

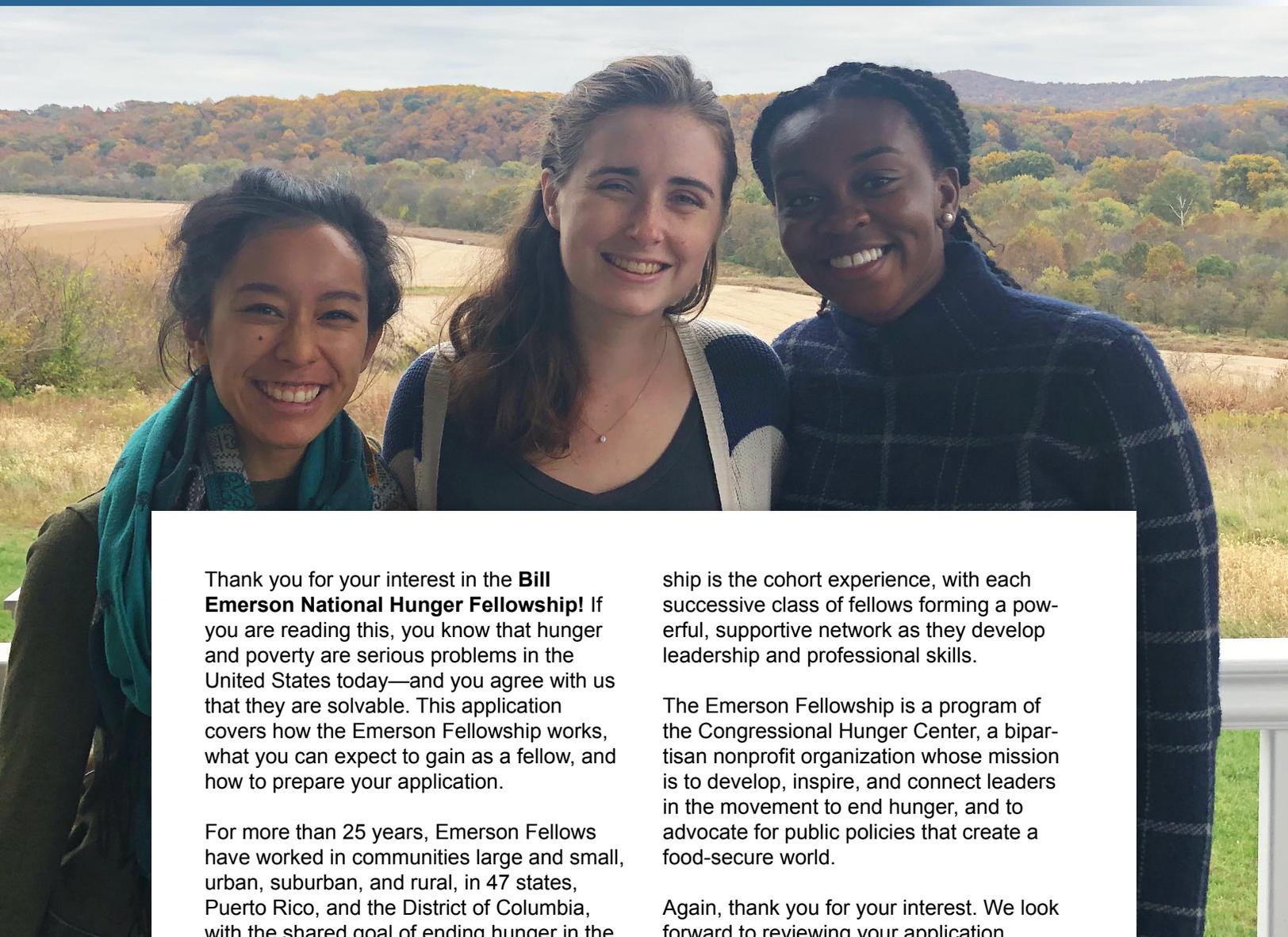


# BILL EMERSON NATIONAL HUNGER FELLOWSHIP



# 2021-2022 Fellowship Application Guide

# Introduction



Thank you for your interest in the **Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship!** If you are reading this, you know that hunger and poverty are serious problems in the United States today—and you agree with us that they are solvable. This application covers how the Emerson Fellowship works, what you can expect to 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 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, with the shared goal of ending hunger in the United States. Nearly 500 Emerson alums have completed the fellowship program, gaining extensive experience in effective solutions to end hunger while expanding the capacity of nearly 300 local, regional, and national organizations. We partner with a range of organizations that focus on addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty, and we approach our work through a racial equity lens. At the heart of the fellow-

ship is the cohort experience, with each successive class of fellows forming a powerful, supportive network as they develop 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.

