



BILL EMERSON NATIONAL HUNGER FELLOWSHIP



2020 Application Guide

Introduction

◀ *Davis Chhoa ('18-'19)
at his field placement in
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Thank you for your interest in the **Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship!** If you are reading this, you know that hunger is a serious problem in the United States today—and you agree with us that it's a problem which can be solved. In this guide, we'll cover how the Emerson Fellowship works, what you'll gain as a fellow, and how to prepare your application.

For more than 25 years, Emerson Fellows have worked in communities large and small, urban, suburban, and rural, in 47 U.S. States, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, with the shared goal of ending hunger. Nearly 500 Emerson Fellows have completed the program, gaining extensive experience in effective solutions to hunger

while expanding the capacity of nearly 300 local and national organizations. We partner with organizations that focus on the root causes of hunger, and we approach our work through a lens of racial equity. At the heart of the fellowship is the cohort experience, with each successive class of fellows forming a powerful, supportive network as they develop their leadership and professional skills.

The Emerson Fellowship is a program of the **Congressional Hunger Center**, a bipartisan nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop, inspire, and connect leaders in the movement to end hunger, and to advocate for public policies that create a food-secure world.

OUR APPROACH



Hunger is a multifaceted and far-reaching problem—and the movement to end it should be, too.

We believe that governments, nonprofits, educational institutions, corporations, philanthropy, and individuals all have a role to play, and a variety of approaches and strategies are required to solve the problem.



Any lasting solution to hunger must be led by people with first-hand expertise.

We invest in the leadership of people who have experienced hunger and poverty, and people of color—who are disproportionately affected by hunger—as designers, implementers, and evaluators of anti-hunger programs and projects.



Breakdowns in understanding and differences in perspective on the root causes of the problem stand in the way of scalable solutions.

We focus on bridging the gap between community-based work and public policy, highlighting the ways that each can inform and strengthen the other.

[Read more about our approach.](#)



▲ *Rep. Bill Emerson
with colleague and friend
Rep. Mickey Leland*

WHO WAS BILL EMERSON?

Representative Bill Emerson (January 1, 1938 – June 22, 1996) was a Congressional leader who crossed political lines to bring people together in the fight to end hunger. Rep. Emerson, a Republican, was first elected in 1980 to represent Missouri's 10th district, and was re-elected seven times until his death in 1996.

His tireless, bipartisan work in Congress advanced numerous anti-hunger initiatives, including The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, which was named posthumously in his honor.

The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship Program serves as a living legacy to his steadfast leadership and dedication to ending hunger, and his bipartisan approach forms the foundation of the Congressional Hunger Center's anti-hunger work.

How It Works



◀ Emerson Fellow Yesenia Jimenez ('18-'19) speaks on a panel on hunger among college students at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., March 2019

The Emerson Fellowship is an 11-month program in which participants develop their leadership skills as they gain hands-on experience working to end hunger through community-led efforts and national policy at *field and policy placements*.

First, fellows are placed with *field sites* across the country—including food banks, anti-hunger advocacy groups, food policy councils, research institutions, and state and local government agencies—and work with the site to end hunger in that community. Following their field placements, fellows come to Washington, D.C., shifting their focus to

national anti-hunger policy as they work with *policy sites* including advocacy groups, think tanks, and Federal government agencies. Both field and policy sites apply to host fellows through a competitive process and are matched with fellows by Hunger Center staff based on fellows' interest, experience, and other factors. Throughout the fellowship fellows are supported with comprehensive staff-led trainings and professional development opportunities. Fellows form a powerful educational cohort, sharing their successes and challenges and learning from one another's experiences.



“My time as an Emerson Hunger Fellow was the perfect stepping stone from my previous direct service and local advocacy work to national-level policy. As a soon-to-be MPP student, this program has helped me get my foot in the door and build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills to fight issues of hunger and poverty on a broad scale.

Alekya Prathivadi ('18-'19)

► *Fellows from the 24th Class ('17-'18) at midfield retreat in New Market, Tennessee, October 2017*



PROGRAM CALENDAR



Late August

Field training in Washington, D.C.



