



## Scholars Strategy Network 2018-2020 Postdoctoral Fellowship

The Scholars Strategy Network is opening applications for the second cohort of its two-year Postdoctoral Fellowship to support early-career scholars in any discipline who wish to engage in research and public scholarship to improve public policy and strengthen democracy. After an intensive, short boot camp, each fellow will be based at a university in one of SSN's regional chapters in either Salt Lake City, Utah; Orono, Maine; or San Diego, California.

### Objectives

Scholars Strategy Network Postdoctoral Fellows will help academics insert research, facts, and scholarly perspectives into local, state, and national policy debates. Successful fellows will build webs of relationships, transforming regional Scholars Strategy Network chapters into powerful research hubs to inform civic leaders, journalists, and policymakers on both sides of the aisle. Fellows will:

- Meet with scholars to learn about their areas of expertise and interest;
- Meet with policymakers, civic leaders, and journalists to learn about their interests, policy goals, and research questions;
- With advice and direction from senior academics, create opportunities for scholars to engage in the policy process by matchmaking and by helping scholars build lasting collaborations with non-academic stakeholders;
- Work with scholars to prepare two-page briefs that clearly convey their research to non-academic audiences;
- Organize at least one significant group project that brings together multiple academic perspectives to synthesize research and scholarly perspectives in response to a request from a non-academic stakeholder;
- Help local policymakers, journalists, civic leaders, and member scholars access the expertise of the national Scholars Strategy Network by connecting them to out-of-state scholars and, as appropriate, arranging visits, State House or City Hall briefings, and university talks.

### Research and Writing

Postdoctoral fellows will be expected to allot fifty percent of their time to their own policy-relevant research. This research can continue doctoral work or comprise new projects that can be completed within the two-year postdoctoral appointment. Ideally, each fellow's research should enrich the policy landscape in a way that is useful to, and guided by, local stakeholders and practitioners.

## Mentorship and Training

**Mentorship:** SSN will connect their Fellow with a mentor from that chapter who has interest and expertise in the Fellow's research area. A Fellow's research mentor can, but does not need to, come from the SSN host chapter. The research mentor (supported by the SSN national team) will help the Fellow write about research findings and prepare related materials in ways that achieve academic excellence and have an impact on policy. In return for sustained engagement with the Fellow, research mentors will have the choice of receiving either a modest stipend or a small grant to help support joint research with the Fellow. If the applicant already has a research mentor in mind, and has consulted with that scholar, there is opportunity to make note of this in the application. If not, SSN will help Fellows find research mentors.

Scholars Strategy Network Postdoctoral Fellows will also have several opportunities to share their work and receive advice and guidance from the academic members of Scholars Strategy Network's Steering Committee:

- **Theda Skocpol**, SSN Director and Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology, Harvard University
- **Lawrence R. Jacobs**, Walter F. and Joan Mondale Chair of Political Studies, and Director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance, Hubert Humphrey School and Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota
- **Jacob S. Hacker**, Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science, and Director of the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University
- **Suzanne Mettler**, Clinton Rossiter Professor of American Institutions, Department of Government, Cornell University; Fellow of the Century Foundation
- **Amy Fried**, Professor of Political Science, University of Maine

**Training:** Throughout the program, each cohort of Fellows will be supported with additional resources and training to help them achieve the goals described above. Fellows will learn how to become active players in public policy arenas by creating research and relationships for maximum policy impact and by organizing other chapter member scholars for the same purposes.

At the outset of the program, each cohort will spend a week with the SSN national team as part of an SSN Bootcamp. Fellows will get a deep understanding of how SSN supports scholars in public engagement work. They will meet will meet the SSN staff, learn about the type of services available to member scholars, and begin training on how to support their chapters.

Fellows will participate in SSN policy trainings to learn how to effectively deliver evidence and ideas to policymakers and civic organizations. Fellows will also receive SSN media trainings and instruction from the national communications team on how a scholar can use the media to disseminate research and analysis to the public.

Finally, fellows will participate in SSN's National Leadership Retreat, where they will get a chance to learn from chapter leaders, staff, and steering committee members including Theda Skocpol, Jacob Hacker, Lawrence Jacobs, Suzanne Mettler, and Amy Fried. Fellows will also have an opportunity to present their own research and SSN work.

## Program Information

**Length of Fellowship:** The SSN Postdoctoral Fellowships will last for two years, starting in July 2018 and running through June 2020.

**Compensation:** The SSN Postdoctoral Fellowship pays \$48,000 annually. Benefits include health insurance, a modest allowance for approved travel to conferences, and reimbursement of appropriate work-related expenses.

**Supervision:** For chapter-related duties, the Fellow will report to the co-leaders of their base chapter and SSN's national Director of Policy and Organizing.

