William T. Grant Scholars Program

2019 APPLICATION GUIDE
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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 supporting research within two focus areas. Researchers interested in applying for a William T. Grant Scholars Award 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, especially on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic standing, language minority status, or immigrant origins. 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 is used in ways that benefit youth. We are particularly interested in research on improving the use of research evidence by state and local decision makers, mid-level managers, and intermediaries.
Clockwise from top: William Darity, Scholars Consultant; Nikki Jones, Class of 2012, Scholars Consultant; David Deming, Class of 2018
Reducing Inequality

Background

Our focus on reducing inequality grew out of our view that research can do more than help us understand the problem of inequality—it can point us toward 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.

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, language minority status, or immigrant origin status. We are interested in research on programs, policies, and practices to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, and economic outcomes.

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.

Proposing Research on Reducing Inequality

The primary line of inquiry in this focus area is building, testing, and increasing understanding of responses to inequality in youth outcomes. 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.
Applications 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, language minority status, 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.

We know that tackling a problem as large as inequality will require fresh, innovative ideas, and we welcome creative studies that have potential to advance or even transform the field.
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).

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.
Clockwise from top: Jacob Hibl, Class of 2021; Kristin Turney, Class of 2021; Joanna Lee Williams, Class of 2019
Improving the Use of Research Evidence

Background

In order for research to impact the lives of children and youth, it must be used. Yet we know too little about what it takes to improve the use of research evidence in policy and practice. We need stronger theory and empirical evidence to guide our efforts: in short, we need research on research use.

In this focus area, we are interested in investigations that identify and test strategies for improving the use of research evidence in policy and practice. We have a particular interest in state and local decision makers, mid-level managers, and intermediaries as research users.

We welcome ideas from a broad range of disciplines and fields, including political science, knowledge mobilization, implementation science, policy implementation, and others. We also welcome investigations about research use in various systems, including justice, child welfare, mental health, and education.

Proposing Research on Improving the Use of Research Evidence

We seek studies about how to improve the use of research evidence in ways that benefit youth. We are particularly interested in investigations that identify and test strategies for improving the use of research among state and local decision makers, mid-level managers, and intermediaries.
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. For example, prior work suggests that decision makers often lack the institutional resources and requisite skills to seek out and apply research, and certain organizational norms and routines can help overcome those barriers (Honig, Venkateswaran, & Twitchell, 2014; Mosley & Courtney, 2012; Nicholson, 2014). Future projects might study efforts to alter conditions in the decision making environment. For example, studies might compare the effectiveness of different ways (e.g., technical assistance, research-practice partnerships, cross-agency teams, etc.) to connect existing research with decision makers or exploit natural variation across decision making environments to identify the conditions that improve research use.

- **Identify or test strategies for producing more useful research evidence.**
  This includes examining ways to create incentives, structures, or relationships that facilitate the production of research that responds to decision makers’ needs. Applicants might identify strategies for altering the incentive structures or organizational cultures of research institutions so that researchers conduct more practice or policy relevant studies and are rewarded for research products that are considered useful by decision makers. Other applicants might identify the relationships and organizational structures that lead to the prioritization of decision makers’ research needs.

Studies may also examine ways to optimize researchers’, decision makers’, and intermediaries’ joint work to benefit youth. For example, one might investigate the effectiveness of funders’ efforts to incentivize joint work between researchers and decision makers. Other projects might develop and test effective curriculum and training experiences that develop researchers’ capacity to conduct collaborative work with practitioners.
• **Test the assumption that using high-quality research 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.

We suspect that simply using research will not be sufficient to yield positive outcomes. The relationship between the use of research evidence and youth outcomes will be affected by a number of conditions. As illustrated in Figure 1, one hypothesis is that the quality of the research and the quality of the decision making will work synergistically to yield strong outcomes for youth. For the purpose of this example, we represented high-quality research as rigorous, relevant, and designed for use. High-quality use is represented as critical consideration and appropriate application of research.

