William T. Grant
Scholars Program

2018 APPLICATION GUIDE

Updated February 2018

Online Application Opens:
April 23, 2018, 3:00 PM EST

Mentor and Reference Letter Deadline:
June 27, 2018, 5:00 PM EST

Application Deadline:
July 5, 2018, 3:00 PM EST

Announcement of Awards:
March 2019
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Areas</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area: Reducing Inequality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area: Improving the Use of Research Evidence</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former William T. Grant Scholar Profiles</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Materials</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submission Instructions</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Criteria</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Review Process</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars Selection Committee and Current Scholars Classes</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

The William T. Grant Scholars Program supports career development for promising early-career researchers. The program funds five-year research and mentoring plans that significantly expand researchers’ expertise in new disciplines, methods, and content areas.

Applicants should have a track record of conducting high-quality research and an interest in pursuing a significant shift in their trajectories as researchers. We recognize that early-career researchers are rarely given incentives or support to take measured risks in their work, so this award includes a mentoring component, as well as a supportive academic community.

Awards are based on applicants’ potential to become influential researchers, as well as their plans to expand their expertise in new and significant ways. The application should make a cohesive argument for how the applicant will expand his or her expertise. The research plan should evolve in conjunction with the development of new expertise, and the mentoring plan should describe how the proposed mentors will support applicants in acquiring that expertise. Proposed research plans must address questions that are relevant to policy and practice in the Foundation’s focus areas.
Focus Areas

The Foundation’s mission is to support research to improve the lives of young people ages 5-25 in the United States. We pursue this mission by building bodies of useful research within a finite set of focus areas.

Researchers interested in applying for Scholars Awards must select one focus area:

Reducing Inequality

In this focus area, we support research to build, test, and increase understanding of approaches to reducing inequality in youth outcomes, particularly on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, or immigrant origin status. We are interested in research on programs, policies, and practices to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, and economic outcomes.

Improving the Use of Research Evidence

In this focus area, we support research to identify, build, and test strategies to ensure that research evidence reaches the hands of decision makers, responds to their needs, and is used in ways that benefit youth. We are particularly interested in research on improving the use of evidence by state and local decision makers, mid-level managers, and intermediaries.
Reducing Inequality

One of our two primary focus areas is reducing inequality in youth outcomes.

In this focus area, we support research to build, test, and increase understanding of approaches to reducing inequality in youth outcomes, particularly on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, or immigrant origin status. We are interested in research on programs, policies, and practices to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, and economic outcomes.

Our focus on reducing inequality grew out of our view that research can do more than help us understand problems—it can point us towards effective responses. There is mounting research evidence about the scope, causes, and consequences of inequality in the United States, but we believe that it is time to build stronger bodies of knowledge on how to reduce inequality.

To address this complex challenge, we support research from a range of disciplines and methodologies, and we encourage investigations into various systems, including justice, housing, child welfare, mental health, and education.

We welcome descriptive studies that clarify mechanisms for reducing inequality or elucidate how or why a specific program, policy, or practice operates to reduce inequality. We also welcome intervention studies that examine attempts to reduce inequality. In addition, we seek studies that improve the measurement of inequality in ways that can enhance the work of researchers, practitioners, or policymakers. The common thread across all of this work, however, is a distinct and explicit focus on reducing inequality—one that goes beyond describing the causes or consequences of unequal outcomes and, instead, aims to build, test, or understand policy, program, or practice responses.

DEFINITIONS

“Programs” are coordinated sets of activities designed to achieve specific aims in youth development.

“Policies” are broader initiatives intended to promote success through the allocation of resources or regulation of activities. Policies may be located at the federal, state, local, or organizational level.

“Practices” consist of the materials and activities through which youth development is enabled (e.g., coaching, mentoring, parenting, peer interactions, teaching). Practices involve direct interaction with youth (though not necessarily in person, as technology affords direct interaction from anywhere).
Proposing Research on Reducing Inequality

In this focus area, we support research to build, test, and increase understanding of responses to inequality in youth outcomes. Proposals for research in this focus area must:

- **Identify a specific inequality in youth outcomes, and show that the outcomes are currently unequal.** We are especially interested in supporting research to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes.

- **Clearly identify the basis on which these outcomes are unequal, and articulate its importance.** We are especially interested in research to reduce inequality on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, or immigrant origin status. Proposals for research on reducing inequality on a basis not listed here, or on ways in which a basis of inequality intersects with another, must make a compelling case that this research will improve youth outcomes.

- **Articulate how findings from your research will help build, test, or increase understanding of a specific program, policy, or practice to reduce the specific inequality that you have identified.**

In sum, proposals for research on reducing inequality should make a compelling case that the inequality exists, why the inequality exists, and why the study’s findings will be crucial to informing a policy, program, or practice to reduce it.

**ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER**

Is your interest in reducing inequality in economic outcomes limited to studies of poverty?

Our interest in economic inequality is not exclusively about poverty. Although we have special concern for the outcomes of youth in the most difficult circumstances, we are interested in reducing inequality across the entire spectrum—not just for the least fortunate. Some studies may focus on middle-class families who are increasingly challenged to provide resources to support their children’s development, such as high-quality youth programs or college tuition. Moreover, our interest is in promoting better outcomes for youth who have been underserved, not in diminishing outcomes for youth who have been successful in the past.
Improving the Use of Research Evidence

One of our two primary focus areas is improving the use of research evidence in decisions that affect young people.

In this focus area, we support research to identify, build, and test strategies to ensure that research evidence reaches the hands of decision makers, responds to their needs, and is used in ways that benefit youth. We are particularly interested in improving the use of research by state and local decision makers, mid-level managers, and intermediaries.

This focus area grew out of our recognition that more can be done to strengthen connections between research and decisions that impact youth outcomes. Based on prior work that we funded from 2009—2015, we have a rich understanding of the conditions that obstruct or support the use of research evidence. What we need now, however, is a more robust understanding of strategies to improve the use of research evidence. Measures also are needed to capture changes in the nature and degree of research use.

To build stronger theory and empirical evidence, we support research from a range of disciplines and methodologies, and we encourage investigations into various systems, including justice, child welfare, mental health, and education. Research teams might draw on existing conceptual and empirical work about the use of research evidence, knowledge mobilization, and implementation science, as well as other relevant areas that can teach us about using research for continuous improvement and about changing research, policy, and practice institutions.

DEFINITIONS

“Research evidence” is a type of evidence derived from applying systematic methods and analyses to address a predefined question or hypothesis. This includes descriptive studies, intervention or evaluation studies, meta-analyses, and cost-effectiveness studies conducted within or outside research organizations.

“Use of research evidence” can happen in many ways and may involve the direct application of research evidence to decision making, conceptual influences on how decision makers think about problems and potential solutions, strategic uses of research to justify existing stances or positions, or imposed uses that require decision makers to engage with research.
Proposing Research on Improving the Use of Research Evidence

Proposed research in this focus area must pursue one of the following lines of inquiry:

- Identify or test strategies to improve the use of existing research. This work may investigate strategies, mechanisms, or conditions for improving research use. Alternatively, studies may measure the effects of deliberate efforts to improve routine and beneficial uses of research in deliberations and decisions that affect young people.

- Identify or test strategies for producing more useful research evidence. This includes examining incentives, structures, and relationships that facilitate the production of research that responds to decision makers' needs. Studies may also examine ways to optimize researchers', decision makers', and intermediaries' joint work to benefit youth.

- Test the assumption that using high-quality research in particular ways improves decision making and youth outcomes. This is a long-standing implicit assumption, but the case for using research would be more compelling if there were a body of evidence showing that using research benefits youth. We want to know the conditions under which using research evidence improves decision making and youth outcomes.

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ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER

Why is the Foundation focused on improving the use of research evidence by state and local decision makers and intermediary organizations?

- State and local departments of education, child welfare, and juvenile justice directly influence the frontline practices that affect youth outcomes. Increased attention to evidence-based policy also creates unprecedented demands to use research in decision making at those levels.

- Mid-level managers are particularly important, given their roles deciding which programs, practices, and tools to adopt; deliberating ways to improve existing services; shaping the conditions for implementation; and making resource allocation decisions.

- Intermediaries that shape the production of research, or that translate and package research for use are also important. These organizations and individuals include think tanks, advocacy groups, consultants, professional associations, and others.
These lines of inquiry require a range of methods, from experimental to observational designs, from comparative case approaches to systematic reviews. Where appropriate, applicants should consider using existing methods, measures, and analytic tools so that findings can be compared and aggregated across studies. That said, existing measures may not be well-suited for some inquiries, and thus we welcome studies that adapt existing measures or develop new ones that can be employed in future studies. Finally, we continue to promote the use of mixed methods wherein multiple types of data are collected and integrated.

We encourage applicants proposing projects on the use of research evidence to read “Improving the Use of Research Evidence: Supplementary Guidance for Applicants,” which describes these lines of inquiry in greater detail.
Former William T. Grant Scholar

MICERE KEELS
PROFESSOR, COMPARATIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Prior to my William T. Grant Scholars project, “Consequences of the Within-Race Gender Imbalance in the College Campus Setting,” I paid little attention to the college experiences of Black and Latinx students. My perspective was that “once we got them into college the work was done,” and I focused more on ethnic minority and low-income K-12 students’ development in and outside of schools. However, as I began to learn more about the low persistence rates of Black and Latinx students, and the gender gap in persistence, I became more interested in college student development.