## Affiliation

Fellows will be affiliated with one of the two following SSN regional chapters and its corresponding institution. Applicants should note in their statement of interest if they have a preference for a particular host site. Additionally, we highly encourage applicants to indicate if they have any connections to either of the three locations.

**Maine SSN:** The Maine SSN chapter launched in 2012 with engaged scholars from public and private universities across the state. There is considerable access to state and municipal decision makers and a powerful policy advocacy community that the Maine SSN chapter leaders hope to connect with the Fellow. The state provides fodder for interesting research projects from a wide range of ongoing issues, including changes in the voting system, Medicaid expansion debates, the opioid crisis, an aging population, a split between rural and urban areas, the loss of manufacturing jobs, implementation aftermath of state-wide marijuana legalization, and more. The Fellow would help the chapter be more strategic with media connections, build a map of the policy stakeholders in the state, and engage chapter membership. The Fellow will be affiliated with the University of Maine.

**Utah SSN:** Based at the University of Utah, the Utah SSN chapter has been a model for others across the network of how to connect expertise to policy stakeholders. The chapter has already developed a number of

relationships with key civic organizations and with members of the state legislature on issues including education spending, diversity in the judiciary, and public health. The Fellow at this chapter would focus on strengthening these relationships, building new ones, and bringing new scholars into the chapter. The Fellow will be affiliated with the University of Utah.

**San Diego SSN:** Based at the University of California San Diego, the San Diego SSN chapter has developed a number of vibrant connections with civic organizations, practitioners, and policymakers at the local, state, and federal level. The chapter's growing work with stakeholders in Southern California is largely centered on socio-economic mobility and opportunity, with a special interest in immigrant populations. The Fellow at this chapter will help current and new members continue to engage as academic experts in these campaigns, bringing research insights to bear on strategies and policy goals.

## Eligibility

SSN Regional Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to applicants from all disciplines who have completed their PhD within the past three years and are prepared to work for two years starting July 2018. Applications are encouraged from soon-to-be or recent PhDs with experience or a strong interest in community or state-level organizing, public policy, and practical research.

Ideal candidates will be persons dedicated to SSN's mission and able to grasp how to make use of SSN's structure as a voluntary, federated network of member scholars. Because SSN's national office is based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, postdoctoral fellows who will be based in SSN regional chapters must show evidence that they are self-starters able to work independently and manage several projects simultaneously. In addition, strong candidates must be able to translate research findings into clear language for public audiences and feel comfortable actively reaching out to a diverse group of external stakeholders. Candidates should have a knowledge of legislative and other government processes.

Fellows must be willing to be year-round residents of the community where their appointment is based for the duration of their two-year fellowship.

## How to Apply

Fill out and attach the required documents to this [Application Form](#). More details on what is required below. For any questions, email Paola Maynard-Moll at [fellows@scholars.org](mailto:fellows@scholars.org) and use "SSN Postdoctoral Fellowship-Your Name" in the subject line.

Each application must include:

- **Statement of Interest:** In 500 words or less, please detail your interest, background, and qualifications for the SSN Postdoctoral Fellowship. You should also state if you have a preference between the Maine, Utah, and San Diego regional chapters.

- **Resume:** Provide a curriculum vitae. Include civic or political engagement experience in your CV.
- **Dissertation Abstract and Date for the PhD:** Provide the abstract and table of contents of your doctoral dissertation and (if the PhD is not yet awarded) include a letter from your advisor about the expected date for the degree.
- **Description of Proposed Research:** In 1000 words or less, describe the research project you would like to undertake during the two-year fellowship, how you plan to incorporate feedback from non-academic stakeholders, and in what ways you anticipate doing outreach about your work during and after completion of the project.
- **OpEd:** Write a jargon-free OpEd using research to comment on a current event or area of public interest. If you have already published such a piece, please submit it. If not, write a piece in 650 words or less. Find tips for OpEd writing at [The OpEd Project](#).
- **Two Letters of Recommendation:** Provide two letters of recommendation that speak to your ability to be successful in this program. Ideally, one letter should be from an academic supervisor and another from a supervisor or peer outside of academia or from an academic who has such experience.

Each application may also include:

- **Research Mentor:** If you already have a research mentor in mind, and have spoken to that person about working together on the proposed project, you may submit the name and expertise of your proposed research mentor. Ideally, that person will write your academic letter of recommendation.
- **Personal Website:** If you have a personal website, you may include a link.

**Timing:** Applications are due March 16, 2018 and will be reviewed after that deadline.

SSN is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, national origin, race, sexual orientation or gender identity. People of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ individuals, and women are strongly encouraged to apply.