Applicants are encouraged to identify other conditions under which using research evidence improves youth outcomes. For example, recent federal policies have instituted mandates and incentives to increase the adoption of programs with evidence of effectiveness from randomized controlled trials. Did these policies actually increase the use of those programs and improve child and youth outcomes?
The lines of inquiry described above require a range of methods, from experimental to observational designs, from comparative case approaches to systematic reviews. The research design should provide credible evidence to support or refute hypotheses about the strategies that improve use of research. For example, a randomized controlled trial might test whether an intervention that provides schools with technical assistance and coaching on the use of research evidence is more likely to lead to adoption of evidence-based programs. We also welcome observational studies that leverage state variation to examine whether states that use research when making decisions improve youth outcomes.

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 review the resources provided on our website, including writing by staff, grantees, and others in the field.

We also recognize that studying ways to improve the use of research evidence will require new and innovative ideas, and welcome creative studies that have potential to advance the field.
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.

“Strategies” are systematic and replicable methods, activities, or policies intended to improve the use of research evidence or to maximize its benefits on decision making and youth outcomes.
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.

Which journals publish studies about the use of research evidence?

A variety of peer-review journals publish investigations about the use of research evidence. Some journals are dedicated to this topic, such as Evidence and Policy. Others serve broader ranges of interest but have published articles related to research use; these outlets include American Journal of Evaluation, Evaluation and Program Planning, Implementation Science, Educational Policy, Educational Researcher, American Journal of Education, Sociological Methodology, Management Science, Organization Science, Research on Social Work Practice, Child Welfare Journal, Journal of Health Services Research & Policy, American Journal of Community Psychology, Criminology and Public Policy, Communication Theory, and others.
Clockwise from top: Adriana Galván, Class of 2018; Rachel H. Farr, Class of 2023; Phillip Hammack, Class of 2018
FORMER WILLIAM T. GRANT SCHOLARS

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 persist in college and those who do not.

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. Even now, 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 does not 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 lack 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.
Candice Odgers
Professor, Psychology and Neuroscience, Duke University

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’ career 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, reducing inequality, 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 the grant program are two-fold. First, we seek to strengthen the mentoring received by junior researchers of color and to position them for professional success. Second, we want to support William T. Grant Scholars and principal investigators in developing a stronger understanding of the career development issues facing their junior colleagues of color and to strengthen their mentoring relationships with them. In the longer term, we hope this grant program will increase the number of strong, well-networked researchers of color doing research on the Foundation’s interests and help foster more diverse, equitable, and inclusive academic environments.
ASK A PROGRAM OFFICER

What do you look for in measurement studies of the use of research?

We anticipate that investigations to improve the use of research evidence will necessitate modifying existing measures and developing new ones. These measures will need to be able to detect changes in the nature or degree of research use over time and differences in research use across conditions. Studies involving tests of strategies to improve the use of research evidence or of the impact on youth outcomes of using research evidence will likely demand measures that can be administered at a large scale and at a reasonable cost.

Proposals for studies to develop or improve measures in either focus area should provide 1) a strong theoretical and empirical rationale for the importance of the constructs or phenomena that will be the focus of the work, 2) the utility of the measures, tools, or analysis strategies beyond their use in the proposed study, and 3) 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?

General Recommendations:

• Clearly describe the theory or conceptual frame guiding the study or studies. 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.

Recommendations for applicants proposing research on improving the use of research evidence:

• Provide a strong conceptualization and operational definition of research use. Make clear how the conceptualization relates to prior theory and empirical evidence on the use of research evidence. This operational definition also provides a roadmap for how you will assess research use.

• Make a compelling case that the study is focused on topics for which high-quality research is available for use in policy or practice that affects youth. Include a description of the body of available research, its relevance to the policy or practice issue under study, and the rationale for promoting its use by particular research users and in certain decision making contexts.