I now split my time between a K-12 project with Chicago Public Schools and the Minority College Cohort Project, which is examining several non-academic factors that may increase the likelihood of college success while controlling for academic preparation. These include financial resources, social supports, and the interaction of students’ academic and institutional identities with their racial or ethnic identities. In my study, students were followed across their first four years of college (3 times year 1, 3 times year 2, once year 3, and at the end of fourth year, in Spring 2017). Students were surveyed regardless of their college enrollment status to examine the trajectory of those who do and don’t persist in college.

During the course of my project, I expanded my methodological competencies to include latent class analysis in order to develop person-centered patterns of students’ trajectories through college. And through my “stretch goal,” I learned how to better manage longitudinal data collection and analysis. Although it’s now four years into my award, I continue to stretch as I acquire the skills to conduct comprehensive analyses of longitudinal quantitative data and qualitative data, and to integrate the findings.

The Scholars Award has presented me with numerous opportunities to connect with talented and accomplished researchers. The mentoring component has been particularly important to my growth and the direction of my research. My two mentors, Vivian Gadsden at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, and Stephanie Lanza at Pennsylvania State University, brought additional perspectives to my work, and were invaluable resources for my study. Dr. Gadsden’s knowledge of the cultural and social factors affecting development helped me develop the empirical and conceptual perspectives to carry out the research. And Dr. Lanza has been instrumental in helping me develop the statistical and methodological expertise to conduct the quantitative aspects of the study.

On the other hand, I have had the opportunity to sharpen my own mentoring skills through the Scholars Mentoring Program, a supplementary grant that the Foundation offers to current Scholars. As a faculty member of color, I am often asked for mentorship...
support, even when a students’ research doesn’t directly align with mine. Because I have learned to be a more effective mentor, I feel more comfortable mentoring students with academically diverse backgrounds and on a range of issues.

The advice I received from senior faculty and the networks that I developed with my peers at the annual Scholars Program retreats have also been invaluable. The retreats deepened my interest in interdisciplinary scholarship by facilitating structured conversations with Scholars who have similar interests, but have different methodological approaches or theoretical frameworks for approaching their questions.

Although my project began as part of the Foundation’s former focus on improving youth social settings, it has also given way to questions and insights that align with the Foundation’s current focus on reducing inequality in youth outcomes. For instance, through working with a sample of academically prepared Black and Latinx students, I have been able to examine whether academic preparation is an effective means of fostering college persistence in light of the many cultural and social resources beyond academic preparation that students need to be successful in college. Throughout the manuscript that I currently have under review, I detail the ways in which Black and Latinx students flounder when they don’t have those resources, and I offer examples of how these students thrive when colleges and universities take proactive steps to provide the necessary cultural and social supports.

The William T. Grant Scholars Program has helped me to develop as a scholar: it broadened my theoretical and methodological expertise, and taught me to develop a strong, theoretically grounded mixed-methods study with useful policy implications. More specifically, though, the award has allowed me the distinction of being one of the first researchers to develop a nuanced understanding of the effects of the campus gender imbalance on male and female college student development, and its potential influence on young adult development.
For my Scholars award, “Macro-to-Micro Contextual Triggers of Early Adolescent Substance Exposure,” I examined substance use and health-risk behaviors during the transition to adolescence, a period when many mental health problems first emerge. The goal was to identify the triggers of these behaviors in teens’ daily lives and in the settings where they spent most of their time. My Scholars award expanded upon our previous research showing that if kids used alcohol or other drugs before age 15, they were at increased risk for a number of poor outcomes, such as failing out of school, abusing substances, and contracting sexually transmitted diseases, as young adults.

An important component of my Scholars experience was my stretch goal of using new technologies, including mobile phones and web scraping tools, to gain high resolution and real-time assessments of the contexts and experiences of young adolescents. At the start of my project, mobile phones were just gaining popularity among young teens, and it was a high risk but potentially high reward plan to place smartphones into the hands of young adolescents in order to follow their daily lives.

One hundred and fifty adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15 years of age, and with a history of behavioral problems, were recruited from low-income neighborhoods. All the adolescents were surveyed three times every day for 30 days via mobile phones. To our surprise, the adolescents responded to over 90 percent of the surveys, resulting in over 13,000 assessments of their experiences, mental health, and digital technology use. We assessed the adolescents 18 months later to measure changes in mental health. What we learned from this intensive assessment was that exposure to violence, whether in their homes, neighborhoods, or schools, corresponded with worse same-day mental health, and that adolescents who were most emotionally reactive to violence “in the moment” were at increased risk for the emergence of new mental health problems over time.

