William T. Grant
FOUNDATION

William T. Grant Scholars Program: 2026 Application Guidelines

Updated January 2026

Online Application Opens:
March 27, 2026, 3 PM ET

Mentor and Reference Letter Deadline:
June 10, 2026, 3 PM ET

Application Deadline:
June 30, 2026, 3 PM ET

Announcement of Awards:
March 2027

Contents

Program 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.

TJ Billard (Class of 2028)

Focus Areas

The Foundation supports research in two distinct focus areas: 1) Reducing inequality in youth outcomes, and 2) Improving the use of research evidence in policy and practice. *Proposed research must address questions that align with one of these areas.*

Focus Area: Reducing Inequality

In this focus area, we fund research studies that examine programs, policies, or practices to reduce inequality in the academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes of young people ages 5–25 in the United States, *along dimensions of race, ethnicity, economic standing, sexual or gender minority status (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth), language minority status, or immigrant origins.*

We fund:

- Descriptive studies that describe, explore, or explain how programs, practices, or policies reduce inequality.
- Intervention studies that provide causal evidence on the effectiveness of programs or policies for reducing inequality.

We do not fund:

- Studies that focus primarily on physical health outcomes (e.g., physical illness, clinical trials, etc.).
- Studies that focus solely on dimensions other than those *prioritized above*.
- Studies that focus primarily on the causes, extent, or consequences of inequality.

Research Interests

Our research interests center on studies that examine ways to reduce 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.

Recognizing that findings about programs and practices that reduce inequality will have limited societal impact until the structures that create inequality in the first place have been transformed, the Foundation is particularly interested in research to uproot systemic racism and the structural foundations of inequality that limit the life chances of young people. For more information on this special interest, see Appendix B.

We invite studies from a range of disciplines, fields, and methods, and we encourage investigations into various youth-serving systems, including justice, housing, child welfare, mental health, and education.

Proposals for research on reducing inequality must:

1. **Identify a specific inequality in youth outcomes.**

   We fund research to reduce inequality in academic, social, behavioral, or economic outcomes.

   - Show that outcomes are unequal in a brief discussion of existing literature.

   - Highlight the main explanations for the unequal outcomes that are relevant for your study.

     - *New for 2026: Please note that we do not fund studies that primarily focus on physical health outcomes, such as physical illness.*

2. **Make a convincing case for the dimension(s) of inequality the study will address.**

   We fund research to reduce inequality along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, economic standing, sexual or gender minority status (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth), language minority status, or immigrant origin status.

   - Please specify the groups on which the study will focus. We do not fund studies that use vague terms such as "at-risk youth," "disadvantaged youth," or "vulnerable youth."

   - Offer a well-developed conceptualization of inequality. Avoid treating dimensions of inequality (e.g., race, economic standing) as variables without providing conceptual and/or theoretical insight into why and how the identified inequality exists.

   - Research that focuses on a dimension other than race, ethnicity, economic standing, sexual or gender minority status, language minority status, or immigrant origins must be in intersection with one of these dimensions. Though important, we do not have the resources to fund studies that focus primarily on other dimensions of inequality, like disability status.

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

- Draw on extant theoretical and empirical literature to provide a rationale for why the specific programs, policies, or practices under study will equalize outcomes between groups or improve outcomes of a particular group. In other words, specify your theory of change.

- Identify how the study will investigate this rationale to determine whether it holds up to empirical scrutiny.

Focus Area: Improving the Use of Research Evidence

In this focus area, we support research studies that examine strategies to improve the use of research evidence in ways that benefit young people ages 5-25 in the United States. We seek proposals for studies that advance theory and build empirical knowledge on ways to improve the use of research evidence by policymakers, public agency leaders, organizational managers, intermediaries, community organizers, and other decision-makers that generally shape youth-serving systems in the United States.

While an extensive body of knowledge provides a rich understanding of specific conditions that foster the use of research evidence, we lack robust, validated strategies for cultivating them. What is required to create structural and social conditions that support research use? What infrastructure is needed, and what will it look like? What supports and incentives foster research use? And, ultimately, how do youth outcomes fare when research evidence is used? This is where new research can make a difference.

