

The Billie Osborne-Fears Leadership Fellowship Program

The Billie Osborne-Fears Leadership Fellowship Program will be a two-year full-time experience located at Starting Point with simultaneous enrollment in the Certificate Program for Nonprofit Management at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.. Its overarching goal is to help create the next generation of transformational leaders in the early childhood field, honoring the memory and legacy of Billie Osborne Fears.

The Fellowship is a unique opportunity and was designed based on extensive research with early childhood leaders at the local, state, and national levels along with a review of existing Fellowship programs. Designed for early and mid-career professionals, it will accelerate the leadership trajectory of outstanding individuals selected through a rigorous, but flexible recruitment and screening process. Local, state, and national recruitment will occur.

One Fellow will be selected for each two-year Fellowship term. The inaugural Fellowship will be awarded in March of 2024, and the program period will be June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2026. Acceptance into the Program includes acceptance into the Certificate in Nonprofit Management Program at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. The Fellow will be a full-time employee at Starting Point with a salary and full benefits and complete the Certificate program during the two-year Fellowship. There will be no cost to the Fellow for their participation in the Nonprofit Management Certificate Program.

The Fellowship experience will be customized via the creation of a Professional Development Plan that reflects the career goals of each Fellow, along with areas for growth in knowledge, skills, and professional network connections. A wide range of meaningful experiences will be included such as a specific project to complete, a committee or advisory group to chair, meetings with high level community leaders, and introductions to community gatekeepers to enhance each Fellow's professional network.

The Fellow will have a professional mentor who will provide advice, support, and guidance to each Fellow in their professional development and will have an academic advisor at MSASS to support and guide their academic experience.

Funding for the program has come from The George Gund Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, The Treu-Mart Fund, and individual donors. All funds currently reside in a philanthropic fund at the Cleveland Foundation. An Advisory Committee comprised of members of the Billie Osborne-Fears Fund Advisory Committee is overseeing the creation of the Fellowship and will serve as the final selection committee for the Fellows.