At the time that my grant was awarded, I could never have imagined how teens’ use of smartphones and digital technology would accelerate in the next few years. This rapid change in the digital landscape of adolescents’ lives presented new opportunities and challenges. For example, Google Street View, which launched in 2007, allowed us to take a virtual “drive” and capture aspects of neighborhoods that we thought might matter for adolescents’ health. The result was the creation of a new tool for conducting systematic social observations of children’s neighborhoods, and the beginning of a series of wonderful collaborations with computer scientists and colleagues around the world working in this area.
Observing adolescents’ daily lives on their mobile phones over the last decade has also provided unique insights into the emergence of a new digital divide, characterized by growing differences in the quality of experiences and opportunities online in spite of greater equality in online access among youth across income levels. The opportunity gap between low versus higher income children has long been recognized as a threat to social mobility and child wellbeing, but as ownership of digital devices has skyrocketed among the low-income children in our samples, we are witnessing the emergence of new challenges related to digital inclusion and equal access to positive online opportunities for low-income teens.

Many of my early career contributions would not have been possible without the support of the Foundation. I can vividly recall my first William T. Grant Scholars retreat, where I learned that the Foundation and its broad network of researchers and partners would continue to invest in us as scholars with their time, expertise, mentorship, and targeted training opportunities. We were promised that we would look different than when we arrived, that our research would matter more to the youth and communities that were the focus of our study, and that we would become part of a larger effort to make the world a better place for young people. I had already felt as though I had won the lottery with the receipt of the award, and now it had somehow gotten better. The leadership and staff of the Foundation delivered in ways that I could never have anticipated, but that I continuously try to pay forward in my own mentorship, research, and outreach activities.
Awards

Award recipients are designated as William T. Grant Scholars. Each year, four to six Scholars are selected and each receives up to $350,000, distributed over five years.

Awards begin July 1 and are made to the applicant’s institution. The award must not replace the institution’s current support of the applicant’s research.

Capacity Building

The Foundation holds annual meetings during the summer to support the Scholars’ professional development. These summer retreats are designed to foster a supportive environment in which Scholars can improve their skills and work. Scholars discuss works-in-progress and receive constructive feedback on the challenges they face in conducting their projects. The retreat consists of workshops centered on Scholars’ projects, research design and methods issues, and professional development. The meeting is attended by Scholars, Scholars Selection Committee members, and Foundation staff and Board members. Scholars are also invited to attend other Foundation-sponsored workshops on topics relevant to their work, such as mixed methods and the use of research evidence in policy and practice.

In years one through three of their awards, Scholars may apply for additional awards to mentor junior researchers of color. The announcement and criteria for funding are distributed annually to Scholars. Our goals for these two-year awards are to build Scholars’ mentoring skills and understanding of the career development issues faced by junior colleagues of color. We also seek to expand their mentees’ research assets and increase the number of strong, well-networked researchers of color doing work on the Foundation’s research interests. The Foundation convenes annual workshops to strengthen these mentoring relationships and support career development.
ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER

What do you look for in measurement studies?

We encourage development of practical, cost-effective measures. Proposals for studies to develop or improve measures should provide detailed plans for establishing reliability and validity.

What do you look for in evaluation studies?

Proposals must specify a theoretical basis for the program, policy, or practice and enhance understanding of its effects. This may include investigations of the mechanisms through which effects occur or variation in intervention effects. Thus, studies should shed light not solely on “what works,” but on what works for whom, under what conditions, and why. We are more likely to fund thoughtful, exploratory studies than work that is narrow, even if it is more rigorously controlled. Many studies will provide direct evidence of impact on youth outcomes, but we will consider studies that examine intermediate outcomes shown in other work to reduce inequality in youth development or to improve the use of research evidence by decision makers. The project should also have relevance to the field, beyond the particular program, policy or practice being studied.

What are the Foundation’s top recommendations for applicants?

Clearly describe the theory or conceptual frame guiding the study. This helps reviewers understand why you are approaching the project in a particular way and how your study relates to the approaches others have taken.

Focus on doing a few things well rather than trying to cover the waterfront. For example, pursue a few key research questions or hypotheses thoroughly and rigorously, rather than proposing an extensive list.

Propose research methods that are tightly aligned with the project’s research questions or hypotheses.

Make a strong case for how the study is relevant to important policy or practice issues, and how it will advance work on those issues.
Eligibility

Eligible Organizations

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.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be nominated by their institutions. Major divisions (e.g., College of Arts and Sciences, Medical School) of an institution may nominate only one applicant each year. In addition to the eligibility criteria below, deans and directors of those divisions should refer to the Selection Criteria on pages 12-14 to aid them in choosing their nominees.

Applicants must have received their terminal degree within seven years of submitting their application. We calculate this by adding seven years to the date the doctoral degree was conferred. In medicine, the seven-year maximum is dated from the completion of the first residency.