• The Foundation primarily funds research; thus prioritize the empirical part of the project beginning with the research questions. Questions might concern the effectiveness of a strategy to improve the use of research evidence, the identification and testing of hypothesized mechanisms to improve research use, or an exploration of the conditions under which research use leads to improved decision making and youth outcomes.
Recommendations for applicants proposing research on reducing inequality:

- Provide a clear conceptualization and operational definition of inequality. Clearly identify, conceptualize, and make a compelling case for the dimension of inequality you will study. The Foundation is primarily interested in research that examines ways to reduce inequality that exists along one or more of the following dimensions: race, ethnicity, economic standing, language minority status, or immigrant origin status. In addition to clearly naming the dimension of inequality to be studied, applicants should draw on extant literature to conceptualize the inequality, document unequal outcomes, and make a case for the importance of studying it. Note that it is inadequate to refer to inequality through umbrella terms (i.e., “at-risk youth”) or to simply list dimensions of inequality as variables.

- Specify the youth outcomes to be studied (e.g., academic, social, behavioral, and/or economic), and show that the outcomes are currently unequal. This should include a demonstration of why the outcomes selected are relevant to the dimension of inequality, and what theory and empirical work tell us about this relationship.

- Make a strong case for how the study will help build, test, or increase understanding of a program, policy, or practice for reducing inequality in youth outcomes, and how it will advance work on those issues. In intervention studies, the potential of the research to build, test, or increase understanding usually goes beyond the specific program, policy, or practice being studied.
Top: Simone Ispa-Landa, Class of 2023;
Bottom: Mark Hatzenbuehler, Class of 2023;
Mesmin Destin, Class of 2021
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 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;

- a discussion of current relationship with 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 the proposed 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 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 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. 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)

(Examples of successful 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, Pay it Forward: Guidance for Mentoring Junior Scholars, and Moving it Forward: The Power of Mentoring, and How Universities Can Confront Institutional Barriers Facing Junior Researchers of Color. The latter two resources focus on personal and institutional strategies to help Scholars become stronger mentors, but 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. The documents can be published or in press.

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.
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 forgot your password, click the link to reset your password.

- 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 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 a strong fit with one of the Foundation’s current focus areas. Proposed research on reducing inequality should aim to build, test, and increase understanding of a program, policy, or practice to reduce inequality in the academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes of young people ages 5–25 in the United States. Proposed research on improving the use of research evidence should inform strategies to improve the use of research evidence in ways that benefit young people ages 5–25 in the United States. 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.
• Proposals reflect a mastery of relevant theory and empirical findings, and clearly state the theoretical and empirical contributions they will make to the existing research base. Projects may focus on either generating or testing theory, depending on the state of knowledge about a topic.

• Although we do not expect that any one project will or should impact policy or practice, the findings should have relevance for policy or practice.

• 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.

  - Discussions of case selection, sampling, and measurement include a compelling rationale that they are well-suited to address the research questions or hypotheses. For example, samples are appropriate in size and composition to answer the study’s questions. Qualitative case selection—whether critical, comparative, or otherwise—are appropriate to answer the proposed questions.

  - The quantitative and/or qualitative analysis plan demonstrate awareness of the strengths and limits of the specific analytic techniques and how they will be applied in the current project.

  - If proposing mixed methods, plans for integrating the methods and data are clear and compelling.

  - 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 has 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 to an applicants’ mentoring network than proposing a former advisor or committee chair.

**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.
Clockwise from top: Matthew A. Kraft, Class of 2020; Eve Tuck, Class of 2020; Parag Pathak, Class of 2020
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 21, 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 three to six William T. Grant Scholars. Applicants will be notified of the Committee’s decision by the end of March 2019.
Scholars Selection Committee

Elizabeth Birr Moje, Ph.D.
Selection Committee Chair
Dean, School of Education
George Herbert Mead Collegiate Professor of Education
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture
University of Michigan

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 B. 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

Nonie K. Lesaux
Academic Dean
Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society
Graduate School of Education
Harvard University

Roberto Lewis-Fernández
Professor of Clinical Psychiatry
Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons
Director of the New York State (NYS) Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence and the Hispanic Treatment Program, and Co Director of the Anxiety Disorders Clinic New York State Psychiatric Institute