We fund:
- Studies that build or test strategies to improve the use of existing research in policy or practice.
- Studies that test whether and how strategies that improve the use of research evidence in turn improve decision-making and youth outcomes.

We do not fund:
- Studies that aim solely to understand how individuals and organizations access research, make sense of research findings, and apply evidence. Studies must examine a strategy to improve research use and the implications of that research use for youth outcomes.
- Studies that focus solely on improving data-driven decision-making. Studies in which data, data use, and research use intersect are welcome, however.

For example, some teams have leveraged routines around data use as a strategy to embed use of research evidence. Others have engaged youth to pair data, personal narratives, and research evidence to increase school leaders' use of research evidence.

- Studies about improving research use among frontline practitioners, at the point of service. For example, studies of strategies to improve research use among teachers, clinicians, and others in similar roles are not considered a fit. See page 7 for a note on why we prioritize mid-level managers and other organizational decision-makers.

This year we will prioritize funding applications that:

- Investigate and test strategies to improve the use of research evidence to benefit young people concerning politically charged and contested issues, particularly in highly polarized contexts. Prior studies of decision-makers' use of research evidence during school board deliberations (Asen & Gurke, 2014), in legislative sessions (Bogenschneider, Day, & Parrott, 2019; Yanovitzky & Weber, 2020), and by advocacy coalitions (Scott et al., 2017) provide a strong evidence base for designing and studying strategies.

- Propose experimental tests of strategies to improve research use in policy and practice to improve youth outcomes.

One of the most common issues in proposed research is a lack of sufficient grounding in the existing empirical literature on the use of research evidence. We strongly encourage applicants to review the resources for applicants, which comprise foundational texts on the use of research evidence as well as historical and more recent work by grantees.

Research Interests

Our research interests in this focus area center on studies that examine strategies to improve the use, usefulness, and impact of research evidence in ways that benefit young people ages 5-25 in the United States. We welcome impact studies that test strategies for improving research use as well as whether improving research use leads to improved youth outcomes. We also welcome descriptive studies that reveal the strategies, mechanisms, or conditions for improving research use. Finally, we welcome measurement studies that explore how to construct and implement valid and reliable measures of research use.

We are particularly interested in research on ways to improve the use of research evidence by state and local policymakers, mid-level managers, leaders in community organizations, and intermediaries. These decision-makers play important roles in deciding which programs, practices, and tools to adopt; deliberating ways to improve existing services; shaping the conditions for implementation; and making resource allocation decisions.

We invite studies from a range of disciplines, fields, and methods, and we encourage investigations into various youth-serving systems, including justice, housing, child welfare, mental health, K-12 and higher education.

Previous studies have drawn on conceptual and empirical work from political science, communication science, knowledge mobilization, implementation science, and organizational psychology, among other areas.

Finally, we welcome critical perspectives that inform studies' framing, research questions, methods, and interpretation of findings.

We welcome studies that pursue one of two aims:

1. **Building or testing ways to improve the use of existing research evidence in policy or practice.**

   This may include:

- Studies of strategies, mechanisms, or conditions that foster more routine and constructive uses of existing research evidence by decision-makers.
- Studies that test the effects of deliberate efforts to improve routine and beneficial uses of research in decision-making.
- Studies to examine the relationships and organizational structures that lead to the prioritization of decision-makers' needs in developing research agendas.
- Studies that examine ways to optimize organized collaborations among researchers, decision-makers, intermediaries, and other stakeholders to benefit youth.
  - For example, prior work suggests that decision-makers often lack the institutional resources and some of the requisite skills to seek out and use research, and certain organizational norms and routines can help overcome those barriers. Studies might examine efforts to alter the decision-making environment by comparing the effectiveness of different ways (e.g., technical assistance, research-practice partnerships, cross-agency teams, etc.) to connect existing research with decision-makers.

2. **Testing whether and how strategies that improve the use of research evidence in turn improve decision-making and youth outcomes.**

   This may include:

- Studies that examine the impact of research use on youth outcomes and the conditions under which using research evidence improves outcomes.

  ○ The notion that using research will improve youth outcomes is a longstanding assumption, but there is little evidence to validate it. We suspect that the impact of research on outcomes may depend on a number of conditions, including the quality of the research and the quality of research use.
  One hypothesis is that the quality of the research and the quality of research use will work synergistically to yield better informed policy or practice decisions leading to improved outcomes for youth.

