



Dissertation Fellowship Program for Retirement and Disability Research 2021 Proposal Guidelines

The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College (CRR) is soliciting proposals for the Dissertation Fellowship Program in retirement or disability research. The program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) through the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC). The program's purpose is to promote the next generation of scholars in retirement or disability policy research and to improve the quality of scholarship in retirement and disability research studies.

Applicants must demonstrate that their proposal focuses on at least one of the following [research focal areas](#): (1) trends in disability; (2) determining disability; (3) requirements of work in the modern economy; (4) informing long-term projections and models; (5) improving communication and outreach; (6) state and local pensions for non-covered workers; (7) modernizing totalization agreements; (8) economic security of SSA beneficiaries; (9) work-activity retention of disabled beneficiaries with overpayments; and (10) improving service delivery.

Applicants are required to: (1) be enrolled in a qualified doctoral program at a U.S. university; (2) have completed all coursework for a Ph.D. by the time funding would start; (3) have a dissertation advisor and/or committee; and (4) have the chair of the dissertation committee confirm that he/she has read and approved the research methodology for the proposal. Doctoral candidates from all academic disciplines are encouraged to submit a proposal.

Up to three grants of \$28,000 will be awarded. **The deadline for submitting a proposal is 5:00pm (EST) on Sunday, January 31, 2021.** Awards will be announced in April 2021.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Requirements for Fellowship Applicants:

1. Applicant must be enrolled in a qualified doctoral program at a U.S. university.
2. Applicant must have completed all coursework and have completed the appropriate examinations or qualifications to be considered A.B.D.
3. Applicants must have a dissertation proposal focused on one of the Social Security Administration's Research Focal Areas (below).
4. Applicants must have a dissertation advisor and committee.
5. Applicants must have the chair of the dissertation committee approve the research methodology using the provided form.

6. Applicants cannot be receiving other federal funding concurrently with this fellowship. Please contact the CRR if you have a potential conflict.

Research Focal Areas

Dissertation Proposals must be focused on a minimum of one of the following [research areas](#):

- Trends in disability;
- Determining disability;
- Requirements of work in the modern economy;
- Informing long-term projections and models;
- Improving communication and outreach;
- State and local pensions for non-covered workers;
- Modernizing totalization agreements;
- Economic security of SSA beneficiaries;
- Work-activity retention of disabled beneficiaries with overpayments; or
- Improving service delivery.

Format of Fellowship Proposal

Proposals should not exceed 12 pages. Twelve-point, Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing, and 1-inch margins are required.

Required elements of the proposal include:

1. Cover page with the researcher's name, dissertation title, institution, list of committee members and advisor [1 page].
2. Abstract describing the project purpose, data, and methods [1 page].
3. Description of research question, methodology, data, and timeline [9 pages].
4. References [1 page].

SUBMISSION PROCESS

All Fellowship Applicants must complete the online submission form found on the [Center's website](#).

Required components of the online application include:

1. Contact information, institutional affiliation, and education history.
2. Research proposal (Word or PDF attachment).
3. Current CV.
4. Electronic copy of doctoral transcript (scanned copies and/or degree audits are permitted).
5. Name and contact information of two persons writing letters of recommendation.
6. Signed form from dissertation committee chair approving the research methodology.

Submissions must be received through the online system by 5:00pm (EST) on Sunday, January 31, 2021.

Letters of Recommendation

Fellowship applicants are required to submit two letters of recommendation for their dissertation proposal. One letter must be from the dissertation chair or academic advisor. Letters are also

subject to the above deadline, and must be submitted through the online system by the person writing the letter at the [Center's website](#).

REVIEW PROCESS

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel that will include representatives from the RDRC and SSA. The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

1. Relevance of the dissertation proposal to retirement or disability policy as listed in the Research Focal Areas section.
2. Evidence that the candidate has passed any or all comprehensive and/or special area exams associated with A.B.D. status.
3. Qualifications of the applicant.
4. Dissertation advisor and committee members.
5. A proposal that has been formally approved by the student's full dissertation committee.
7. Research design and methodology.
8. Research proposal schedule and timeline.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

Awards will be announced in April 2021. A draft of the dissertation must be submitted within a year of the award to demonstrate adequate process.

QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For any questions about the Dissertation Fellowship Program, please call Marina Tsiknis at (617) 552-1092 or e-mail tsiknis@bc.edu.

About the Center for Retirement Research

The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College was established in 1998 through a grant from the Social Security Administration. The Center's mission is to produce first-class research and forge a strong link between the academic community and decision makers in the public and private sectors around an issue of critical importance to the nation's future. To achieve this mission, the Center sponsors a wide variety of research projects, transmits new findings to a broad audience, trains new scholars, and broadens access to valuable data sources. Since its inception, the Center has established a reputation as an authoritative source of information on all major aspects of the retirement income and policy debate.

Potential applicants are encouraged to visit the Center's website at crr.bc.edu to learn more about our research and activities. To join the Center's mailing list, please send an e-mail to crr@bc.edu or fill out an online form through our website.