SRCD State Policy Fellowship Program

There are two types of U.S. state policy fellowships: post-doctoral and pre-doctoral. Both state fellowships place fellows in state executive branch agency offices focusing on early childhood programs and policies. They are an immersion experience in policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

About the State Fellowship Program

The SRCD State Policy Fellowship runs from September 1st to August 31st. During the fellowship year, fellows are supported by a placement supervisor within their state executive branch agency, an academic mentor, and by SRCD. Academic mentors for those participating in both the pre- and post-doctoral programs are expected to have backgrounds relevant to research on state early childhood policies and programs.

SRCD expects the state fellowships to provide fellows with opportunities to:

- Gain further understanding of state level early childhood policies and programs.
- Understand the linkages between research and policy through an immersion experience
- Engage in the policymaking process
- Learn how developmental science can be utilized to improve policy development, implementation, and evaluation
- Contribute to the planning and implementation of key state programs and initiatives that serve diverse youth and families
- Learn how to communicate effectively with policymakers and other stakeholders
- Formulate more informed and useful questions for policy-related research
- Further expand your career opportunities and network
Fellows are supported by a placement supervisor and an academic mentor throughout the fellowship year. The SRCD policy team works to facilitate the fellows' experience and are available as a resource throughout the year.

The State Fellowship Program aims to:

1. Provide fellows with firsthand experience in state policymaking, program implementation, and evaluation.
2. Provide state executive branch agencies greater access to research expertise on a diverse range of child development topics to enhance evidence-based policy development, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Build a network of experts that bridge developmental science, state policymaking, and practice.

**Examples of State Policy Fellow Responsibilities**

State fellows can be involved in bridging research and policy through a variety of responsibilities. Depending on the specific placement, responsibilities might involve, for example:

- helping to inform the design of a new state pre-kindergarten program or working to strengthen an existing program.
- assisting in the planning or implementation of policy initiatives to improve program quality.
- assisting in the design, conduct, or analysis of a program evaluation.

One of the main positive experiences that I had involved going to meetings with [my state supervisor] and meeting politicians and advocates throughout the state…I would recommend [the state fellowship]—especially for students of color because I feel like I had opportunities that I wouldn’t have gotten otherwise.

— Former SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellow

**Read about selected contributions from past SRCD State Policy Fellows**
SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship

The SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship places doctoral students in state executive branch offices that work on state pre-kindergarten programs. SRCD will be seeking candidates with a strong interest and background in early education.

Candidates must confirm with their academic advisor that participation in the program would be in keeping with the requirements of their doctoral program and would not impede progress towards the degree. Participation in the program requires a commitment to participate in an immersive placement in a state executive branch agency for an average of 20 hours per week.

Who should apply?

The SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship is for candidates who:

- Have completed at least 2 years of coursework and are in good academic standing
• Have a background in early learning and education
• Can commit to a 12-month part-time placement in a state executive branch office that averages 20 hours per week over the course of a year. Fellowships are immersive experiences and fellows will be expected to be on site at the state agency for most if not all of their work.
• Are U.S. citizens
• Are members of SRCD

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.

Previous fellows found it helpful to speak with former fellows about the application process and/or their fellowship experiences. We recommend you reach out to former fellows that you may know in your own extended network. If you’d like to reach out to a former fellow outside your network, you can also view list of previous SRCD Policy Fellows. Alternatively, you can contact policyfellowships@srcd.org to set up a connection with a former fellow.

How to Apply

This experience has given me the additional perspective of how state policies and systems influence the programs that directly serve children and families and that help improve outcomes for children; we need research to support efforts at all levels of the system.

— Former SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellow
SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship

The SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship places early career developmental scientists in state executive branch offices that focus on early childhood.

Who should apply?

The SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship is for candidates who:

- Will have completed their doctoral work in any discipline relevant to child development no more than two years before the start of the fellowship
- Are U.S. citizens
- Are members of SRCD

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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.

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How to Apply

The learning and the growth was just incredible…I got an in-depth understanding of how decision-making is done at the state agency…I think you only get that when you have an immersion experience.

— Former SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow

Benefits of Being a State Policy Fellow

Be immersed in policy work at the state level.

Gain policy training as a doctoral student or early-career professional.
• One-day state-specific training on the state's child and family policy landscape, organized by SRCD.
• Two-day training focused on child and family policy, hosted by SRCD in Washington, D.C. Fellows will be reimbursed for all travel expenses.
• Monthly video seminars for fellows with topics focusing on child development and public policy, as well as career development.
• One-day Capstone meeting at the end of the fellowship year in Washington, D.C. Fellows will be reimbursed for all travel expenses.
• Individualized professional development planning to support the acquisition of new knowledge and skills over the course of the fellowship program.
• Development of a portfolio that showcases the fellow's experiences and contributions to the placement throughout the fellowship year.

Receive a stipend and health insurance or tuition allocation.

• For Pre-doctoral fellows:
  ◦ Fellows will receive a $30,000 stipend.
  ◦ An allocation of up to $15,000 to defray the cost of tuition and health insurance.
• For Post-doctoral fellows:
  ◦ Fellows will receive a stipend aligned with the federal GS level 12, Step 1 in their respective locality.
  ◦ An allocation for purchase of health insurance is provided with the amount depending upon number of family members covered.
• All academic mentors receive an honorarium of $2,500.

Receive a professional development fund.

• For Pre-doctoral fellows:
  ◦ Funding for the fellow, academic mentor, and state placement supervisor to attend an early childhood focused conference.
• For Post-doctoral fellows:
  ◦ Fellows receive an allowance of up to $2,800 to use towards professional development opportunities during their fellowship year.
Join an extensive network of fellowship alumni.

- To date, there is a network of approximately 200 fellowship alumni.

Learn about the differences between the post-doctoral and pre-doctoral state fellowships, examples of past placement activities, and the benefits of becoming a fellow in this informational webinar presented by Dr. Kelly Fisher, SRCD's Director for Policy, and Dr. Ruth Friedman, former SRCD Congressional fellow and co-lead for the SRCD U.S. State Policy Fellowship.

I am immensely grateful for this fellowship experience. My understanding of early learning systems and the work that is done to support the well-being of children has expanded beyond the realm of academia. I feel more prepared to incorporate policy perspectives into my research, from the questions I ask to the methods and implications. Furthermore, I am confident that the fellowship has helped me develop the skills to meaningfully collaborate and partner with early learning policy-makers.

— Former SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellow

Questions?
Contact us via email at policyfellowships@srcd.org or call 202-800-0666.

Frequently Asked Questions