Richard J. Murnane, Ph.D.
Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Research 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

Karolyn Tyson, Ph.D.
Professor and Associate Chair
Department of Sociology
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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

Scholars Class of 2019

Noelle Hurd, Ph.D.
Critical Contexts for the Formation of Natural Mentoring Relationships among Economically Disadvantaged African-American Adolescents

Michael MacKenzie, Ph.D.
Children in Limbo: A Transactional Model of Foster Care Placement Instability

Rebecca M.B. White, Ph.D.
A New Look at Neighborhood Ethnic Concentration: Implications for Mexican-Origin Adolescents’ Cultural Adaptation and Adjustment

Joanna Lee Williams, Ph.D.
Benefits and Challenges of Ethnic Diversity in Middle Schools: The Mediating Role of Peer Groups

David Yeager, Ph.D.
Toward a Sociological, Contextual Perspective on Psychological Interventions
Scholars Class of 2020

Leah Doane, Ph.D.
Transiciones: Examining the Latino Transition to College in Support Academic Equality

Matthew Kraft, Ph.D.
Teacher Effects on Students' Non-Cognitive Competencies: A Study of Impacts, Instruction, and Improvement

Parag Pathak, Ph.D.
Using Unified School Enrollment Systems to Improve Access to Effective Schools and for Research and Evaluation

Laura Tach, Ph.D.
Adolescent Well-Being in an Era of Family Complexity

Eve Tuck, Ph.D.
Deferred Action and Post-Secondary Outcomes: The Role of Migrant Youth Settings in Effective and Equitable Policy

L to R: Eve Tuck, Parag Pathak, Laura Tach, Matthew A. Kraft; Not pictured: Leah Doane
Scholars Class of 2021

Matthew Desmond, Ph.D.
Understanding the American Child Welfare System

Mesmin Destin, Ph.D.
Healthy Pathways Toward Academic Achievement and Social Mobility for Low-SES Youth

Laura T. Hamilton, Ph.D.
How Does Institutional Context Matter?
Shaping Success for Disadvantaged College Students

Jacob Hibel, Ph.D.
Supporting Young Students’ Special Needs in New Immigrant Destinations

Kristin Turney, Ph.D.
The Unequal Intergenerational Consequences of Paternal Incarceration: Considering Sensitive Periods, Resiliency, and Mechanisms

L to R: Laura T. Hamilton, Jacob Hibel, Mesmin Destin, Kristin Turney
Scholars Class of 2022

Seth M. Holmes, Ph.D.
Unequally “Hispanic”: Intersectional Inequalities and Resiliency Among Indigenous “Hispanic” Youth

Julie Maslowsky, Ph.D.
Preventing Unintended Repeat Births to Hispanic Adolescents

Awilda Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Can an Informational Intervention Increase Black, Latino, and Low-income Student Participation in Advanced Placement Courses?

L to R: Julie Maslowsky, Awilda Rodriguez; Not pictured: Seth M. Holmes
Scholars Class of 2023

Anjali Adukia, Ed.D.
Do School Disciplinary Structures Ameliorate or Exacerbate Inequality?

Rachel H. Farr, Ph.D.
Reducing Harm of Discrimination among Diverse Adolescents with LGBTQ Parents: How do Family, Peers, and Community Matter

Mark Hatzenbuehler, Ph.D.
Evaluating Structural Strategies for Reducing Homophobic Bullying

Simone Ispa-Landa, Ph.D.
Creating More Equitable and Developmentally Attuned Disciplinary Environments for Adolescent Students

Daniel Schneider, Ph.D.
Unstable and Unpredictable Work Schedules and Child Development: Descriptive and Quasi-Experimental Evidence

Pamela Wisniewski, Ph.D.
Reducing Digital Inequality by Empowering At-Risk Youth to be Resilient against Online Sexual Predation Risks

L to R: Pamela Wisniewski, Simone Ispa-Landa, Anjali Adukia, Mark Hatzenbuehler, Daniel Schneider, Rachel H. Farr