

**SLIDE 1:** Welcome to the webinar on tips and tricks for applying to the SRCD U.S. Federal Policy Fellowship program. Let's get started.

**SLIDE 2:** Let's begin with an overview of the fellowship application process timeline. Please see SRCD's website for exact dates. This timeline applies to both types of federal fellowships, the Congressional and the executive branch. Deadlines for applications will be in early January. Notification of semi-finalist status and invitation to interview will be in mid-February. The semi-finalist interviews will be conducted in Washington, DC in the end of February or early March. The interviews will be with the fellowship Selection Panel, and for candidates applying to the executive branch fellowship, the executive branch agencies with available placements will also interview you. Please note that executive branch candidates go through a second, finalist interview process. SRCD will notify candidates if they have been selected as a finalist. They will participate in virtual interviews with potential executive branch placements in March. Notification of congressional and executive branch offers will be in April. Please be sure to see our website for more details about the federal policy fellowship application process.

**SLIDE 3:** So what is included in an application? Well there are 5 parts: a statement of interest (or SOI for short), 3 letters of recommendation, your current C.V., your transcript, and your answers to some background questions in the application portal.

**SLIDE 4:** Now let's go over some tips and tricks for the application. We will begin with 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. It is important that you clearly show you understand the goals of the fellowship and what you can gain from the experience. To obtain this insight, please be sure to review all relevant policy fellowship webpages. 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 worked on and the knowledge and skills they gained. These columns and abstracts can be found on the webpage titled "SRCD Policy Fellowship Experience." You can also reach out to former SRCD federal policy fellows to learn more about how the fellowship influenced their own career and for advice on the application process. 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 contact [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org) to set up a connection with a former fellow. When writing your statement of interest, please make sure to include all requested information. All information required is listed on the statement of interest template that SRCD provides in the application portal.

**SLIDE 5:** If you are applying to both the Congressional and Executive Branch fellowships, you will need to submit 2 separate Statements of Interest. In these two SOIs, it is important that you

articulate your differing goals in applying for each fellowship. You may be wondering how you can fit all the information requested into your SOI. The SOI is recognizably short, so be strategic with your recommendation letter writers. You may be only able to give a head nod to certain things in your SOI 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 them to address. For instance, have your letter writers identify different skills or background experiences you bring to the table and that will help you in the fellowship. Ask them to 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 SOI or have your letter writers do it. Lastly, get feedback on your application. Show your letter writers your SOI 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 semi-finalist candidate you will be invited for an in-person interview at SRCDC's DC office. The interview will be two parts: the first part is a one-hour interview with the selection panel. During the second part, executive branch candidates will meet briefly with representatives from the available placement offices. During this time they will want to know a little bit more about you and will also provide you with some information about their office and the types of projects that may be available at their offices for fellows. 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 mutual 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? Also, why are you interested in this fellowship? And how will the fellowship further your own desired career trajectory?

**SLIDE 7:** Also, some applicants may not have very much experience with interviews and 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 interview techniques. 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 8:** After the in-person interviews in DC, select semi-finalists will be notified they have made it to the finalist stage. The placement offer processes are slightly different for the congressional and executive branch fellowships. For the congressional fellowship, select finalists will receive a fellowship offer in April, prior to receiving placement in a congressional office. The placement process begins in mid-September and is facilitated by our partners at the American Association for the Advancement of Science or AAAS. For executive branch

fellowships, in March finalists will participate in individual interviews with potential placement offices that have expressed interest in the finalist, typically virtually. It is not uncommon for a finalist to interview with several potential placements. After the interviews, the placement office will notify SRCD of the finalist or finalists that best suit their office. In April, the placement offices will extend offers to their selected candidates and if the fellow accepts, SRCD will follow-up with confirmation paperwork.

**SLIDE 9:** Thank you for watching this webinar and good luck with your application. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via email at [policyfellowships@sacd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@sacd.org).