

**SLIDE 1:** Welcome to the webinar on tips and tricks for applying to the Society for Research on Child Development U.S. State Policy Fellowship Program. My name is Jennifer Brooks and I am the State Policy Fellowship Supervisor. I'm excited to share information about the policy fellowship with you today.

**SLIDE 2:** Let's start with an overview of the application process timeline. Applications must be submitted through an online portal, accessible on SRCD's website, which typically opens in November or December. In step 1, applicants submit applications through this portal in January. The exact application deadline will vary by year so please visit the SRCD website to check the deadline for the current year. In step 2, the fellowship selection committee will review applications and select finalist. In March, SRCD will send notifications to applicants if they have been selected to interview. In step 3, finalists will engage in virtual interviews with the fellowship selection panel and this will happen in mid or late March. And finally, in step 4 fellowship offers will be sent to selected fellows in April or May.

**SLIDE 3:** A key aspect of the state fellowship application process is identifying a placement office that would host you for the fellowship if you are selected. You must identify a state executive branch agency that focuses on children's learning and well-being and includes children from birth to 8 years old. Examples of areas of focus for agencies include, but are not limited to, those that oversee: education, child care, income security, early childhood mental health, family engagement, and child abuse prevention or other agencies that touch children or families. Remember, this fellowship is an immersive experience so make sure the location of the state office is somewhere you can be physically present full-time. Once you've identified the right agency, office, or division, you need to connect with the state to discuss a fellowship placement. Now you may make that contact yourself. But, you can also consider whether there's a faculty at your university, at another university, at a research organization that you know who could perhaps help make that connection. That might be someone who has worked with the state in the past and willing to reach out on your behalf, or someone who knows who you should contact at the state. When reaching out to the state, it can be helpful to include links to more information about the fellowship from the SRCD website. It might be particularly useful to point to the responsibilities the state agency would have in hosting a fellow and to providing information about the types of work that previous fellows have engaged in.

**SLIDE 4:** Next let's go over the materials you'll need to submit as part of your application. We'll break this into two sections: materials from the post-doctoral candidate and materials from the state agency. The post-doctoral candidate will need to submit a statement of interest, a current C.V., and three letters of recommendation. The state agency will need to contribute a statement of support which confirms the agency's commitment to hosting the fellow and outlines the agency's role.

**SLIDE 5:** Let's discuss a few tips and tricks for your application. Information about the application evaluation criteria can be found on SRCD's website, using the link on this slide. It is really important that you address all the requested information in the statement of interest. Please utilize the statement of interest template provided in the application portal and adhere to all formatting guidelines detailed on the template. Make sure you show that you understand the goals of the fellowship. SRCD has included a lot of information about the fellowship on its website, so make sure you've reviewed it. We also suggest you read the 'Spotlight on the SRCD Policy fellow' columns and the professional portfolio abstracts to better understand fellows' experiences at different placement offices, including the types of projects they've worked on and the knowledge and skills they've gained. These columns and abstracts can be found on the webpage titled "SRCD Policy Fellowship Experience." The narrative is relatively short, so you may want to plan your letters of recommendation with that in mind. You may only be able to give a head nod to certain things in your statement of interest but you can have your letter writers give more detail for you. Talk with those who will submit letters and identify specific areas you would like for them to address. For instance, have your letter writers identify different skills or backgrounds that will help you in the fellowship. Have them communicate more details about your research and how it contributes to the field more broadly. If you feel like there is a limitation in your background, you may address it directly in your statement of interest or have your letter writers do it. Lastly, get feedback on your application. Show your letter writers your statement of interest along with the requirements and ask them for feedback.

**SLIDE 6:** Now let's go over some tips and tricks for the interview. If you are selected as a finalist candidate you will be invited for virtual interviews with the selection panel. Our first tip to you is to really know your research. Know how to communicate your research to different target audiences. Know how your research fits into the context of the broader research literature. It is also important for you to be ready to clearly communicate the benefits of a fellowship placement offer. So what exactly is your expertise that you would bring to the placement? How could you help facilitate the work of the placement office? And why are you interested in this fellowship? And how will the fellowship further your own desired career trajectory? Some applicants may not have very much experience with interviews so may be nervous or unsure about what to expect. The interview panel will do their best to make this a comfortable experience and we hope this webinar provides you with some general interview expectations to help you prepare. We also recommend exploring the many resources online about best practices for interviews. Please utilize these techniques. Many of them you probably have heard of – for example, maintain eye contact, wear professional attire and write out your key talking points. We also highly recommend that you practice. This practice will help calm your nerves and also give you a boost in confidence.

**SLIDE 7:** We think you will find it really helpful to read over some of the portfolio abstracts and spotlight columns from former fellows, which can give you a better understanding of the various types of work state fellows have contributed at their placements and the skills they've gained. These are available on the SRCD webpage titled "SRCD Policy Fellowship Experience." If you would like to contact a former state fellow, let us know by emailing [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org) and we would be happy to connect you. If you are planning to apply for a state where we have previously had a fellow, it would be a good idea to connect with that fellow.

**SLIDE 8:** Thank you for watching and good luck with your application! If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via email at [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org).