Distinguished Fellows

2016 APPLICATION GUIDE

APPLICATION DEADLINES:
JANUARY 12, 2016
MAY 5, 2016
The William T. Grant Foundation’s Distinguished Fellows Program creates bridges between the research, practice, and policy communities. The program is designed to increase the supply of, demand for, and use of high-quality research to improve the lives of youth.

During the Fellowship, researchers are immersed in a practice or policy setting, and policymakers and practitioners in a research organization. This immersion helps Fellows to experience firsthand the needs and challenges of their new settings. We expect that these experiences will facilitate the production and use of relevant, high-quality research and create stronger connections across the research, policy, and practice communities.

Proposed Fellowships must fit the Foundation’s focus areas. We are focused on youth ages 5 to 25 in the United States. We fund research that increases our understanding of:

- programs, policies, and practices that reduce inequality in youth outcomes, and
- strategies to improve the use of research evidence in ways that benefit youth.

The Distinguished Fellows Program encourages mid-career researchers to submit proposals that offer experiences working within policy and practice settings. Similarly, we invite policymakers and practitioners to propose projects within research settings. All applicants identify learning goals and develop Fellowship plans to reach their goals.
Researchers often begin the application process by considering what they want to learn about policy or practice settings, and then looking for host sites and mentors to facilitate those goals. Researchers should also consider how Fellowship activities might enhance understanding of policymakers’ and practitioners’ research needs and the ways they use research. These motivations and considerations should be clearly stated in the application.

Policymakers and practitioners consider what they want to learn about or from research. They also discuss how Fellowship activities might support their understanding of the features of high-quality research and its production, and how this could improve the use of research in their decision-making. Successful applicants in these fields have often engaged in dialogues or previously worked with researchers. These experiences inform the Fellowship design and selection of host sites.

Applicants should propose a Fellowship plan for achieving learning objectives. Activities should align with the project’s stated goals and provide reviewers with a sense of what the applicant will be doing on a day-to-day basis. If the setting experiences are proposed in phases or sequentially, the plan should also describe what the applicant hopes to learn first and how the activities or learning objectives for the latter phase(s) differ. In the same vein, applicants should describe the length of their proposed Fellowship and whether it will be full- or part-time; this should include the specific number of years and percentage of time. All applicants should describe areas in which the award will facilitate opportunities to participate in other settings and cultivate relationships that would otherwise not occur. Applicants should also describe how the goals and proposed activities might deepen existing expertise and enrich future work.

The mentoring plan should detail how the proposed mentors will support the project’s goals and include information about how the applicant and mentor will work together. The project should be feasible given the proposed resources and timelines.

All projects must immerse the Distinguished Fellow in the ongoing work of the designated site(s) in a way that appropriately deepens the Fellow’s knowledge and understanding of the site’s work. The major “product” is the development of the Fellow, not the site(s). We likewise encourage applicants to select host sites whose work relates closely to their interests and will strengthen connections between research, policy, and practice.
All applicants should demonstrate their qualifications as influential mid-career practitioners, policymakers, or researchers.

**Practitioner.** “Practitioner” refers to a person working in an organization or system that provides direct services to youth ages 5 to 25 (e.g., school districts, child welfare agencies, community-based organizations) or in an organization meant to support such direct service organizations and systems (e.g., training and technical assistance providers, constituent group organizations).

**Policymaker.** “Policymaker” refers to a person working in a policymaking or policy-implementing organization (e.g., legislative or executive branch staff) or in an organization meant to support and/or influence such agencies (e.g., constituent group organization, advocacy organization).

**Researcher.** “Researcher” refers to a person working in a setting in which he/she manages, designs, or conducts research.

**Influential.** An “influential” is seen in his/her field as particularly knowledgeable and well connected. An influential can leverage these connections and knowledge to influence colleagues—on a national or state level—on matters important to youth (i.e., an opinion leader). While many people benefit from learning about other roles, we believe that influentials offer the greatest potential impact. As Fellows apply their newly acquired insights to produce or use high-quality research, we expect radiating effects that will also influence others working in their spheres.

**Mid-Career.** A mid-career professional has 8 to 20 years of cumulative experience in his/her current role as a researcher, policymaker, or practitioner. Mid-career professionals are well-established in their roles and unlikely to leave them, though they may be looking to broaden their experiences before assuming a new position. That is, after researchers complete a Fellowship at a policy site, we do not expect them to leave their research careers and pursue policymaking. Rather, we expect that they will bring their new perspective to their ongoing research and mentoring. Likewise, after completing a Fellowship at a research center, a practitioner may use his or her new perspective to recommend a new service model or to move to a similar position at another organization.

