



Birmingham-Southern College

HESS FELLOWS ADVOCACY PROGRAM

— Agency Application —

Part I: Agency Information

Agency: *One Roof*

Street Address: *1515 6th Avenue South, 5th Floor (inside Cooper Green)*

City: *Birmingham*

State: *Alabama*

ZIP: *35233*

Website: www.oneroofonline.org

Contact Name: *Michelle Farley*

Title: *Executive Director*

Phone: *205.254.8833 x 114*

E-mail: *michelle@oneroofonline.org*

Agency Mission Statement:

It is the mission of One Roof to equip and empower our community to end homelessness through advocacy, education and coordination of services.

One Roof is the coordinating body for homelessness services providers in the three county area of Jefferson, Shelby and St. Clair counties. We implement and manage the data management system that connects most service providers, are responsible for the annual Point in Time mini-census of our homeless population, and are the Coordinated Assessment agency. In other words, we are the data and big-picture agency.

Part II: Plans for Hess Fellow

- 1) Please describe an example of a project or focus area you could assign to a Hess Fellow. We recognize that the details might change, but please provide an overview of a potential project or focus area at your agency on which the Fellow might work. Your description will assist the Hess Center staff in matching your needs and interests with the strengths of student applicants.
 - a) *Because Housing and Urban Development invests many millions of competitive dollars in our area, and because One Roof is responsible for successfully competing for those dollars, we are extremely outcomes driven. There are several issues affecting our competitive abilities at this time, and a Hess Fellow could choose from several of these for research and advocacy.*
 - i. *There are small changes that could happen at the State level that would affect the competitiveness of One Roof and like agencies around Alabama. For example, there are "points" attached to One Roof agencies utilizing a single application for mainstream benefits rather than individual Food Stamp, TANF, etc. benefits. While many other states use a single application, Alabama has thus far declined to do so. A HESS fellow might research reasons for the state's decision; might explore a streamlined process to implement a single application; might identify appropriate state contacts with the will and ability to make said change and then advocate for that change. It should be noted that while moving from multiple applications to a single application would be good for One Roof, the ultimate beneficiary of said change is the homeless/ impoverished client in dire need of those benefits. Deliverables for this project could be a well-researched, actionable proposal to change to a single application for benefits. Students could present proposal to state contacts.*
 - ii. *One Roof hosts Project Homeless Connect, a one-day event that brings 60+ service providers under one roof at the Boutwell Auditorium to provide what homeless people need to get out*

- of homelessness. For each of the previous ten annual events we have been able to bring Social Security and the Department of Public Safety to the table to provide identification that is a dire need for a client experiencing homelessness. The missing part of the ID puzzle has been the refusal of the State Department of Public Health in Montgomery to participate. A Hess Fellow could research the cost benefits of Project Homeless Connect participation, identify appropriate state contacts with the will and ability to garner the participation of the State Department of Public Health and advocate for said participation. Deliverables for this project could be a cost analysis of the Public Health's dept.'s participation in PHC and/or appropriately engaging state leaders to address this issue.
- iii. One Roof is responsible for monitoring 22 separate HUD-funded programs and thus collects a tremendous amount of data regarding program outcomes, demographic served, cost-per-service, etc. What we do not currently collect is a reasonable amount of client satisfaction data, and we know that is important for a complete understanding of program success/failure. A Hess Fellow might design a client satisfaction form, develop a volunteer training program to administer the form, evaluate the data, and advocate for either program-specific changes or overall community changes to program provision. Deliverables will be a satisfaction survey, a sustainable plan for administering said survey, implementing this plan (collecting surveys), and analysis of the satisfaction survey.
- b) Research has shown that Alabama suffers from a lack of safe, decent and affordable housing. Homeless people, when asked what contributed to their homelessness, most often cite an inability to identify an affordable place to live.
- i. A Hess Fellow might research exemplary "alternative housing" communities such as Tiny Home villages, Rammed Earth communities, etc. S/he might then identify barriers (zoning? public perception?) to alternative housing communities in our area and develop an advocacy plan that would begin during the Hess Fellow Internship and continue beyond. A deliverable for this project could be a well-researched presentation on alternative housing projects that work and what could work in Birmingham. Project could include interviewing leaders in other communities about alternative housing and producing a report on local barriers to bringing this type of housing to Birmingham.
 - ii. Homeless Youth ages 18 - 24 are of strong concern to homelessness advocates for many reasons including their vulnerability to exploitation. A Hess Fellow might research the local contributors to Youth homelessness, identify barriers to housing these youth (including Alabama's Age of Majority), and develop an advocacy plan that would begin during the Hess Fellow Internship and continue beyond. This is an on-going project at One Roof. If Hess Fellow is at all interested in youth homelessness, this project could be ideal.
- c) One Roof does education and advocacy. This may take many forms including education for our member agencies, municipal partners and the general public.
- i. A Samford Communications Intern developed an award-winning workshop, Homelessness 101, designed to educate member agency new staff on homelessness. This workshop has proved to be a popular tool for educating the general public and advocating for an end to homelessness as well, and has been presented for local library groups, the Birmingham Court System, the Birmingham Community Law Department (Public Defender's Office), Churches, etc. This workshop was developed several years ago and is in need of an in-depth update including expanding sections on Youth Homelessness, Criminalization of Homelessness and development of a PowerPoint, Presi, short film, or other visual components.
 - ii. In 2007, a group of local service providers, municipal representatives, business leaders and formerly homeless people worked on a year-long process to develop a Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. Unfortunately, there has been only one short update on that plan developed and distributed. Chronic homelessness numbers have decreased dramatically since the implementation of that plan, but there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done. A Hess Fellow might develop a Progress Report that includes positive developments, identifies long-term barriers, and creates an advocacy plan for getting the public interested in completing the Plan to end Chronic Homelessness.

- 2) What skills, attitudes, or prior knowledge 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.
- a) *Excellent research, writing, educational and organizational skills are mandatory.*
 - b) *Ability to work collaboratively or independently with little direct supervision is very important.*
 - c) *Passion for social justice is a must for the successful Hess Fellow.*
 - d) *Access to transportation because travel to multiple member agencies may be required. All costs incurred, except travel to and from the administrative job site, will be reimbursed. If the Intern drives, a valid driver's license and current insurance is also required.*
 - e) *If the Intern wishes to do a project that requires development of visual aids, graphics knowledge would be helpful.*
- 3) Are there specific dates a Hess Fellow should be available for your program? If so, what is the start and end date? (The Hess Fellows program requires students to intern for a minimum of 8 weeks. Please list below if your program is longer than 8 weeks or has a specific start date/end date.) *There are no specific dates for a One Roof Internship.*

We will notify you about placements no later than March 2nd. We assume that you will hold a place for a Hess Fellow until that date. If you agree, please electronically sign below.

Signature

Please contact Emily Thornton (ethornto@bsc.edu) if you would like participate in the Hess Fellow interview and selection process (phone/video interviews can be accommodated).

Please email completed application to ethornto@bsc.edu by Wednesday, November 25, 2015.

Part III: Program Timeline

Wednesday, November 25, 2015 Agency applications due

Thursday, February 4, 2016 Start of Spring 2015 Term

Sunday, February 21, 2016 Student applications due

Week of February 22, 2016 Student applicants interviewed

Wednesday, March 2, 2016 Agencies updated on application status. Agencies selected to host a Hess Fellow have the option of conducting a phone interview with student nominated to serve with them

Friday, March 18, 2016 Agencies requested to confirm placement by this date