Early September

Fellows depart to begin work at their field placements



Late October / Early November

Fellows gather for midfield retreat to reconnect and share experience



Mid-February

Policy training in Washington, D.C.; fellows present key findings from their field placements and debrief their experience



Early March

Fellows begin work at policy placements



Late July

Fellows complete policy placements; fellowship ends

Field and Policy Work

FIELD PLACEMENTS

Emerson Fellows' projects with their field sites reflect a wide variety of approaches to ending hunger at the local level, from advocacy and out-

reach to research and analysis. Projects started by fellows continue to have an impact years after the fellowship year has concluded.



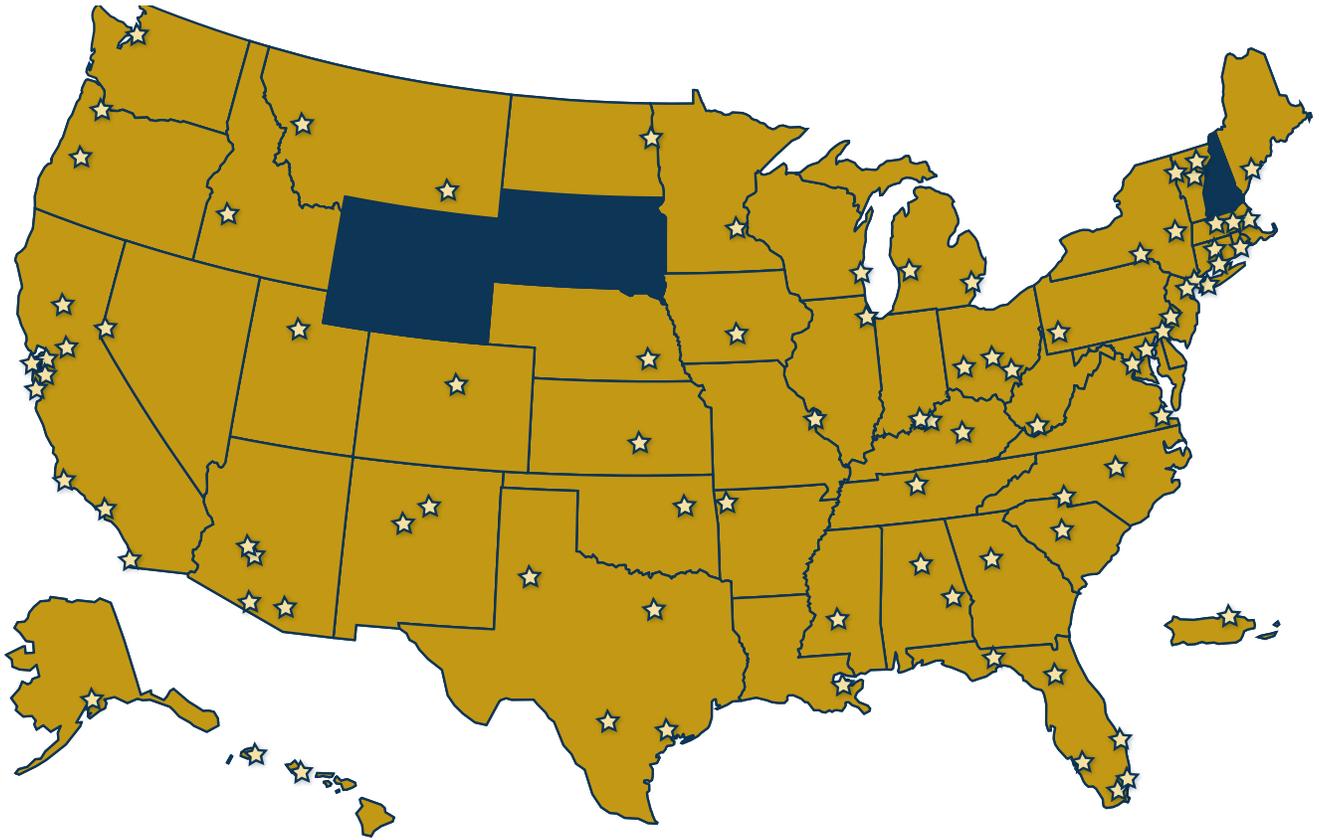
◀ Working with United Way of King County in Seattle, Washington, **Jade Adia Harvey** ('18-'19) designed and implemented a pilot program to help low-income students and students of color build essential savings to boost educational persistence and completion. [Read more about Jade](#)



◀ **David Lazere** ('16-'17, left) worked with local school districts in San Jose, California, to implement alternative breakfast provision models and run breakfast outreach campaigns. [Read more about David](#)



◀ **Paige Milson** ('18-'19, right) conducted the first region-wide survey of clients of the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama and made recommendations to improve their advocacy and programming. [Read more about Paige](#)



Since 1994, Hunger Fellows have worked in communities in 47 states plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, expanding the capacity of over 300 organizations



POLICY PLACEMENTS

Emerson Fellows' work at policy sites can include research, outreach, advocacy, and public education projects supporting national policy initiatives and campaigns.