Applicants must be employed in career-ladder positions. For many applicants, this means holding a tenure-track position in a university. Applicants in other types of organizations should be in positions in which there is a pathway to advancement in a research career at the organization and the organization is fiscally responsible for the applicant’s position. The award may not be used as a post-doctoral fellowship.

Applicants outside the United States are eligible. As with U.S. applicants, they must pursue research that has compelling policy or practice implications for youth in the United States.

Applicants of any discipline are eligible.
Application Materials

Applications to the William T. Grant Scholars Program are accepted once per year, and must include the following:

Mentor and Reference Letters

We recommend beginning the online application early in order to give mentors and references ample time to complete their sections. You may work on other sections of the application while waiting for your mentors and references to submit their letters, but you will not be able to submit your application until all letters are received.

Mentors: Each proposed mentor should submit a letter. Mentor letters are not recommendations, and applicants should discourage cursory letters of support. Please refer to the Scholars Program Selection Criteria for more information.

The letter should include:

- a brief assessment of the applicant’s research plan, and a summation of the applicant’s potential, his or her strengths, and areas for growth;

- his or her current relationship to the applicant, and how the award will add significant value beyond what would normally occur in the relationship;

- an explanation of the expertise the mentor will help the applicant acquire and the mentoring activities that will be undertaken. Provide a persuasive rationale that the types of activities and time commitments are appropriate for developing particular kinds of expertise. Activities generally include direct interactions with applicants, but can also include indirect support such as facilitating access to new professional networks, readings, or training opportunities. Describe how the mentor and applicant will interact (e.g., in-person, email, phone), the frequency of that interaction, and how potential barriers such as distance and busy schedules will be addressed; and

- confirmation of his or her willingness to complete annual reports for the award (mentors receive an honorarium of $500 upon receipt of reports).
References: Three letters of recommendation should be submitted from colleagues, supervisors, or the department/division chairperson who nominates the applicant. Proposed mentors may not submit these.

Budget

Provide budget information for five years using the form included in the online application. The total budget can be up to $350,000. It can include an indirect cost allowance of up to 7.5 percent of total direct costs.

Requests to fund recipient’s salary must not exceed 50 percent of the total salary received from the sponsoring institution. The portion of the grant used for salary must be equivalent to the time made available for research by this award. The remainder of funds may be used to support research-related work. (The Foundation pays expenses related to the Scholars’ participation in Foundation-sponsored meetings.)

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.

Please adhere to the page limits specified below. Files can only be uploaded one at a time. They may be uploaded in any order; the final application PDF will sort the uploads as they are listed below.
Budget Justification Form
Complete and upload the Foundation's budget justification form, which can be found within the Uploads tab of your online application.

Abridged Curriculum Vitae
Use the Foundation's form on the website.

Full Curriculum Vitae

Abstract (6 pages maximum)
Use the Foundation’s form on the website. Do not edit the form or delete instructions from the form. Abstracts are a critical part of the application, and Foundation staff use them to screen applications. In addition, Selection Committee members will review the abstracts of all finalists, but will not read all the full applications. We advise applicants to include sufficient details about the research sample, methods, and designs for all reviewers to be assured of the quality of the proposed research.

Full Research and Mentoring Plan (40 pages maximum)
The five-year research plan (20 pages maximum) should include one or more research projects and provide convincing evidence that the projects meet the Selection Criteria. The project descriptions should include:

- the unique contribution of the research,
- its significance in terms of policy and/or practice,
- a brief literature review,
- research design and methodology,
- data sources and collection procedures,
- data analysis plans, and
- plans for protection of human subjects.
The mentoring plan (4 pages maximum) must be developed in conjunction with the proposed mentors, and must meet all Selection Criteria (see page 28). Applicants should describe a systematic plan with detailed descriptions of the following:

- applicant’s current areas of expertise, and the new areas of expertise that will be developed during the award;
- the mentoring activities designed to develop the new areas of expertise;
- the rationale for the proposed mentors, the applicant’s current relationship with each, and how the award will add significant value to the proposed relationship;
- how the applicant and mentor will interact (e.g., in-person, email, phone), how often, around what substantive issues, and how barriers such as distance and busy schedules will be handled.

Plans should also include:

- Bibliography (8 pages maximum)
- Appendices (8 pages maximum)

(Successful examples of mentoring plans can be found on the Foundation’s website.)