- Studies to test 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, with the expectation that the use of these programs will lead to better outcomes. Do these policies actually increase the use of those programs and improve youth outcomes?

  In this example, a proposal would need to use theory and related empirical evidence to motivate the potential of the evidence mandate to improve research use and the connection between improved use of research and improved youth outcomes. More generally, whether or not the study includes measures of youth outcomes, the connection between improved use of research among decision-makers and improved youth outcomes needs to be well-described.

ⓘ NOTE

These research interests call for a range of methods, including experimental or quasi-experimental studies, observational research designs, comparative case studies, or systematic reviews.

- Where appropriate, consider using existing methods, measures, and analytic tools for assessing research use so that your findings can be compared and aggregated across studies (see Gitomer and Crouse [2019] *Studying the Use of Research Evidence: A Review of Methods*: http://wtgrantfoundation.org/studying-the-use-of-research-evidence-a-review-of-methods).

- Existing measures may not be well-suited for some inquiries, so you may also propose to adapt existing measures or develop new ones. We strongly encourage applicants to utilize an open-access methods and measures repository that shares existing protocols for collecting and analyzing data on research use (https://www.uremethods.org/).

- Mixed-methods studies that collect and integrate multiple types of data may be particularly advantageous given the limitations of relying solely on self-report methods to study evidence use in complex deliberations and decision-making contexts.These research interests call for a range of methods, including experimental or observational research designs, comparative case studies, or systematic reviews.

Top, left to right: Emily Ozer, Kelly Harris (Class of 2030), Cynthia Coburn; Bottom: Siwei Cheng (Class of 2028)

Awards

- Award recipients are designated as William T. Grant Scholars.

- Each year, four to six Scholars are selected.

- Each Scholar receives exactly $425,000 over five years, including up to 7.5% indirect costs.

- Awards begin July 1 of the award year and are made to the applicant's institution.

- The award must not replace the institution's current support of the applicant's research.

> **ⓘ NOTE**
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> The Foundation holds an annual retreat during the summer to support Scholars' career development. Designed to foster a supportive environment in which Scholars can improve their skills and work, the retreat allows Scholars to 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.
>
> Scholars may apply for an additional award to mentor junior researchers of color. The announcement and criteria for funding are distributed annually to eligible Scholars. Our goals for the mentoring grant program are two-fold. First, we want to support William T. Grant grantees in developing a stronger understanding of the career development issues facing their junior colleagues of color and to strengthen their mentoring relationships with them. Second, we seek to strengthen the mentoring received by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian or Pacific Islander American junior researchers and to position them for professional success. 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.

Eligibility

Eligible Organizations

- The Foundation makes grants only to tax-exempt organizations. We do not make grants to individuals.

  - We encourage proposals from organizations that are under-represented among grantee institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native-Serving Institutions, Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions.

Eligible Applicants

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

- Applicants must have received their doctorate within seven years of submitting their application. We calculate this by adding seven to the year the doctorate was conferred. In medicine, the seven-year maximum is dated from the completion of the first residency. The month in which the degree was conferred or residency completed does not matter for this calculation.

- 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.

- We strive to support a diverse group of researchers in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and seniority, and we encourage research projects led by Black or African American, Indigenous, Latinx, and/or Asian or Pacific Islander American researchers.

Mariah Kornbluh, Class of 2028

Application Requirements

All applications must include the following materials:

Mentor and Reference Letters

Mentor and reference letters are due by June 10, 2026. We recommend beginning the online application early to give mentors and references ample time to complete their sections. You may continue to other sections of the application while waiting for your mentors and references to submit their letters online, but you will not be able to submit your application until all letters are received.

Mentor letters

Applicants propose one to two mentors for the first two years of the award. Each proposed mentor must submit a letter. Mentor letters are not recommendations, and applicants should discourage cursory letters of support. The letter should include:

- A brief assessment of the applicant's research plan, and a summation of the applicant's potential, 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.

- 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.)

- A description of 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.

- Confirmation of willingness to complete annual reports for the award (mentors receive an honorarium of $500 upon receipt of reports).

