

Policy Fellowship: Become a State Placement

State agencies interested in hosting an SRCD Policy Fellow, learn about eligibility requirements and how to connect to applicants below.

State agencies can find prospective fellows and benefit from the support of experienced researchers in your offices.

[Download the PDF](#)



What is the State Policy Fellowship?

Experienced child development researchers spend 1-2 years in state agencies. The Society for Research in Child Development – a membership society of more than 5,000 child development experts – supports fellows with professional development and mentorship. Fellows support states to create evidence-based child and family policy.

The fellowship aims to improve the connection between research and policy in child and family policy by:

- Increasing evidence-based policymaking on policy issues impacting children and families.
- Growing the number of trained researchers with policy skills.
- Building a network of experts who can bridge developmental science, state policymaking, and practice.

Building on more than 30 years of success with its Executive Branch and Congressional policy fellows, in 2017 SRCDC began placing developmental scientists in state executive branch agencies. To date, SRCDC has posted state fellows in 20 states in all regions of the country. Among the alumni of the federal fellowship are some of the most influential researchers in early childhood, senior staff at federal and state agencies, and philanthropic leaders.

Our state placements have been running since 2017. In that time, we have had over 30 alum who have spanned a range of post-fellowship trajectories, including academia, government, nonprofits and more.

What are the costs and requirements for state agencies?

The SRCDC State Policy Fellowship is generously supported by the [Heising-Simons](#) Foundation. Typically, two new state fellows start each year. The state agency is not responsible for paying the fellow. Fellows are contractors of SRCDC and will receive a stipend, funded by the Heising-Simons grant. SRCDC manages the grant and grant reporting.

State agencies assign the fellow a placement supervisor, who will oversee the fellow's experience in this immersive program. The state placement supervisor's responsibilities include:

- Coordinating a successful onboarding process or the fellow to acclimate to the office, including workstation setup.
- Supervising the fellow's placement work and fellowship experience through regular meetings and by providing policy learning opportunities.
- Reviewing fellowship products, including the fellow's professional development plan.
- Attending semi-annual meetings with SRCD fellowship staff to ensure the fellow and the state placement office has a successful fellowship experience.
- Completing a year-end survey that helps SRCD improve the program and report to our funder.

The agency is expected to provide the fellow with a computer, software, email, and other technology and support needed to work with the agency.

SRCD supports a dedicated placement for a specific state if there are philanthropic or other funders interested in supporting that placement. If you know of a philanthropic organization that might be willing to support a fellow in your state, please reach out to us at policy@srcd.org. We would be happy to work with that organization to support a dedicated placement in your state.



How do we get a fellow?

Because the number of slots for new fellows is limited, no applicant (or placement agency) is guaranteed to receive a fellow if they apply. If your applicant is not selected for the fellowship, we encourage agencies to work with applicants to apply again in future years. In addition, SRCD can develop a dedicated placement in an agency if there is a philanthropic partner that would be willing to support the fellow. If your agency is interested in a dedicated placement opportunity and knows of a funder that might be interested, please contact SRCD at policy@srcd.org.

Agencies cannot apply for the fellowship. However, agencies can proactively search for a potential fellow in the following ways:

1. Reach out to the SRCD policy staff at policy@srcd.org to express your interest in the fellowship. Your information can be included [on the SRCD webpage](#) for applicants looking for potential placements.
2. Reach out to colleagues in universities to see if they have any doctoral students that are close to graduating or recent postdoctoral students that might be interested in the fellowship.

What are your requirements for a fellow?

For details on our application process, including how we assess candidates, [click here](#).

Applicants for all placements must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Earn a doctoral-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) relevant to child development before the fellowship starts on September 1 of the following year.
- Be active members of SRCD.

Citizenship

- Non-U.S. citizens can apply to the state fellowship but must get confirmation from their potential placement office that lack of citizenship is not a requirement.

Specific backgrounds

- State and Congressional applicants must have an interest in early childhood development (ages birth through 8). Candidates may have conducted research or worked in practice with young children themselves or focused on the families of young children or systems that touch young children such as health systems, child welfare, childcare, and programs that touch low-income families.

What do the State Policy Fellows work on?

Fellows have worked on a wide range of projects on children's well-being and learning. Examples include:

- Developing evidence-informed quality rubrics for early care and education programs.
- Analyzing agency data to understand disparities in the child welfare system.
- Analyzing and sharing district-level and state-level data from kindergarten entry assessments.
- Developing cost analysis to support increased billing rates for home visiting programs.

Fellows address topics that are determined jointly based on the agency's needs and the fellow's skill set.



What support do SRCD fellows receive?

Fellows participate in a monthly webinar with the other state and federal fellows where they learn from experts in the field about key issues related to child and family policy and its connection with research. Fellows also participate in career activities and individualized professional development planning with support from their SRCD supervisor. SRCD hosts regular social activities and networking events for fellows and alumni.

Fellows are paid a competitive wage and given stipends to cover moving expenses, monthly health insurance costs, and professional development activities.

How can I get more information?

For more information about the fellowship, please contact the SRCD policy team at policy@srcd.org. You can find more about the state policy fellowship – including information about the fellowship benefits and application process, as well as FAQs – on our [website](#).

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