

Policy Fellowship: FAQs

See frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship program.



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General Questions

What is the duration of the SRCDC U.S. Policy Fellowship?

The SRCDC U.S. Policy Fellowship is a 12-month immersion experience beginning in early September and ending in late August. It is a year-long, full time commitment. If all parties are happy (SRCDC, the fellow and the placement), a second year is possible for the state and federal placements.

Is the SRCDC U.S. Policy Fellowship designed only for early-career fellows?

No. The fellowship is suited for individuals at all career stages.

Does this fellowship involve learning advocacy?

No. The intent of this program is to learn how to bridge research and policy. It involves learning about the research questions placement site needs addressed and attempting to address them

through empirical research. It also involves learning about program implementation, policymaking, and the role of research policymaking. If learning and participating in advocacy is a major goal for you, this program is not a good fit.

I have a special circumstance that will make it impossible for me to begin the fellowship on September 1st, but I could easily extend beyond August 31st for the 12-month requirement. Are the dates of the fellowship flexible?

Unfortunately, we cannot offer special accommodation on dates. You must be available September 1st through August 31st. We hope you'll consider the fellowship another year.

My work cycle at the university would make it difficult for me to remain in Washington until August 31st. Is there any flexibility with the dates of the fellowship?

Unfortunately, we cannot offer special accommodation on dates. You must be available September 1st through August 31st. We hope you'll consider the fellowship another year.

I have research projects and grants underway. Will it be possible for me to continue work on them during the fellowship?

Similar to programs like the Fulbright Scholars Program, all the SRCDC U.S. Policy Fellowships are immersion experiences, and the vast majority of fellows do not find time during the workday for their own projects. Fellows sometimes find they are able to work on their own writing projects in the evenings and on weekends. Fellows need to adhere to ethics rules in their placements.

Federal agency fellows must request permission from their host office or agency to continue active work on federal grants, contracts, or consulting so as to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. SRCDC Congressional Policy Fellows are not permitted to work on or apply for federal grants while in a congressional placement. Both federal agency and Congressional fellows must receive approval to work on non-federal research collaborations or appointments.

I am interested in taking one year of leave from my university to do an SRCDC U.S. Policy Fellowship. How do I arrange this with my university, and how do I convince my university that this can be of value to them?

You may be eligible for cost-sharing between the university and the fellowship program for a year of leave (such as an Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program, or IPA.) We believe that it is important to educate your department chair and dean about the additional knowledge and skills you will bring back to the university following your fellowship. In general, assets that a fellow can bring back to the university include: enhanced grantsmanship skills; enhanced communication skills for non-academic audiences; an enriched capacity for policy-relevant research; a broader network of collaborators, both inside and outside academia; a broader ability to teach about developmental science and public policy; broader experience for committee service to the university; and enhanced capacity for working with state and local policymakers. We recommend that you review the reflections of former fellows for what they have gained from the fellowship ([Spotlight on the SRCDC Federal Policy Fellow](#)). Please contact us for additional assistance at policy@srcd.org.

Will there be any reporting requirements to SRCD?

SRCD Policy Fellows will have monthly calls with SRCD staff to discuss their placement experience and get support on questions or concerns. They will be asked to write a brief spotlight column to highlight their experiences at their placement. Towards the end of the fellowship year, fellows will also be required to create a final Professional Portfolio providing examples of their contributions at the placement. Placement supervisors will be asked to review the materials prepared for the final Portfolio before they are shared with SRCD to assure that nothing that is considered confidential by the agency is included. The Portfolio will also involve an introduction and reflections on what the fellow has learned through the fellowship about bridging between research and policy. Towards the end of the fellowship year, fellows will be asked to participate in a Capstone Meeting at the SRCD headquarters in Washington, D.C. to share presentations based on their Portfolios. Fellows will also complete an end-of-year survey to report on their experience.

What kinds of support will the SRCD office provide?