Reference Letters

Three letters of recommendation must be submitted from colleagues, supervisors, or the department/division chairperson who nominates the applicant, respectively. Proposed mentors may not submit recommendation letters.

Budget

Using the form included in the online application, provide budget information for five years. The total budget should be exactly $425,000 (including the combined direct and indirect costs for the full grant period). Indirect costs may not exceed 7.5 percent of total direct costs.

Requests to fund the 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.)

Budget Justification Form

Complete and upload the Foundation's budget justification form, which can be found within the Uploads tab of the 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 Review 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

- 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 Review 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 mentors 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:

- a bibliography (8 pages maximum)

- appendices (8 pages maximum).

ⓘ NOTE

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 focus on personal and institutional strategies to help Scholars become stronger mentors but may also provide insights on being mentored. (See: https://wtgrantfoundation.org/funding/william-t-grant-scholars-program/applicant-resources.)

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 Dean or 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 non-profit) 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. There are no specific guidelines for the resubmission statement with respect to format or length. Most applicants approach these like they would a response to reviewers for a journal article submission, whether formatted as a memo, a letter, or a document with "Resubmission Statement" at the top. Applicants should prepare the statement in whatever way best suits the nature of their revisions.

Top: NaLette Brodnax (Class of 2028); Bottom: Kim DuMont, Farzana Adjah (Class of 2030)

Review Criteria

> **ⓘ NOTE**
>
> 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 their 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.

- Prior training and publications indicate the applicant's ability to conduct and communicate creative, sophisticated research.

- Applicant has 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 their expertise through this award. The applicant has identified area(s) in which the award will appreciably expand their expertise and has provided specific details 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 plan aligns with one of the Foundation's focus areas.
  - Proposed research on reducing inequality should aim to build, test, or 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.

- 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 their 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 Scholar with sufficient resources to carry out the five-year research plan. This includes computer equipment, colleagues, administrative staff, research facilities, and the balance of their 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.

ⓘ NOTE

"At least half time for research" means that the institution demonstrates a willingness to allow the Scholar to engage in their own program of research at least 50 percent of the time for each year of the award. This does not require the Scholar to spend 50 percent of their time on the Scholars project, but on their research, broadly speaking. Often this takes the form of course releases because this is a very concrete way to calculate time and for the institution to indicate their support of and investment in the Scholar. However, some career ladder positions don't involve a lot of teaching, so in those cases, the institution might indicate that the Scholar will engage in their program of research at least 50 percent of the time by having a reduced service load or administrative burden.

"At least half time for research" is not an indicator that 50 percent of the Scholar's 9-month salary has to be covered by the grant. We see a wide variety of salary portions allocated to the grant (e.g., 0%, 25%, 40%). Applicants have also used these funds to pay for summer salary, research assistants, lab equipment, travel, fieldwork, and other research-related expenses.

Application Review Process

First, Foundation staff screen abstracts, brief CVs, and, if warranted, full applications to determine whether they fit our research focus areas and potentially meet other Review 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 in February 2027. Prior to the interview, finalists' proposals are reviewed by two external reviewers.

During the interview, finalists respond to Committee members' and external experts' reviews. Following the interviews, the Selection Committee chooses four to six William T. Grant Scholars to recommend to the Board of Trustees for approval. Applicants will be notified of the Trustees' decision by the end of March 2027.

Scholars Selection Committee

Andrew Bacher-Hicks*
Vice President of Evidence and Evaluation, Arnold Ventures

Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (Lumbee)
Dean, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy

Tabbye Chavous
Executive Director, American Educational Research Association

Cynthia Coburn
Professor of Human Development and Social Policy, Professor of Learning Sciences, School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University

Robert Crosnoe*
Rapoport Centennial Professor of Liberal Arts, Department of Sociology, University of Texas, Austin

Cristiane Duarte
Professor, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Columbia University, New York State Psychiatric Institute

David Figlio
Provost, Gordon Fyfe Professor of Economics and Education, University of Rochester

Adriana Galvan*
Associate Professor, Psychology Behavioral Neuroscience Developmental Psychology University of California, Los Angeles

Adam Gamoran
President, William T. Grant Foundation

Anne Gregory
Professor of School Psychology, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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

Kenji Hakuta
Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education (Emeritus), Stanford University

