

The 2024–2025 Barbara Wilensky Gopen Memorial Fellowship

Now Accepting Applications

What is the Barbara Wilensky Gopen Memorial Fellowship?

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Network created the Barbara Wilensky Gopen Memorial Fellowship in 2001. The Fellowship honors Barbara Wilensky Gopen. Barbara Wilensky Gopen was a disability advocate.

The Gopen Fellowship is for people with developmental disabilities. If you are accepted into the Fellowship, you will be called a *Gopen Fellow*.

As a Gopen Fellow, you will come up with a project idea. Staff from ICI and the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council will meet with you regularly to check in on your progress and help as needed. During the Fellowship, you will have the chance to learn leadership skills. We will also help you learn about disability policy, disability services, and disability advocacy.

What do Gopen Fellows do?

First, you come up with a project idea related to disability advocacy. Then, you will spend 9–12 months working on your project at the ICI. Here are some examples of Gopen Fellow projects:

- Developing a curriculum for Self-Advocacy Leadership Training
- Creating an Accessible Transportation Guide to Southeast Massachusetts
- Supporting businesses to hire people with disabilities
- Researching assistive technology practices for high school students in Massachusetts
- Expanding opportunities for people with disabilities to start businesses
- Producing materials for law enforcement on engaging with people with disabilities
- Helping people who live in group homes get more involved in their community

What kinds of activities will I do in the Gopen Fellowship?

As a Gopen Fellow, you will work on your project on your own. You will also do other activities, such as:

- **Join meetings.** Go to meetings at the ICI and other organizations to help with your project.
- **Go to Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) classes.** These classes will be held in Boston, though you may be able to participate online (on Zoom). Classes are every Friday morning from September to May.
- **Go to conferences and workshops.** Go to events to learn about disability advocacy and services. You will also learn about what the government does.
- **Meet with other advocates.** Share your project with other people in the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Network.
- **Update ICI and the MA Developmental Disabilities Council about your project.** Let us know how your project is going.
- **Give a presentation.** At the end of your Fellowship, you will give a presentation about your project.
- **Create a brochure, presentation, or something else that will help you share your work with other people.** At the end of your project, you will create a product, like a brochure, presentation, or report.

The Gopen Fellowship is sponsored by the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Network and funded by the Administration on Community Living.



How long is the Gopen Fellowship?

The Gopen Fellowship is 1 year long. It goes from July 2024–June 2025. Gopen Fellows will spend up to 20 hours each week on Fellowship activities.

Do Gopen Fellows get paid?

Yes, Gopen Fellows will be paid up to \$20,000 for the year. As a Gopen Fellow, you will get paid every month or every three months depending on your preference.

Where is the Gopen Fellowship?

The Gopen Fellowship is at the ICI in Dorchester, MA. Gopen Fellows can work remotely and/or in person at the ICI.

Am I eligible for the Gopen Fellowship?

If you answer “yes” to all these questions, you are eligible to apply:

- Do you live in Massachusetts?
- Are you a person with a developmental disability?
- Are you out of school and out of a transition program?
- Do you like working independently?

We strongly encourage people with disabilities from historically marginalized groups to apply. This may include people with disabilities who are Asian, Black, Indigenous, immigrants, LGBTQ+, and Latine.

Can I work with another person on my project for the Gopen Fellowship?

Yes. You can work with another person who has a developmental disability if you want. You can both apply to the Fellowship together. If you apply with another person, you will split the money and Fellowship resources.

Will I have a mentor or advisor for the Gopen Fellowship?

Yes. You will work with a mentor on this project. We do not provide job coaches or support people. You can bring your own support person or job coach if you need one.

Tell us if you have any other accommodation needs. Let us know if you need anything to make the Fellowship more accessible. We will provide accommodations.

How can I learn more about the Gopen Fellowship?

You can attend a webinar on **Wednesday, March 13 at 12:00** to ask questions and learn more about the Gopen Fellowship. We will record the webinar. You can watch the recorded webinar on our [website](#) after April 1.

[Register for the webinar](#)



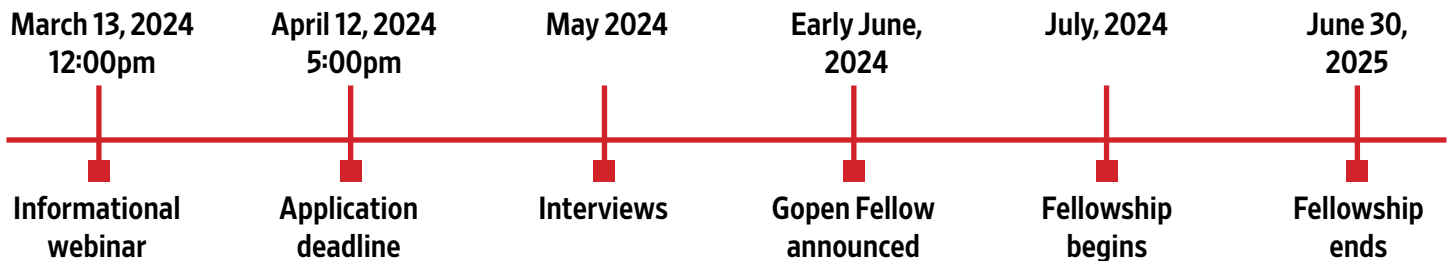
Application Questions

How can I apply for the Gopen Fellowship?

Follow these instructions to apply for the Gopen Fellowship:

1. Your proposal can be written or you can submit a video. Your proposal must include:
 - your name
 - your project title: a name that describes your project
 - your background and disability experience
 - a description of the project you want to work on in your Fellowship
 - your specific project goal
 - why you want to work on this project
 - how your project will benefit people with disabilities
 - what makes your project special
 - a list of activities and when you want to complete them (for example, 1. “Do internet research about my project from July–August”)
 - a description of the final product you will create: will you make a brochure or create other materials? will you share your project? how will it help people during and after your Fellowship?
 - what you hope will happen if you do this project: your project outcomes and impact
 - what you want to do after the Fellowship
 - what kind of training or support you will need during the Fellowship
2. Include your resume
3. Include three letters of reference from people who have worked with you
4. Email your proposal, resume, and three letters of reference to Berenise Reyes-Albino at berenise.albino@umb.edu. Your email subject line should be: “Gopen Fellowship Application – (your last name)” **by April 12, 2024 at 5pm.**

Important Dates



How do we decide who will get to be the 2024–2025 Gopen Fellow?

We will review all Fellowship applications. We will decide who is the Fellow based on:

- how original the project idea is
- how much of a need there is for the project
- how much the project will help people with disabilities
- how much the project will continue to help people with disabilities, even after the Fellowship is over
- how realistic the project is for the amount of time you have
- how much you will benefit from the Gopen Fellowship
- how excited and committed you are to your project

Do you have any other questions about the Gopen Fellowship?

Contact Berenise Reyes Albino by email at Berenise.Albino@umb.edu if you have any questions.