



Meridian Institute Fellowship Program

2016 Position Announcement

Meridian Institute is pleased to announce position openings for Project Assistants within the Meridian Fellowship Program – an opportunity for recent college graduates to work on varied and highly complex public policy issues, learn about the field of multi-party collaborative problem solving, and engage with leaders from a variety of sectors and interest groups. Meridian has two offices (Washington, D.C. and Dillon, CO) and Fellows are hired for both locations.

Meridian professionals combine extensive experience in collaborative process design, deep substantive knowledge, and proven mediation skills to help people solve complex and controversial problems, make informed decisions, and implement solutions that improve lives, the economy, and the environment. At Meridian, we design collaborative approaches that bring together people who understand the issues and have a stake in their resolution. Our processes regularly involve government officials, business leaders, scientists, foundation executives, and nongovernmental organization representatives—people who would not typically have the opportunity to learn from each other, build mutual understanding, and reach agreement were it not for carefully designed processes and skillfully mediated interactions. Meridian facilitates processes that range from local, site-specific disputes to national policy dialogues to international negotiations. Some of the areas we work on include agriculture and food security, climate change, ocean policy, forest and land use management, freshwater resources, and resilience.

Effective collaborative decision-making requires inclusion of different perspectives and involves bringing together participants with diverse backgrounds. As an organization, we seek a staff that reflects that same diversity in background and perspective and who value diversity and have experience working in multicultural settings.

For more information about Meridian and specific projects, please visit www.merid.org.

Primary Duties of the Position

Meridian Fellows provide research, writing, and other types of support for projects focusing on a wide variety of challenging issues. Meridian Fellows may:

- Assist in the preparation of meeting materials and summaries, press releases, and other communications
- Help prepare for new projects by researching and developing background documents
- Interview or otherwise engage participants in Meridian processes, including leaders of the private, non-profit, and government sectors

- Help plan, attend, and/or provide logistical support for both domestic and international meetings
- Actively engage in dynamic teams focused on helping design and facilitate collaborative public policy processes
- Tracking and keeping team up to date on political and news developments on relevant policy issues
- Attend policy briefings, hearings, seminars, and other events as needed to track key topics and activities and provide summaries of these events to project teams
- Provide administrative support for Meridian projects and the organization, including but not limited to maintaining websites and list serves, drafting emails, taking notes, and participating on internal Meridian teams to assist with organizational development
- Other duties as assigned

Personal and Professional Development

The Meridian Fellowship offers significant personal and professional development opportunities. By working in an active, exciting, and dynamic professional environment, Meridian Fellows can expect to:

- Develop the ability to think critically about complex issues and analyze participant interests and process dynamics
- Help identify and learn to respond appropriately to concerns and problems that can arise in complex and challenging collaborative processes
- Actively manage numerous tasks toward the final completion of a project; and
- Improve writing, research, and communication skills

Meridian Fellows gain these skills through a combination of the projects they support and targeted professional development activities, such as a mentorship program and annual Fellowship retreat.

Characteristics of Meridian Fellows

Required Characteristics—Successful applicants *must*:

- Be fluent in English
- Legally be able to work in the United States without visa support/sponsorship
- Have completed a bachelor's degree
- Have strong attention to detail, copy-editing, and note-taking skills
- Have strong written and oral communication skills; experience researching, synthesizing, and communicating complex information for diverse audiences
- Maintain a high degree of professionalism and be responsible, respectful, courteous, and understanding of the "customer service" aspect of the position
- Have experience and enthusiasm for effectively working as part of a team and be able to handle multiple tasks at once, manage time effectively, and receive and balance direction from multiple Project Directors

- Have passion for the issues and work that Meridian is involved in, be able and willing to learn, and be self-motivated
- Be comfortable using and learning new technology. Proficiency with Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, OneNote) and other commonly used computer programs and technology, such as social media.

Desired Characteristics: Preference will be given to candidates with the following characteristics:

- Interest or experience in collaborative decision-making, facilitation, or mediation
- Substantive experience in Meridian topic areas
- Basic understanding of the institutional and political context in which public policies are deliberated
- Demonstrated experience with the skills required for the Fellowship position, drafting meeting summaries, conducting interviews, and researching and assembling background materials
- Critical thinking skills including the ability to think “on one’s feet”, innovative thinking, and the ability to view and understand an issue from multiple perspectives
- Foreign language skills
- Experience in multicultural and/or international settings
- Experience with meeting and logistical support
- Experience with managing website content, Twitter, SiteCore, SharePoint, or MailChimp a plus
- Advanced technology competencies (e.g. document formatting, template development, graphic design, and database management)

Structure of the Fellowship

The Fellowship will begin summer 2016. Meridian hires Fellows for the following positions:

- **Dillon, CO – Generalist:** Works in support of projects on a variety of substantive topic areas. Likely to work on Western US natural resource projects, but not exclusively as assignments are determined by availability.
- **Washington, DC – Generalist:** Works in support of projects on a variety of substantive topic areas. Likely to work on agriculture policy projects, but not exclusively as assignments are determined by availability.
- **Washington, DC – Oceans Program:** Works in support of a suite of ocean and coastal policy projects including the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a bipartisan effort to catalyze action and monitor progress toward meaningful ocean policy reform. This work focuses on improving the management of ocean and coastal resources at the regional and national level.

The Fellowship is a two-year position, contingent upon performance and needs of the organization. Meridian leadership and the Fellow will periodically review the Fellow's performance and interest throughout the Fellowship. Fellows will be encouraged to explore a variety of post-Fellowship career choices, including graduate school and employment with other organizations.

Benefits

First year Fellows are offered a minimum salary of \$32,000 per year in a non-exempt position. An excellent benefits package is included.

How to Apply

The Fellowship application consists of four parts:

1. **Cover Letter** – Drawing from your personal, professional, and academic experiences, please explain how you hope to contribute to Meridian as a Fellow and what you hope to gain from this opportunity.
2. **Essay** – 600 words or fewer
Meridian works on a variety of social and environmental policy issues including climate change, resilience, and natural resource management. Briefly describe a critical public policy issue facing society today and suggest how a collaborative process could be effective in helping address that issue. If applicable, include details about which parties should be engaged and what challenges might be faced in trying to bring them together. Oceans Program Candidates are advised to focus on topics related to ocean and coastal policy and climate change.
3. **Resume** – Two pages or fewer detailing relevant education, training, experiences, and accomplishments.
4. **References** – Three references, including title, affiliation, phone number, and email addresses. References can be professors, current or former employers, or others who can speak to your professional qualifications for this position. Please do not include “personal” references.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the application process can be found on the Meridian Website—FAQs. Please direct any additional questions about the Fellowship to Jennifer Brassanini (jbrassanini@merid.org).

Completed applications are due by 10 pm EST on Friday, February 5, 2016. Please submit your application on our website—[Submit Online Application](#).

Equal Opportunity Employment

Meridian welcomes applicants from all backgrounds and does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, national origin, creed, or ancestry.