

Statement of Work

Background

Senior leadership at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) endorses attracting new people and ideas to NIH through new mechanisms and considers it desirable to identify those with a high probability of remaining in the federal, academic, or industrial research environment upon completion of a temporary placement at NIH. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has operated the Science & Technology Policy Fellowship Program (AAAS S&T Policy Fellowship) since 1973. They currently partner with more than 30 scientific and engineering professional societies to provide Congressional Fellowships, as well as with 16 federal agencies to provide Executive Branch Fellowships. The AAAS operates the S&T Policy Fellowship Program to enable accomplished scientists and engineers from early, mid, and senior career stages to learn about, participate in, contribute to, and communicate the implementation, monitoring, enforcement, and evaluation of federal policies.

NIH has participated in the AAAS S&T Policy Fellowship Program since 2001 and considers this a unique opportunity to introduce scientists and engineers to the analysis, development, and implementation of policies that affect the conduct of medical research. The AAAS S&T Policy Fellows at NIH also are given the opportunity to further develop their understanding of the process and mechanisms that NIH uses to support, manage, and coordinate research, research training, medical and health communications, and outreach.

The AAAS S&T Policy Fellowships support NIH by bringing highly trained individuals who contribute their doctoral level scientific and technical expertise, analytical skills, and external perspectives to federal science policy. The Fellows accept placement in the science policy, planning, evaluation, communication, programmatic, or legislative offices in the Institutes, Centers, and the Office of the Director (ICOs), and work on initiatives of mutual interest to the Fellows and the host offices. They interact with staff across NIH, other federal agencies, scientific associations, voluntary health agencies, and other public and private sector organizations. Currently more than 30 former AAAS S&T Policy Fellows hold senior positions at NIH.

AAAS currently offers S&T Policy Fellowships in seven programmatic areas, three of which NIH typically recruits from (depending on the focus of the host office):

- Health, Education & Human Services (HEHS) track: Fellows work to improve programs and policies in areas such as scientific research, innovation, communication, and education.
- Big Data & Analytics (BDA) track: Fellows tackle a broad range of policymaking and implementation challenges by applying analytical skills to data and trend analysis issues from infrastructure, technology, quality control, and presentation to security and ethics.

- Diplomacy, Security & Development (DSD) track: Fellows apply their scientific expertise into policy development and program planning, implementation and evaluation in the areas such as foreign policy, multilateral cooperation, disaster preparedness and response, capacity building, cyber and health security.

As and when the need arises, NIH will potentially host Fellows from additional S&T Policy Fellowship programmatic areas in the future.

Funding Arrangement

The AAAS S&T Policy Fellows at NIH hold the classification of Temporary Full-Time Equivalents under 5 CFR 213.3102 (r), Schedule A. Under this classification, Fellows are paid through the Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS), known as MyPay. This pay system is the result of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management assigning (on November 20, 2002) DFAS as the provider of payroll services to all federal agencies under the Department of Health and Human Services and is the mandatory pay system used by NIH. Under the DFAS system, taxes and applicable benefits are deducted from each pay period check. All job related travel, health insurance, and other allowable elected benefits are paid for by the sponsoring office through the DFAS System. Moving expenses are not allowable reimbursements under the classification of Temporary Full-Time Equivalents.

AAAS shall provide NIH with a monthly invoice for 1/12 of the annual price for administrative and management fees times the number of Fellows in the program each year. Additionally, the AAAS shall provide to NIH an annual narrative summary report of the Program and the NIH Fellows' progress within 90 days of the end of each Fellowship period (August 31).

Implementation, Administration and Management

The objective of the AAAS S&T Policy Fellowships at NIH is to place up to 40 first and second year Fellows annually in science policy, planning, evaluation, communication, programmatic, or legislative offices throughout NIH. All placements are dependent on the needs and matching of Fellows to offices.

Building on more than 40 years of experience, AAAS administers and manages the S&T Policy Fellowships in consultation with designated staff at its partner agencies. The AAAS Fellowships' Division ensures the necessary materials, facilities, supplies, personnel, and expertise to permit quality program oversight; promotion and recruitment of all applicants; processing of all applications; management of the dual peer reviewed selection process and the placement process; planning and implementation of a yearlong professional development program; planning and implementing on-site visits to each placement office; and monitoring, evaluation, and annual narrative reporting on all Fellows and the Fellowship program at NIH.

