Tips for writing a robust Open Society Fellowship proposal

- Please answer all questions posed in the online application system.
- Be concise but also as informative and illustrative as you can within the word limit. Project budgets are not considered part of the word limit.
- We look for fellows who are dynamic, creative and thoughtful. Your proposal should demonstrate those qualities and show us that the plan you propose is well thought-through. If you are not a native speaker of English and feel that you are unable to express yourself effectively in English, please feel free to write the proposal in your native language and have it translated. (We can only accept proposals in English.)
- This is not a traditional grant or an academic proposal. Make your words leap off the page. We don't need extensive citations, graphs or flowcharts. Rather, make your case in powerful and assertive language.
- Please make your proposal specific to the Open Society Fellowship and tailor your answers to our application guidelines and questions. Simply submitting a book proposal or research outline, without answering our questions, will generally not suffice.
- As noted in our guidelines, we do not fund dissertation research, courses of study or other research while the applicant is still in school.
- Lastly, please run a spelling and grammar check on your proposal and turn off "track changes" if you have used it.

Description of Project, Arguments
- Describe the project and outputs as clearly and concisely as you can.
- If you are stating arguments that are unconventional or counterintuitive, provide evidence rather than simply blanket statements. If you are using case studies, include your arguments for why you selected those case studies.
- We look for a balance between questions and answers – that is, we want to know the questions that are driving your argument, but we also want to understand the "hunches" that are leading you in a certain direction. Strong proposals are inquisitive, but also clearly describe the contours of the applicant's thinking and approach.

Existing Terrain and Newness of Concept
- We don't require extensive literature reviews but we do look for a familiarity with existing work and an explanation of how your argument or angle is different and new.

Impact
- Projects often seek to influence many sets of diverse audiences simultaneously. Please clarify which audiences are most crucial for your project and ensure that the activities

you propose will be aimed at those audiences. What do you want them to do differently based on your arguments and products?

- Please avoid using charts or tables to outline goals, objectives, impact and outcomes if they reiterate the points you have already made in writing.

Communications and Outreach Strategy

- Beyond a description of your products, we also look for how you plan to use the products to get traction among your audiences. Why are your chosen products the most effective and creative means of doing so?
- Simply having a website does not mean audiences will come. If you are proposing a website, please clarify why a website is the best means of dissemination.

Qualifications for the Project

- While we don't have academic requirements, we do look for a significant body of expertise in your field as well as demonstrated ability to question conventional thinking.

Engagement with OSF

- Fellowship proposals are independent projects that are multi-disciplinary and convention-busting. Since the Open Society Foundations is primarily an organizational-grant donor, we seek to make a distinction between an Open Society Fellowship proposal and an organizational grant proposal. Hence, we look for evidence that a fellow's work will be applicable across different thematic and/or geographic areas of focus.
- If you are planning a project that is closely related to the work of an organization where you currently work, please indicate how your proposed fellowship would be conceptually different, and how it is an independent project. Why couldn't this work be just as easily carried out with an organizational grant?
- We don't expect all applicants to know the Open Society Foundations and its work in great depth. However, please spend some time on the www.soros.org website reading up about different initiatives, and propose ideas on ways in which your project can dovetail and/or complexify different programs' work.
- The Open Society Fellowship is different from many traditional individual fellowships and grants. We look for applicants who see the Open Society Foundations as an intellectual resource for their work, and whose ideas can in turn deepen or challenge the Foundations' thinking. Why is the Open Society Foundations the right home for your project? And why, in particular, is the Open Society Fellowship – with its unique aspect of engagement with our network – the right vehicle?

Project Budget

- All we need at the application stage is a preliminary project budget that tells us the types of activities you will undertake and the kinds of support you will need to finish your

project. This budget will not make or break your fellowship proposal. Once fellows have been provisionally chosen, we will work with them to decide on a final project budget that will be included in the formal grant letter.

- If you are planning a conference or convening as a project activity with expenses for participants other than yourself, please provide as much justification and details as you can. We may choose to fund all or part of it through a grant to an organizational partner, or we may decide that it is best funded through outside fund-raising.