



ASTC Community Science Dialogue & Deliberation Fellowship

The Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) is proud to launch a pilot fellowship program to nurture a corps of 10 public-engagement professionals based in science and technology centers and museums, alongside community partners, towards implementation of a strategic Dialogue & Deliberation community-based event. This 12-month cohort-based training program will allow Fellows to develop skills in working collaboratively with their community partners at the intersection of science, technology, society, and policy using deliberation- and dialogue-based methods.

To support implementation of new and expanded dialogue and deliberation programs among the trained Fellows and their community-partner teams, the [Chan Zuckerberg Initiative](#) and ASTC will distribute funding to support the project proposals informed by insights and skills developed through the fellowship curriculum. These new and expanded programs will engage the public in considering the personal, local, and societal implications of global challenges and emerging technology trends.

This fellowship program is a part of [ASTC's Community Science Initiative](#) which is building capacity within ASTC-member institutions and their workforce to address community priorities through community science.

What is Dialogue & Deliberation?

Dialogue & Deliberation is a set of approaches that can help community members identify or refine priorities and make decisions about important issues. **Dialogue** allows people to share their perspectives on a topic, and **deliberation** provides an opportunity to examine options and make actionable decisions. These techniques are effective when applied to a wide range of topics that impact communities, including issues related to science and technology. Dialogue & Deliberation on science-related topics takes an expansive view to examine societal impacts, community values, and public policy decisions that can inform—and be informed by—science.

The goal of Dialogue & Deliberation events is to have the communities produce recommendations that are then acted upon by scientific experts, policymakers, and community members *in collaboration* with one another.

There are a variety of approaches to designing and implementing Dialogue & Deliberation events, and Fellows will be introduced to wide range of models. Some examples include:

- The Nurture Nature Center's [From Risk to Resiliency](#) in Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania
- [Building with Biology](#) project's [deliberative forums](#)
- Public Agenda's [community action planning forums](#) in Brooklyn, New York, within their [Cycles of Resilience](#) project

Dialogue & Deliberation events are also rich and robust spaces for civic engagement around a variety of topics: the National Center for Dialogue & Deliberation outlines several [here](#).

Goals of the Program

To increase the number of science engagement professionals and institutions capable of supporting deliberative programming on science and technology issues, ASTC's Community Science Dialogue and Deliberation Fellowship program will include two major components:

- 1. Capacity building for Dialogue- & Deliberation-based Community Science approaches.** This will equip the Fellows and community partners with skills for establishing and maintaining equitable partnerships, as well as an understanding of dialogue and deliberation program approaches and techniques. The program will also include institutional leaders from the science centers and the community partner organization, as well as explicit responsibilities for the Fellows and partner-representatives to build institutional buy-in and capacity.
- 2. Program development and peer learning** among Fellows and partners to co-design and develop a dialogue and deliberation program that addresses a community priority at the intersection of science and society. This design and development will require additional training and support for both the Fellow and the community partners.

While this program is designed around individual Fellows, the program activities, learning opportunities, and deliverables are designed to include leadership and staff from throughout the science center or museum to build a working understanding of dialogue and deliberation programs throughout the institution.

Fellowship Elements, Objectives, and Outcomes

Partner identification

Working with your institution, you will be asked to identify a community partner who you will work with to co-develop a dialogue and deliberation program. "Community partners" are defined broadly for the purposes of this program, but are often organizations, coalitions, or networks of individuals or groups sharing a common geography, set of characteristics, interests, and goals. You may be encouraged to participate in or organize community listening sessions to surface potential priorities and opportunities.

You will receive an introduction to community science and principles of equitable community partnerships before identifying and finalizing the partnership with the community organization. You and representatives of your community partner will participate in the majority of the curriculum together and will jointly learn about dialogue and deliberation program design, topic selection, participant engagement, and more.

Training and capacity building

Cohort training curriculum

During the training, you and your community partner will:

- Strengthen your understanding of a set of attributes and outcomes of community science
- Participate in training and discussions on topics such as community agency, power-sharing, and co-design

- Develop skills and knowledge required for establishing and maintaining equitable community partnerships
- Learn about the different models of dialogues and deliberative programs for science and technology engagement
- Receive training on the basic components of dialogue-based programming including:
 - topic identification and framing
 - structure, format, and meeting design
 - facilitation
 - evaluation
 - dissemination and ongoing engagement
- Learn the range of purposes and outcomes for using dialogue and deliberation approaches and the potential funding sources for these activities

Upon completion of the formal training, you will be able to:

- speak to the challenges and outcomes of community science
- be familiar with examples of dialogue and deliberation on science and technology issues
- access the existing resources and communities of practice for facilitators of dialogue and deliberation programs (e.g., National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation)
- speak to the role of the science center in a deliberation, how topics are connected to community priorities, and who the deliberative activity will inform (e.g., policymakers, funders, community leaders, etc.)