The Foundation is committed to helping Scholars navigate their way through successful mentoring relationships. The following resources can be found on our website and are provided to aid applicants in creating strong mentoring plans: Maximizing Mentoring: A Guide for Building Strong Relationships and Pay it Forward: Guidance for Mentoring Junior Scholars. The latter was developed to help Scholars become stronger mentors, but it may also provide insights on being mentored.
Publications 1 and 2 (20 pages maximum, each)

Submitted publications should be journal articles, chapters, or research reports that exemplify the applicant’s research. Ideally, the publications are relevant to the proposed research. We prefer publications that have already been published or are in press, though some applicants choose to submit work that is directly relevant to the proposed research, but still under review.

Nominating Statement

This statement from the chairperson of the nominating division should describe why the applicant was selected; an assessment of the applicant’s plan; the applicant’s current and expected future roles in the division; the supporting resources available; the applicant’s current source and amount of salary; and the appointment, promotion, and institutional support plans for the applicant, including a guarantee that 50 percent of the applicant’s paid time will be devoted to research. (Successful examples of nominating statements can be found on the Foundation’s website.)

Endorsement of Project

This document should come from the appropriate institutional office and personnel (e.g., Office of Sponsored Research, chief administrative officer), contain general information about the applicant, and confirm that the institution is aware the applicant is submitting the proposal.

Letter of Independence of Multiple Applicants (if applicable)

If an institution nominates more than one applicant, a central administrative officer must submit confirmation that the applicants represent distinct schools or major divisions (e.g., College of Arts and Sciences, Medical School, major division of a nonprofit) of the institution.

Resubmission Statement (if applicable)

Applicants who have applied previously should describe their response to reviewer comments on the prior application and the major ways this application differs from the prior one.
WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION
23
WILLIAM T. GRANT SCHOLARS PROGRAM
2018 APPLICATION GUIDE
Kristen Turney, Scholars Class of 2021
Submission Instructions

The William T. Grant Foundation accepts applications only through our online application system, which is accessible through our website at wtgrantfoundation.org. For specific deadlines, please visit the Grants page of our website.

We encourage applicants to begin the application as early as possible to review the online application and allow sufficient time to resolve any technical issues that may arise.

**Step 1: Log in (or register if you are a new user).**

- Go to wtgrantfoundation.org and click “LOG IN” at the top right of any page.
- If you are the principal investigator (PI), and do not have an account, register on our website to create one. If you are not the PI, obtain the account login information from that person or help the PI create an account.

**Step 2: Select the William T. Grant Scholars funding opportunity, and complete the eligibility quiz**

- Once you have completed the eligibility quiz, return to your Easygrants homepage and click on the “Application” link to enter the application.

**Step 3: Enter contact information.**

**Step 4: Select “Notify” in the mentors and references section of the online application.**

- This will send an automated email to your mentors and references, with instructions for completing their sections.
- You will receive an email confirmation when your mentors and references have submitted their sections. We advise applicants to inform mentors and references that these emails may get caught by spam filters.
Step 5: Enter and upload all required information.

• See the Scholars Program Application Materials section for more information.

Step 6: Review and Submit.

• Review the application PDF to make sure that your materials are in order. Once the application is submitted, you will not be able to make any changes.
Selection Criteria

Selection is based on applicants’ potential to become influential researchers, as well as their plans to expand their expertise in new and significant ways. The application should make a cohesive argument for how the applicant will expand his or her expertise. The research plan should evolve in conjunction with the development of new expertise, and the mentoring plan should describe how the proposed mentors will support applicants in acquiring that expertise.

Applicant

• Applicant demonstrates potential to become an influential researcher. An ability to conduct and communicate creative, sophisticated research is proven through prior training and publications. Competitive applicants have a promising track record of first authored, high-quality empirical publications in peer-reviewed outlets. The quality of publications is more important than the quantity.

• Applicant will significantly expand his or her expertise through this award. The applicant should identify area(s) in which the award will appreciably expand his or her expertise, and specific details should be provided in the research and mentoring plans. Expansion of expertise can involve a different discipline, method, and/or content area than the applicants’ prior research and training.

Research Plan

• Research area is consistent with Foundation’s current focus areas. We’ve compiled resources related to our focus areas—including blog posts, commissioned papers, and articles and presentations by staff and grantees—on our website.

• Research questions have relevance for policies and/or practices affecting youth ages 5 to 25 in the United States. Some funded studies directly examine policies, programs, or services. Others inform efforts to improve policies, programs, or services, or improve their effects on youth. While we do not
expect that any one study will create these changes, the research should contribute to a body of useful knowledge to improve the lives of young people.

- Research plan informs theory and extends prior and concurrent work in the field. The application reflects a mastery of related theory and empirical findings and builds upon that prior work.