Grants are made to organizations, not individuals. Grants are limited, without exception, to tax-exempt organizations. A copy of the Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status determination letter is required from each applying organization. We do not support or make contributions to building funds, fundraising drives, endowment funds, general operating budgets, or scholarships.
As a 2014 William T. Grant Foundation Distinguished Fellow, Maisha Winn is immersing herself in two restorative justice programs to deepen her understanding of how educators can mitigate the effect of harsh discipline on students.

Winn is spending the first six months of her fellowship at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) in Oakland, California. There, she is working alongside professionals providing technical assistance for an initiative to train school, prison, police, and court personnel in restorative justice practices. At NCCD, she will check her research hat at the door and be a participant-observer, working in every facet of NCCD’s program, from co-facilitating restorative activities to engaging with lawyers in legal discourse around restorative justice practice.

“This Fellowship will help me to learn more about restorative justice in its criminal justice context. Sometimes when ideas and practices are ‘imported’ to education, they are done so without fidelity to the existing restorative justice theories,” says Winn.

For the latter part of her fellowship, Winn will work with the local YWCA in Madison, Wisconsin as part of a restorative justice program that emphasizes racial disparities in education and the criminal justice system. This work will bring into focus the interconnectedness of racial justice and restorative justice. Specifically, Winn will assist with the Y’s Annual Racial Justice Summit; hone her training skills with students, teachers, and administrators; and be part of a team that collects and analyzes data to present to the local school district.

Winn’s interest in restorative justice grew out of ethnographic research she conducted at a girl’s detention center, where she followed incarcerated African-American girls as they worked with a theatre company to write and produce their own plays. Through her research, Winn learned that the harsh discipline that these girls experienced ultimately led to their disengagement in school. She notes, “Many of the girls in my study wanted to share their stories and contribute ideas on how to improve engagement with school and learning. In the theory of restorative justice, we ask about the root causes of behaviors so we can make things right.”

Winn’s primary objectives for her Distinguished Fellowship are to inspire new research and guide efforts to create restorative justice training modules for middle- and high-school teachers. She hopes that the Fellowship will enable her to pursue research that bridges the current gap in the literature on restorative justice and education.
Award recipients will be named William T. Grant Distinguished Fellows. We generally select between one and four Fellows annually. Each will receive up to $175,000 (including direct and indirect costs) for the total duration of the Fellowship. Fellowships may range from six months to two years. The structure of the Fellowship is deliberately flexible. Fellowship activity must amount to a minimum of half of a year at the Fellowship site(s) over the duration of the award. Thus, the minimum duration is six months of full-time work, but a quarter-time Fellowship may spread over the course of two years.

If appropriate, the Foundation will also provide a small grant up to $25,000 to the Fellowship site to defray the costs associated with hosting a Fellow.

Notification of awards will be made shortly after Foundation Board meetings held in late March, June, and October. Fellowship activities can begin shortly afterward.

If appropriate, Fellows may be invited to attend Foundation-sponsored meetings throughout the year on topics related to their work. The Foundation pays for related travel, and Fellows need not budget for these meetings in their proposals. All William T. Grant Foundation Distinguished Fellows and their primary mentors submit semiannual progress reports. These reports provide an opportunity for Fellows and mentors to reflect on their main activities during the reporting period and plan activities to maximize the benefits of the Fellowship in subsequent months. The reports also help reviewers identify opportunities to link grantees to other researchers, policymakers, and practitioners working in similar areas; provide technical assistance, advice, or other resources; and assist with communication and dissemination efforts.

Annual financial reports are also required. The financial reports are due within three months of the end of the grant year. Within three months of the conclusion of the Fellowship, Distinguished Fellows submit a final, cumulative report summarizing their objectives and activities and reflecting on what they learned and how it might enrich future work.

If a Fellow wishes to transfer an award to another institution, he/she must receive approval from the Foundation. We also reserve the right to terminate the award if the Fellowship changes substantially from that originally proposed. Again, please note that this Fellowship is not intended to facilitate permanent career transitions (e.g., from research into policy or practice, or vice versa).
Marc Wheeler entered his Distinguished Fellowship with 13 years of experience in public service. As an executive with Big Brothers, Big Sisters (BBBS) of Alaska, he was working on an initiative to enhance BBBS of America’s national model for school-based mentoring programs. “I had just discovered the field of youth mentoring research and was excited about what research evidence would bring to bear in improving youth mentoring programs,” he says. “I saw the Fellowship as a great opportunity to ‘sharpen my saw’ and learn new skills that would make me more professionally relevant.”

During his Fellowship, Wheeler relocated to Oregon to work with Thomas Keller, an influential mentoring researcher at Portland State University, and took doctoral classes in the university’s social work program. “After classes, I worked on a meta-analysis and critical review of three school-based mentoring studies with Dr. Keller and former Distinguished Fellow David DuBois. We were able to publish our findings in an SRCD Social Policy Report.”

