

Federal Policy Fellowship FAQs

General Questions about the Federal Policy Fellowship Program

Who should apply for a SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship?

Both the SRCD Congressional and Executive Branch Policy Fellowships are designed for developmental scholars from a variety of backgrounds and scientific disciplines. Applicants must be U.S. citizens and 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.

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. However, both SRCD Congressional and Executive Branch Policy Fellowships are training opportunities suited for individuals throughout their career development. 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 Federal Policy Fellow?

SRCD fellows serve as ambassadors for developmental science. Therefore, scholarship, including graduate coursework and research expertise, is the most important qualification for the fellowship. Additionally, the applicant's previous professional experiences, policy interests, career goals, and interpersonal and communication skills are important considerations. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Please visit the [Federal Policy Fellowship Application Process](#) page for more details.

Which SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship should I apply to?

Both the SRCD Congressional and Executive Branch Policy Fellowship provide scholars with a unique opportunity to work at the junction of developmental science and public policy. Fellows in both of the federal fellowships have opportunities to learn about the policy-making process. Both branches are involved with legislation, regulatory policy, and federal programs that affect children and families. However, different skills are enhanced by each fellowship. For a better understanding of how the SRCD Congressional and Executive Branch Policy Fellowships differ, [read these brief articles](#) written by current and former fellows about their experiences.

Can I apply to both the SRCD Congressional and Executive Branch

Fellowships?

It is recommended that you apply for the fellowship best suited to your interests and goals. However, some applicants may choose to apply for both fellowships. In that situation, applicants should submit a separate statement of interest, articulating their differing goals in applying for each fellowship.

Please note that while you may apply to both the Congressional Fellowship and the Executive Branch Fellowship, if you are ranked highly for both fellowships, you will only receive one (1) fellowship offer (either the Congressional *or* Executive Branch fellowship).

Can I apply for both the SRCF Federal and State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship Programs?

Yes. However, applicants should provide a strong statement of interest specific to each program and follow the specific guidelines for each fellowship application process.

Is the SRCF Federal Policy Fellowship designed only for early-career fellows?

No. The fellowships are training opportunities suited for individuals at all career stages.

Where are the placements for SRCD Federal Policy Fellows located?

All SRCD Federal Policy Fellows have placements that are full-time in the Washington, D.C. area. It is expected that all fellows relocate to the Washington, D.C. area so they are available to work in-person at their placement. Fellowship placement opportunities may vary from year to year. The SRCD Executive Branch Fellowship Program has included 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 in previous years and we anticipate a continuation of these placements.

What is the duration of the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship?

The fellowships are 12-month immersion experiences beginning on September 1st and ending on August 31st. Individuals accepting a fellowship must sign an agreement acknowledging this year-long commitment. Some SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellows may renew for a second year at the mutual agreement of the host office, the fellow, and SRCD. Under rare circumstances, SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowships may be extended for an additional four months (for a total of up to 16 months), through the remainder of a legislative session. All extensions must be applied for by March 1st of the fellowship year.

Does this fellowship involve learning advocacy?

No. The intent of this program is to learn how to bridge research and policy. It involves learning

at the placement about the research questions that need to be addressed at the federal level and attempting to address them through empirical research. It also involves learning how best to communicate research to federal policymakers. 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?

The dates of the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship are not flexible. They are designed to coincide fully with the Science and Technology Fellowship Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), in which SRCD is a partner society. The fellowship calendar begins with extensive orientation programming and is structured with professional development events across the year to build the fellowship experience sequentially. Any experience outside of this calendar would not hold the same career development value, or sense of inclusion in the fellowship cohort. Applicants are advised to apply for a fellowship at a time in their careers when the fellowship calendar will work for them.

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?

The fellowships begin on September 1st with the AAAS orientation and continue for 12 months. However, a fellow might be able to arrange with their placement to accumulate leave so as to

return to a university or other position earlier in August.

Who funds the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowships?

The funding mechanisms for SRCD Executive Branch Fellowship differs depending on the agency. Many placements are funded through federal cooperative agreements with SRCD. Some host agencies temporarily hire SRCD fellows as federal employees for the duration the fellowship. Some fellows are funded strictly by SRCD or by private grants. The SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship is funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation.

How is the salary of a fellow decided?