Alexes Harris
Presidential Term Professor and Professor of Sociology, University of Washington

Amy Hsin*
Professor of Migration, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

Noelle Hurd*
Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia

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

Brian Mustanski*
Director, Impact Institute, Professor, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern University

Ann Owens*
Professor of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles

Emily J. Ozer
Professor of Community Health Sciences, University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health

Jan Plass*
Professor and Paulette Goddard Chair, Digital Media & Learning Sciences New York University

Stephen Russell
Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor in Child Development, Chair, Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, University of Texas at Austin

Karolyn Tyson
Selection Committee Chair
Professor and Chair of Sociology, Georgetown University

*One year appointment for 2025-26

Standing, left to right: Kenji Hakuta, Tabbye Chavous, Jan Plass, Sandra Graham, Robert Crosnoe, Alexes Harris, Emily Ozer, Karolyn Tyson, Stephen Russell, Anne Gregory, Ann Owens, Andrew Bacher-Hicks, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (Lumbee)
Seated, left to right: Cristiane Duarte, Adam Gamoran, Noelle Hurd, David Figlio
Not pictured: Cynthia Coburn, Adriana Galvan, Amy Hsin, Nonie K. Lesaux, Brian Mustanski

Scholars Class of 2026

Riana Elyse Anderson, Ph.D.
EMBRacing Technology to Improve Black Youth's Coping with Racial Discrimination to Reduce Psychosocial Inequalities

Denisa Gándara, Ph.D.
Administrative Burdens in Free-College (Promise) Programs and Post-secondary Outcomes for Racially Minoritized Students

Emily K. Penner, Ph.D.
How Ethnic Studies Teaching Reduces Racial Inequality: Identifying Effective Pedagogy and School Efforts to Promote It

Goleen Samari, Ph.D.
Reducing Harm from Structural Xenophobia for Reproductive Equity

William Schneider, Ph.D.
Income and Housing Support Experiments and Child Neglect

Left to right: Emily K. Penner, Denisa Gándara, Goleen Samari, William Schneider, Riana Elyse Anderson

Scholars Class of 2027

Theresa Stewart-Ambo, Ph.D.
Explicating the Role of Higher Education in Native Nation-Building

Niloufar Salehi, Ph.D.
Reducing Inequalities in Public Education through Algorithmic Assignment

Sophia Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Welcoming Central American Newcomer Immigrant Students in Maryland

Abigail Weitzman, Ph.D.
Understanding How U.S. Immigrant and Immigration Policies Affect Latino Adolescents' School Lives

Deadric Williams, Ph.D.
Racism and the Mechanisms Maintaining Racial Stratification in Poverty and Material Hardship for Families with Children

Left to right: Theresa Stewart-Ambo, Deadric Williams, Sophia Rodriguez
Not pictured: Niloufar Salehi, Abigail Weitzman

Scholars Class of 2028

TJ Billard, Ph.D.
Cisinformed: Misinformation and the Media War on Transgender Youth

NaLette Brodnax, Ph.D.
Top-Down Discipline: The Effects of Carceral Ideology on Low-Income and Racial Minority Students

Siwei Cheng, Ph.D.
Using Big Data to Understand and Reduce Inequality in Youth Connectedness in an Era of Economic Polarization

Adam Haber, Ph.D.
Building Healthy Foundations: City-wide Mapping of Childhood Asthma Rates for Early Identification of Dangerous Housing

Mariah Kornbluh, Ph.D.
Mapping the Civics Education Landscape: Identifying the Role of Research and Politics in Educational Decision-Making

Left to right: Thomas Billard, Adam Haber, Mariah Kornbluh, Siwei Cheng, NaLette Brodnax

Scholars Class of 2029

Raquel Muñiz Castro, J.D., Ph.D.
Strategies And Conditions Facilitating And Hindering Education Law Attorneys' Use of Research Evidence

Julius Oatts, M.D.
Detecting Preventable Childhood Vision Loss and Barriers to Care in the Navajo Nation to Reduce Vision Health Disparities

Natasha Quadlin, Ph.D.
Reducing Socioeconomic Inequality in Pathways from College to Work

Amanda Raffoul, Ph.D.
Exploring the Role of Youth Advocacy in State Policymakers' Use of Research Evidence for Eating Disorders Prevention

