General Questions

What is the duration of the SRCD State Policy Fellowships?

The SRCD State Policy Fellowships are a 12-month immersion experience beginning in early September and ending in late August. Individuals participating in the program must sign an agreement acknowledging this year-long commitment. The commitment is part-time (20 hours/week) for pre-doctoral fellows and full-time for post-doctoral fellows.

Is there any flexibility with the dates of the fellowship?

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No. A commitment to participating for the full 12-months (beginning in early September and ending in late August) is critical.

What is the relationship between the SRCD State Policy Fellowship Program and the longstanding SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program?

SRCD is continuing its strong commitment to the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program. SRCD State Policy Fellows will have multiple opportunities to meet with the SRCD Federal Policy Fellows who have placements in federal executive branch agencies or in Congress.

Does this program 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 the state agency needs addressed and attempting to address them through empirical research. It also involves learning how best to communicate research to state policymakers. If learning and participating in advocacy is a major goal for the graduate student or post-doctoral candidate, this program is not a good fit.

Will there be any reporting requirements to SRCD?
SRCD State Policy Fellows will be asked to complete a log either daily or weekly providing a brief summary of activities and hours at the placement. They will have monthly calls with SRCD staff in the Washington, D.C. office. Towards the end of the fellowship year, fellows will also be required to create a final Portfolio providing examples of their contributions at the placement. State 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.

What kinds of support will the SRCD office provide?

SRCD staff support the SRCD State Policy Fellows in a number of ways, including:

- Setting-up an individualized state-specific training day for each fellow. In addition, SRCD will provide a training in Washington, D.C. focusing on federal child and family policy,
- Organizing monthly seminars hosted in Washington, D.C., in which SRCD State Policy Fellows will be invited to participate remotely, and
- Having monthly check-in calls with the fellows.

SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellows will be supported in articulating specific goals for how the placement experience will contribute to their next steps in pursuing the doctorate as well as their broader professional development by completing a professional development plan several months into the fellowship year.

SRCD State Policy Post-Doctoral Fellows will be supported in the development of professional development plans to set goals for the fellowship year and for building on the fellowship in
further career steps.

What should applicants do if they have further questions?

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

Application Requirements

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

No. SRCD State Policy Fellows are required to be U.S. citizens.

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

Yes. In order to be eligible for the SRCD State Policy Fellowships, graduate students and post-doctoral scholars must be SRCD members. However, the academic mentor and state placement supervisor who will work with the fellow do not need to be members.
What kind of support will the academic mentor be expected to provide to the fellow?

Academic mentors will be expected to support the fellow’s placement experience by meeting on a regular basis (at least once a month) and through providing guidance and sharing resources relevant to placement projects (within guidelines set by the agency regarding confidentiality and disclosure about projects the fellow is assisting with). Support might include, for example, directing the fellow to research literature relevant to a project; serving as a sounding board in the formulation of a research question, evaluation plan, or plan for monitoring aspects of program implementation; or addressing issues with data analyses. The academic mentor will be asked to participate with the fellow, his or her state placement supervisor, and SRCD staff in a kick-off call to start the fellowship year. The academic mentor, fellow, and state placement supervisor will be asked to develop their own plan for periodic contact as a “triad” during the course of the fellowship year.

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

The state placement supervisor should be prepared to utilize the background of the fellow in developmental science in the work of the state agency related to early childhood programs and policies. In addition, he or she should be prepared to support the fellow in developing a greater understanding of state policy development, implementation and evaluation through encouraging participation in appropriate meetings and providing opportunities for discussion of questions and reflections. 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. The state placement supervisor will be asked to participate with the fellow, the fellow’s academic mentor, and SRCD staff in a kick-off call to
start the fellowship year. In addition, the fellow, state placement supervisor, and academic mentor will be asked to develop their own plan for periodic contact as a “triad” during the course of the fellowship years.

Can I reapply for an SRCD State Policy Fellowship?

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

The Application Process

How should the letter of intent be submitted?

Letters of intent can be submitted through an online portal, available on the SRCD State Policy Fellowship page.

A selection committee will review the letters of intent and invite full applications from a subset. A link to the application website will be provided to those invited to submit full applications.

What will a complete online application include?
Full applications will only be invited from a subgroup of those who submit letters of intent. The online application requirements are described in further detail on the SRCD State Policy Fellowship page.

When will the response to the letter of intent be sent, indicating whether a full application is invited?

A response to the letter of intent will be transmitted in mid- to late January. The response will indicate whether or not a full application is invited and provide details on how to submit the full application if one is invited.

Will there be an interview?

No, there will not be an interview for this application process.
Who should apply for the SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship?

The SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship is designed for scholars with a background in early learning and development. Applicants must have completed at least 2 years of doctoral coursework and be in good academic standing in a program leading to a doctoral degree related to child development. Participation must be in keeping with the graduate student’s requirements and progress towards the doctorate. The application process can be initiated by a professor or university-based researcher submitting a letter of intent together with a pre-doctoral scholar, or by a professor or university-based researcher submitting a letter of intent without yet naming a particular graduate student. In this case, those preparing letters of intent must note the process by which a specific graduate student will be identified for the full application.

Where will pre-doctoral fellowships be located?

The SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship involves part-time placements in U.S. state executive branch agencies focusing on early learning. The state agency must be involved with the state pre-kindergarten program.

What will the focus of the fellowship placements be?

Placements must be in a state executive branch agency that focuses on early learning policies and programs, specifically the state pre-kindergarten program. The state policy fellows will shape the particular projects they work on during the placement along with those overseeing
their work at the placement. Academic mentors should serve as a resource to the fellow during the year as well.

**Who funds the SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship?**

The SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

**What financial support is provided to the SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellow?**

SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellows will receive a $30,000 stipend, provided directly to the fellow. An allocation of up to $15,000 to defray the cost of tuition and health insurance will be provided to the fellow or academic institution as appropriate. Academic mentors will receive an honorarium of $5,000 in appreciation for their mentoring of the fellow. Funding will be available for the fellow, academic mentor, and state placement supervisor to attend a national meeting focusing on early childhood development together.

**Will the fellow get a larger stipend if the university does not require a contribution towards tuition?**
No. $30,000 is the maximum stipend.

What if the participating graduate student can’t complete a 20-hour placement during the academic year?

It is fine if the hours of placement vary somewhat between the academic year and summer as long as this variation is approved by both the academic mentor (the faculty member submitting the letter of intent and application) and state placement supervisor (staff member at the state executive branch placement interested in guiding the work of the fellow at the placement). The average must be 20 hours per week across the year. The total number of placement hours across the fellowship year must total to about 960 hours. Fellows will be asked to keep a weekly or daily log documenting their hours completing placement work, briefly noting the activities they were engaged in as well.

Is it possible that there will be multiple fellows in the same state agency?

Yes, this is a possibility. However, it will need to be clear that each state policy fellow will be able to make separate and meaningful contributions to the placement.
Can the faculty member interested in serving as the academic mentor for a fellow be someone other than the graduate student’s advisor within the doctoral program?

Yes. However, as part of the full application (if one is invited), a letter will be required from the program chair confirming that participation in the SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship is in keeping with program requirements and steps for progressing towards the doctorate.

Do faculty members and graduate students need to come from graduate programs in child development, human development, developmental science, or developmental psychology in order to submit application?

No. Applications are welcome from faculty and graduate students from other disciplines as long as they have a strong focus on child development research.

Application Process

What does a complete letter of intent need to include?
A letter of intent may be submitted either:

1. Jointly by a graduate student and an interested professor or university-based researcher or
2. Solely by an interested professor or university-based researcher, in which case, a specific pre-doctoral candidate does not need yet to be identified in the letter of intent.

The letter of intent requirements are described in further detail on the State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship Application Process page.

What if participation will delay the graduate student’s academic progress?

It is important for the faculty member submitting the letter of intent to confirm that participation will not impede a graduate student’s progress toward the doctorate. Please be sure to carefully review how participation in the SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellowship will align with the requirements of the graduate program. If the faculty member submitting the letter of intent is not chair of the graduate student’s academic program, it is important to confirm with the program chair that participation in the fellowship will not impede progress toward the doctorate.

If the letter of intent is submitted jointly by a professor/university-based researcher and a particular graduate student, or is submitted by a professor/university-based researcher alone but naming a particular graduate student with whom a full application would be submitted if invited, the letter of intent should indicate how participation in the fellowship would align with the timeline for either development of the dissertation proposal (for graduate students earlier in their doctoral studies) or completion of the dissertation (for graduate students further along in their graduate studies and who have an approved dissertation proposal). If the letter of intent is submitted by a professor or university-based researcher indicating a general plan for identifying
a graduate student should a full application be invited, the letter of intent should lay out how progress towards the doctorate will be taken into account in selecting a particular graduate student, specifying criteria with respect to preparation of the dissertation proposal or completion of dissertation research.