- Research plan reflects high standards of evidence and rigorous methods, commensurate with the proposal’s goals. The latter years or projects of the research plan may, by necessity, be described in less detail than those of the first few, but successful applicants provide enough specificity for reviewers to be assured of the rigor and feasibility of the plan.
  - Research designs, methods, and analysis plans clearly fit the research questions under study.
  - Samples are appropriate in size and composition to address the research questions.
  - Assessments, observations, and/or measurements reflect methodological rigor.
  - Analysis plans for quantitative and/or qualitative data reflect sufficient sophistication for addressing the research questions.
  - Plan reflects a clear understanding of the strengths and limits of various research designs, methods, and analytic techniques.
  - Where relevant, there is attention to generalizability of findings and to statistical power to detect meaningful effects.

- Research plan demonstrates adequate consideration of the gender, ethnic, and cultural appropriateness of concepts, methods, and measures.

- Research plan is feasible. The work can be successfully completed given the resources and time frame. Some research plans require additional funding, and in those cases, applicants have viable plans for acquiring that support.

- Research plan is cohesive and multiple studies (if proposed) are well-integrated.
• Research plan will significantly extend the applicant’s expertise in new and significant ways. Applicant provides specific details about how the research activities will stretch his or her expertise.

**Mentoring Plan**

• Applicant proposes one to two mentors for the first two years of the award. Two is typical and recommended. (The mentoring plan for the latter years will be developed in consultation with Foundation staff after the second year of the program.)

• The mentoring plan and mentor letters demonstrate that all parties have identified and agreed on specific goals that expand the applicant’s expertise in the ways outlined in the research plan.

• Each mentor has appropriate credentials, expertise, and resources to aid the applicant’s acquisition of the new expertise; has a strong track record of mentorship; and demonstrates a commitment to mentoring the applicant.

• The mentoring plan and mentor letters convincingly detail how the mentor will aid the applicant in acquiring the new expertise. A compelling rationale and specific details about the mentoring activities are provided. This includes information about how the mentor and applicant will interact, how frequently, and around what substantive issues. Reviewers must be persuaded that the mentoring activities are sufficiently robust to result in the new expertise that have been identified, and that the mentor is making a sufficient time commitment. Careful consideration should be devoted to the types of activities and time that is required to learn different types of skills (e.g., new methods versus disciplinary perspectives). Examples of activities include advising on new disciplinary norms, data collection plans, analytic techniques, and publication; providing feedback on manuscripts; arranging training opportunities; facilitating access to new professional networks; recommending readings; and more general career advising.
• Award will add significant value to each mentoring relationship beyond what would normally occur. Applicants should propose relationships and activities that are unlikely to occur without the award. Deepening a relationship with a casual colleague, or developing a new relationship, adds greater value than proposing a former advisor.

Institutional Support

• The supporting institution nominates the applicant. Each year, only one applicant may be nominated from a major division (e.g., College of Arts and Sciences, Medical School) of an institution.

• The institution is committed to providing the researcher with sufficient resources to carry out the five-year research plan. This includes computer equipment, colleagues, administrative staff, research facilities, and the balance of his or her salary, absent denial of tenure or dramatic reduction in institutional funding. At least half of the Scholar’s paid time must be spent conducting research.
Application Review Process

Review occurs in the following stages: Staff screen abstracts, brief CVs, and, if warranted, full applications to determine whether they fit our research focus areas and potentially meet other Selection Criteria. Next, the Scholars Selection Committee reviews the remaining applications. Each application receives detailed reviews by two Committee members. The Committee then chooses approximately 10 finalists, who will be invited to New York City for an interview on February 8, 2019. Prior to the interview, finalists’ proposals are reviewed by two external reviewers.

During the interview, finalists have the opportunity to respond to Committee members’ and external experts’ reviews. Following the interviews, the Selection Committee chooses four to six William T. Grant Scholars. Applicants will be notified of the Committee’s decision by the end of March 2019.
Scholars Selection Committee

Margaret R. Burchinal, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist and Director,
Data Management and Analysis Center
FPG Child Development Institute
University of North Carolina
Adjunct Professor
Department of Education
University of California, Irvine

Linda M. Burton, Ph.D.
Dean of Social Sciences
James D. Duke Professor of Sociology
Duke University

Edith Chen, Ph.D.
Professor of Clinical Psychology
Faculty Fellow, Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University

Adam Gamoran, Ph.D.
President William T. Grant Foundation

Sandra Graham, Ph.D.
Professor and Presidential Chair in Diversity
Department of Education
University of California, Los Angeles

Susan M. Kegeles, Ph.D.
Professor of Medicine
Co-Director, Center for AIDS Prevention Studies
University of California, San Francisco

Elizabeth Birr Moje, Ph.D.
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture
Associate Dean for Research, School of Education
Faculty Associate, Institute for Social Research
Faculty Affiliate, Latino/a Studies
University of Michigan

Richard J. Murnane, Ph.D.
Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society
Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

