

CALL FOR PROPOSALS POLICY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP FALL 2019 Open Society Foundations - Armenia

The Open Society Foundations Armenia (OSFA) works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies with governments accountable to their citizens. Human rights, transparency, access to justice, promotion of civil society and social inclusion are among Foundations' core areas of concern. Responding to the challenges of open and pluralistic society, and in its quest for an empowered civil society, OSFA announces Call for Proposals for the Policy Research Fellowship, [PRF Fall 2019](#). The program invites applications from policy researchers and advocates who are willing and prepared to conduct credible and innovative policy research identifying critical open society challenges, to develop practical solutions and to take up measures towards effective advocacy. The program also aims to enhance the capacity of researchers in influencing public policy-making processes, and encourages proactive cooperation between independent researchers, decision-makers, the civil society and the policy community, to achieve a higher quality of policy analysis and research-based dialogue.

ELIGIBILITY The PRF Program is open to civil society representatives, university faculty, policy researchers, analysts and advisers. The applicants must have at least an MA degree in Public Policy and Administration, Political Science, Law, Economics, International Relations or any other related field. Experience in policy analysis and advocacy is desirable. Strong research skills are highly valued. Availability of fellows to devote significant time to the fellowship is required. Applications are accepted from individual authors or groups of two co-authors; the duration of research projects is up to five months.

EXPECTATIONS Applicants are expected to identify and conceptualise specific issues in the framework of challenges in Armenia today,¹ conduct public policy research and contribute to public discourse by promoting policy concerns, and generating solutions to identified problems. Successful applicants are expected to question policies, reforms or their implementation, formulate concerns based on reasoned arguments and apply relevant methodological techniques. Fellows are expected to provide a structured and informed reporting in the form of a policy paper² and a policy brief with clear and targeted recommendations.

Fellows are also expected to develop advocacy strategies, and delegate time for their implementation to promote a public policy concern, including identifying relevant decision-makers, groups and allies, initiating targeted consultations, engaging in formats of public communication, networks and following-up on policy developments. It is expected that fellows take the initiative for the advocacy of their research results.

¹ Applicants are encouraged to formulate concerns based on but not limited to suggested areas presented in [Appendix 1](#) (page 3).

² An average of 10,000 words.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES Applicants are required to submit [*PRF Fall 2019 Application Form*](#)³ by carefully considering and responding to the framework designed for proposal submission and evaluation. All applicants will be informed about the results of competition in a period of five weeks after the submission deadline. Shortlisted applicants may be invited for an interview.

BUDGET Fellows will receive individual grants up to \$3,000 (USD) to cover research-related costs.

TRAINING OSFA PRF assists fellows in developing policy analytical capacity. Fellows participate in a mandatory seminar on research methods, policy writing and advocacy. Fellows are expected to actively participate and contribute with their expertise to the policy discussions and meetings organised by the OSFA and other civil society organisations.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND CONTACTS All interested applicants are required to submit the Application Form ([Appendix 2](#)) and supporting documents: resume (mandatory) and sample/link to previously conducted research (optional) to OSFA via email: register@osi.am by:

Monday, 21 October 2019 17:00

Applications are submitted electronically.

Applicants will receive an electronic confirmation of application receipt to their email in a period of two working days after submission. If no confirmation email is received – contact us. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. For questions or additional information, please contact Policy Research Program Coordinator Valentina Gevorgyan valentina@osi.am or (010) 533 862, 536 758.

Information session:

Friday, 11 October 2019 17:00

Vivaldi Hall, Grand Hotel Yerevan, 14 Abovyan str., 0001 Yerevan

³ [See Appendix 2 \(page 5\) for Application Form, also available here.](#)

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Appendix 1

Public policy research support in the new political environment

In Armenia's post-revolutionary environment, there are opportunities towards country's democratic transformation. The agenda for systemic reforms will be conditioned by the implementation of state's commitments, political will, and the availability of evidence-based research support. The public policy research support in a number of sectors will stimulate the development of informed decisions and contribute to the transparency and monitoring of policymaking processes.

The Policy Research Fellowship Program aims to enhance the value and role of research in public policy decision making. The Program supports the public, local and international institutions by developing independent policy research with clear and feasible recommendations. The Program stimulates open dialogue between the different members of the policy community. Fellows are expected to provide an in-depth expert analysis on an emergent policy issue and implement local and international advocacy, targeting the relevant for their research institutions and authorities. These include but are not limited to, ministerial departments and ministers, government adjacent agencies, parliamentary working groups and members of parliament, civil society organisations and international representations, academic and research institutes, policy advisors, experts, journalists etc.

Fellows' policy research may denote but be not limited to the following areas, subareas and institutions: *justice system*, including judiciary, law enforcement, investigative and prosecutorial bodies, issues related to transitional justice, civilian oversight, penitentiary institutions and other closed and semi-closed institutions. The researchers may develop proposals addressing issues of *governance accountability, transparency and corruption prevention*, including development and implementation of anti-corruption reform agenda, anti-corruption bodies, public procurement system, regulations on asset declaration and beneficial ownership, illicit enrichment, conflict of interest, whistle-blower protection.