Stipends for fellows correspond to the federal government general schedule (GS) pay scale GS, Grade 12, taking into consideration post-doctorate experience. Fellowships are viewed as an educational experience beyond postdoctoral training, so stipend (and benefit) levels may or may not be competitive with employment experience. Please note that fellows may not negotiate stipends and benefits with SRCD, agencies, or placements. Stipend levels will be adjusted according to the most recent information available prior to the start of the fellowship year.

SRCD also provides fellows with an allowance of up to \$1,300 for moving expenses if they moved 50 or more miles, a professional development fund of \$2,800, as well as an allowance for purchase of health insurance with the amount depending upon number of family members covered.

Please note that fellows hired as temporary employees of their placement agency will receive

their salary and benefits directly from the agency. SRCD fellows who are temporary federal employees do not receive a separate allowance for professional development. This will be at the discretion of the host office. Temporary federal employees are not eligible for a relocation allowance. However, many expenses for employment-related relocation are tax deductible for moves more than 50 miles from your previous work location ([see the IRS guidelines](#)).

Information on employee benefits can be found on the [website of the Office of Personnel Management](#).

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, both the SRCD Congressional and Executive Branch 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 Congress and the Executive Branch. SRCD Executive Branch Policy 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. SRCD Congressional Policy Fellows are not permitted to work on or apply for federal grants while in a congressional placement. Both SRCD Executive Branch and Congressional Policy 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 SRCD Federal 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 SRCD Federal Policy Fellow](#)). Please contact us for additional assistance at policyfellowships@srcd.org.

Can a current or former SRCD State Policy Fellow be a candidate for the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship?

Yes, as long as the candidate fulfills all of the requirements and the timelines align.

What should applicants do if they have further questions?

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

Applicant Requirements

What is the application deadline for the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship?

Applications for the 2022-2023 SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship were due by **January 4, 2022, 11:59pm Eastern** via an online portal. Applications are not usually accepted past the deadline. Applicants with extreme extenuating circumstances should contact the SRCD policy staff at policyfellowships@srcd.org.

Do I have to have a doctorate to apply for an SRCD Federal 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 1st and all degree requirements will be completed by August 31st. 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?

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 Federal 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?

No. Fellows are required to be U.S. citizens. This is due to citizenship restrictions for placement in Congress and the federal agencies.

Can I reapply for an SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship?

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

The Application Process

What does a complete online application include?

1. Candidate data including education and demographics, and certification of accuracy
2. Statement of interest
3. Current C.V.
4. Three letters of recommendation

Note: The Selection Committee will only read three (3) letters of recommendation for each applicant. If an applicant submits additional letters of recommendation, SRCD will randomly select which three (3) letters of recommendation the Selection Committee will review for that applicant.

For further information, visit the [SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship page](#).

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

Contact the SRCD policy staff immediately at 202-800-0666 or policyfellowships@srcd.org. We honor all application and recommendation letter 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 mid-late February whether or not they have been selected for an interview. Executive Branch applicants are contacted within the month after their semi-finalist interview to let them know if they have been selected for the finalist phone interviews with federal agency representatives. All fellowships will be offered by May.

When and where do the semi-finalist interviews take place?

Interviews take place in March in Washington, D.C. Candidates will be reimbursed for their travel, meals, and accommodations. Following the interviews, a subset of candidates for the SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship will be invited to complete finalist phone interviews with potential executive branch placements. These phone interviews will take place in March.

How should I approach the interview?

- Candidates will be notified whether they are invited to an interview by late February. Interviews will take place at the SRCD office in Washington, D.C.
- The interviews will be conducted by members of the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Selection Committee.
- Consider how you plan to leverage your background (e.g. your experience and interest) to bridge research and policy during your fellowship and career.
- [Watch this webinar](#) to learn about tips and tricks for the fellowship selection process.

Will there be any reporting requirements to SRCD?

Fellows are asked to write one-page reflections on their fellowship experiences, referred to as Spotlights on the SRCD Policy Fellow. Towards the end of the fellowship year, SRCD Federal Policy Fellows will also be required to create a final Professional Portfolio providing examples of their contributions at the placement. Federal 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 also 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 be required to complete an end-of-year survey reflecting on their fellowship experiences.
