

The Autry Fellowship



“The dominant mood of our time is that of a society integrating and fragmenting at the same time. The more interdependent we become, the more some of our people turn inward into smaller communities of meaning and memory ... Our destiny and our well-being as a people are now tied together. If we do not act now, generations of youth will be under-prepared, our capacity to thrive in a national and international economy will suffer, the progress we have made will be unraveled, and the values we have affirmed will be eroded.”

—Ambassador James A. Joseph, MDC Board Chair

The Autry Fellowship is a competitive fellowship program for talented and ambitious recent college graduates interested in careers in social justice. It provides an opportunity to work for one year at MDC as a full-time, paid staff member. MDC’s work is primarily in the American South, where a history of inequality and exclusion has trapped millions in circumstances below their potential. The Autry Fellowship supports MDC’s mission—to help organizations and communities close the gaps that separate people from opportunity—by developing a cadre of young leaders who have experience promoting economic development, increasing equity and excellence in education, building inclusive civic cultures, and who are poised and ready to apply their new learning to benefit this region.

The ideal Autry Fellow is open-minded and compassionate, curious and reflective, and deeply committed to advancing social equity and opportunity. The Fellow’s time will center on learning MDC’s strategies for promoting economic and social justice by participating in a variety of project teams.

Qualifications include:

- ▶ the ability to communicate and work with people who have diverse backgrounds and experiences;
- ▶ the capacity to understand complex economic and social issues and communicate those issues clearly and persuasively;
- ▶ a commitment to MDC’s mission;
- ▶ prior work, study, or service in a variety of relevant areas, including public policy, education, economic and workforce development, poverty alleviation, sociology, political science, Southern studies, community development, leadership development, or a similar field;
- ▶ demonstration of leadership potential in the areas of interest;
- ▶ candidates must be in their final year of undergraduate or graduate study or have graduated within two years from any accredited four-year college or university.



MDC

Expanding Opportunity, Advancing Equity

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TOP: The Autry Fellowship celebrates the life and perpetuates the work of the late George B. Autry, founding president of MDC. For 32 years, he led MDC with a passion for improving opportunities for people and places struggling to keep pace with economic and social change.

BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: Alyson Zandt, 2009–2010 Fellow; Daniel Bowes, 2007–2008 Fellow and recipient of the Root-Tilden-Kern Scholarship for public interest law at New York University; John Rohrs, 2000–2001 Fellow, an Episcopal minister in Richmond, Va., who received his Master’s from Yale Divinity School.

To date, there have been ten Autry Fellows, two of whom are still on staff at MDC. Today, the past Fellows continue their dedication to MDC's mission in a wide range of careers. They include a program officer with the Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation, a graduate of UNC Law who recently established a law firm in Union County, the recipient of a Mellon Fellowship for Ph.D. in American History at Yale University, and a state policy specialist at CFED in Washington, D.C. For full bios of each, please visit <http://mdcinc.org/about/past.aspx>.

MDC is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Chapel Hill, N.C. Founded in 1967 to identify and help remove barriers to progress in the South, MDC has been publishing research and developing policies and programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and building inclusive civic cultures for the past 42 years. MDC's major social change initiatives currently include:

- ▶ Achieving the Dream, a national organization that aims to increase community college student success, particularly for low-income students and students of color. As managing partner, MDC coordinates the work of six other national organizations and over 100 community colleges with funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education. Based on early successes, MDC recently received a \$16.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund the Developmental Education Initiative, an effort to identify methods for scaling up successful community college remedial education programs at select Achieving the Dream institutions.
- ▶ The Work Supports Initiative (WSI), a national outreach effort to connect low- and moderate-income Americans with tax credits, public benefits, and student financial aid using a Web-based service called The Benefit Bank.
- ▶ The State of the South, MDC's signature report, seeks to stimulate an agenda for addressing fast-paced social and economic change in states and communities across the region. The 2010 report will examine how the current recession has stifled the economic advancement of the region, and it will define the issues that the South must contend with as it seeks to recover.

The Autry Fellow will have meaningful exposure to MDC's Board of Directors, which includes a former U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, the director of the Institute for Emerging Issues at N.C. State University, the Executive Director of the Commission on Presidential Debates, and the mayor of Savannah, Ga. MDC's staff is a mix of academics, researchers, and professionals with backgrounds in a variety of fields including education, community and economic development, and public administration.

Applications for 2010–2011 must be received by February 8, 2010. Top candidates will be notified within three weeks of the deadline with an invitation to interview in March. The Autry Fellow will be selected immediately following interviews. The Fellowship will begin in the summer of 2010.

For more information or an application, contact Alyson Zandt, 2009–2010 Autry Fellow, by phone at (919) 968-4531 ext. 319 or by e-mail at azandt@mdcinc.org. To download an application, go to www.mdcinc.org/about/apply.aspx.