Again, thank you for your interest. We look forward to reviewing your application.

**Tony Jackson**  
Director  
Bill Emerson National  
Hunger Fellowship Program

▲ Emerson Fellows **Trish Abalo, Riley Link, and Megan Smith** ('19-'20) at midfield retreat in Maryland.

# How Does the Fellowship Work?



The Emerson Fellowship is an 11-month program in which participants develop leadership skills as they gain hands-on experience working to end hunger and poverty in the United States through efforts led by local, state, regional, and national **host organizations**.



### Field Placements

For the first six months, Emerson Fellows are placed with organizations across the United States with a local or regional focus, including food banks, anti-hunger/anti-poverty advocacy groups, food policy councils, research institutions, and state, local, and regional government agencies.



### Policy Placements

Following their field placements, fellows shift their focus to national anti-hunger/anti-poverty policy through placements with national advocacy groups, think tanks, and federal government agencies.

Host organizations apply to host Emerson Fellows through a competitive process. Fellows are then matched with their placements by Emerson Program staff based on several factors, including the fellows' interest and experience. Throughout their time with the Emerson

Program, fellows are supported with comprehensive staff-led trainings and professional development opportunities. Fellows form a powerful cohort, sharing their successes and challenges and learning from one another on both professional and personal levels.

▲ *Methany Eltigani ('19-'20) shares information about EBT at Pepper Place Farmers Market, Birmingham, Alabama.*

## KEY PROGRAM DATES

**Late August 2021**  
Field training for 28th Class

**Early September 2021**  
Fellows begin at their field placements



**Early March 2022**  
Fellows begin work at policy placements

**Late July 2022**  
Fellows complete policy placements;  
fellowship ends

▲ *Fellows from the 26th Class ('19-'20). Clockwise from top: a scene from field training; fellows at the 2020 National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference; **Mariama Badjie** at her field placement in Pittsburgh.*



**Late October / Early November 2021**  
Fellows gather for midfield retreat to reconnect and share experience

**Mid-February 2022**  
Policy training: fellows present key findings from their field placements and debrief their experience



