

BSC Birmingham-Southern College
HESS FELLOWS ADVOCACY PROGRAM

– Agency Application –

Part I: Agency Information

Agency: Greater Birmingham Ministries
Street Address: 2304 12th Avenue North
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State: AL
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Agency Mission Statement:

Part II: Plans for Hess Fellow

- 1) Please describe an example of a project you could assign to a Hess Fellow. We recognize that the details might change, but please provide an overview of a potential project. Your description will assist the Hess Center staff in matching your needs and interests with the strengths of student applicants.

The description below is indicative of the kind of work we do: grassroots organizing and leadership development, advocacy around issues affecting the poor, and educating our supporting congregations and the general public on those issues to engage them in efforts to bring change. GBM is currently working on immigration, transit, wage theft, and health care for the poor. GBM also provides Direct Services to people in need – groceries, clothing, and financial assistance with utility bills. **A Hess Fellow will be actively engaged in advocacy on the range of GBM’s issues. A Hess Fellow will also be involved in the hands-on work of Direct Services, grounding him/her in relationships with real people dealing with real challenges and bringing many real gifts to the table as well.**

Two potential projects are Voting Rights & Ban The Box.

Voting Rights work will involve helping staff reach out in the community and talk with our own clients to ensure that low-propensity voters are registered, have photo ID, and educated about the upcoming municipal elections.

Ban The Box is an effort to remove the box acknowledging past arrest or conviction from job applications with major local employers, local government and the State of Alabama. “Ban The Box” gives ex-offenders a fair chance to obtain work & regain dignity – both necessary to reduce recidivism. It allows qualified candidates to make it past the first cut and get an interview where they

can explain the checked box to potential employers. The Box has been banned by 18 states, more than 100 cities & counties and major employers including Wal-Mart, Target and Bed Bath & Beyond. Approximately 100,000 people in greater Birmingham would benefit. GBM will educate faith communities and the public, organize ex-offenders, and promote change at the local and state levels.

GBM's project would:

1. Educate about our congregations, individual supporters, the general public and ex-offenders about the "Ban The Box" campaign through newsletters and earned and social media;
 2. Connect, organize and provide leadership development for ex-offenders to advocate on their own behalf;
 3. Educate and negotiate Ban The Box policies with key public and private employers, such as Birmingham-Southern College, the City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, UAB, ACIPCO, Alabama Power Company and local universities, banks and hospitals;
- 2) What skills would a Hess Fellow need to succeed at your agency? In the past, agencies have requested students with particular majors, foreign language proficiency, research experience, computer programming knowledge, graphic design interests, etc.

Ability to gain a working understanding of policy issues, flexibility to adapt quickly to changes in role depending on what is happening in the community, ability to work independently, exceptional social skills with people from all walks of life, good written and verbal communication skills, social media proficiency. Spanish language proficiency not required but would be a great plus!

- 3) Hess Fellows are required to intern for a minimum of 8 weeks. Please indicate start and end dates for your intern and if these are dates are adjustable.

Our beginning and ending dates are flexible. We are closed the week of July 4

We will notify you about placements no later than March 3rd. We assume that you will hold a place for a Hess Fellow until that date. If you agree, please electronically sign below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. U. [unclear] 2011". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial.