State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship Application Process

The deadline to submit letters of intent for the 2021-2022 State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship Program has passed (January 4, 2021).

Application Timeline

1. Letter of Intent submission site opens by December 1, 2020
3. Notification of Status & Invitation to Submit Full Application: **End of January 2021**
4. Deadline for Finalist Full Application: **March 1, 2021 at 11:59 Eastern**
5. Notification of Fellowship Offers: **End of April 2021**

Application Submission Instructions

Applying to the SRCD State Policy Fellowship is a two-step process.

1. Submit a letter of intent (max 3 single-spaced pages) to an online portal.

   A joint letter of intent should be submitted by the fellowship candidate and interested professor or senior researcher, from a university or research organization (referred to as academic mentor). We highly recommend that the academic mentor be from a university center or research organization in the same state as the fellowship placement agency. If the proposed academic mentor will be in a different state, your Letter of Intent must include confirmation from the academic mentor that they will be able to provide the fellow access to university resources such as libraries, statistical software, and/or training.
2. A selection committee will invite full applications from a subset of those who have submitted letters of intent. The full applications will be submitted through an online portal.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicants must receive a doctoral-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) relevant to child development prior to the start of the fellowship.
- This fellowship is for early-career scholars. Applicants must have received their doctoral work within two years prior to the start of the fellowship year.
- Applicants to the SRCD State Policy Fellowship Program must be a member of SRCD and be a U.S. citizen.
- The potential state executive branch agency office must focus on early childhood.

What should be included in a State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship letter of intent?

Please utilize SRCD’s letter of intent template for your letter of intent submission, making sure you adhere to the guidelines on the template. The letter of intent must include the following sections:

- Applicant Background
  - Describe your background in child development research, including expertise in early childhood and interest in policy research.

- Background and affiliation with the proposed state executive branch agency
  - Describe the proposed placement agency and the work they do. Identify a supervisor that may support the applicant during the fellowship.
  - Describe the applicant’s relationship with the state executive branch agency. If the academic mentor has a relationship, please briefly describe that relationship.
  - Describe the types of work potentially available for the post-doctoral fellow in the
identified agency with the understanding that specific projects will be determined together with the agency when the fellowship begins and that projects will evolve during the course of the year

- Confirm that (should a full application be invited) it will be possible to obtain a letter of commitment from the identified state executive branch office, indicating that a placement with the agency will be feasible

- **Academic mentors for the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow**
  - Name the proposed academic mentor who will dedicate mentoring time to support the fellow throughout the fellowship year including completing the following requirements: join a kick-off call at the start of the fellowship year with the fellow, placement supervisor, academic mentor, and SRCD staff; discuss a professional development plan with the fellow; review the fellows’ Portfolio at the end of the year; and complete an end-of-year evaluation of the fellowship.
  - Describe the professional supports they will provide to the fellow throughout the year, including (1) plans for frequency of meetings and whether these meetings would be one-on-one or part of ongoing meetings with a group of graduate students or a research team, and (2) providing guidance and sharing resources relevant to placement projects (within guidelines set by the agency regarding confidentiality). 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
  - *Briefly* describe the Academic Mentor's background and research interests.

*The letter of intent must not exceed three single-spaced pages.*

**How do I submit the letter of intent?**
Letters of intent should be submitted through an online portal. See “Application Submission Instructions” above.

What is required of the State Policy Post-doctoral Fellowship full application?

A. Six items from the post-doctoral candidate:

1. **Statement of interest** (1,000 word limit) describing:
   - Background and Qualifications: What is your specific background and experience in child development and early learning that would qualify you for the fellowship (e.g. coursework, training, and professional experience)?
   - Research Expertise: What are your current areas of research, primary questions of interest, and methodologies used to address the questions?
   - Policy Interests: Why are you interested in working on policy and practice issues and what types of knowledge and skills do you hope to develop through the fellowship?
   - Career Aspirations: What are your career goals and how would the fellowship support your career goals?

   *Candidates should confirm their understanding that the fellowship is a full-time, on-site immersion experience at the state placement agency.*

2. **Current C.V.**

3. **Transcript** (official or unofficial). Your transcript will be used to confirm that you have an academic background in developmental science.

4. **Three letters of recommendation** for the post-doctoral candidate, addressing the following:
   - How does the post-doctoral candidate’s expertise, skill set, and interest prepare the
candidate for a successful fellowship experience?

- What is the post-doctoral candidate’s knowledge base and how does the candidate’s expertise relate to policy?
- To the best of your knowledge, what drives or motivates the post-doctoral candidate to pursue this fellowship?

**B. Two items from the academic mentor:**

1. **Statement of interest** (750 word limit) that indicates why the academic mentor is recommending the applicant for this fellowship addresses how areas of research will benefit the fellow, and the ways in which the academic mentor would provide individualized support to the post-doctoral fellow. Support for a post-doctoral fellow should include:
   - access to libraries, statistical software, and/or training
   - regular meetings with the fellow to reflect on: (1) the placement experience and connect the placement experience with potential future career plans, and (2) applications and connections between relevant research, policy, and practice

   *The academic mentor can include sections from the letter of intent, where appropriate extending the initial letter. The statement from the academic mentor must be signed and on letterhead.*

2. **Current C.V.**

**C. Two items from staff at state executive branch agency:**

1. **Statement of interest** (600 word limit)

   The statement of interest should be written by an employee in a leadership position working on early childhood policy at the state executive branch agency and who would provide the placement opportunity to the SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow:
   - Description of professional background and role in the organization
Description of possible projects the fellow might assist with

Confirmation of interest and description of supervisory plan. This would include a description of the individual(s) who will supervise the fellow and provide guidance and feedback on specific placement projects, regularly scheduled discussions with the supervisor(s) during which the fellow could ask questions and reflect on what they are learning, and identify opportunities for the fellow to learn about policy development and implementation in a state agency.

Description of onboarding plan to orient the fellow to the agency's structure and functions

2. **Letter of commitment**

   The letter should be written by a representative of the state executive branch agency with appropriate authority

   - Confirm that the agency would host a post-doctoral fellow for a year-long placement and that such a placement would be in keeping with agency rules and regulations and state laws
   - Name the specific supervisor
   - Confirm that an appropriate workspace would be made available including use of a computer and telephone (used only according to agency guidelines).

   *The statement of interest noted above and letter of commitment may be from the same individual, if appropriate. The statement of interest and the letter of commitment must be signed and on letterhead.*

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**How do I submit a full application?**

Full applications will be due by the **end of February 2021** through an online portal. See “Application Submission Instructions” above for more information.
Post-doctoral candidates will be evaluated based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Demonstrates relevant academic background in development science (e.g., topically relevant graduate coursework)
- Demonstrates strong research skills (e.g., research methods coursework, methodologies used in publications)
- Previous professional experiences related to the application of research to practice (e.g., clinical)
- Record of publications, presentations, and professional activities commensurate with experience and appropriate to discipline
- Demonstrates strong communication skills
- Alignment of interests and career aspirations with the fellowship program

Tips & Tricks

Watch the webinar on tips and tricks for applying to the SRCD U.S. State Policy Fellowship presented by Dr. Kelly Fisher, SRCD's Director for Policy, and Dr. Ruth Friedman, Co-lead for the SRCD U.S. State Policy Fellowship.