

Tips to Approach Host Organizations

A strong working relationship between a Fellow and Host Supervisor is instrumental to a successful fellowship. Key ingredients include: adequate supervision, integration of the project into the program work of the Host Organization, and shared goals between the Fellow's project and the Host. Fellows can be hosted by a current employer or an organization where they volunteer, or by another organization that aligns with their project goals.

This checklist supports applicants who are reaching out to prospective Host Organizations.

Host Organization Profile

Typically, Host Organizations are:

- Established NGO, CBO, faith-based organizations or research/academic institutions with experience in HIV and other epidemics, and preferably HIV prevention research or HIV advocacy.
- Interested in building on their work in HIV prevention advocacy.
- Are led by or work with people living with HIV or key populations, such as sex workers, LGBTQIA+ people and drug users.
- Committed to working with and mentoring Fellows.
- Meet all financial eligibility criteria. (See list of required documentation in the Application Form.)
- Willing to assign a supervisor to the Advocacy Fellow and clearly define expectations of the Fellow.

For applicants considering their current employer or organization where they volunteer. Does it fit the profile described in the box below? What are the pros and cons of continuing with your current organization but with a different purpose? Think about what would make this easy or complicated before deciding.

Suggested actions:

- Request a meeting with your current supervisor or manager. Show them the AVAC flyer and Call for Applications and indicate your interest in applying. Watch the [videos](#) on the AVAC Fellows page together. Share the application and information materials with them.
- Submit a strong proposal to your current supervisor to convey how your project would be beneficial to the organization's goals, to your community, and to your own growth.
- Make the case for setting aside your current responsibilities for 18 months to pursue a Fellowship and complete a project. This can include strengthening advocacy skills that could contribute to the organization. Propose a plan to shift your current responsibilities to others for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Discuss what, if any, limited responsibilities you can retain for the 18 months if you are selected.
- Discuss the responsibilities of a Host Supervisor and the possible benefits of participation.

- Discuss their role in the Fellowship and in the application process, as well as the benefits of hosting a Fellow.
- If you are comfortable, ask what, if any, concerns they may have. This allows an open discussion.
- Let them know about the scheduled information call with prospective applicants and Host Organizations, Fellow Alumni and the AVAC team.
- Ensure you keep them abreast of the application process and let them know they may directly reach out to AVAC at fellows@avac.org.
- For more information, refer them to [Frequently Asked Questions for Host Organizations](#).

For applicants considering a new organization to approach. Does it fit the profile described for Host Organization qualifications in the box below? Consider if it is known to you and if you have a key contact within the organization (at any level) to talk to before you approach the leadership.

Suggested actions:

- Reach out to any contact you have associated with the organization to identify the best approach for contacting their leadership.
- If you are completely new to this organization, treat the interaction as a job interview. Read as much as you can about it. List any interactions you've had with staff, any meetings you've jointly attended, and your role or interest in the organization's mission and activities.
- Consider who you should request to meet—organization leader or department head? This should be someone who has the time to talk to you and either decision-making responsibility or a direct link to the decision-maker.
- Show them the AVAC flyer or Call for Applications and indicate your interest in applying. Watch the [videos](#) on the AVAC Fellows page together. Share the application and information materials with them.
- Send your resumé/CV in advance and bring it to any scheduled meetings, along with any materials or videos that tell them more about who you are.
- When you meet them, say why you're interested in their organization, why you think they would be a good host, and why they should be interested in your project idea.
- Share a strong project idea to convey why it's beneficial to the organization's goals and to your community.
- Discuss their role in the Fellowship and in the application process, as well as the benefits of hosting a Fellow.
- Let them know about the scheduled information call with prospective applicants and Host Organizations, Fellow Alumni and the AVAC team.
- Ensure you keep them abreast of the application process and let them know they may directly reach out to AVAC at fellows@avac.org.
- For more information, refer them to [Frequently Asked Questions for Host Organizations](#).

Please see the [list](#) of current and previous Host Organizations.

About AVAC

AVAC is an international non-profit organization that leverages its independent voice and global partnerships to accelerate ethical development and equitable delivery of effective HIV prevention options, as part of a comprehensive and integrated pathway to global health equity.

Follow AVAC on Twitter @HIVpxresearch; find more at www.avac.org and www.prepwatch.org.