

ROOT CAUSE RESEARCH CENTER

2023 Call for Applications

Application Deadline: Monday, May 9, 2022 (11:59 p.m. ET)

Click here to access the [online application](https://forms.gle/Q2G1jvXtsF7qtv4d8) (https://forms.gle/Q2G1jvXtsF7qtv4d8)

Root Cause Research Center Community Research Incubator Program

“The study of poverty is marked by the ethics of distance - of lives that are studied but remain distant from the privileged researcher.” - Ananya Roy

ABOUT THE ROOT CAUSE RESEARCH CENTER

The team at the Root Cause Research Center are researchers and tenant organizers. We believe in class struggle as a theory of change and organize at the intersections of property and policing to build a multiracial base of poor and working-class tenants in the U.S. South. We help build structured tenant-lead campaigns and produce knowledge in solidarity with communities under threat of displacement, surveillance, and police violence.

We are actively building a genuine community platform and base for radical scholarship in the U.S. South that provides an alternative to the traditionally hierarchical and classist model of research that uses impacted community members as test subjects rather than co-investigators. We produce knowledge and data as an alternative to the dehumanizing and inaccessible research that is typically created by state and private institutions.

We define our base-building practices as (1) expanding the number of people committed to struggling alongside you politically; (2) developing their skills, analysis, and leadership; and (3) deepening our relationships with them. Our base-building practices include regular canvasses and phone banks to connect with new people; deepening relationships with people in our base through regular one-on-ones; providing training for members to develop skills and analysis; and identifying members of our base to develop into leaders and working with them on leadership development plans. Our target base is poor and working-class people in Kentucky, who are impacted by homelessness and police violence, especially Black people and people living in rural areas.

We are focused on the U.S. south because our cities and rural areas share similar histories of extraction and have faced violent retaliation in building institutionalized local power. We organize both to support local organizing and to coordinate local groups to participate in statewide and national efforts. When we support local organizing, decisions are made by members of the local tenant organizations we work with. When we coordinate statewide efforts, decisions are made by representatives from participating local organizations. Our approach is to let the people most impacted by problems be the ones coming up with the strategies for change. Instead of a “think tank” where a bunch of scholars come up with recommendations and solutions, we train tenants to research the best solutions and build local collective power. Our belief is that the “root cause” of most societal challenges is best known by the people impacted—and that any revolutionary change will be led by them.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY RESEARCH INCUBATOR PROGRAM

The Community Research Incubator is a 24-week (6mos) cohort-based program that includes participant stipends, mentorship services, training, research exhibition, as well as participatory data collection, research, and reporting. During the course of the 24 weeks, Community Researchers are trained and mentored in launching their own research projects within a predetermined topic area. The incubator culminates in a Community Research Expo where Community Researchers will share their work, demo projects, and/or recruit members to accelerate the growth of their work.

2023’s incubator topic areas include:

- Property
- Policing
- Gender

Incubator Mentorship and Training

RCRC facilitation will help participants to identify and illustrate problems as systems, clarify points of intervention, raise questions and alternatives when considering varying approaches, provide an accountability mechanism that prioritizes and advocates for the participation of impacted individuals in decision-making and implementation strategies, measuring impact, and help to define actionable goals.

The RCRC will provide training in the following areas: Our Data Bodies’ Community Power Tools for Reclaiming Data, counter-mapping, investigative techniques, basebuilding, campaign planning, canvassing training, power mapping, infographic design, interactive map-making and more.

Community Researchers who receive stipends through this program will be required to attend a minimum of 24 research work sessions with RCRC staff. They will also be required to attend all skill labs offered for their cohort.

Who is Eligible to be a Community Researcher?

Community Researcher eligibility hinges on the following credentials:

- Applicants cannot be a representative or in leadership of a major institution (i.e. a nonprofit, government entity, news media company, university, etc, that has an operational budget in excess of \$150,000 annually)
- Applicants must either be from a historically and systematically oppressed race, class, or background, AND be connected through lived-experience to their chosen incubator topic area.

Community Researcher Award Details

Applicants that are accepted into the incubator as Community Researchers will receive the following:

- \$1200 stipend
- At least 8 core skill labs/trainings
- Mentorship/one-on-ones with RCRC staff members
- Research guidance
- Logistical planning assistance
- Grassroots base-building assistance
- Additional pay opportunities include:
 - \$500 - if participant is a Project Coordinator (may be two co-PCs at \$250/person)
 - \$500 - if participant is a Records Manager (may be two co-RMs at \$250/person)

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- Monday, May 9, 2022 (11:59 p.m. ET)
Deadline for receipt of completed applications
Click here to access the [online application](https://forms.gle/ece3fRAj2PK6HreX8) (https://forms.gle/ece3fRAj2PK6HreX8)
- May 10 - May 28, 2022
Application Review and Applicant Interviews
- May 2022
Notification of awards and incubation period begins
- Jan 2023 / Feb 2023 - Community Research Expo

OUR EQUITY POLICY

The Root Cause Research Center (RCRC) is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of accountability, transparency, veneration, belonging, and liberation.

We believe that the people most impacted by an issue are best positioned to discover the root causes and solutions of that issue. Impacted people are the most qualified investigators on our team. The collective sum of our lived experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, self-expression, unique capabilities, and insights allow us to do extraordinary work.

We embrace and encourage every team member's differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other characteristics that make that person unique.

To hold strong to these principles, our transformative accountability strategy includes:

1. The promotion of direct contact/discussion and open face-to-face contact between staff, board members, and affiliates;
2. Assuring that strategic decision-making is made collectively by staff, board, and affiliates by regularly reporting projects and creating opportunities for input and discussion;
3. Using policy and strategy-making as a means of learning and development;
4. Understanding that conflict is inevitable as well as a source of creativity;
5. Regularly checking to make sure that the alignment of how we treat organizational members is congruent with values expressed in work; and
6. By calling attention to power dynamics (place-based, role/hierarchy based, etc) when opening a meeting.

RCRC's equity initiatives are applicable—but not limited—to our practices and policies on recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; professional development and training; promotions; transfers; social and recreational programs; layoffs; terminations; and the ongoing development of a transformational and healthy work environment.

OUR RACE & CLASS STATEMENT

We believe in foregrounding the intersectional lens around race and class to build resilience in combating systems of oppression through justice and abolition, rather than focusing solely on veneer diversity metrics. In recognition of the lingering damage caused by racist strategies employed within the American Labor Movement, both historically and in the present, as well as the ongoing class issues grounded in White supremacy (i.e. respectability politics, colorism, assimilation pressures, etc) that exist in some Black spaces, we have chosen this intersectional path. Working foundationally at the intersections of race and class, RCRC is building resilience, collective power, and cross-racial solidarity across the state of Kentucky, and inevitably, across the American South.

EVALUATION

Evaluation for the Community Research Incubator will have three main components: 1) a systematic method for monitoring progress toward specific collectively identified goals, 2) a logic model that outlines relationships between interventions and outcomes, and 3) two sets of continuous feedback loops that will happen both during and after incubation periods. The first continuous feedback loop will prioritize the comments and concerns of Community Researchers, and the second will prioritize the feedback of external parties--particularly the feedback of other impacted community members that are not stipend incubator participants.

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by RCRC staff and affiliates. RCRC's investigative staff are experienced research analysts, data analysts, and community organizers. All staff members who engage in research and data collection also maintain the following certifications:

- Human Subjects Research certification from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative ([CITI Program](#))
- Responsible Conduct of Research certification from [CITI Program](#)
- Financial Conflict of Interest certification from the National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#))