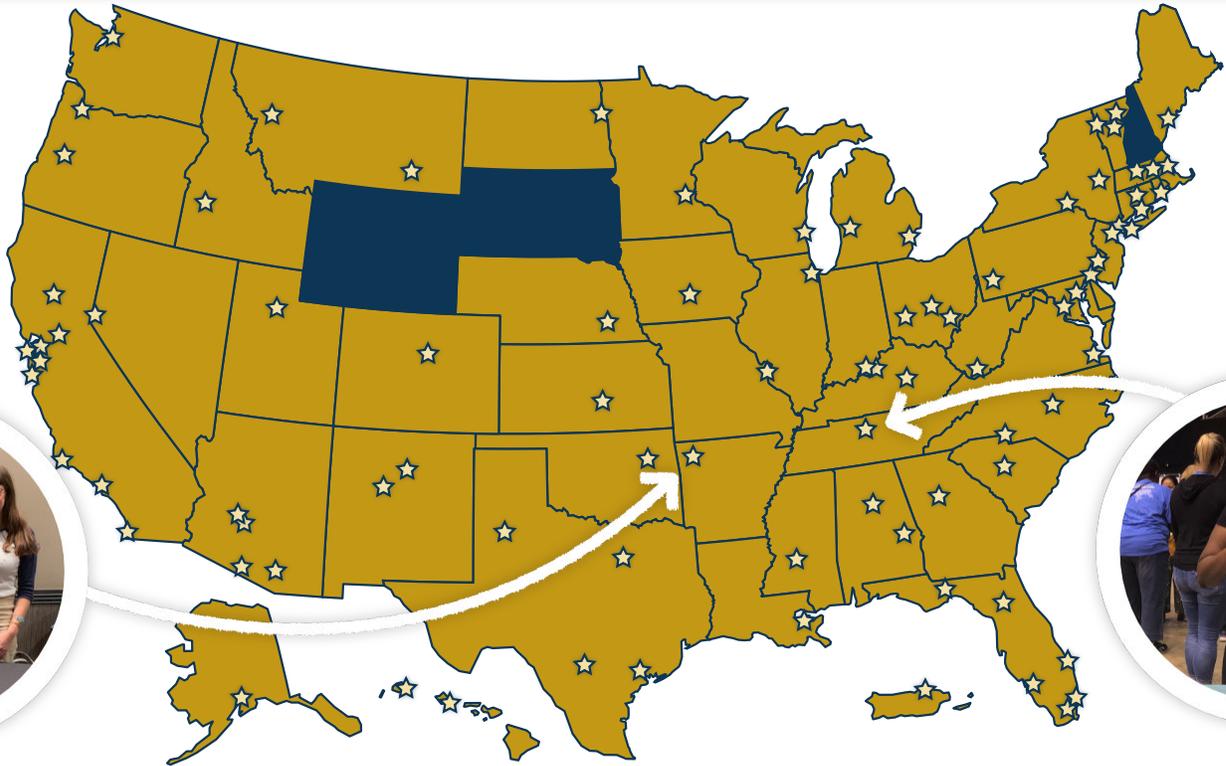
"My time as an Emerson Hunger Fellow was the perfect stepping-stone from my previous direct service and local advocacy work to national-level policy. As a soon-to-be MPP student, this program has helped me get my foot in the door and build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills to fight issues of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

**Alekya Prathivadi ('18-'19)**

## FIELD PLACEMENTS

Emerson Fellows' work at their field placements reflect a wide variety of approaches to ending hunger and poverty in the United States at local, state, and regional levels. From advocacy and out-

reach to research and analysis, projects started by fellows continue to have an impact years after the they have completed their fellowship year.



**Anne-Marie Noll** ('19-'20) was placed with the **Native American Agriculture Fund** in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where she researched economically viable and sustainable options for Native farmers, ranchers, fishers, hunters, and other food producers to market their products in their own communities.

[Read more about Anne-Marie's work.](#)

**Margaux Johnson-Green** ('19-'20) was placed with the **Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee** in Nashville, where she developed a survey for participants in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to collect firsthand accounts of the program's accessibility for people aged 60 and older.

[Read more about Margaux's work.](#)

## WHERE WILL I BE PLACED?

Emerson Fellows are matched to their field placements based on the fellows' interests and experience, the host organizations' needs, and other factors.

Since 1994, Emerson Fellows have worked at placements in **47 states** plus **Puerto Rico** and the **District of Columbia**. Past placements have included food banks, advocacy organizations, food policy councils, local and regional government agencies, and more.

[See the field placements of the 27th Class of Emerson Fellows \('20-'21\)](#)

## POLICY PLACEMENTS

For the second half of their fellowships, Emerson Fellows are placed with host organizations that focus on national anti-hunger policy. Fellows' work

can include research, outreach, advocacy, and public education projects supporting national initiatives and campaigns.



### WHERE WILL I BE PLACED?

Like with field placements, Emerson Fellows are matched to their policy placements by program staff. Matches take into account the fellows' interests, field placement experiences, and career goals, as well as the host organizations' needs and other factors.

Since 1994, Emerson Fellows have worked with **over 100 policy-focused host organizations**. Past placements have included national advocacy organizations, think tanks, research institutions, federal government agencies, and more.

[See the policy placements of the 26th Class of Emerson Fellows \('19-'20\)](#)

**Heather Street** ('19-'20) was placed with the **Duke University World Food Policy Center**, where she created a report that illuminated the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the emergency food system, detailing needs, barriers, actions, and successes, and giving recommendations for moving from a charity to justice model.

**Emily Hwang** ('19-'20) was placed with the **U.S. Department of Agriculture**, where she researched best practices for school lunch period times and supported staff to ensure that over 30 million children could still access school meals during the Coronavirus pandemic.