► **Imani Marshall** ('16-'17) worked with the Food Research & Action Center, convening key stakeholders to ensure equitable and successful implementation of the new CACFP meal patterns. [Read more about Imani](#)



► **Valery Martinez** ('17-'18) created a policy brief for local and state leaders to address food insecurity in immigrant and mixed-status households with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. [Read more about Valery](#)



► **Eduardo Hernandez** ('16-'17, right) worked with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to survey and catalog programs that contribute to family self-sufficiency. [Read more about Eduardo](#)



Leadership Capabilities

Like all programs and projects at the Congressional Hunger Center, the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship's trainings are designed to develop new leaders following our **Leadership Capabilities Model**. The model identifies eleven core capabilities of an effective leader, grouped into three categories which build upon and reinforce one another.



DEVELOP SELF

- **Self-Aware** Works to understand own strengths, growth areas, tendencies, and roles. Seeks out, accepts, and applies critical feedback. Understands how social identities are connected to own experience, development, and impact on the world.
- **Has a Personal Theory of Change** Has a personal vision for their role in ending hunger and poverty and actively works towards advancing this vision.
- **Goal-Oriented** Sets clear personal and professional goals. Aligns personal goals with team, program, and organizational goals. Takes initiative and is accountable for measurable progress toward achieving goals.
- **Resourceful and Resilient** Finds ways to make forward progress in the midst of uncertainty, ambiguity, and obstacles. Knows when to and how to ask for help. Adapts to new environments, cultures, work styles, and team structures.
- **Active Learner** Constantly sees opportunities for learning and distills knowledge from experiences. Is humble and open to learning from others, especially across difference. Asks insightful and critical questions.

LEAD WITH OTHERS

- **Builds Community** Actively listens. Works with others with empathy and humility, especially when working across difference and culture. Enthusiastically shares knowledge and experience, and draws out knowledge and experiences of others. Has the confidence and awareness to play different roles as needed.
- **Communicates Effectively** Effectively expresses complex ideas. Adept at oral and written communication, including public speaking and writing. Works to understand the needs of different audiences and tailors messages accordingly.
- **Strives to Amplify Voices Directly Impacted by Hunger and Poverty** Values lived experience and learned experience. Prioritizes the voices and perspectives of those impacted by hunger and poverty. Allows people to speak for themselves whenever possible.

CREATE CHANGE

- **Has Vision** Is committed to ending hunger and poverty. Keeps the end goal in mind. Thinks and prioritizes on multiple time-horizons (short, medium, and long-term). Sees and seizes opportunities.
- **Thinks Critically and Systemically** Is able to analyze challenges with a view toward solving/overcoming them. Possesses the content knowledge to be able to analyze root and proximate causes, as well as relevant power structures. Uses this analysis to evaluate the strengths and limitations of different approaches to making change.
- **Inspires Others to Action** Creates shared vision. Understands the self-interests, knowledge base and needs of others and adapts approach accordingly. Leads by example.

A Powerful Network

From the first to the last day of the program fellows form a supportive, tight-knit learning cohort. The program creates an environment of community, which fosters open discussion and learning from the diverse collection of experiences and view-

points within every class. After the fellowship ends, each cohort joins the network of program alumni, now nearly 500 strong, sharing resources and continuing to engage with fellow fellows.



▲ *Fellows from the 19th Class ('12-'13) meet Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee at the Hunger Leadership Awards, May 2013*



▲ *Fellows from the 21st Class ('14-'15) take part in an exercise during field training, August 2014*



“I’ve grown and learned so much from fellows, Hunger Center staff, and the Emerson alum network. The Fellowship has provided me with great work experiences, great friends, and an amazing network of experts to lean on in my future career.

Pierre Collins ('18-'19)

Training and Skills



Throughout the program year, fellows receive more than 30 days of in-person professional and leadership development training. Fellows begin the program with a comprehensive field training, exploring the history of hunger and its root causes in the United States and why we think it's important to apply a racial equity lens to anti-hunger and anti-poverty work. The field training is also a time for community building among the fellows.