Through the Fellowship, Wheeler was able to learn first-hand about research and the research community. “I learned that research follows a different timeline than that common to the world of practice. I learned some of the language used by researchers and became a better translator of research evidence to practitioners. I think the most important thing I learned is how to be a better consumer of research knowledge—by understanding how to discern the quality of specific research evidence and what limitations research evidence has in informing practice decisions.”

Following the Fellowship, Wheeler worked for BBBS of America as associate director of program implementation and evaluation. In this role, he frequently drew on the insights he gained through his experience as a Distinguished Fellow. “Essential to my work have been the relationships I developed with members of the research community through my Fellowship. The experience prepared me well in terms of being able to explain research practices and research evidence to practitioners and also help inform the research community through the work we are performing in the field. I feel lucky to be able to be a ‘bridge’ between the worlds of research and practice at a national level within the youth mentoring field.”
Application Process & Required Materials

The application process includes two stages: letter of inquiry and invited full proposal. Foundation senior staff will evaluate all letters of inquiry and invite a small group of applicants to submit full proposals. Letters of inquiry will be accepted two times in 2016; deadlines are January 12 and May 5.

Questions regarding proposed Fellowship plans or the application process may be directed to Nancy Rivera-Torres at nrivera@wtgrantfdn.org.

To begin the application process, go to our website and follow these steps:

1. Click on the Login button on the top right of any page, and enter your Login ID and password. New users must register to obtain login information before they can proceed.

2. You will be directed to your homepage. On your homepage, select “Click here to start a new application.”
   
   a. Select appropriate funding opportunity: Distinguished Fellows.
   b. Take the eligibility quiz for Distinguished Fellows.
   c. After saving this information, you will be brought back to your homepage.

3. You can access the application from your homepage at any time. You may complete the sections of the application in any order. You do not need to complete the application in one session, and can revisit it as often as needed until you are ready to submit.

Enter the applicant’s contact information and demographic information. (Note: The Foundation is working to improve its application processes. Better understanding the background of our applicant pool will help us in this effort. The information will not be shared with external reviewers.)

Contact information for the applicant’s mentors should be added on this page (if you have identified a specific person). Under “Project Contacts – Personnel,” click the “Add” button to add contact information for your mentors.
PROJECT INFORMATION

- Project title (maximum of 15 words)
- Brief description of the project (maximum of 100 words)
- Start and end dates of the project
- Total requested amount (combined direct and indirect costs for the full grant period)
- Enter project characteristics

UPLOADS

All uploaded documents should:
- use a font no smaller than 12 pt.;
- have margins of at least one inch on all sides;
- be single-spaced, with two lines between paragraphs; and
- be in .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf format.

LETTER OF INQUIRY
(3-5 pages)

Primary objectives for this proposed Fellowship. What do you hope to learn? Why are these objectives important? What is your primary policy or practice area? Be specific about how learning about research, policy, or practice will improve your work. For researchers, how will your proposed Fellowship help you do more relevant research or better engage with policy and practice? For policymakers and practitioners, how will it help you better draw on research and researchers?

Description of and rationale for proposed site(s) and activities. What will you do during the Fellowship to embed yourself in the proposed setting? How will the proposed activities enable you to achieve your objectives? How have your previous experiences prepared you for these activities?

A brief description of the Fellowship site(s) and primary mentor(s). For the LOI, applicants do not need to have a firm commitment from a Fellowship site and mentor. If you have specific plans and commitments, please discuss them. If you do not have firm plans, describe the placement(s) you hope to secure and the sort of mentor(s) you are seeking. It would be helpful to provide illustrative examples of potential sites and mentors and explain why they are appropriate. Please include the number of years (.5 to 2 years) and percentage of time (25 to 100 percent) you intend to devote to your Fellowship project. (If invited to submit a full proposal, all applicants will need firm plans and commitments from host site[s] and mentor[s].)

A brief statement of eligibility discussing the number of years you have served in your primary role in research, policy, or practice, and a discussion of how you are influential in that role and sphere (e.g., leadership positions, organizational affiliations, awards).
Upload a one-page curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé for the applicant. Also upload a CV or résumé for the primary mentor at each Fellowship site (if you have identified a specific person).

After you complete your uploads, click “View PDF” to review your letter of inquiry. We recommend that you review it carefully—once submitted, it cannot be changed. After reviewing the document, hit the Submit button to complete your application. An automatic email confirmation will be sent to you after you submit your letter of inquiry.

1. Cover page stating the applicant’s name, contact information, and total dollar amount requested (maximum $175,000; $200,000 if site support is also requested); the name, address, and contact person at the applicant’s employer (this institution will be the grantee); and the name, address, and primary mentor for each Fellowship site.

