The Education Pioneers Fellowship

Frequently Asked Questions About Our Expansion | November 2015

Why is Education Pioneers expanding its Fellowship now?

We set out in our 2015-2019 Strategic Plan an idea to continue to refine our existing programs to meet market needs. This year in particular we heard from both talent and Partners that their needs have shifted -- they want more long-term opportunities, and they want Fellowships to start throughout the year. EP is evolving to meet those market needs so we can increase our impact and serve more students.

What is different about the expanded Fellowship?

The expanded Fellowship offers more flexibility to our talent and Partners. Previously, EP offered a 10-week summer Fellowship for graduate school students, a 10-month Fellowship for data analysts and a yearlong Fellowship for graduate students. The Fellowships all had specific cycles with fixed start dates in June or September.

Our expanded Fellowship combines these programs and offers flexible hiring timelines, year-round so we can serve more talented professionals and partners. We will offer:

- A 10-week summer track (primarily for graduate students) and
- A career track with start dates throughout the year for professionals from a variety of backgrounds interested in a full-time or long-term opportunity

We are also recruiting from new talent pipelines to find more transformational leaders from diverse backgrounds. In addition to early- and mid-career talent that organizations have come to rely on EP for, we are introducing new talent pipelines, including more senior-level talent pursuing “second careers.”

What's the same about the expanded Fellowship?

We are still recruiting diverse, transformational professionals driven to solve problems outside of the classroom so students and teachers can succeed in the classroom. And we are matching them with a diverse range of partner organizations that serve students, from school districts and charter schools organizations to education nonprofits.

We will continue to recruit and support professionals who exhibit our values (courage, optimism, collaboration, and action) and who are the types of change agents unafraid to take on big problems if it will support student success. We will provide our Fellows with leadership development, build their knowledge of
the K-12 sector, and connect them with a network to support their work and launch them into meaningful careers.

**How is EP different from a search firm?**

EP is expanding on what we already do well and providing a new and different approach to talent sourcing than a search firm.

Because of their cost and their specialty, you would likely approach a search firm for a very narrow set of roles - for example, just for C-suite positions. We aim to be a more inclusive and reliable source of talent, for a range of roles. Our Partners will be able to hire junior-, mid-, and more senior-level talent through EP, not just executives (which is where most search firms specialize).

We recruit and select professionals from diverse backgrounds with the mindsets and skills to understand the communities our Partners serve and help our Partners advance their work. We provide a more affordable and simpler talent search.

Above all, EP is a “connector” that can provide access and choice among new, high-quality candidates. We don’t guarantee placement; we put more of the choice and ownership in the organization’s hands while supporting with sourcing and vetting across the nation.

And we invest in our Pioneers’ onboarding and development. As they settle into their roles, we provide professional development and networking support to ensure they have the right skills, mindsets, K-12 knowledge, and connections to thrive.

**Will all EP Fellows still have access to professional development and a cohort of fellow Pioneers?**

Yes, we will continue our strong, cohort-based professional development programs that provide our Fellows with a powerful and transformative learning experience.

Our leadership development programming enables our Fellows to build a community and a network in the education sector; engage in courageous conversations about race, class, and equity; and explore key trends and issues to expand their K-12 education knowledge. Our Fellows consistently tell us the cohort model is one of the best parts of their experience and helps pave the way to a successful career in education.

The professional development and cohort-based learning programs will remain largely the same for our Fellows on the summer track, including cohort sessions throughout the 10-week experience. Cohorts for our Fellows on the career track will start several times throughout the year and extend for three months.

**How long will Fellowships on the career track last?**

Fellows on the career track will start their positions with our partner organizations on a rolling basis throughout the year. Shortly after beginning
their Fellowship, people in the career track will embark on an intensive, three-month professional development and cohort-based learning program.

Beyond that, the duration of their Fellowship will vary based on the needs of Fellows and Partner organizations, with most roles lasting at least a year. While some Fellows on the career track may have set end dates, in many cases, they will be placed in permanent, full-time roles.