## TRAINING AND SKILLS

During their time in the fellowship, Emerson Fellows will receive more than 30 days of professional and leadership development training.

### Field Training

The fellowship begins with a comprehensive two-week training exploring the history of hunger and poverty in the United States, including their root causes, and why the Hunger Center believes in the importance of applying a racial equity lens to anti-hunger and anti-poverty work. This initial training is also a time for community-building among the fellows.



### Midfield Retreat

Midway through their field placements, fellows come together to reflect on their experiences in the field and discuss their key insights about solutions to ending hunger and poverty in the United States. They also use this retreat as a time to forge deeper connections with their cohort and the Hunger Center staff.



### Policy Training

In February, fellows reconvene to process their field experiences and participate in intensive policy training. Fellows learn how national public policy is developed and implemented, and the roles the federal government, advocacy groups, lobbyists, think-tanks, and other organizations play in the legislative process. Fellows are also briefed on the status of current policy issues in the anti-hunger and anti-poverty space by public policy experts.



## KEYS TO LEADERSHIP

Like all programs and projects developed by the Congressional Hunger Center, the trainings for Emerson Fellows are designed using our **Leadership Capabilities Model**. This model identifies eleven core capabilities of an effective leader grouped into three interlocking categories which build upon and reinforce one another: **develop self**, **lead with others**, and **create change**. [Read more about the theory behind the model at our website.](#)

▲ **Methany Eltigani and Jarvis Benson** ('19-'20) discuss their upcoming field work presentations at policy training in Washington, D.C.

## A POWERFUL NETWORK

Emerson Fellows form a supportive, tight-knit learning cohort from the very first to the very last day of the program.

The Emerson Program creates an environment that fosters open dialogue and encourages fellows to learn from the diverse collection of experiences within their class. After the fellowship ends, each

cohort joins the network of Emerson alums, now nearly 500 strong, by sharing resources and engaging with current and past fellows as trainers, speakers, supervisors, and mentors.



"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)**

▲ **Trish Abalo and Rachel Flores ('19-'20)** at their field placement with Hunger Free Colorado CEO and Emerson Fellow alum **Marc Jacobson ('98-'99)**.

## FINANCIAL PACKAGE AND BENEFITS

### Financial Package

The Hunger Center establishes its financial packages for fellows based on their location, taking into consideration the cost of living at both the field and policy placements. (One resource we consider when setting financial packages is the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#).) Emerson Fellows typically receive financial packages ranging from **\$38,000 to \$45,000** over the duration of the fellowship.

### Graduate School Partnerships

Emerson alums pursuing Masters' degrees in public health or public policy at select institutions of higher learning are eligible for significant discounts on tuition. As of 2020, the Hunger Center maintains partnerships with **Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College** and the **University of Virginia's 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; and
- Project management experience.



▲ **Davis Chhoa** ('18-'19) at his field placement with CAPI USA in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

▼ **Yesenia Jimenez** ('18-'19) speaks on a panel at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference.

## INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS

Per 2 U.S. Code §1161, Emerson Fellows serve as independent consultants and *not* as employees of the Hunger Center or their host organizations. This means that **fellows are expected to secure and finance their own health insurance, and to save for and pay their own taxes**; accordingly, health care costs and taxes are among the factors we take into consideration when determining fellows' financial packages.

Hunger Center staff can provide Fellows with some limited guidance and share resources, but if you have not worked as a contractor and managed self-employment taxes before, we **strongly recommend** doing some research on your responsibilities under the law before you submit your application. We suggest starting with this information from the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

## AFTER THE FELLOWSHIP

After their fellowships end, alums use their experience to determine how they can be most effective in ending hunger and poverty.

Many join organizations working to eradicate hunger and poverty, while others go on to pursue Masters' degrees, law school, or medical school.

Wherever they go after the fellowship, alums know how to be effective agents of change for a hunger-free world.

