

Barr Fellowship Application: Class of 2026

Investing in leaders has long been a core value at Barr. In response to major global and societal challenges, Barr reflected on its leadership investments and reimagined its Social Change Leaders portfolio. The portfolio's updated strategy envisions a flourishing ecosystem for leadership, where networks of cross-sector, effective, and intergenerational changemakers representative of the diverse communities and perspectives across our region, are working together to create a more equitable, vibrant, and thriving Massachusetts. This refreshed strategy is seeing the launch of three new anchor programs: Leadership Recharge, Organizational Wellness, and the reimagined Barr Fellowship. The combined goal of these programs is to resource and support social change leaders to sustain their leadership and effectively tackle the challenges and opportunities in their communities.

Barr Foundation is pleased to announce the launch of the refreshed Barr Fellowship, which will: provide Fellows with opportunities for rest, rejuvenation, connection and learning across retreats, site visits, cohort programming and peer support over 15 months; and support participating organizations to enhance the well-being and resilience and/or collaborative skills across their staff team. **Applications for the Class of 2026 are due Tuesday, June 30, 2026, 5 p.m. EST.**

To find out if you are eligible for this program and whether it's a good fit for your organization, please closely review the program goals and components, and eligibility requirements [here](#) before beginning your organization's application.

The application, instructions for submission, and application process timeline are described below. We encourage you to review this information and then use this document to prepare your responses before [submitting your application here](#).

If you have specific questions about your eligibility and fit for the program, we encourage you to contact fellowship2026@barrfoundation.org.

Context for the launch of the 2026 Barr Fellowship

Nonprofit organizations and their leaders across the social sector have been working under increased pressure with ever-shrinking resources. The most recent strategic review of the Barr Fellowship begins by observing, “...with the global pandemic, racial uprisings and a DEI backlash, a more visible climate emergency and other challenges, much more is being demanded of leaders, and can make what were already isolating roles seem less doable or sustainable. Leaders and their staff are calling for greater self-care and collective renewal.”

These challenges continue unabated, and pressures on the sector are increasing in intensity. Unsurprisingly, nonprofit leaders and their teams are actively contending with exhaustion, burnout, and fear, while also recognizing the need for rejuvenation, collaboration and solidarity.

It is with this in mind that Barr Foundation is refreshing and relaunching its Fellowship Program in 2026. The intended impact is to enable more leaders to experience increased resilience, renewal, and sustainability in their role; to expand networking among social change leaders that can be activated in service of shared goals; and to strengthen the quality and depth of relationships among leaders across sectors, within, and beyond established networks.

Application

Organizational Eligibility

1. Please confirm that your organization is recognized as a tax-exempt nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity or is an organization fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) public charity.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Please confirm that your organization is not any of the following: a government agency, hospital, a K-12 school, a higher education institution, or an entity with a primary function of re-granting.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Please confirm that roughly 75% of the activities, services and/or programming conducted by your organization occur in Massachusetts.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Please confirm that your Operating Budget is within \$500,000 to \$5,000,000.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. The Fellowship will entail approximately 16 days of virtual and in-person programming, some of which will require travel and overnight stays (i.e., multi-day in-person retreats, in-person regional site visits, virtual cohort meetings, virtual coaching) between late 2026 and early 2028, as well as the activities supported by the Fellowship grant. Please confirm your organization's commitment to support your nominated candidate's full participation.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. If you answered "no" to any of the questions above, then your organization does not appear eligible for the Barr Fellowship. If there are special circumstances that lead you to believe that your organization should be considered, please explain here:

Individual Eligibility

1. Please confirm that the nominated candidate is the CEO, Executive Director, or Co-Director of the applying organization and has held this role for at least three years.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Please confirm that the nominated candidate has between **three and ten years' total experience** in a paid role as a nonprofit CEO, Executive Director, or Co-Director
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Please confirm that you are a full-time resident of New England with professional life and work significantly focused on Massachusetts.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. The Fellowship will entail approximately 16 days of virtual and in-person programming, some of which will require travel and overnight stays (i.e., multi-day in-person retreats, in-person regional site visits, virtual cohort meetings, virtual coaching) between late 2026 and early 2028, as well as the activities supported by the Fellowship grant. Please confirm your nominated candidate's availability, capacity, and commitment for full participation.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Note: If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, then the nominated candidate does not appear eligible for the Barr Fellowship. If there are special circumstances that lead you to believe that your nominated candidate should be considered, please explain here:

Tell us about your organization.

1. Organization Name
2. Website
3. Full address of Organization's Headquarters
4. Number of paid staff
5. Our intention is to prioritize organizations with a commitment to: developing a field that is rooted in justice and belonging, in which all staff can thrive and contribute to organizational missions; and cultivating a healthy operating culture that recognizes and invests in leadership at all levels. Please share anything you wish about how your organization reflects this aspiration.

Tell us about the nominated candidate.

1. Full name
2. Title
3. Pronouns
4. Email
5. Phone number
6. LinkedIn profile
7. City and state where the candidate lives
8. Total number of years working as a paid ED in a nonprofit
9. What other leadership roles does the nominated candidate hold outside of the organization, if any? *(e.g., board roles, professional network affiliations, or other ways that the nominated candidate is a leader within their community or sector)*

10. **Personal Statement:** We seek to invest in the wellbeing, leadership and visibility of Fellows from across the whole of the Commonwealth and to advance healthy work environments where all staff are free to show up as their whole selves. We invite the nominated candidate to tell us about yourself, your background, and what has shaped you.

This question is optional and intended to help the Foundation better understand who we reached through this program. Your decision to answer or not answer this question will have no bearing your application's standing.

Narratives and Attachments

1. Organization Overview

Please provide a recent annual report OR a one-page overview of your organization's mission and programs with enough detail so that the Selection Committee can understand the reach, impact, and reputation of your organization (e.g., describe the community(ies) you serve, number of participants, how you measure/define impact, etc.).

2. Organizational Narrative: Program Fit and Impact

The Barr Fellowship award includes a grant and coaching opportunities to invest in your staff's well-being and resilience and/or collaborative skills building. Please provide a 1-2 page narrative responding to the following questions:

- Why is this opportunity important for the organization at this time?
- What impact do you anticipate this program will have on the organization?
- How will the organization support the nominated candidate to participate in the Fellowship?

3. Board Chair Letter of Support

Please include a letter **from your organization's Board Chair in support of the application**. This letter should share the Board's perspective on the intended impact and positive difference the Fellowship could make for the organization overall. Additionally, it should share examples of the nominated candidate's personal and professional impact as a leader, how the candidate "shows up" for your team and your community, including examples of the candidate exercising collaborative leadership within and outside the organization.

4. CEO, Executive Director, or Co-Director's Application Narrative

Please review the Barr Fellowship Overview and then upload either a written statement of approximately 2 to 3 pages, or a video statement no longer than 5 minutes, in which you share your answers to the following questions:

- Why is this Fellowship the right opportunity for you? What are the “why this, why now, why me” reasons for applying?
- What are your highest hopes for your participation in terms of what you will gain and hope to contribute?
- What would need to be true for this to be a positive experience for you?

5. CEO, Executive Director, or Co-Director's Resume

Please upload the nominated candidate's resume that covers, at a minimum, the last 10 years.

6. Please upload a current fiscal year budget and actuals showing revenue sources.
7. Please upload an organizational audit or independent review if available.
8. Please upload a list of board of directors with affiliations.