Do you find science is lacking diverse voices and want to help create change?

We invite you (or your trainees) to be part of the Agents of Change science communication program, a joint initiative between GW Milken School of Public Health (Founder and Director: Dr. Ami Zota) and Environmental Health News.

Agents of Change is an ongoing series featuring the stories, analyses and perspectives of next generation environmental health and justice leaders who come from historically under-represented backgrounds in science and academia. These essays depart from other types of scientific writing in that fellows have a chance to blend their lived experiences and research expertise. We developed this platform to provide a space for early career scientists to explore intersections between research, health, diversity, and justice. In our first year of the program, fellows wrote about various topics including: Black food sovereignty, indigenous cultural fire practices, housing security and urban displacement, workers’ rights, energy production and public health, and prioritizing inclusion in environmental health research.

This is a chance to have real impact. The fellowship offers an opportunity to reach people both within and outside an applicant’s field. Some of our prior blogs have reached nearly one million views, with readers ranging from senior scientists to social activists to farmers in rural America.

This initiative is in response to historical and ongoing structural racism prevalent in most institutions including science and media, which suffer from a lack of diversity and inclusion. Many bright minds from historically underrepresented backgrounds are never encouraged to cultivate their ideas because of institutional bias and unspoken penalties for being different. By giving fellows the training and platform to share their bold ideas, we hope to increase diversity of thought and help shape the public dialogue on environmental health sciences, policy, and justice. Long-term, we seek to foster a new cadre of diverse thought leaders who are empowered to develop innovative solutions for environmental justice and health equity.

By participating in the program, fellows will improve their writing skills and get experience communicating with new forms of media (e.g., blogs, social media, podcasts). Through our monthly trainings, fellows get the opportunity to: discuss new ideas in a safe space, provide and receive feedback from peers, and learn about new research and community perspectives in environmental health and justice.

Eligible applicants are early career scientists or early career practitioners from under-represented populations pursuing work related to environmental public health, environmental justice, or ecosystem/climate health or justice. Relevant disciplines may include (but not limited to): environmental health, epidemiology, urban planning, earth sciences, or sociology.

Applications are due on August 28, 2020. More information on fellowship requirements, eligibility, and the application process is available at www.agentsofchangeinEH.com. If you have questions about the program, you can also email Dr. Ami Zota at azota@gwu.edu.