fellowship year. The Orientation workshop introduces and orients new Advocacy Fellows and Host Supervisors to the program and provides an opportunity for networking and building peer/mentor relationships among new Advocacy Fellows, alumni and Host Organisations.

It is important to note that the Fellowship grants do not provide financial compensation for the Host Supervisor. It is expected that these activities will be incorporated into her/his current job responsibilities.
Finally, the Host Organisation is responsible for preparing the financial and program reports (at the mid-point and conclusion of the Fellowship) that account for activities implemented and funds disbursed as will be outlined in the grant agreement.

13. Who in the primary Host Organisation is best suited to be the Advocacy Fellow’s supervisor?

A Fellow’s Host Supervisor should be someone in a leadership role at the Host Organisation who has adequate time, interest and commitment to supervise an Advocacy Fellow throughout the twelve months of her/his Fellowship. In addition, the proposed Supervisor’s portfolio should be pertinent to the Advocacy Fellow’s activities (see Question 17 in Advocacy Fellows Program Information Packet).

- The Host Supervisor is expected to give a percentage of her/his time to overseeing and advising the Advocacy Fellow on program activities and management, ensuring that the project is integrated into current organisational activities, that the Fellow is on track both programmatically and financially, and where applicable, working with the Fellow to identify ways to sustain and build on activities after the Fellowship year is completed.

- The Host Supervisor is the primary supervisor for the Fellow. As well as reviewing reports, advising on strategy and overseeing implementation, they are also expected to link the Fellow/project to other relevant organisational partners and ensure that proposed plans are appropriate to the context and protocol of the community/country. The supervisor will also structure ways to ensure that others in the Host Organisation are kept abreast of the Fellowship project progress.

14. What does the Host Organisation receive in return?

As noted earlier, as the fiscal partner, the Host Organisation administers the Fellowship grant. The grant includes financial support for the Advocacy Fellow, an activity budget for the Advocacy Fellow’s project and overhead costs for the Host Organisation. AVAC will pay up to 15 percent for overhead costs to be applied to total direct costs. Overhead costs or administrative costs are those costs that are incurred by the organisation to support all activities and cannot be directly attributed to the Fellowship activity (for example, rent, phone, some personnel costs such as executive director, accounting and administrative staff time). The Advocacy Fellowship offers a wealth of opportunities for technical capacity-building for the Fellow, her/his supervisor and other staff members in the Host Organisation. This includes participation in skills-building training, phone calls and site visits by AVAC staff and partners, and access to AVAC programs, finance and administrative staff both during the Fellowship and as partners in the future.
15. How will the Host Organisation be kept informed about the Fellow’s activities?

Each Advocacy Fellow and supervisor pair is expected to set up mechanisms for providing feedback and progress updates to the relevant staff at the Host Organisation. Each Fellow prepares monthly and other program reports that s/he circulates to both the mentors and the supervisor. Host supervisors may also have periodic calls with AVAC staff. Generally, the Host Organisation is encouraged to develop a reporting system that meets its needs.

16. What happens when the Fellowship is over—how is the project sustained?

AVAC is committed to helping Advocacy Fellows and Host Organisations build on the experiences of the Fellowship year. Midway through the Fellowship year, AVAC encourages Fellows, Supervisors and other Host Organisation staff to review progress and think about sustainability plans including possible follow-up projects or next steps, strategies for identifying and approaching additional sources of funding. In some instances, additional funding may be available for follow-up work through AVAC. In other instances, AVAC will work with the Host Organisation and Advocacy Fellow to identify other potential partners and sources of support. In every case, the Host Organisation and Advocacy Fellow remain part of the broader advocates’ network fostered by AVAC, and will be included in relevant national, regional and global activities going forward.

17. Can organisations apply to host an Advocacy Fellow?

At this time, we are accepting applications only from individuals. If your organisation is interested in hosting an Advocacy Fellow, please contact the AVAC Fellows team at fellows@avac.org to explore this possibility as we may be looking to pair applicants with Host Organisations.

If you are a current AVAC grantee (hosting a 2019 Fellow or receiving another project grant), please contact AVAC first (fellows@avac.org and your key contact at AVAC) before agreeing to Host an applicant. Existing grantees will only be considered in specific circumstances. If you need more information, please contact us.

For more information, please visit www.avac.org/application-materials-advocacy-fellows-program or contact fellows@avac.org.