



ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship

Project:	Internet Access as a Health Imperative: Defining the Health Outcomes and Cost Savings of Broadband Networks in Unconnected Communities
Organization:	Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Location:	Remote
Stipend:	\$60,000 per year, plus health insurance and professional development funding
Start Date:	September 7, 2021

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1974, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) is a national research and technical assistance organization that constructs the foundation and frame upon which communities can take charge of their local resources, their economies, and their environmental future. ILSR challenges concentrated economic and political power, and instead champions an approach in which ownership is broadly distributed, institutions are humanly scaled, and decision-making is accountable to communities. <https://ilsr.org/>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Healthcare costs for rural regions across the United States are almost universally higher than in urban areas, and health outcomes almost universally lower. The consequences of this (exacerbated by the pandemic) for individuals, families, and economies include lost days to illness, lower life expectancies, more money spent on healthcare by rural residents, and more money spent by hospitals and insurance companies.

ILSR is currently undertaking research alongside the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative (SRBWI) to explore the cost savings and increasing health outcomes for communities resulting from the installation of fiber networks in rural areas for a constellation of promising telemedicine interventions, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, asthma, and cancer. The Leading Edge Fellow will join, continue, and expand upon this foundational work with a focus on both urban areas and rural population centers along with ILSR's broadband team and our network of allies—including rural municipal broadband networks, groups like the SRBWI, the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB), and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)—who are deeply invested in arguing for infrastructure investment to tackle existing social and racial justice inequities.

The fellow will collect a range of first-hand experiences to document quality-of-life improvements resulting from more immediate access to telemedicine services, including remote medical devices. This person will also collaboratively design and execute a quantitative data analysis project to document savings for these conditions over the short and long term. This is a full-time commitment for the fellowship year, including dedicated time for professional development activities.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Update existing literature reviews to identify promising high-impact telehealth interventions which would save costs for in-person doctor visits and hospital stays, including at-home monitoring and treatment devices.
- Document the medical and economic benefits of broadband access in unserved areas.

This position is *only* available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program.
You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.

- Interview U.S. residents who are able to take advantage of telehealth opportunities and document the impact it has on their lives.
- Research and write case studies using qualitative and quantitative data, and craft policy papers and FCC comments to support legislative changes and advocacy work.
- Assist in updating and expanding a telehealth savings database to support legislative changes and advocacy work.
- Collect data on the digital skills challenges that exist in the populations that would benefit from telehealth services, and work with allies to identify, develop, and distribute the tools to help overcome those challenges.
- Identify target counties and communities in rural and urban areas to which existing cost calculations can be extended.

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields [here](#);
- Familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative analysis; position will not require sophisticated statistical methods, but will require the ability to collate basic demographic data;
- Ability to work independently within the parameters of a project;
- Interest in thinking and writing about solutions to bridge the digital divide;
- Excellent writing skills.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: <https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9pm EDT, May 6, 2021

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