

Summer Economics Fellows Program

Purpose: To increase the participation and advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in economics, the fellowship allows the fellow to spend a summer in residence at a sponsoring research institution such as a Federal Reserve Bank or other public agency.

Overview: Sponsored by the American Economic Association and the National Science Foundation, summer economics fellowships are available to senior graduate students and junior faculty. During their residency, fellows participate as members of the research community while engaged in a research project of their own choosing. Fellows will be mentored by experienced economists both on scientific issues, and career issues such as negotiating publications, the job market, and advancement strategies. Fellows are encouraged to present a research seminar at the sponsoring agency during their fellowship. Fellows are typically either junior faculty or graduate students at the dissertation stage. Fellows are to be chosen by the program with the agreement of the sponsoring institution in line with the goal of advancing the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the economics profession, the fit of a candidate with the activities of the research group at the sponsoring institution, and the value of the proposed research to advancing the sponsoring institution's own goals.

Application: Applicants are asked to apply directly to the program, but are welcome to indicate a preference for a particular sponsor. Applicants should include a c.v. and one page description of their proposed research, as well as the applicant information form. (A cover letter is not necessary.) Graduate students should include a letter of recommendation from a faculty member; junior faculty may include such a letter from a senior faculty member. Fellowships are open to all economists without regard to gender or minority status, although the goal of the program, advancing the careers of women and underrepresented minorities, will drive the selection process. For example, in seeking to advance women in the economics profession an institution may sponsor a couple, or a male partner of a female economist, or otherwise sponsor a male economist whose participation would assist the general goal of advancing women in the profession. Please send applications to CSWEP@tufts.edu. Preference in consideration will be given to applications received by February 29, 2008.

Participating Programs for Summer of 2008:

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve
Brookings Institution
The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City
The Federal Reserve Bank of New York
The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
Rand Corporation
Resources for the Future
Urban Institute
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

Compensation and residency dates: Compensation is set by each sponsoring institution, normally at a level commensurate with the institution's usual practices for an economist of equivalent

experience. Fellows are responsible for their own expenses. (Sponsors may cover expenses in lieu of a stipend where the amounts involved are roughly equivalent and where the fellow and sponsor both prefer this method.) Dates of residence are determined by agreement between sponsor and fellow, eight to twelve weeks is the norm.

Sponsoring requirements: Sponsoring institutions agree to sponsor one or more fellows during summer 2008 and summer 2009, assuming suitable matches can be made. Sponsoring institutions may either make payments directly to fellows, or transfer funds through the National Science Foundation to the program's AEA/Pipeline budget and have the program make payments to the fellow. Administrative expenses of the program are supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Administration: The program is administered by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Chairs of CSWEP and CSMGEP.

For further information contact Dick Startz, Summer Fellows Program Coordinator at aeansfsf@u.washington.edu.

AEA/NSF Summer Economics Fellowships to Advance the Careers of Women and Underrepresented Minorities

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where do I get an application form?

A: Just send us the applicant information form on the website, a cv., and your research proposal. Graduate students should have a letter of recommendation sent; a letter is optional for junior faculty.

Q: How long should my project description be?

A: One page or less. (Really. Including references, notes, appendices, etc.)

Q: Can I propose multiple projects to increase the probability of a match with a sponsor?

A: You can, but one strong research proposal is much more likely to grab a sponsor's attention than are several weaker ones.

Q: What about a cover letter?

A: A cover letter is not necessary; the information form has a small space for comments. If there's something really special we should know that doesn't fit, then a cover letter or additional note.

Q: Do you accept faxes?

A: We really prefer email, but we can accept faxes at 617-627-3005.

Q: Is the program open to non-Americans?

A: Definitely. But you should be aware of three points. First, it is your responsibility to be sure that your visa would allow you to work in the U.S. for one of the sponsoring agencies. Note that student visas may have restrictions and that H1B visas almost certainly have restrictions. Second, our definition of under-represented minority does depend on nationality. Third, in principle, a particular sponsoring agency might have further limitations based on citizenship or visa status.

Q: Can you help me with a visa?

A: Maybe. (U.S. immigration rules can be somewhat arcane. Neither the program nor the sponsoring institutions can give you legal advice.) We generally cannot provide H1B- or J-visas. Sometimes the sponsor can help with a B1 (visiting scholar visa). Where visa rules do not permit a stipend to the fellow, sometimes agencies are able to cover expenses in lieu of the stipend. Canadian and Mexican citizens should check out the possibility of a trade NAFTA visa.

Q: Is the program open to graduate students and junior faculty located outside the United States?

A: Yes, so long as the other criteria are met.

Q: What is the definition of “under-represented minority?”

A: We use the definition of “under-represented minority” that has been set up for the AEA Pipeline program: US citizens, permanent residents, and refugees who are African-American, Hispanic, or Native Americans.

