ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship

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<th>Project:</th>
<th>Securing Victim Compensation Funds for All Survivors of Violence</th>
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<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Common Justice (Brooklyn, NY)</td>
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<td>Location:</td>
<td>Remote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stipend:</td>
<td>$60,000 per year, plus health insurance and professional development funding</td>
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<td>Start Date:</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
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ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Common Justice develops and advances solutions to violent crime that transform the lives of those harmed and foster racial equity without relying on incarceration. Locally, we operate the first alternative-to-incarceration and victim service program in the United States that focuses on violent felonies in the adult courts. Nationally, we leverage the lessons from our direct service to transform the justice system through partnerships, advocacy, and elevating the experience and power of those most impacted. Rigorous and hopeful, we build practical strategies to hold people accountable for harm, break cycles of violence, and secure safety, healing and justice for survivors and their communities. Learn more at https://www.commonjustice.org/

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A federal fund called VOCA (Victims of Crime Act 1984) provides resources to all states for victim compensation. These resources support survivors of violence in meeting critical needs such as emergency housing, medical care and mental health services. Unfortunately, survivors in New York can only gain access to such compensation by reporting what happened to them to the police – even if they think doing so will make them unsafe, or even risk their lives. The problem is that many survivors, the majority of whom are Black and Brown people, know that participating in the criminal legal system might expose them to greater harm. Common Justice plans to launch a campaign that seeks to change this law and allow survivors of violence to receive victim compensation funds without having to go to the police.

The Leading Edge Fellow will join Common Justice’s United for Healing Equity (UHE) team as a Research Analyst to help UHE develop a report that would dive deeply into the various ways that New York’s victim compensation reporting law harms marginalized communities by preventing individuals from these communities from receiving victim compensation funds when they need it most – in order to heal. The fellow will do this through the use of new data, personal narratives and historical research. The fellow’s work on this research report would advance social justice and racial equity by helping Common Justice advance our campaign to reform this law, which disproportionally harms Black people and other people of color. Depending on public health guidance and the fellow’s preference, they may have the opportunity to travel to various victim service provider sites throughout the state and speak with their participants about how the law has prevented them and/or their loved ones from accessing victim compensation funds. The fellow will report to the Vice President of Organizing and Policy. This is a full-time commitment for the fellowship year, including dedicated time for professional development activities.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Interview survivors of violence and victim service providers to develop a clear understanding of the various ways that New York’s victim compensation law impacts marginalized communities.
- FOIA the Office of Victim Services to determine how many people were denied access to victim compensation funds in the state in the last 10 years due to the aforementioned law.

This position is only available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program. You may not contact the host institution to inquire about this position.
• Research the legislative history of the Victim of Crime Act to determine if the New York law fulfills the true legislative intentions of the Act.
• Work with the UHE team to draft a report, as well as other advocacy tools including op-eds, news articles, social media posts, data visuals, webinars, and workshops, that will show how the victim compensation law impacts survivors from marginalized communities.

Qualifications:
• PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields here;
• Excellent research, writing, and communication skills;
• An understanding of structural and institutional racism;
• Some familiarity with quantitative and qualitative analysis;
• Good organizational skills;
• Ability to work independently and strong project management skills;
• Enthusiasm for and alignment with Common Justice’s mission, vision, and values.

APPLICATIONS
• Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships
• All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
• Application deadline: 9pm EDT, May 6, 2021