In a 2017 survey, Emerson alums reported how the fellowship made an impact on their life:

94%

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

88%

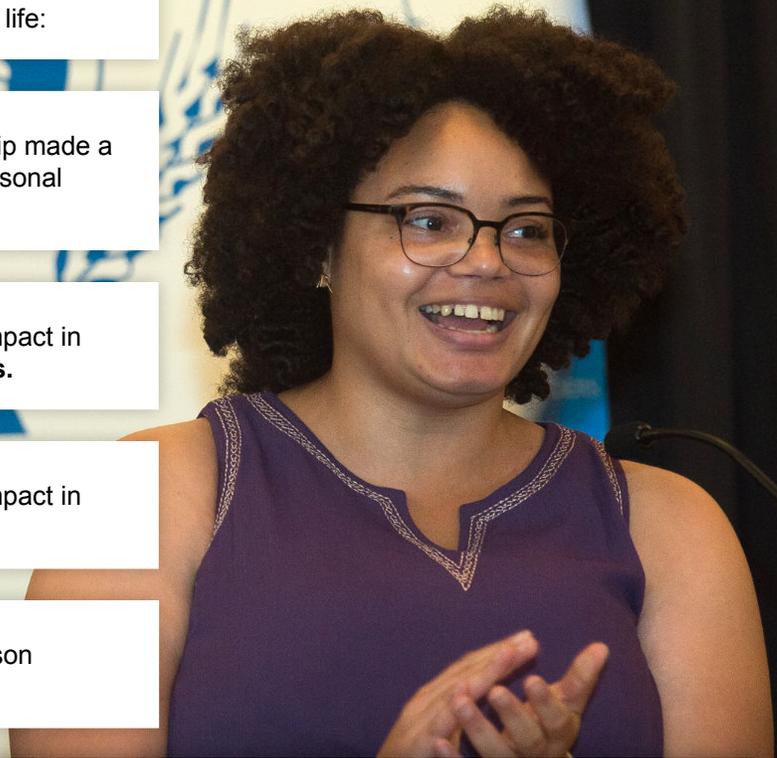
said the fellowship made an impact in their ability to **lead with others**.

88%

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

95%

**would recommend** the Emerson Fellowship to others.



"The fellowship has been great opportunity to understand how nonprofits function and what my role will be in the fight to end hunger. With the skills I have gained, I was able to secure a job at a nonprofit 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)**

▲ Alum **Cara Brumfield ('10-'11)** delivers her acceptance speech at the 2018 Hunger Leadership Awards.

PART II

# How Do I Apply?



The next class of Emerson Fellows will serve from fall 2021 to summer 2022. Applications for the upcoming class will be accepted from **October 16, 2020 to January 13, 2021**.

In the following pages you'll get a better sense of what you can expect from the application process, and answers to some frequently asked questions.



"The fellowship was invaluable to cementing my career in the nonprofit sector, particularly working on issues of food insecurity and poverty."

**Christina Martinez ('11-'12)**

▲ *Fellows from the 21st Class ('14-'15) during field training, August 2014.*

## SELECTION CRITERIA

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



▲ Clockwise from left: **Amirio Freeman**, **María Cristina Chicué**n, **De'Sean Weber**, and **Sarah Goldman** ('17-'18) at midfield retreat in New Market, Tennessee, October 2017.

- A commitment to ending hunger and poverty in the United States
- An ability to adjust and adapt to new situations
- A commitment to racial equity and social justice
- Demonstrated leadership qualities and skills
- An ability to solve problems in creative and innovative ways
- Enthusiasm for learning from a wide variety of individuals with expertise in the area anti-hunger/anti-poverty space; and a willingness to search for new models in anti-hunger and anti-poverty work
- A lived experience with hunger and poverty
- 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 (**required**)

## MEET THE EMERSON FELLOWS

The current class of Emerson Fellows will serve from 2020-2021. [Get to know the current class and where they're working.](#)



## PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted [via the Congressional Hunger Center's website](#) no later than **January 13, 2021**.

The application is in two parts: a **webform** to collect biographical information and preferences, and 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, which addresses the following:

- What values, principles, and identities (race, class, gender, etc.) shape your interest in the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship?
- What particular qualities, knowledge, experiences, and skills will you contribute to your potential field and policy placements?
- How do you expect this fellowship to contribute to achieving your professional goals?

3

A one-page response to the following **short essay questions** (each response should be single spaced and half-page in length):

- How have your community work and life experiences changed your perspective on hunger and poverty over time?
- What role do you believe government plays, or should play, in addressing complex social problems such as hunger, poverty, and systemic racism?



