The Belonging Forum

2027 Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program

Partner Organization:

The Inside-Out Center:
International Headquarters of
The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program
and Alternative Dialogue & Exchange Initiatives)

Project Title:

Anthologizing 30 Years of The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program in Preparation for the 30th Anniversary Celebration & Conference of The Inside-Out Center

2027 Samuel Fellows in Belonging:

Project Proposal

Partner Organization: The Inside-Out Center

A sense of belonging is central to The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. When people are asked about their experiences in Inside-Out, the first thing they talk about is the deep sense of belonging that they felt in the class. Though the stories are different, the message remains the same: in the classroom, they felt liked they belonged to a unique community, and this feeling stayed with them throughout the semester – and beyond. It is, in fact, the central felt experience of those who get involved: the sense of belonging to something (a community, a mission, a purpose, a movement) much bigger than any one of us.

Inside-Out brings together campus-based students with incarcerated students to study issues collaboratively, through a semester-long dialogue process. Everyone in the class has an equal voice and an equal stake in the learning process. But besides learning together about the given topic, those involved learn just as much about themselves, other people, the assumptions that we carry, dealing with conflict, communication, the many ways that we are all connected – all very human realities.

Learn more at: https://insideoutcenter.org/inside-out-center.html

Location of the Project: This project will be accomplished completely remotely. The Inside-Out Center is located in Ardmore, PA, a few minutes outside of Philadelphia.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Sections 1 and 2: Description and Goals of the Project

The Inside-Out Center's global program turns 30 in the fall of 2027. We are interested in having **two Fellows** work collaboratively to anthologize the program and celebrate Inside-Out's 30-year anniversary.

With Inside-Out courses conducted throughout the U.S. and beyond over the last 30 years, 1,600+ instructors having been trained in the Inside-Out methodology, and nearly 40,000 Inside-Out alumni, there will be countless ways (written, artistic, creative, etc.) to illustrate the fundamental sense of belonging experienced through the program, as well as its ongoing history, accomplishments, and amazing serendipity throughout the years.

The Fellows will begin by reading Kim Samuel's book, "On Belonging: Finding Connection in an Age of Isolation," along with a compilation of writings from Inside-Out, through both the book, "Turning Teaching Inside-Out: A Pedagogy of Transformation for Community-Based Education" and several academic articles published about the program over the years.

Additionally, the Fellows will research and learn from methods used by others (through reading and/or interviews) to capture the archival history of a large, lengthy, diverse, and far-flung program, and the many levels and kinds of connection that have been created along the way.

What the Fellows learn and produce through this process can provide a model for other programs seeking to highlight and illustrate their own sense of belonging and connection across their particular networks.

Section 3: Guiding Questions

- How is a sense of belonging illustrated in some of the creative projects that have been developed through Inside-Out classes and think tanks over the years?
- How can the arts (through varying media) serve as points of connection between and among people and groups?
- How can the arts provide us with a deeper understanding of what happens through the Inside-Out experience?
- What might the plethora of artistic creations developed over the years say about the power of Inside-Out's impact on participants?
- What sorts of themes emerge in the creative projects generated through these group experiences?

Section 4: Research Methods & Dissemination Approach: The 3 Streams

The Belonging Forum propose **three research streams**:

- **Creative**
- **Advocacy**
- **Academic**

The tracks are designed to articulate the possibilities of diverse Fellowship on belonging. The program recognizes that creative methods, advocacy-focused research, and academic research are all Fellowly. All three tracks have the potential to address similar topics. The **key difference is the outputs and methodologies.** The beauty of the tracks is that they all overlap and

interweave, only strengthening each other and the Belonging Forum's impact. The streams **illustrate a sense of "belonging" in both process and product.**

We encourage Samuel Fellows and Partners to explore different ways of asking questions and sharing knowledge that instills belonging for the researcher and participants. Partners do not need to choose a stream, but they are welcome to consider how the streams might shape methods or outputs.

This project will predominantly focus on the creative stream.

Section 5: Key Deliverables

Belonging Forum Deliverables

- **Work plan** to serve as a preliminary blueprint for the project, including a budget plan which predicts and plans potential research costs to ensure responsible allocation of bursary funds.
- **1 Opinion Piece per Fellow** (500 – 1,000 words) related to the project the Fellows are working on, posted to the Belonging Forum's website. Partners are welcome/encouraged to post the article as well.
- **A Final Output** - a written component (5-15 pages) to outline the research process and findings.
- **A Final Presentation with the Cohort**

Inside-Out Deliverables

The Fellows will work together to create **both digital and print media** to be distributed in and outside of prisons. The following are examples:

- Put out an open call for creative writing, visual art, and other creative pieces (to be collected in a magazine format – digitally and in print).

- Create both digital and print media to be distributed in and outside of prisons.
- Provide all that is gathered to The Inside-Out Center to build on and expand the part of the Inside-Out website dedicated to the arts.
- An interview podcast series with program participants past and present to be made available through the Inside-Out website and various podcast platforms.

Plan various **30-year anniversary events**:

- Develop a gallery of artistic and written pieces to be on temporary exhibit during the anniversary celebration / conference.
- Make this gallery available to The Inside-Out Center to include on the Center's website.
- Create an arts-based event kit that can be used by different Inside-Out think tanks all over the country and world, allowing the festivities to take place in and outside of prison.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

About the Program / What the Program Offers

The Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program empowers young people, recent graduates, and people with lived experience to engage in meaningful research and community action. At the Belonging Forum, our mission is to build connectedness within and between communities through partnerships, research, programming, learning initiatives, and advocacy. At the Belonging Forum, fostering belonging is central to our work.

The Belonging Forum approaches the definition of belonging as connection to the 4 Ps: **people, place, power, and purpose**. This is to say that belonging comes through our relationships with other people as well as through our

rootedness in nature, our ability to influence social, political and economic decision-making, and our capacity to find shared meaning and purpose in our lives. The program offers a unique opportunity to apply the lens of belonging to issues that matter, to think intersectionally, and holistically about the problems of the 21st century – while working alongside experts and community leaders.

This is a paid opportunity from February 8 – October 29, 2027. Fellows will carry out the research part-time on a schedule agreed between the Fellow, the partner, and the Belonging Forum. Each Fellow will receive a bursary to support their work.

The Program offers:

- A flexible, part-time research opportunity.
- A bursary to support your research calculated based on cost of living where the Fellow is based and number of hours committed.
- Work with national and international community partners.
- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship.
- Network and team building opportunities.
- All works produced by the Fellows are published on the Belonging Forum website and promoted on our social media channels.

Equity Statement:

We encourage all equity-seeking groups such as immigrants, Black and Indigenous communities, people of color, women, young and older people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and people with disabilities to apply. Please let us know if you need any accommodation throughout the application and interview process and we will be happy to support you.

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant:

The project requires:

- Past and/or current experience with the Inside-Out Program.
- Capacity to develop ideas and questions, engage in research, and write clearly and concisely.
- Interviewing abilities, as well as communication, organizational, and planning skills.
- A sense of curiosity and interest in digging deeply into what people have to share and how their input connects with a sense of belonging.
- The ability to work collaboratively, creatively, and strategically towards a time-bound goal.
- Those who have been formerly incarcerated are preferred for this project, but others may be considered, as well.

Thank you for your interest in the Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program. Due to a high volume of applications, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.