**What happened to the Analyst Fellowship?**

Our focus on analytic talent is here to stay! Our Partners still want to hire data analysts, and EP believes that data analysts provide crucial insights to improve education for all students. We will continue to recruit professionals with skills in data analysis into high-value roles as part of our career and summer tracks.

**Will EP continue offering the Visiting Fellowship?**

Yes, we will continue our Visiting Fellowships, which allow professionals currently in the education sector to participate in our cohort-based professional development programs.

**What is the timing for potential Pioneers to apply, be admitted, and start?**

**Applications:** Candidates interested in the summer track for the summer of 2016 can start applying on September 22, 2015. Candidates interested in the career track can start applying on November 3, 2015.

**Selection:** After the applications are opened for both tracks (September 22 for the summer track and November 3 for the career track), applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. We will share more details on the timing of the admissions process in the coming weeks.

**Matching:** We anticipate beginning to match career track Fellows and Partners as soon as February 2016. We will start matching Fellows on the summer track in spring 2016, with programming starting in June 2016.

**What is EP looking for in potential Fellows?**

We aim to work with the most talented professionals in the country. We believe in looking for talent with different types of backgrounds and experiences, and place a particular focus on developing leaders of color. We believe it is critical for leaders in education to reflect the diverse communities we serve.

Beyond that, we are looking for people whose specific skills align with the needs of our Partners, and who have the passion for and commitment to transforming our country’s education system so that all students from all communities have the opportunity to succeed.

We are adjusting our eligibility guidelines, which outline who will be most competitive in our process. At a baseline, our Fellows must have a bachelor’s degree, at least two years of work experience and be eligible to work in the U.S.
Also, for the summer track, preference will be given to students who are enrolled in graduate school.

**Can potential Fellows apply for both a summer and career track Fellowship with one application?**

Yes, potential Fellows can fill out one application and indicate they are interested in either or both tracks. (NOTE: In this first year of our expansion, candidates will need to fill out their summer track application now, and then re-access their application in November to indicate they are also interested in the career track).

Also, we are updating our application process to be housed within an interactive “applicant center” where candidates can submit their application, receive updates on their application status, and ask questions of EP staff members.

**Is EP changing the way it matches Fellows with Partner organizations?**

Yes, we are improving our matching process to ensure that Fellows and Partners both feel confident they have found the best match, and to ensure the process is as streamlined and efficient as possible. We have engaged a nationally renowned organization, with deep expertise in matching process design, to redesign our process for 2016. We expect to materially increase the percent of projects and candidates successfully matched through our process and the speed at which successful matches are made.

**How does EP help match Fellows with their Partner organizations? If I am accepted, will I have input on where I complete my Fellowship? How long will it take for me to learn where I will work?**

Our primary goal is to help find an opportunity where your skills and experience align with the identified Partner needs. Your geographic and role preferences, along with organizational preferences, will be taken into account as we identify potential matches for you. You will have the opportunity to work with the EP team during the matching process. The process to help find matches for the summer track will start in the spring, with projects beginning in June, while the process will be ongoing for the career track program. You will be notified as soon as we identify one or more potential matches, and interviewed on a rolling basis.

**Is EP adding additional cities where you will be recruiting Fellows?**

EP recruiters travel the country to find potential Pioneers, but right now we operate our Fellowships in 20 cities nationwide, serving more than 200 Partners in education. In 2016, we plan to focus our work in the cities where we currently operate, though we could expand to additional cities in the future.
If I have applied to be a Fellow before but was not accepted to the Fellowship, can I apply again?

Yes, you are welcome to wait one year and apply again for either the summer or career track — or for both! (i.e., if you applied for the summer track in 2015, you can apply for the summer track in 2016).

How many Fellows do you expect for the career track and summer track this year?

We plan to place at least 500 Fellows with education organizations around the country this year, with plans to continue growing in years ahead. The Fellowship expansion will help us meet our goal of recruiting, developing, and connecting 10,000 Fellows by our 20th anniversary in 2023.

Who can I contact if I still have unanswered questions?

Please contact us at Recruiting@educationpioneers.org.