



2021-22 Extramural Mentored Fellowships Call for Applications – Due February 5, 2021

Retirement and Disability Social Policy Fellows

The University of Wisconsin-Madison [Center for Financial Security's](#) (CFS) *Retirement and Disability Social Policy Extramural Mentored Fellowship Program* is an interdisciplinary program providing mentored fellowships in the field of retirement and disability research to early career researchers. Funded by the Social Security Administration through CFS' [Retirement and Disability Research Consortium](#) (RDRC), it provides two extramural fellowships for junior faculty (those who are non-tenured), postdoctoral researchers, or those in dissertator status.

Fellows will conduct research on topics related to Social Security, retirement, and disability policy, especially focused on economically vulnerable populations. Fellows will be expected to produce a Working Paper that conforms to SSA standards, along with an accompanying Policy Abstract and Research Brief, and quarterly progress reports.

The goal is to produce high-quality research products, as well as to develop early career researchers who can become principal investigators in the retirement and disability research fields. The fellowship will provide both funding and mentoring for researchers with an interest in applied research that is of relevance to Social Security programs and/or beneficiaries. The fellows will work in collaboration with CFS faculty, and other affiliated mentors.

Applicants should submit a proposal for a research project, which falls within one or more of the themes below, and is in alignment with recent [SSA research focal areas](#). The proposed project will result in a working paper for SSA as well as a manuscript suitable for submission to a peer review journal; and must address how SSA can use the results of the study.

1. Interactions between public assistance and social insurance programs, particularly Social Security programs, over the life course
2. The role of health and health insurance as it affects retirement and/or disability, or its impact on the financial security of economically vulnerable households
3. How economically vulnerable households combine work, pensions, and social insurance programs to secure consumption over lifetimes
4. Low-net-wealth households and retirement well-being, including the role of housing wealth, non-retirement savings, and debt.
5. The impact of the pandemic on financially vulnerable populations, and/or the impact of COVID on Social Security programs, recipients or policies.

All proposals should include specific research questions and the proposed data to answer these questions. The potential findings should clearly articulate relevance for policymakers, and specifically with respect to Social Security Administration beneficiaries and programs, as well as contribute to the broader retirement and disability research literature. A discussion of how this work is an extension of current/existing research and/or how the work creates opportunities for future



projects should also be included. Applicants should describe their interest and experience in retirement and disability research; their experiences working with data in applied research; and propose and discuss the research question(s) they will study as part of this project.

Eligibility

An ideal candidate will have strong quantitative and writing skills; advanced knowledge of quantitative sociology, demography, biostatistics, or econometric methods with large survey and/or administrative data; and training or interest in issues relating to retirement and disability. Suitable backgrounds include Economics, Policy/Policy Analysis, Demography, Public Health, Sociology and other related fields. Applicants should be non-tenured junior faculty, postdoctoral researchers, or those in dissertator status.

Award

Two 12-month positions are available. In 2021-22, the stipend for this fellowship will be \$40,000. Start date to be negotiated, but no later than August 23, 2021. Fellows will have access to travel support (as appropriate and as permitted by UW-Madison travel policies), and CFS researchers and events, including the RDRC Annual Research Meeting, along with the aforementioned mentorship.

Application Materials and Submission

Applicants should describe their interest in the RDRC, their experiences working with data in applied research, and propose and discuss the research question(s) they would like to study as part of the fellowship. Along with their CV, applicants will need to submit the following:

- ✓ Cover Letter (1 page) describing your research interests and how you see this fellowship supporting your development as a scholar of retirement and disability research
- ✓ Equity Statement (1 page) describing your personal commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through your research, teaching or service.
- ✓ Letter of Recommendation from an advisor, mentor, or senior colleague
- ✓ Working paper or published paper on which you are primary author
- ✓ Research Prospectus (3 pages) that will be the focus of their work, and includes
 - Proposed Project Title
 - Abstract (200 words)
 - Brief background on the proposed topics (250 words)
 - Research questions to be explored, how they connect to the CFS RDRC themes, and significance of your research
 - Proposed data sources, methods section and discussion of the techniques you will use in your analysis to answer the central research questions
 - How this work fits into the scholar's development (250 words max.)
 - The proposed research papers and other related work that could emerge from project
 - The relevance of your research for the field, for policy makers, and for the public
 - The scholar's goals and mentoring support needs during the fellowship

Application Materials and Submission

The application link is online at <https://cfsrdrc.wisc.edu/training>. **For full consideration, submit your application by 11:59 PST on February 5, 2021. Submit online [here](#).** The online application



form includes the following background information:

- ✓ Name, mailing address, phone and email address
- ✓ Current Institution
- ✓ Department or Field
- ✓ Doctoral status: date of doctorate degree
- ✓ Dissertation chair or main advisor
- ✓ Personal website
- ✓ Earliest available start date

All applications will be reviewed by a panel of scholars from CFS, SSA or RDRC programs. Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria and weights:

- Research prospectus and capability (50%)
- Equity, diversity and inclusion statement (20%)
- Writing and communication capability (15%)
- Recommendation letter (15%)

All projects will also be subject to review by SSA program officials before Fellows are named. For more information, contact Professor J. Michael Collins (jmcollins@wisc.edu), Faculty Director of the Center for Financial Security.