In the area of *economic and social justice*, applicants may consider issues related to Armenia's integration into the Eurasian Economic Union, tax, customs and import policies, market access, conflict of interest issues and policies protecting economic competition. In the context of *human rights, non-discrimination and fundamental freedoms*, we encourage research related to labour rights, the rights to access to justice, fair trial, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, the right to freedom of assembly, association and expression, issues addressing domestic violence, minority and marginalised groups, as well as human rights protection mechanisms in the context of security.

The applicants can research issues related to the *general and higher education*, particularly education quality assurance mechanisms, optimisation of general education in the context

of community enlargement, inclusive and egalitarian policies, autonomy in higher education, integration and institutionalisation of extracurricular activities, academic qualification process, academic integrity, academic freedom, educational programs and issues of scientific research in higher education institutions.

Considering the absorption of public spaces by propagandistic narratives, the applicants may develop proposals addressing the mechanisms, ways and political logic of *disinformation and propaganda*, issues related to critical thinking, fake news and information flows, fact-checking methods, communication methods and techniques between different groups, etc.

Contributing to the development of public policy capacity for reforms in a number of areas, the applicants may develop research addressing the government priorities and the *EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)* agenda, including issues related to evaluation and impact models of CEPA implementation, establishment, organising, functions and impact of CEPA Civil Society and other platforms, as laid down in the Agreement.

In different areas, the proposed examples of research activities, include but are not limited to analysing Armenia's progress in terms of implementation of international commitments, developing benchmarks to assess activities and responsibilities of different institutions; developing research to address ideological foundations of reforms, stereotypes, attitudes and perceptions towards those of different social groups; issues of civilian oversight, mechanisms ensuring public awareness and support for reforms; links between researchers and public authorities; implementation of public funds; data collection methods and mechanisms, international experience of fact-collecting and fact-checking and its application in Armenia, and so on.

The above suggested – as well as other areas, research activities and issues proposed by applicants – should be aimed at supporting the development and implementation of public policy, strengthening the agenda for reforms, thus ensuring the process of democratic transformation in Armenia.

Call for Proposals Policy Research Fellowship Fall 2019
Appendix 2
Application Form

This application form offers framework for proposal submission and evaluation. The form highlights selected key sections that a robust policy research proposal shall contain. Each section has to be carefully addressed. Word limits [min-max] in each section are expected to be taken into consideration. Precise, concise and clear writing are advantages of a potentially successful proposal.

<p>1. Project title and abstract Provide a <u>title</u> and a <u>brief overview</u> of your policy research: what do you intend to examine? What is the motivation and reason behind your research? What is the current reform relevance? Describe the questions you seek to answer. (150-300 words)</p>
<p>2. Problem description and research justification Define the policy problem and specify what you aim to achieve with your policy research. What are the novelty and urgency of addressing the problem? How the problem affects the Armenian society today? Who are the stakeholders directly and indirectly involved; targets influenced by the problem? Present the context and nature of the specific concern and anticipated contribution to the field as a result of your research. (850-1200 words)</p>
<p>3. Research questions Present your main and sub- (if any) research questions (in a question format). (80-100 words)</p>
<p>4. Policy options and argumentation In response to your research question/s, what is/are your suggested alternative policy option/s? Elaborate on the reasons why the suggested alternative policy option/s is/are more effective? (250-400 words)</p>
<p>5. Methodology Describe research methodology selected to answer your research question/s. Indicate potential obstacles in applying research methods, and elaborate on how you will overcome those. (300-400 words)</p>
<p>6. Outputs and deliverables Describe your research outputs and deliverables: policy papers, policy briefs, posters, conference papers, databases, guidelines, information leaflets, infographics, presentations, audio visual materials etc. (80-150 words)</p>

<p>7. Advocacy strategy How you see the impact of your policy research? What tools and resources you will use to reach out to target audiences in properly communicating the findings of your research? Elaborate on the advocacy strategy you will apply to maximise the impact of your research. What are the risks associated with the implementation of your advocacy strategy? (400-700 words)</p>																														
<p>8. Project timetable Provide the timeframe for the project and its key activities. Please note that the maximum project duration is five months. Estimated start of the project is <u>November 25, 2019</u></p>																														
<p>9. Budget Please list all costs associated with your research in an itemised budget table below (in USD). Expenses such as honorarium, fieldwork, advocacy costs (presentation, publication of policy paper), and other necessary expenses can be included in the budget. Please note that the budget shall not exceed \$3,000.</p>																														
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 5%; text-align: center;">1.</th> <th style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><i>budget category</i></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"><i>unit</i></th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><i>number of units</i></th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;"><i>cost per unit (\$)</i></th> <th style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><i>total (\$)</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2.</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3.</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4.</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="5"><i>Total (\$):</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	1.	<i>budget category</i>	<i>unit</i>	<i>number of units</i>	<i>cost per unit (\$)</i>	<i>total (\$)</i>	2.						3.						4.							<i>Total (\$):</i>				
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