Acting independently and not as an agent of the U.S. Government, AAAS shall carry out the following functions:

1. Recruitment and Outreach – AAAS shall recruit candidates from a broad array of backgrounds and diversity of geographic, disciplinary, gender, and ethnic perspectives; from a range of sectors, including academia, industry, and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) (federal employees are not eligible); and from a spectrum of career stages from recent Ph.D. graduates to university faculty and/or high-level employees from private organizations to retired scientists and engineers. The AAAS shall target individuals who meet the following criteria:
 - a. Highly qualified doctoral-level scientists or engineers (Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M., D.Sc., and other terminal degrees), in any behavioral/social science, biological, computational, or physical science, geoscience, and medical/health science, or any field of engineering, or any relevant interdisciplinary field (individuals with a master's degree in engineering and at least three years of post-degree professional experience also may apply);
 - b. Demonstrate integrity and good judgment on selections by having candidates provide solid scientific and technical credentials.
 - c. Exhibit a record of increasing professional accomplishments and experiences appropriate to the candidate's career stage and field, and a strong interest in applying knowledge toward the solution of problems in the designated Fellowship program area.
 - d. Show awareness of the ways in which science and technology affect a broad range of non-scientific issues and sensitivity to political, economic, and social factors.
 - e. Display a willingness and flexibility to tackle problems beyond the scope of a specific area(s) of scientific or technical expertise.
 - f. Present a commitment to apply their scientific or technical expertise to serve society.
 - g. Demonstrate the capacity to communicate well, both verbally and in writing to nonscientific audiences, and the ability to work effectively outside the scientific and engineering communities.
 - h. Display maturity and self-direction, with the capacity, initiative, and flexibility to work well independently as well as in groups.
 - i. Hold U.S. Citizenship; and
 - j. Notify all S&T Policy Fellowship finalists prior to interviewing at NIH that a requirement of serving as a temporary federal employee under NIH provisions of

the Fellowship is the obligation of males to register for the Selective Service as imposed by the Military Selective Service Act, which establishes and governs the operations of the Selective Service System.

In addition, AAAS shall incorporate language about the Military Selective Service Act on the S&T Policy Fellowships website under the section pertaining to compliance requirements for background checks. AAAS shall also add this information to the *Frequently Asked Questions* section.

2. In order to help accomplish these criteria, AAAS shall maintain exposure and promote activities year-round by developing a pipeline of candidates and maximize the recruitment and outreach budget by carrying out the following activities:
 - a. Maintain a website dedicated to promoting the AAAS Fellowship Programs that details the descriptions of all Fellowship opportunities at federal partnered agencies.
 - b. Distribute the annual call for applications each May to November.
 - c. Arrange information booths and presentations at scientific conferences and information sessions, and workshops at university campuses.
 - d. Publicize Fellowship information on science and technology related electronic bulletin boards, LISTSERVs, websites, and through print publications; and
 - e. Advertise in *Science* and other appropriate professional journals, magazines, newspapers, and newsletters.
3. Application and Selection Process – involves soliciting, reviewing, and evaluating applications, designating, and interviewing semi-finalists, and appointing finalists for the annual AAAS Fellowships. In administering and managing the process, AAAS shall:
 - a. Maintain an online application system and respond to applicant inquiries.
 - b. Research, select, and convene initial review panels of former AAAS Fellows, and selection committees for the Fellowships. AAAS retains decision-making authority regarding the composition of all panels and committees, in order to ensure that they include the necessary representation of backgrounds and expertise to select candidates for the full range of participating agencies under the Fellowship areas, and to avoid any conflict of interest, however each HEHS and BDA selection committee shall have at least one member from NIH;
 - c. Review all applicants to ensure candidates meet designated criteria and that all required materials are submitted to NIH at the appropriated time.

