

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, integrating 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 an employer or organization where they volunteer, or for an organization that aligns with project goals.

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

Considering your current employer or organization where you 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 supervisor or manager. Show 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 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 a year in order 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 year.
- Discuss what, if any, limited responsibilities you can retain for the year if you are selected.
- Discuss the responsibilities of a Host Supervisor and the possible benefits of participation.
- Discuss their role in the fellowship, the application process and 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](#).

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 to 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 whom 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 résumé/CV in advance and bring it to any scheduled meetings. Also bring any materials or videos that tell them more about who you are.
- When you meet them, talk about 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 community.
- Discuss their role in the fellowship, the application process and 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.

Host Organizations

Typically, Host Organizations are:

- Established NGO, CBO, faith-based organizations or research/academic institutions with experience in HIV, and preferably HIV prevention research or HIV advocacy.
- Interested in building on their work in HIV prevention advocacy.
- Led by or work with people living with HIV or key populations, such as sex workers, LGBTQ 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.

About AVAC

AVAC is a global organization working to accelerate the ethical development of and global access to effective HIV prevention options, as part of a comprehensive and integrated pathway to global health equity. For more information, go to the [AVAC homepage \(www.avac.org\)](http://www.avac.org).