Midway through the field placement, fellows come together for a retreat to reflect on their experiences at their field placements and discuss their key insights about solutions to ending hunger as they forge deeper connections within their cohort and with Hunger Center staff.



In February, fellows return to Washington, D.C. to process their field experiences and participate in intensive policy training. Fellows learn how public policy is made and about the roles the government, advocacy groups, lobbyists, think-tanks, and other organizations play in the process. Fellows are also briefed on the status of current policy issues in the anti-hunger and anti-poverty realm by experts involved in the process.

During their policy placements fellows meet regularly for professional development days to facilitate ongoing learning, with topics determined by the fellowship cohort.



◀ **Top** Fellows from the 25th Class ('18-'19) participate in a group activity
Center Fellows from the 25th Class at midfield retreat in New Orleans, Louisiana
Bottom Fellows from the 23rd Class ('16-'17) visit the office of **Rep. James P. McGovern** during policy training.

Financial Package and Other Benefits

FINANCIAL PACKAGE

We establish fellow financial packages based on location, taking into consideration the cost of living at the field and policy placement. (One resource we consider when setting financial packages is [the MIT Living Wage calculator](#).) Typically, Fellows receive financial packages in the range of \$38,000 to \$43,000 over the duration of the fellowship.

Emerson Fellows serve as independent consultants. Fellows are expected to secure and finance their own health insurance, and to save for and pay their own taxes as contractors; accordingly, health care costs and taxes are among the factors we take into consideration when determining

fellows' financial packages. Hunger Center staff provide some limited guidance and share resources where fellows may learn more about how to file taxes as self-employed independent contractors.

▼ *Left Funke*

Aderonmu ('17-'18)
poses with a poster from
her field site in Washing-
ton, D.C.

Right Fellows from the
23rd Class ('16-'17) at the
2019 Hunger Leadership
Awards



GRADUATE PARTNERSHIPS

Emerson Fellow alums pursuing Masters' degrees in public health or public policy at select institutions are also eligible for significant discounts on tuition. As of 2019 we maintain partnerships with Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College and the University of Virginia Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy. [Learn more about our partnerships.](#)



OTHER BENEFITS

Emerson Fellows also gain:

- Membership in a dynamic learning community of fellows
- Connection to an extensive network of alums, partners, and experts
- Experience working with community and policy leaders
- Training, mentoring, and leadership development
- Project management experience

After the Fellowship



Fellows use their experience to determine their own personal theory of change and how they can be most effective in ending hunger in the United States. Upon completion of the fellowship many fellows join organizations working to eradicate hunger and poverty, while others go on to pursue Masters' degrees, law school, or medical school.

► *Fellows from the 15th Class ('08-'09) celebrate with fellow fellow **Christine Tran** (3rd from left), winner of the 2015 Alum Leadership Award for her work on child nutrition*



▲ **Amanda Wagner** ('05-'06) manages the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program for the City of Philadelphia Health Department



▲ **Shana McDavis Conway** ('03-'04) is the co-director of the Center for Story-Based Strategy in Sacramento, California



“The Fellowship has been great opportunity to understand how non-profits function and what my role will be in the fight to end hunger. With the skills I have gained in project management and community organizing, I was able to secure a job at a non-profit in my hometown. I will be doing the work I'm passionate about and serving my community by taking community concerns and turning them into policy action.

Keisha Perkins ('18-'19)

What Alums Say

In a 2017 survey of Emerson Fellow alums—

94%

said taking part in the fellowship made a significant impact in their personal development

88%

said the fellowship made an impact in their ability to lead with others

88%

said the fellowship made an impact in their ability to create change

95%

would recommend the Emerson Fellowship to others



“The fellowship was invaluable to cementing my career in the nonprofit sector, particularly working on issues of food insecurity and poverty. As a college student unclear of how to start a career that aligned my passions and strengths, my work experiences as a fellow and the mentorship and support provided throughout have been integral to turning my interests into a career that makes a difference to marginalized communities every day.

Christina Martinez ('11-'12)

How Do I Apply?

