

## 2021-2022 Autry Fellowship Application Overview

**This document is intended only as a guide. No PDF or Word submissions will be accepted. We recommend reading the essay and short answer questions below, preparing and editing your responses in a separate document, and copying into the [online application found here](#) once you are ready to submit. Please note that the online application does not save progress. We hope this overview document is a useful tool in your application process!**

### Instructions and Guidelines

**TO THE APPLICANT:** Greetings and welcome! This information will assist the selection committee in choosing one person to serve as a Fellow for one year to work at MDC in Durham, North Carolina. Applicants must either be in their final year of undergraduate studies or have graduated within two years from any four-year college or university. **THIS APPLICATION CLOSSES AT 11:59 PM EST ON MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2021.** MDC staff will notify all candidates of their status within four weeks, and choose the Fellow immediately following an interview day in mid-February. The Fellowship will begin in the summer of 2021, with the start date to be negotiated.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION:** The application consists of two sections: an essay portion that includes two prompts (up to 500 words each) and a short answer section with three prompts (250, 100, and 150 words, respectively). There is also a brief biographical section.

You cannot save progress within the online application. We recommend preparing and editing responses beforehand and pasting into the online application only once you are ready to submit. **IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT** Faydra Richardson, 2020-2021 Autry Fellow, at [AutryFellowship@mdcinc.org](mailto:AutryFellowship@mdcinc.org).

### Eligibility

**If you answer no to any of the following, you unfortunately do not qualify for the 2021-2022 Autry fellowship and should not continue with this application. We appreciate your interest.**

1. Are you a student/graduate of a four-year, bachelor-granting college or university?
2. Did/will you graduate no earlier than May 2019 and no later than May 2021?
3. Can you commit to one full year as an Autry Fellow beginning between June and August 2021?

### Biographical & Contact Information

This section will collect your legal and preferred names, gender pronouns, mailing address, telephone number, email address, and high school information. You will also be able to list where

you attended college, what you studied, the degrees you earned, and the year you graduated for up to three institutions.

## **Essay Questions**

*Each essay is limited to 500 words. You are welcome to provide somewhat shorter responses that are thorough and meaningful. We recommend that you prepare your responses in a word processor and then paste your completed responses in the online form. As a reminder, you cannot save progress on the form.*

## Essay 1<sup>1</sup>

### KEY INDICATORS

## By Race and Hispanic Origin

		National Average	African American	American Indian	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latino	White	Two or More Races
<b>ECONOMIC WELL-BEING</b>								
Children in poverty	2018	18%	32%	31%	11%	26%	11%	18%
Children whose parents lack secure employment	2018	27%	41%	44%	21%	31%	21%	30%
Children living in households with a high housing cost burden	2018	31%	44%	29%	30%	41%	22%	33%
Teens not in school and not working	2018	7%	10%	12%	3%	8%	6%	7%
<b>EDUCATION</b>								
Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school	2014–18†	52%	48%	56%	46%	58%	51%	51%
Fourth-graders not proficient in reading	2019	66%	82%*	80%*	45%*	77%	56%	60%*
Eighth-graders not proficient in math	2019	67%	87%*	85%*	39%*	81%	57%	64%*
High school students not graduating on time	2017–18	15%	21%*	27%*	8%*	19%	11%	N.A.
<b>HEALTH</b>								
Low birth-weight babies	2018	8.3%	13.7%	7.9%	8.6%	7.5%	6.9%	8.9%
Children without health insurance	2018	5%	4%	13%	4%	8%	4%	4%
Child and teen deaths per 100,000	2018	25	38	28	15	20	24	N.A.
Children and teens (ages 10 to 17) who are overweight or obese	2017–18	31%	39%	N.A.	22%	38%	26%	35%
<b>FAMILY AND COMMUNITY</b>								
Children in single-parent families	2018	35%	65%	53%	15%	41%	24%	40%
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma	2018	13%	11%	17%	9%	30%	5%	8%
Children living in high-poverty areas	2014–18	10%	26%	27%	5%	17%	4%	9%
Teen births per 1,000	2018	17	27	21	4	27	12	18

† Data are from five-year American Community Survey (ACS) data and are not comparable to the national average using three years of pooled one-year ACS data.

\* Data are for non-Hispanic children.

N.A.: Not available.

<sup>1</sup> 2020 KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being. 22 June 2020, p. 8, <https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2020kidscountdatabook-2020.pdf>.

**Considering the above,** briefly describe what, in your opinion, drives the racial/ethnic disparities in 2-4 of the categories (Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, Family and Community). What factors do you believe keep these disparities in place? Then briefly discuss the implications of these disparities on our society and economy. (500 word limit)

## Essay 2

MDC equips Southern leaders, institutions, and communities to improve economic mobility and advance equity. To do this MDC works in partnership with leaders and community institutions to change the conditions that perpetuate inequity. Tell us about an experience that shaped or affirmed your understanding of how to engage in social change. Briefly explain the experience, your course of action, and the implications of your actions. (500 word limit)

## Short Answer Questions

**\*Pay Attention to Each Question's Specific Word Limit**

1. Over the past 20 years, Autry Fellows have come from various regions across the country. Throughout their time with MDC, Fellows have established or reaffirmed a commitment to addressing issues across the South. Why is it important for you to work in the South? In your response consider your experience with a Southern identity OR your interest in place-based work. (250 word limit)
2. Through the Autry Fellowship, MDC aims to train future southern leaders. What knowledge, skills, or experiences do you hope to gain during your Autry year? How will your Autry experience move you forward in your professional journey beyond the fellowship? (100 word limit)
3. Please use this space to elaborate on anything else that you think we should know about you. This is an opportunity to share your unique attributes or experiences. (150 word limit)

## **\*A Note Concerning References**

References are used by MDC to ascertain an applicant's skill in various areas, such as leadership, analytical thought, etc. Applicants often feel that a supervisor or boss can adequately answer questions concerning these skills. References, however, are not limited to the applicant's superiors within a formal work setting. References may include peers, former teachers, mentors, etc. We encourage you to think critically about who can accurately, thoughtfully, and eloquently answer questions about your specific skill set.