2. Fellowship Plan (fifteen pages maximum)
   a. Major goals guiding the proposed Fellowship;
   b. Description of and rationale for the proposed Fellowship site(s) and activities (e.g., participation in research activities, program or administrative activities in service agencies, policy advocacy, policy implementation);
   c. Description of and rationale for the proposed mentors at each site;
   d. A description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of the Fellowship experience.

3. CV or resume for the applicant and the applicant’s primary mentor at each Fellowship site.

4. Letter from the primary mentor at each proposed Fellowship site certifying their enthusiasm for hosting and mentoring the Fellow as described in the Fellowship plan and describing the mentoring plan in detail.

5. Letters of recommendation from three persons who work in the applicant’s field, describing why they believe the applicant meets the Foundation’s definition of being influential within his or her field. Letters of recommendation should be submitted online by each reference writer. This process takes time, so invited applicants are advised to start their online full proposals early.

6. A letter from the applicant’s employer certifying that the applicant is a successful employee in good standing and the employer’s willingness for the applicant to participate in the proposed Fellowship. The letter should also describe how the employer expects to benefit from this Fellowship once it is complete and the employee returns to full-time status.

7. A budget and budget justification. This form is available on the Foundation’s website.

8. IRS tax determination letter.
Current and Former Distinguished Fellows

Below are the individuals and institutions that received the award, along with their Fellowship site.

2005

Rob Geen, M.P.P.
Child Trends
Fellowship site: Committee on Ways and Means, United States House of Representatives

Deborah Gorman-Smith, Ph.D.
University of Illinois at Chicago
Fellowship site: Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

Joanne Nicholson, Ph.D.
University of Massachusetts Medical School
Fellowship sites: Massachusetts Department of Social Services and Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Jean Rhodes, Ph.D.
University of Massachusetts, Boston
Fellowship sites: Big Sister of Greater Boston and Big Brother of Massachusetts Bay

Lauren Smith, M.D.
Boston Medical Center, Boston University School of Medicine
Fellowship site: Office of the Speaker, Massachusetts State House

Constance Yowell, Ph.D.
University of Chicago
Fellowship sites: National Writing Project and Chicago Public Schools

2006

Martha Holleman, M.A.
Safe and Sound: Baltimore’s Campaign for Children and Youth
Fellowship site: Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University

Robin Nixon, M.Ed.
National Foster Care Coalition
Fellowship site: Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago

2007

Tamera Coyne-Beasley, M.D.
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Fellowship sites: National Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) and Center for the Prevention of School Violence (CPSV), North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

David DuBois, Ph.D.
University of Illinois at Chicago
Fellowship sites: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Abram Rosenblatt, Ph.D.
University of California, San Francisco
Fellowship sites: Santa Cruz County’s Probation and Substance Abuse Departments and California Forward

2008

Laurel Leslie, M.D.
Tufts Medical Center
Fellowship site: Massachusetts Department of Children and Families

Susan Maciolek, M.P.P.
Cutler Institute for Child and Family Policy, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine
Fellowship site: Judge Baker Children’s Center
David Wallinga, M.D.
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Fellowship site: Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota

Marc Wheeler, B.A.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska
Fellowship site: Portland State University

Stanton Wortham, Ph.D.
Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania
Fellowship site: Norristown Area School District

2009
Maria Cancian, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fellowship site: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Elizabeth Devaney, M.A.
Providence After School Alliance
Fellowship site: Weikert Center for Youth Program Quality and Department of Education, Brown University

Peter Salem, M.A.
Association of Family and Conciliation Courts
Fellowship site: Arizona State University Prevention Research Center

2010
Kevin Crowley, Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh
Fellowship site: Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH)

John Tyler, Ph.D.
Brown University
Fellowship sites: Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and The Providence Plan

2011
Jennifer Barber, Ph.D.
University of Michigan
Fellowship sites: Planned Parenthood (PP) Mid and South Michigan and Teen H.Y.P.E.

2013
Nancy Hill, Ph.D.
Harvard University
Fellowship sites: Massachusetts Executive Office of Education and the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet

Lisa Chamberlain, Ph.D.
Stanford University
Fellowship site: California State Assembly

Jeffrey Kaczorowski, M.D.
The Children's Agenda
Fellowship site: Children's Institute

Sumie Okazaki, Ph.D.
New York University
Fellowship site: New York City Department of Education and the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

2014
Megan Bair-Merritt, M.D., M.S.C.E.
Boston University
Fellowship site: Futures Without Violence

Maisha Winn, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fellowship sites: National Council on Crime and Delinquency and YMCA of Madison, Wisconsin

2015
Angela Calbrese-Burton, Ph.D.
Michigan State University
Fellowship sites: The Exploratorium; Impressions and Impression 5

Jennifer Fredricks, Ph.D.
Connecticut College
Fellowship site: Connecticut Voices for Children

Julia Henly, Ph.D.
University of Chicago
Fellowship site: Illinois Action for Children and Illinois Bureau of Child Care Development