Hosting a multi-day training on child and family policy in October of the fellowship year. SRCD will also arrange for an individualized state-specific training day for each fellow in a state placement. Organizing monthly seminars on policy and professional development topics, with participation from all fellows (virtual for state fellows).

Which SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship placement should I apply to?

Each of the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship placements provide scholars with a unique opportunity to work at the junction of developmental science and public policy. All fellows have opportunities to learn about the social and/or science policy-making process. However, different skills are enhanced by each fellowship. For a better understanding of how the placements in the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowships differ, see [here](#).

Where are the placements for SRCD Federal Policy Fellows located?

Congressional and federal agency placements are full-time in the Washington, D.C. area and fellows are required to relocate to the Washington, D.C. area so they are available to work in person at their placement. State placements are typically located at the state capital, but applicants should discuss expectations for their location with their proposed placement supervisor before submitting their application.

What should applicants do if they have further questions?

Please email policy@srcd.org or call 202-800-0666.

Funding and Compensation

Who funds the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship?

The funding mechanisms for SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship differs for the different placements. The federal executive branch placements are funded by those executive branch agencies through a cooperative agreement with SRCD. The Congressional and state placements are funded by the [Heising-Simons](#) Foundation.

How is the salary of a fellow decided?

We use the federal government's general schedule (GS) level 12 pay scale, taking into consideration post-Ph.D. experience and fellow's locality. (Stipends and benefits are not negotiated.) The starting stipend for a fellow in Washington D.C. who has just completed their Ph.D. is \$94,199 annually, as of 2023. Stipend (and benefit) levels are highly competitive compared to other post-doc experiences, but ultimately, they reflect the fact that the fellowship offers substantial educational value over employment, so they may or may not be competitive with those for employment.

What are the other paid benefits?

SRCD provides an allowance for health insurance premiums, a \$1,300 relocation reimbursement (for moves of 50 miles or more), and \$2,800 for professional development expenses such as

travel to research meetings. State fellows are supported to fly to Washington D.C. twice per year, for the October orientation and the August Capstone event.

Application Requirements

What is the application deadline for the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowships?

11:59 p.m. ET on January 7, 2024

Do I have to have a doctorate to apply for a SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship?

Applicants must receive a doctorate-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., or M.D.) relevant to child development prior to the start of the fellowship. A J.D. alone does not qualify without any of the aforementioned degrees. For current doctoral candidates, the dissertation defense must take place by July 1, and all degree requirements must be completed by August 31.

I am completing my doctorate after the application deadline but before the fellowship year starts. Can I still apply?

Yes, as long as the applicant's dissertation defense will take place by July 1 and all degree requirements will be completed by August 31. A letter from the dissertation committee chair will be requested to confirm this timeline. There are no exceptions.

I received my doctorate more than ten years ago. Am I eligible to apply?

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Yes. SRCD encourages individuals at any point in their careers to apply for a fellowship. Early, mid-career, and advanced professionals have all completed SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowships. Several later-career fellows coming from academia have pursued the fellowship during a sabbatical. For a better understanding of how a mid-career or advanced professional may benefit from the fellowship, [read about one mid-career fellow's experiences](#).

May I apply if I am not a U.S. citizen?

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Applicants for the federal agency and Congressional placements are required to be U.S. citizens. Applicants for a state agency placement must confirm that their citizenship status is acceptable to work with their proposed placement agency.

Can I apply to multiple placements (e.g. Congressional and federal agency)?

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We recommend that you apply for the placement(s) best suited to your interests and goals. Applicants can apply for multiple placements with the same application. The state placement requires a letter of support from the state agency you wish to apply for. Please note that while you may apply to multiple placements, you will only receive one (1) fellowship offer.

I was unsuccessful in a prior application cycle. Can I reapply for an SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship?

Yes. SRCD does not impose limits on the number of times a candidate may apply.

Do I need to be a SRCD member in order to apply?

Yes. In order to be eligible for the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowships, applicants must be SRCD members. **While our database is under improvement, please [click here to join or renew your membership](#).** Placement supervisors who will work with the fellow do not need to be members.

