

Sierra Fellows Program- Key Facts

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Goal: aid rural mountain communities in developing skills and projects geared toward the challenging task of building capacity

Fellows: college and advanced degree individuals with skillsets that benefit the needs of the community in which they are placed

Fellows are placed in rural mountain communities that have identified a need or project that is desired to improve a current situation. Specifically, these are community-driven projects that benefit from being worked on at the local level and from having an additional resource for their project. The community may not have the skillset needed to accomplish the task, or the community may have the skills needed for a project but may need an extra set of hands or someone to work on the project full time in order to complete it. The fellow is placed in either situation to help the project move forward.

A major component of the Fellows Program is sustainability. Fellows are placed in a community for one to two years, but their projects are aimed to be self-sustaining after the Fellow leaves. By bringing the community together to define their needs, identify a plan, and be involved in its implementation, the community creates a sustainable project and positive change that endures long after the end of the Fellow's term. A Fellow may act as a major driving on getting a project in motion, but the community will be able to maintain and improve the project after the Fellow leaves.

Sierra Institute is currently developing this nascent program, and is defining where Fellows will be placed and the roles they will play in the upcoming years. If you have questions or comments about the Fellows Program, or ideas on how or where a Fellow could be used, please contact Courtney Gomola at cgomola@sierrainstitute.us or 530-284-1022.