▲ Top: Fellows **Cassandra Granville** and **Megan Smith** ('19-'20) prepare for cold weather at their field placement in Buffalo, New York.

▲ Bottom: Fellows from the 26th Class ('19-'20)

### READY TO APPLY?

You can find the application form at our [website here](#). Please note: the webform **will not save your progress** if you cannot complete the application in one sitting. We suggest composing your answers in a separate document and copy-pasting them into the form.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE



**October 16, 2020**

Application form available on the Hunger Center's website.



**January 13, 2021**

Deadline to submit applications to join the 28th Class.



**January-February 2021**

A selection committee of Emerson Fellowship alums will review applications; Hunger Center staff will select semi-finalists.



**February 2021**

Semi-finalists invited to online one-on-one interviews with Emerson Program staff.



**March 2021**

Emerson Fellowship finalists are invited to online group interviews.



**March-May 2021**

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



**Early June 2021**

Emerson Fellows notified of their field placements.



**Late August 2021**

28th Class assembles for field training.

*Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Washington, D.C.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



◀ *Fellows from the 26th Class ('19-'20) following their field work presentations at Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C.*

### **Can I choose my field and policy placements?**

Fellows are matched with both their field and policy placements 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 the skills they would like to use or learn during their upcoming placements. Program staff consult these preferences, as well as the host organizations' requirements and expectations, when matching fellows and placements.

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

You can search for Emerson Fellows by class year, location, and placement [in our directory](#). There you can read the bios of past fellows, learn about what they accomplished at their field and policy placements, and read reports and blog posts they wrote during their time as a fellow.

### **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 individual donations. In 2020, the Emerson Program received support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), C&S Wholesale

Grocers, General Mills, the Kroger Co. Foundation, PepsiCo, and Tyson Foods. You can read more about our sponsors [here](#).

### **How do alums of the Emerson Fellowship stay connected to the program and the Hunger Center?**

Emerson Fellowship alums stay connected in many ways! The Hunger Center encourages the fellows to think of themselves as being Emerson Fellows for life. Alums serve the program directly as application reviewers, trainers, coaches, and supervisors at both field and policy placements. Alums also help spread the word about the program to potential fellowship applicants, share job opportunities with the fellowship network, and organize social gatherings and reunions. And, following the fellowship, alums continue to work to end hunger and poverty.

## STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you've got questions about the fellowship or the application process that this guide doesn't answer, contact Program Associate **Emma Williamson** at [ewilliamson@hungercenter.org](mailto:ewilliamson@hungercenter.org)

## THE HUNGER CENTER'S 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 hunger and poverty.



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

We invest in developing 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.



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

Hunger Fellows 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.](#)



▲ Representative **Bill Emerson** (right) with his colleague and friend Rep. Mickey Leland

### WHO WAS BILL EMERSON?

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

His tireless bipartisan work during his tenure 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 serves as a living legacy to his steadfast leadership and dedication to ending hunger, and Rep. Emerson's bipartisan approach to legislation forms the foundation of the Congressional Hunger Center's work.

[Learn more about Rep. Emerson](#)



## Congressional Hunger Center

c/o WeWork Apollo  
810 7th St NE Suite 02-146  
Washington DC 20002  
[www.hungercenter.org](http://www.hungercenter.org)

☎ (202) 547-7022

📠 (202) 547-7575

Have questions not covered by this guide?  
Contact Program Associate **Emma Williamson**  
at [ewilliamson@hungercenter.org](mailto:ewilliamson@hungercenter.org)

Aerial photo of Washington, D.C. by [Famartin](#) CC BY-SA 4.0  
Photo of Martin Luther King Jr Memorial courtesy [SonderQuest](#)  
Photo of Rep. Emerson and Rep. Leland courtesy [Marty LaVor](#)  
Icons courtesy [Font Awesome](#) CC BY 4.0

Cover Photo: Emerson Fellows **Analicia Bañales** and **Heather Street** ('19-'20) with colleagues at their field placement at the Houston Food Bank.

© 2020 Congressional Hunger Center  
This edition published 9/29/2020