Q: I’m male and don’t fit the definition of “under-represented minority.” Am I still eligible?

A: Definitely. Please use the space on the information form to let us know how your participation will advance the role of women or under-represented minorities in economics.

Q: My dissertation isn’t quite rolling yet. Should I still apply?

A: You should have a well defined research project. If you’re not yet at the “well-defined” stage, it would be better to wait for another year.

Q: Are fellowships available during the academic year?

A: No.

Q: Are Masters students eligible?

A: No.

Q: I’m a more senior economist. Am I eligible?

A: No.

Q: I don’t have a research plan, but I’d love to spend the summer as a research assistant. Am I eligible?

A: No.

Q: As an applicant, how do I get find an institution to sponsor me?

A: You don’t. The program supplies the sponsors.

Q: There’s an institution at which I’d like to have a fellowship, but it isn’t on your list. What should I do?

A: Institutions need to be on our sponsoring list to participate. If you have a good contact at the agency that might be interested in joining the program, ask them to contact us.

Q: My institution might want to become a sponsor. What do we need to do?

A: Essentially, you need to agree to sponsor one or more fellows and sign up! You pay for the fellows during their summer fellowship. The program is designed to keep hassle for the sponsoring agencies to a minimum. Contact aeansf@u.washington.edu for more information.

Q: Suppose my institution becomes a sponsor and then can’t find a suitable fellow?

A: We expect sponsors to make a good-faith effort, but we understand that sometimes a match can’t be worked out.

Q: As a sponsor, can we restrict the research area for fellows we might sponsor?

A: We expect you to pick fellows who match well with your institution’s interests so precisely so that you can mentor their research.

Q: Who chooses the fellows?

A: The program's screening committee sends a list to each sponsoring institution, which makes the final choice. The list is screened according to each institution's specifications. Some institutions have asked to see all candidate material, others have asked the program to provide a pre-screened short list.

Q: How much is compensation for the summer?

A: Details vary by sponsoring institution, but compensation is roughly what the institution would normally pay a visiting economist with equivalent experience.

Q: Does the program pay living or travel expenses?

A: No. (Except in special cases where the sponsor and fellow both prefer payment of expenses in lieu of a stipend. Usually done only to comply with visa restrictions.)

Q: Do I need to be a member of CSWEP, CSMGEP, or the AEA?

A: No.

Q: I missed the deadline on the website. Can I still apply?

A: We are fairly informal, so if we haven't started sorting through applications we'll take a late application. Otherwise, no. You can email us to check if you like.

Q: When will I hear back from the program?

A: Sponsoring institutions will contact directly those applicants they'd like to offer a fellowship. We expect to have the process wrapped up by the end of March, certainly no later than the end of April.

Q: How many recommendations should I have sent?

A: One for graduate students, one optionally for junior faculty. Some sponsors prefer a second letter so you can have two letters sent, but it's not required.

Q: How should the letter of recommendation be transmitted?

A: The recommender should email it directly to CSWEP@tufts.edu.

Q: Does the "fit" with the sponsoring institutions affect my chances of getting a fellowship.

A: Yes. A research agenda that is aligned with the interests of the sponsoring institution, makes for a better experience for both the fellow and the institution.

Q: I'm a junior faculty member. Who should write me a letter of recommendation?

A: A letter isn't required for a junior faculty member, but will probably work to your advantage. Any senior economist is fine. Letters usually come from a dissertation advisor, coauthor or department chair.

Q: How long is the fellowship period?

A: Typically about eight to twelve weeks. Details are negotiable between the fellow and the sponsoring institution.

Q: I have geographic preferences.

A: If they're strong, tell us about them on the applicant information form.

Q: I have various summer plans. Can I do a series of short visits?

A: It's best to have a single, long uninterrupted stay.

Q: What are the mentoring responsibilities of the sponsoring institution?

A: We figure the sponsoring institutions are already pretty savvy at nurturing young economists and don't need instruction. But here are a few suggestions based on feedback from previous participants.

1. Arrange an informal meeting at the beginning of the program to discuss the fellow's plan for the summer as well as substantive research issues.
2. Require a seminar presentation at the end of the fellowship period.
3. Assign someone to be a mentor on career issues, preferably someone who is not also in the position of advising on substantive research issues.
4. Include the fellow's work in your working paper series, when appropriate.

Q: Who pays for the program?

A: The sponsoring institutions pay for the individual fellows. The NSF is paying for administrative costs.

Q: Who runs the program?

A: The program is run by an ad hoc committee appointed by the chairs of two committees of the American Economic Association (AEA, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/>), the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP, <http://www.cswep.org/>) and the Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/CSMGEP/>).

Q: How long has the program been in operation?

A: The first fellowships were in summer 2007.

Q: Suppose I still have questions after reading the FAQs?

A: Contact Dick Startz by email at aeansf@u.washington.edu.