



SSRI Mentored Early Career Faculty Fellows Program

Release Date: November 10, 2025

Due Date: December 5, 2025

Estimated Date of Award Notification: December 15, 2025

The SSRI Mentored Faculty Fellows Program supports the career development of Penn State early career faculty in social and behavioral sciences at all Penn State campuses.

The mentored Faculty Fellows award supports training in a new area of research, an extension of existing research into new areas and/or the development of new interdisciplinary collaborations aimed at building sustainable research and securing external funding. Funding is provided to the home department for one year to support protected research time for the applicant and to support research mentors via summer supplements. Priority will be given to proposals that are aligned with SSRI's mission to foster novel, interdisciplinary research to address critical human and social problems at the local, national, and international levels and are likely to lead to future external funding.

Funding

This mentored Fellowship provides funding to the department to support the faculty member for one to two course releases during the academic year semester(s) specified in the fellowship timeline, for study and training with the guidance and support of a mentor or mentor team. The course release amount will be negotiated with the SSRI Director and PI Department Head. For CoM clinical faculty without teaching responsibilities, it will be the equivalent salary support. The mentor/mentoring team will also receive up to \$1,000 in summer supplement that will be divided by the members of the team.

Eligibility

Penn State tenure line faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor and who conduct research in the social and behavioral sciences at all Penn State campuses are eligible. Faculty members who have been PI on a major external award (e.g., NIH K01, R01, W.T. Grant Scholars Program Award, NSF Career Award or Research Project) are not eligible. However, PIs of smaller external awards (e.g., NIH R03, R21, NSF RAPID project, etc.) are eligible. Please reach out to ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu for questions about eligibility.

Application Process

Applications should first be submitted for approval to the applicant's Department Head. After approval, the Department Head should forward the application to the College Dean or Campus Chancellor. Deans and Chancellors may submit up to two proposals each year to ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu.

Timeline

- **December 5, 2025:** Deans and Chancellors forward up to two candidate proposals along with their own and the Department Head(s) statements of support, to the SSRI at: ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu;
- **December 15, 2025:** Faculty members will be notified of funding for the 2025-2026 academic year. Fellows should work directly with their Department Heads to schedule course releases (Awards are for July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027).

Format

The application should be no more than **3 single-spaced pages**, not including items 4 and 5 below. Items 1-5 should be saved in a single PDF document for review by the College Dean or Campus Chancellor.

1. Title of project and name and department(s) of the proposed Fellow and the mentor/mentorship team.

2. Goals for the Faculty Fellowship (1 page):

- Describe the research area, significance, and innovation (e.g., 1-2 paragraphs)
- Explain how the Fellowship will play a significant role in advancing the Fellow's research program (e.g., 1-2 paragraphs)

3. Activity and Training Plan (2-3 pages):

- Describe the activities that will be undertaken during the Fellowship period (e.g., 4-6 paragraphs)
- Describe how the activities will advance the goals of the Fellowship (1-2 paragraphs)
- Provide a timeline for their accomplishment - Identify and describe the targeted outcomes and milestones (1 paragraph and/or figure)
- Describe the role of each Mentor(s) and their qualifications for their roles.
- Include a brief training plan that provides details about mentoring activities such as meeting frequency and goals over the course of the fellowship (2-3 paragraphs)
- Explain how the Fellowship will lead to a proposal for external funding (1-2 paragraphs)

4. Attach statements of support from Department Head(s) and mentor(s). The letter of support from the Department Head should indicate their support of course release(s). The letter of support from the mentor(s) should include specific commitments of time and effort from the mentor to support the proposed activities. Mentor(s) should also provide evidence of past successful mentorship and/or their engagement in mentoring training activities.

5. Attach an NIH biosketch for the investigator and mentor(s).

Review Criteria

- Merits of the proposal, including its innovation, significance and relevance to the SSRI's interdisciplinary mission and strategic aims. [SSRI Mission](#)
- Qualifications, commitment, and clarity of roles for the Fellow and mentor(s).
- Clarity, rigor, and feasibility of the proposed activities.
- Likelihood of an external proposal resulting from Fellowship.

Expectations of Awardees

- SSRI encourages mentees and mentors to participate in workshops, open houses and other SSRI sponsored events throughout the award period.
- Awarded PI's will be asked to register as an Affiliated Faculty member of SSRI if they are not already designated as one.
- In addition, awardees are required to provide a progress report at six months and at the end of the funding period. The reports should highlight progress made, document tangible outcomes (e.g., papers, presentations), and describe the plan and expected timeline for an external grant proposal. Follow-up reports will be requested until a targeted external funding application is submitted.
- Finally, we ask that you please acknowledge SSRI's support in any work that results from your project by using the following language. *“This project was supported, in part, by funding from Penn State's Social Science Research Institute (SSRI). Content is the responsibility of the authors and does not represent the views of the SSRI”.*