Exploration of diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity topics

Along with the formal training above, you will be asked to do independent reading and work to enhance your personal understanding of critical topics relating to the advancement of accessible and equitable science engagement. Your cohort will engage in facilitated conversations and peer learning to keep all Fellows grounded in these core values and help you navigate any issues that arise in your project work.

Institutional one-on-ones and involvement

To develop institutional buy-in, you and your community partner will be required to bring other staff from your organizations to selected sessions to better understand the value to an institution, the need and opportunity to attract funding around dialogue-based programs, and the importance and fundamentals of sustaining community partnerships. These staff will include, but not be limited to, science and technology center and museum leadership, institutional advancement, fundraising, and communications professionals who will need to support the Fellow's specific project and who will be essential to continuing this work in the future.

Program execution

Topic identification

You and your community partner will co-develop a proposal for a dialogue and deliberation program that outlines the issue, participants, structure, and outcomes. Regular cohort meetings will be used to facilitate peer learning, support, and troubleshooting during the partner identification and topic selection.

Program development and execution

You and your community partner will work together to develop and host your dialogue and deliberation event for a limited number of community members. You and your community partner will convene on a regular basis to discuss your progress and challenges. Experts will be invited to these sessions to deepen the training on topics such as issue framing and participant recruitment and to provide feedback on program development. Final dialogue and deliberation programs may be held in person or virtually depending on the final timeline.

Post-program reflections and evaluation

You will engage in evaluation, led by a third-party evaluator who will be responsible for assessing impact and capturing lessons learned from the Fellows' dialogue programs. You will also engage in reflections with your cohort about the success of your dialogue programs and discuss opportunities to continue advancing approaches to equitable community partnerships. Finally, you will be asked to reflect on the value of the training you received through this program and provide feedback on further opportunities for ASTC to facilitate capacity building among our members.

Eligibility and Applicant Requirements

Staff at ASTC-member science and technology centers and museums are invited to apply to this pilot fellowship program. Applicants are required to have institutional support and buy-in to participate. Strong applicants will:

- Have a working understanding or strong interest in learning and applying the concept of Community Science. *Applicants do not need to have specific familiarity with or capacity in dialogue and deliberation-based approaches to community science.*
- Be familiar with concepts of equity and inclusion and open to self-reflection with the goal of creating equitable partnerships with community members
- Have made previous—or have ongoing—efforts to create meaningful relationships with the various communities served by their institution, and be able to articulate how this program will expand institutional capacity for equitable community engagement in issues of science and technology
- Have institutional support to participate in the fellowship, including
 - Demonstrated interest in dialogue-based programming and alignment with the organization's strategic priorities, as reflected in the application
 - Supervisor commitment for the time and resources needed to participate during the 12-month fellowship
 - A cross-team commitment to participate in one institutional training session
 - Senior-level commitment to provide staff support for the dialogue and deliberation event

As this fellowship program is targeted at growing capacity within the science center field, it is not the best fit for individuals with extensive experience in designing and executing dialogue and deliberation programming. However, ASTC is interested in engaging a limited number of resource partners to support the fellowship program. Resource partners will help strengthen peer learning among the Fellows, and as interested, can participate in relevant cohort sessions and provide small-group mentoring. Expertise can include dialogue and deliberation specifically, or in starting and sustaining equitable community partnerships. Please reach out to communityscience@astc.org for more information.

Timeline and Required Time Commitment

This is an intensive fellowship and applicants can expect to spend up to four days per month in facilitated learning sessions with ASTC, pursuing individual learning and reflection, co-learning with other Fellows, and working with their community partners and colleagues to produce an event. Applications will open August 6, 2021 and close September 7, 2021.

The fellowship will kick-off in late September 2021. Fellows will attend a pre-conference session at the ASTC *Virtual* 2021 Annual Conference, and then meet every month for half-day sessions through September 2022. The co-developed dialogue and deliberation event is expected to be held in late spring or summer of 2022. Events are themselves a pilot and should be considered a learning opportunity for the Fellows, their institutions, and their community partners.

Community partner time commitment will vary based on agreed-upon roles and responsibilities, but they can expect to spend at least one day per month on average. If interested and available, community partners could also participate in select sessions so they could receive the foundations of dialogue and deliberation and the diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity training.

Financial Support

Fellows will receive a stipend of \$10,000 to support their time on this project. Community partners will also receive a stipend to support their participation in co-learning and planning activities. In addition, the host institution and the community partner will be eligible to apply for additional funding to support the project, including the community partner's staff time to work on the dialogue and deliberation program. A part of the training and development program for both Fellows and community partners will involve the development of an equitable budget that supports all partners equally and part of the qualification for project funding will be in ensuring that all partners are equitably supported for their work. Project funds will be available to support the execution of the community dialogue and deliberation event.