Ying Shi, Ph.D.
School Victimization and Hate Crime Exposure Among Asian Students: An Evidence Base to Reduce Well-Being Inequality

Left to right: Ying Shi, Julius Oatts, Natasha Quadlin
Not pictured: Raquel Muñiz Castro, Amanda Raffoul

Scholars Class of 2030

Farzana Adjah, Ph.D.
Disrupting and TRANSFORMing Race-Related Stressors to Address Psychosocial Inequalities and Promote Adolescent Adjustment

Irene Lo, Ph.D.
Developing and Evaluating Equitable Student Assignment Policies

Kelly Harris, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Developing a School-Based Care Coordination Service Model to Support Youth with Asthma: A Systems Approach

Mollie McQuillan, Ph.D.
Understanding Educational Gender- and Sexual-Diversity Reforms and the Use of Evidence in Politically Divisive Contexts

Ericka Weathers, Ph.D.
Curbing Racial Inequality in Truancy with Critical Policy Research: A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Policy Rhetoric and Implementation

Left to right: Mollie McQuillan, Ericka Weathers, Kelly Harris, Farzana Adjah
Not pictured: Irene Lo

Appendix A: Useful links

Resources for Applicants

https://wtgrantfoundation.org/funding/william-t-grant-scholars-program/applicant-resources

Resources Include:

- Example Nominating Statements
- Annotated Excerpts from Successful Proposals
- Required Application Forms
- Mentoring Resources
- Applicant Guidance and Recommended Reading: Reducing Inequality
- Applicant Guidance and Recommended Reading: Improving the Use of Research Evidence

Frequently Asked Questions

https://wtgrantfoundation.org/funding/william-t-grant-scholars-program/faq

Topics Include:

- Eligibility
- The Application
- The Budget
- Mentors

Appendix B: Special interest in studies that address systemic racism and structural foundations of inequality

Recognizing that findings about programs and practices that reduce inequality will have limited societal impact until the structures that create inequality in the first place have been transformed, the Foundation is particularly interested in research to uproot systemic racism and the structural foundations of inequality that limit the life chances of young people.

Such research shifts the focal point of change from individuals to macro-level social institutions and examines how these institutions might be altered to dislodge the deep roots of inequality and develop a way forward toward greater equity.

Studies might examine how structural responses improve outcomes for youth, or the mechanisms through which such change occurs. Or they might ask how power hierarchies are disrupted, or how resources are redistributed. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Research on dramatic changes to the U.S. federal tax system, such as those examined in the Foundation-supported National Academies study, A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty.

- Research on shifts in power structures, such as changes in governance systems, or on the process through which the mindsets and behaviors of those who hold power are changed.

- Research on the role of social movements to reduce inequality in youth outcomes, as laid out by Jenny Irons and Vivian Tseng in "Social Movement Research to Reduce Inequality for Young People."

- Research on the potential impact on youth outcomes of reparations to American descendants of enslaved people, as proposed by William J. Darity, Jr. in "A New Agenda for Eliminating Racial Inequality in the United States: The Research We Need," and in a recent grant awarded by the Foundation.

- Research on the consequences for reducing educational inequality of significant school finance reforms, as discussed by former William T. Grant Distinguished Fellow Robert Kim in "How School Finance Research Can Sharpen the Debate, Strengthen Policy, and Improve Student Outcomes."

- Research on implementing new approaches to prosecution aimed at eliminating racial and ethnic disparities, such as explored in recent Foundation grants.

- Research on whether equitable bank lending policies can reduce housing segregation, improve neighborhood quality, and enhance youth development

- Research on the consequences for youth outcomes of a reallocation of municipal resources away from punitive action and towards social services.

This list is intended to illustrate what we mean by systemic racism and the structural foundations of inequality. It is not an exhaustive set of possible grant topics. Please note that to be eligible for funding, the research still needs to focus on outcomes for young people ages 5-25 in the United States.

For a discussion of why research on programs and practices to reduce inequality in youth outcomes remains important even as the larger structures of racism and inequality persist, please see "Research on reducing inequality: Why programs and practices matter, even in an unequal society," by former William T. Grant Scholar David Yeager.

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