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**State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship Program**

**General Questions**

**Who should apply for an SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship?**

The SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship is designed for early-career post-doctoral scholars whose background is in early childhood research. Candidates with expertise in the research on family engagement, early math skills, and/or the development of dual language learners in early childhood will be prioritized, but placement activities may focus on early childhood policy more broadly. Post-doctoral candidates must have received a doctorate-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) by August 31st, 2020 and no more than two years before the start of the fellowship.

**Is this fellowship program designed for early-career fellows?**

Yes. Candidates for the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship must have received their
doctorates no more than two years prior to the start of the fellowship. However, mid-career and distinguished scholars are welcome to apply for the ongoing SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program.

Where are the post-doctoral fellowships located?

The SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship involves a full-time placement in a U.S. state executive branch agency focusing on early childhood. Placements can be in any state. Funding to relocate is not provided through this program.

What will the focus of the fellowship placements be?

Placements must be in state executive branch agencies that focus on early childhood policies and programs. The fellows will shape the particular projects they work on during the placement along with those overseeing their work at the placement. Academic mentors should serve as a resource to the fellow during the year as well.

Who funds the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship?

The SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship is funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation.
How is the salary of a fellow decided?

Stipends for fellows will be parallel to the federal government general schedule (GS) pay scale, taking into consideration previous experience. Stipend (and benefit) levels reflect the fact that the fellowship offers substantial educational value over employment, so may or may not be competitive with those for employment. Please note that fellows may not negotiate stipends and benefits directly with agencies or placements. Fellows will receive a stipend aligned with the federal GS, Grade 12 level associated with their locality of residence. SRCD will provide fellows with an allowance to purchase health insurance if needed. Fellows will also receive $2,800 for professional development expenses such as travel to research meetings. Please note that academic mentors will receive an honorarium of $5,000 for the year in recognition of the guidance they provide to the fellow.

Is there an allocation to pay for a move?

SRCD is assuming that fellows will be in state executive branch offices near their home universities. No moving allowance is included.

Can a post-doctoral candidate apply for both the SRCD Federal and State Policy 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.
Can a current or former SRCD Federal Policy Fellow be a candidate for the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship?

Yes, as long as he or she fulfills all of the requirements and the timelines align.

Will it be possible for SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellows to continue work on research projects during the fellowship year?

Similar to programs like the Fulbright Scholars Program, the SRCD State Policy Fellowships are immersion experiences, and fellows are unlikely to have 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 the state executive branch agency. Fellows must request permission from their host office or agency to continue active work on grants, contracts, or consulting so as to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest or an actual conflict of interest. SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellows must receive approval to work on non-federal as well as federal research collaborations or appointments during the fellowship.

Application Requirements

Can the person interested in serving as the academic mentor for an SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow be someone other than the post-
doctoral candidate’s academic advisor within the post-doctoral program?

Yes. The academic mentor can be any professor or a senior researcher from a university center or research organization located in the same state as the placement agency and who has a background or interest in policy-related research. The post-doctoral candidate will want to be sure to communicate with the chair of her or his academic program about applying for this fellowship to confirm that it aligns with plans for the post-doctorate at the academic institution.

What level of degree is needed for those applying to be fellows in the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship?

To be eligible for the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship Program, candidates must have completed a doctoral-level degree by the start of the fellowship in September 2020 (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., or M.D.). A candidate with a J.D. alone is not eligible without any of the aforementioned degrees.

Can applications involve a post-doctoral scholar who will complete the doctorate after the application deadline but before the fellowship year starts?

Yes, as long as the dissertation defense will take place by July 1st and the degree will be awarded by August 31st. A letter from the dissertation committee chair will be requested to
The Application Process

What does a complete letter of intent need to include?

Letters of intent should be submitted jointly by a post-doctoral candidate and a professor or senior researcher (at a university center or research organization) interested in serving as the academic mentor for an SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow.

The letter of intent requirements are described in further detail on the State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship Application Process page.

When will the faculty member/senior researcher and candidate for the fellowship be notified as to whether they are invited to submit a full application?

Those submitting letters of intent will be notified in mid- to late January as to whether or not they have been selected to complete a full application.
Will there be an interview?

No, there will not be an interview for this application process.