



Applications being accepted for Open Access' annual 2024 Fellowship program until Feb. 15

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2024 OPEN ACCESS FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION NOW OPEN

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New York, NY Open Access has made available the opening of applications for its fourth annual program.

Open Access aims to address the underrepresentation of Black and Latinx professionals in the community development finance industry, encompassing areas such as community development financial institution financing and tax credit financing including new markets tax credits, low-income housing tax credits, historic tax credits, and the energy/renewables sector of tax credits.

The program offers a comprehensive learning experience, including 10+ hours of free online industry training, access to webinars, a 160-hour paid fellowship, and free attendance to a Novogradac conference. Successful participants will be awarded a certificate of training completion by Novogradac. With 76% of alumni succeeding in either finding positions in the community development finance industry or launching their own CDF firms, Open Access hopes to continue to provide new or enhanced career opportunities for this year's participants.

Applications for the Open Access program are now open, and can be submitted until February 15, 2024, with the program scheduled to commence on May 1, 2024. For more information and to apply, visit open.access-us.

Distinguished by its transformative approach, Open Access targets early to mid-career professionals, providing sustained support, mentorship, and sponsorship. The program's objective is to empower professionals across various levels, cultivating future decision-makers who will contribute to a more inclusive and diverse industry representation of the communities they serve.

Open Access hosted an "I Have a Dream" information session on MLK Day that featured alumni reporting on the transformative effect the program has had on their careers: Desiree Thomas '21, VP/director of Climate Finance with TruFund; Tyrone Thomas '22, impact investing at Nuveen; Norberto Velasquez '23, COO JGV Management; and Justin Barrett '23, leasing consultant.

Tyrone Thomas said, "I had an 'aha!' moment when I realized during a networking event that I'm part of the industry! None of this would have been possible without Open Access."

Desiree Thomas said, "The communities we serve represent US! I would say to prospective applicants: 'You want to be in the room, you want to make decisions affecting your communities. You cannot go wrong to apply.'"

Rashidah Billups, executive director of Open Access 2022 Alumna emphasized the urgency of transforming the current industry landscape and the opportunity that exists to change the status quo: "Open Access creates a pathway for highly qualified candidates to enter the CDF industry with the support of an extremely knowledgeable and supportive network, garnering a community of seasoned leaders and sponsors focused on the same mission. The impact our Fellows make is invaluable, as they possess the cultural perspectives needed to best understand and drive change to the diverse populations served."

Jeff Monge, one of the founding co-chairs of Open Access, emphasized, "Our objective is to improve the provision of CDF services to low-income communities. Although the program aligns with DEI goals, our primary focus is addressing a gap in capital financing delivery within low-income

communities. It's not just about meeting diversity goals; it's also a sound business strategy!"

"As a firm, we are incredibly proud to support Open Access and sponsor the 2024 Open Access Fellowship program, an initiative that is essential to expanding opportunities for underrepresented professionals in community development finance," said En Jung Kim, head of new markets tax credit at JPMorgan Chase. "As an industry, we must remain committed to driving economic inclusion through employment opportunities like this."

Program sponsors for 2024 include:

Trailblazer: Novogradac

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A special thank you to our Trailblazer Sponsor, Novogradac for their in-kind donations.

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