



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
SWITZER NETWORK INNOVATION GRANTS
September 2011

We believe that the Switzer Fellowship Network is one of the Foundation's most important assets. During the past year, the Foundation Board, staff and Fellows Advisory Committee have sought to tap the Network's collective potential for innovation and action on environmental issues. Innovation is often the result of collaboration between individuals with different backgrounds and experiences. This RFP serves to invite the nearly 500 Fellows in the Switzer Network to take advantage of the latent potential for innovation by fostering connections in our diverse Switzer Network.

We want to create a pathway toward environmental innovation that starts with sharing ideas and will lead to action and results. We aim to help Fellows test and improve their thinking with input from the Network, provide funding to concepts that seem most promising and have Fellows share results and invite further feedback. Initial ideas will be evaluated by staff and shared with the Network to generate further interest.

This RFP is an invitation for Fellows to work together and with their personal networks of colleagues and organizations to engage in shared learning, convening, collaboration and ultimately "breakthrough" thinking and action on complex issues. The Switzer Foundation is seeking brief proposals of 500 words that describe how you would like to use and tap the Switzer Fellowship Network to advance progress on an issue, project or policy initiative in which you are engaged. Sample ideas include:

- organize a study tour with tangible goals. This kind of gathering can be a Fellows' spring retreat (*please submit ideas for this by November 15! These submissions will determine topics for and whether we have spring retreats. Concepts can be for gatherings of Fellows and need not be limited to New England and California locales.*)
- follow-up on a past retreat topic such as Central Valley water issues, river restoration and downtown revitalization in New England
- convene or collaborate with Fellows to address a specific environmental policy or technical challenge you or your organization are tackling
- organize a panel of Fellows to present at a conference or other high-profile meeting
- organize a group of Fellows to start an affinity group to:
 - o write collaborative document (ex. white paper)
 - o develop/enhance a website, video or podcast
 - o develop survey or other research tool, analyze and disseminate results
 - o develop curriculum and materials and conduct training for Fellows

Criteria/process:

1. Send a one page (or 500 word) description of your concept to Lissa or any of the trustees listed below; or to the listserv if you want to seek partners and solicit feedback from others first.
2. Be willing to have your idea vetted by other Fellows for input and to gauge interest (Post your idea to the BLOG and send link to the listserv. See blog post instructions below or we can help you post.)
3. Be willing to take some leadership role in advancing progress on your identified issue and indicate how you'd be willing to help/lead this effort.
4. If funding is needed, indicate estimated funding needs and whether there is a partner organization or fiscal agent you would be able to work with.
5. If non-financial support is needed, what kinds of resources/help do you need?
6. Is there an optimal schedule for this concept or any known dates of relevance?
7. We hope to fund a few concepts with strong Network interest and potential for impact on an issue and will work with Fellows and our respective networks to creatively facilitate outcomes.
8. A word on budget/funding: we realize that a fully developed budget is not realistic at this stage, and we'd like to encourage you to bring forward your best problems that need to be solved, or ideas that you think would truly benefit from the resources of the Switzer Network regardless of budget detail. Typical range might be none - \$15,000.

To find other fellows you can:

- Search the Fellow directory using keyword search or geographic fields
- Use the search function on the website (top right field)
- Call Lissa (who has a network map in her head) or contact Don Brackett (don@switzernetwork.org) for a customized group list.

To share and post your idea on the blog:

- Log into the Switzer website
- Go to blog page, enter your project idea, tag "Switzer Innovation Proposals" and other topics relevant to your post
- Copy the link of your blog post into a message to the listserv and invite Fellow feedback on your idea

Proposals/ideas may be submitted any time. **We are particularly interested in receiving proposals by November 15, 2011 for fellow-led spring retreats.** We will re-evaluate RFP criteria and process in December.

Inquires may be directed to:

Lissa Widoff, Executive Director, lissa@switzernetwork.org

Erin Lloyd, Program Officer, erin@switzernetwork.org

Jessica Switzer, Trustee, Jessica@bluepractice.com

Margaret Rubega, Trustee, Margaret.rubega@uconn.edu

Steve Parry, Trustee, parry@ngenpartners.com