We accept applications for the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship from **October to January**. Read through the following information to prepare your application.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Here are some of the qualities of successful applicants to the Emerson Fellowship:

- Commitment to ending hunger and poverty
- Flexibility; ability to adjust to new situations
- Commitment to racial equity and social justice
- Demonstrated leadership qualities and skills
- Ability to solve problems in creative and innovative ways
- Enthusiasm for learning from experts in the field, and searching for new models in anti-hunger and anti-poverty work
- Experience working in low-income communities
- Excitement about peer learning in a tight-knit community of Fellows
- Bachelor's degree, or equivalent experience
- U.S. citizenship or permanent legal residency

We strongly encourage applications from people of color, people with lived experience with poverty or hunger, and members of the LGBTQ communities. Applicants will not be discriminated against



▲ **Soad Mana and Madeline Becker** ('14-'15) at their field placement in Jackson, Mississippi

▼ **Amirio Freeman** ('17-'18, left) on a grocery walk with DC Greens in Washington, D.C.



because of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, color, marital status, or medical status.



◀ *Keisha Perkins and Mackenzie Aime ('18-'19, 3rd and 2nd from right) meet with West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Kent Leonhardt (4th from right)*

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted [via our website](#). In addition to completing a webform, you will be required to include a three-page addendum, saved as a single PDF, which will include:

1. A **one-page resume**;
2. A **one-page personal statement**, single spaced, addressing the following:
 - What values, principles, and identities (race, class, gender, etc.) have shaped your interest in the Bill Emerson Hunger Fellowship? What particular qualities, knowledge, experiences, and skills will you contribute to your field and policy placements? How do you expect this fellowship to contribute to your professional goals?
3. A **one-page response** to the following short essay questions (each response should be single spaced and ½ page in length):
 - How have your community work and life experiences changed your perspective on poverty over time?
 - What role do you believe the government plays, or should play, in addressing complex social problems such as hunger, poverty, and racism?

You will also be required to submit **one letter of recommendation** from someone familiar with your skills and abilities, preferably a supervisor. [Submit your letter here](#)

APPLICATION TIMELINE

October 9, 2019

Application form available on Hunger Center Website

January 13, 2020

Deadline to submit applications to join the 27th Class ('20-'21)

January-February 2020

A selection committee of Emerson Fellow alums reviews all applications; Hunger Center staff select semi-finalists

February 2020

Semi-finalists invited to online one-on-one interviews

March 2020

Finalists invited to online group interviews

March-May 2020

Fellows are selected and notified of acceptance on a rolling basis.

Early June 2020

Fellows notified of field placements

Late August 2020

27th Class arrives in Washington, D.C. for field training

Frequently Asked Questions



◀ *The 25th Class of Emerson National Hunger Fellows ('18-'19) meet with Rep. James P. McGovern at commencement, Washington, D.C., July 2019*

Can I choose my field and policy placements?

Fellows are matched to field and policy sites by Emerson Program staff. Prior to starting each segment of the fellowship, fellows are invited to provide their preferences for topical interests, work environment, and skills they would like to use or learn during their upcoming placement. Staff consult these preferences, as well as the field and policy sites' requirements and expectations, when matching fellows to sites.

Where can I read about past Emerson Fellows and their experiences?

You can search Emerson Fellows by class year, location, and placement [in our directory](#). There you can read fellow bios, learn more about what they accomplished at their field and policy sites, and read reports and blog posts they wrote during their fellowship experiences.

Where do the Emerson Program and the Congressional Hunger Center get their funding?

Both the Emerson Program and the Hunger Center are supported through a combination of federal, corporate, and philanthropic grants, and indi-

vidual donations. In 2019, the Emerson Program received support from USDA, C&S Wholesale Grocers, General Mills, the Kroger Co. Foundation, PepsiCo, Tyson Foods, Pepsico, and Tyson Foods. [Read more about our sponsors.](#)

How do alums of the program stay connected to the Emerson Program and the Hunger Center?

In many ways! Emerson Fellows are encouraged to think of themselves as being Hunger Fellows for life. Alums serve the program directly as application reviewers, trainers, coaches, and supervisors at field and policy sites. Alums also help spread the word to potential fellowship applicants, share job opportunities with the network, and organize social gatherings and reunions. And, following the fellowship, alums continue to work to end hunger and poverty.

I have a question that isn't answered anywhere in this guide.

Let us know! Drop us a line at fellows@hungercenter.org and we'll be happy to assist you with your question.



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Have questions not covered by this guide?
Contact us at fellows@hungercenter.org

Photo of Amanda Wagner courtesy Farzana Quaraishi
Photo of Rep. Bill Emerson and Rep. Leland courtesy Marty LaVor

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