Lawrence Palinkas, Ph.D.
Albert G. and Frances Lomas Feldman Professor of Social Policy and Health
School of Social Work, University of Southern California

Jane Waldfogel, Ph.D.
Compton Foundation
Centennial Professor of Social Work and Public Affairs
School of Social Work, Columbia University

Standing, L to R: Lawrence Palinkas, Sandra Graham, Richard J. Murnane, Margaret R. Burchinal, Elizabeth Birr Moje, Linda M. Burton
Seated, L to R: Susan M. Kegeles, Adam Gamoran, Margarita Alegria, Edith Chen
Not pictured: Jane Waldfogel
Scholars Class of 2018

Aprile Benner, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Human Development and Family Sciences
University of Texas at Austin
Adolescents and the Social Contexts of American Schools

Donald Chi, DDS, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Dental Public Health Sciences
University of Washington
Neighborhood Social Capital and Oral Health for Publicly Insured Adolescents

David Deming, Ph.D.
Professor
Graduate School of Education and the National Bureau of Economic Research
Harvard University
The Long-Term Influence of School Accountability: Impacts, Mechanisms, and Policy Implications

Adriana Galván, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of California, Los Angeles
Predictors and Outcomes of Insufficient Sleep in Disadvantaged Youth: A Study of Family Settings and Neurobiological Development

Phillip Hammack, Ph.D.
Professor
Psychology Department
University of California, Santa Cruz
Subverting the Impact of Stigma and Subordination: Toward Empowering Settings for Sexual Minority Youth

L to R: Phillip Hammack, Adriana Galván, Donald Chi, DDS, Aprile Benner
Not pictured: David Deming
Scholars Class of 2019

L to R: Joanna Williams, Michael MacKenzie, Rebecca M.B. White, David Yeager, Noelle Hurd

Noelle Hurd, Ph.D., MPH
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology
University of Virginia
Critical Contexts for the Formation of Natural Mentoring Relationships among Economically Disadvantaged African American Adolescents

Michael MacKenzie, Ph.D., MSW
Associate Professor
School of Social Work and Pediatrics
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Children in Limbo: A Transactional Model of Foster Care Placement Instability

Rebecca M.B. White, Ph.D., MPH
Associate Professor
T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics
Arizona State University
A New Look at Neighborhood Ethnic Concentration: Implications for Mexican-Origin Adolescents’ Cultural Adaptation and Adjustment

Joanna Williams, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Policy
University of Virginia
Benefits and Challenges of Ethnic Diversity in Middle Schools: The Mediating Role of Peer Groups

David Yeager, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of Texas at Austin
Toward a Sociological, Contextual Perspective on Psychological Interventions
Scholars Class of 2020

Leah D. Doane, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
Arizona State University
Transiciones: Examining the Latino Transition to College in Support of Academic Equality

Matthew Kraft, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Brown University
Teacher Effects on Students’ Non-Cognitive Competencies: A Study of Impacts, Instruction, and Improvement

Parag Pathak, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Economics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Using Unified School Enrollment Systems to Improve Access to Effective Schools and for Research and Evaluation

Laura Tach, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Policy Analysis and Management
Cornell University
Adolescent Well-Being in an Era of Family Complexity

Eve Tuck, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Deferred Action and Postsecondary Outcomes: The Role of the Migrant Youth Settings in Effective and Equitable Policy

L to R: Matthew Kraft, Leah D. Doane, Laura Tach, Eve Tuck, Parag Pathak
Scholars Class of 2021

Matthew Desmond, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Sociology
Princeton University
Understanding the American Child Welfare System

Mesmin Destin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Education and Social Policy and the Department of Psychology
Northwestern University
Healthy Pathways towards Academic Achievement and Social Mobility for Low-SES Youth

Laura Hamilton, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
University of California, Merced
How Does Institutional Context Matter? Shaping Success for Disadvantaged College Students

Jacob Hibel, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
University of California, Davis
Supporting Young Students’ Special Needs in New Immigrant Destinations

Kristin Turney, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
University of California, Irvine
The Unequal Intergenerational Consequences of Paternal Incarceration: Considering Sensitive Periods, Resiliency, and Mechanisms
Scholars Class of 2022

Seth Holmes, PhD, MD
Associate Professor
Public Health and Medical Anthropology
University of California, Berkeley
Unequally ‘Hispanic’: Intersectional Inequalities and Resiliency Among Indigenous ‘Hispanic’ Youth

Julie Maslowsky, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Health Education
University of Texas at Austin
Preventing Unintended Repeat Births to Hispanic Adolescents

Awilda Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education
University of Michigan
Can an Informational Intervention Increase Black, Latino, and Low-income Student Participation in Advanced Placement Courses?

L to R: Julie Maslowsky, Seth Holmes, Awilda Rodriguez