Who should apply for a SRCD Policy Fellowship?

- This program is best suited for researchers that are passionate about evidence-based policymaking, who are open to growth and learning, and who want to explore policy-related career paths. You will be most successful if you are eager to learn, are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and are passionate about bringing evidence into the policy space.
- Eligibility: The SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship is designed for developmental scholars from a variety of backgrounds and scientific disciplines. Applicants must hold doctoral degrees by the start of the fellowship (September 1st) and must be members of SRCD. Applicants seeking Congressional or federal executive branch placements must be U.S. citizens.
- Diversity: SRCD embraces a commitment to, and support for, diversity in the child development field. This includes training and engaging a workforce that is representative of diversity in all its forms. We encourage fellowship applications from scholars of color, scholars from underrepresented cultural and ethnic backgrounds, scholars from low-income backgrounds, first-generation college graduates, scholars with disabilities, and scholars from the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Career stage: Applicants must demonstrate exceptional competence in an area of child development research and receive a doctorate-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) prior to starting the fellowship. We welcome applications from early, mid-career, and advanced professionals. This fellowship will help developmental scientists at all career stages understand the linkages between research and policy, how to communicate more effectively with policymakers, and how to formulate more informed and useful questions for policy-related research.

What makes an ideal SRCD Policy Fellow?

SRCD fellows serve as ambassadors for developmental science. Therefore, scholarship, including graduate coursework and research expertise, is an important qualification for the fellowship. Additionally, applicants are most successful if they have a strong openness to learning, take

initiative, are collaborative, and have good communication skills. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Application Process

What does a complete online application include?

We encourage you to read the [How to Apply](#) page, which contains specific details. Here is an overview:

1. Candidate data including eligibility criteria, education and demographics, a self-assessment of your methodological and child development skills and certification of accuracy.
2. Statement of Interest
3. Current C.V.
4. Three reference surveys. (Your references have until January 14 at 11:59 p.m. ET to submit their surveys. To be considered, it is the applicant's responsibility that references meet this deadline.)
5. Placement Agency Letter of Support (state placement applicants only)

I am having trouble submitting my online application. What should I do?

Contact the SRCD policy staff immediately at 202-800-0666 or policy@srcd.org. We honor all application and recommendation submission efforts made before the deadline.

When will applicants be notified about the status of their application and candidacy for an interview?

Applicants will typically be notified late January or early February whether they have been selected for an interview. All fellowships will be offered by early April.

What is finals week?

If you pass the written application stage, you will be invited to finals week in mid-February. During finals week, you will participate in a pre-interview task and an SRCD interview. If you have applied for the state or Congressional placement, you will be interviewed virtually. Federal agency applicants will be flown to Washington, D.C., where they will interview with both SRCD and prospective placements. For more, see the [How to Apply](#) page.

Placement-Specific Questions

What role is the placement supervisor expected to play in the fellowship?

The placement supervisor must be able to support the fellow's ability to engage in the work, leveraging their unique experience as a developmental scientist. In addition, they should be prepared to support the fellow in developing a greater understanding of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. This might mean encouraging participation in appropriate meetings and providing opportunities for discussion of questions and reflections, among other activities. While there should be an idea of projects appropriate for the fellow to assist with initially, it is expected that projects will evolve, and new projects and opportunities will emerge during the course of the year. State placement supervisors are be asked to participate with the fellow and SRCD staff in a kick-off call to start the fellowship year. Placement supervisors will be asked to provide input on and review all fellowship products, including the fellow's Spotlight column, Professional Portfolio, and professional development plan. They will also be asked to attend semi-annual meetings with SRCD fellowship staff to ensure the fellow and the placement office has a successful fellowship experience.

Where are the federal agency placements located?

Fellowship placement opportunities may vary from year to year. Typically, federal agencies have offered placements in the Office of Head Start; the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation; the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; the Office of Child Care; and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Still have a question? Get in touch with us at policy@srcd.org.

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