- d. Maintain an online evaluation system for reviewers and selection committee members, ensure that all reviewers and committee members are provided guidance and instructions on selection criteria and all procedures for reviewing and scoring applications, designate and interview semi-finalists, and determine Fellowship finalists.
 - e. Manage the logistics of arranging selection committees, selection committee meetings, semi-finalists interviews, finalists' interviews and instructing semi-finalists and finalists on the selections system.
 - f. Coordinating the interviews of semi-finalists by selectin committees via online video-sharing technology.
 - g. Coordinating travel and accommodations for both finalists to come to the Washington, D.C. area for the committee selections and placement interviews with federal agencies.
 - h. Process and deliver all reimbursements for committee members and finalists.
 - i. Provide the NIH COR with a roster of HEHS and BDA selection committees, and if requested, selection committees for other tracks that NIH may host Fellows from, a minimum of ten business days prior to the initial committee meetings; and
 - j. Inform the NIH COR in the Office of the Director, Office of Science Policy of the dates and times Selection Committees are scheduled to meet and allow said COR or their designee the courtesy to observe Selection Committee Meetings with finalists.
4. Placement Process – involves interviews between finalists and potential host offices to explore compatibility between projects, expertise, and interests; matching finalists with interviewing offices, and issuing offer letters to those offices to confirm placement and assignments within that office. In order to carry out these activities, AAAS shall:
- a. Maintain an online placement interview scheduling system and respond to inquiries and issues from participating host agencies and offices.
 - b. Provide the NIH Program Manager and other designated staff, as assigned, with online access. AAAS shall then provide the interviewing NIH offices with access in order that they can access appropriate candidates' applications for the exclusive purpose of reviewing and identifying finalists to interview during Placement Week.

- c. NIH does not allow finalists and interviewing offices to contact one another prior to interviews taking place during the interview week. Any contact prior to interviews must come from the NIH COR/AAAS program manager. Therefore, it is imperative that AAAS provide the NIH COR/AAAS program manager on the day the online scheduling system becomes available a listing of each finalists' phone and email address, three references to distribute to interviewing offices, and a one-page writing sample on any health/policy topic selected by the finalist (these references are in addition to the references sent to AAAS through the application process, and which are considered to contain personal information that is not provided to interviewing agencies)
 - d. Provide online information for each finalist that shall include at a minimum, a one page summary of extracurricular activities, the AAAS completed Application form, CV, and application essay.
 - e. Handle logistics for finalist's travel and accommodations for activities and interviews during Placement Week.
 - f. Handle all requests and processing of reimbursements.
 - g. Conduct a half-day placement orientation to prepare the finalists for the week of interviews and set up and staff a central placement office for the finalists, as well as provide guidance and support for both finalists and participating host offices.
 - h. Collect ranked lists of preferred Fellowship offers from interviewing offices and finalists and facilitate matches.
 - i. Keep NIH interviewing offices informed of progress on the matching and placement of Fellows either by direct communication or through the OSP Project Manager.
 - j. Inform and advise finalists and interviewing offices on placement opportunities and available finalists when placements/finalists are still available.
 - k. AAAS will provide NIH with a list of AAAS Fellows that have signed Fellowship agreement forms, which marks the completion of the placement process. Following the placement process, NIH will contact new and/or renewing AAAS Fellows and provide the terms and conditions of their temporary federal term appointment.
5. AAAS will provide a copy of the Fellowship Agreement Form to the NIH COR annually. It is understood that this signed form is only an agreement pertaining specifically to the relationship between the Fellow and AAAS while claiming Fellowship status with AAAS.

6. The AAAS program manager will inform the NIH COR of the final status of matches within three (3) business days of each match.
7. The NIH COR may coordinate with the AAAS Program Manager but is not responsible for the matching process between placement offices and finalists. Therefore, it is required that the AAAS program manager provide the NIH COR with a comprehensive listing of the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of finalists and matching NIH placement offices within 10 days of completing the matching process.
8. Professional Development and Networking enables Fellows to have an active learning experience, helps better prepare them for assignments in the federal government, and supports them in their professional growth throughout the Fellowship year. In administering and managing the professional development program for NIH, AAAS shall perform the following activities:
 - a. Plan and implement an 8-day orientation for new Fellows to be held beginning on or about September 1 of each Fellowship year.
 - b. Plan and arrange for monthly or bi-monthly educational activities that may include seminars, local and/or legislative tours, career-enhancement sessions, skill-building workshops, and networking; and
 - c. Provide the NIH COR /AAAS program manager, and each placement office with an electronic AAAS calendar of proposed/ scheduled activities as developed and/or edited.
9. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting involves soliciting Fellowship plans, site visits, collecting Fellows' reports, ongoing contact with Fellows to address challenges and opportunities, administering evaluation surveys to assess progress towards objectives, and annual reporting to NIH host offices. In administering and managing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, AAAS shall perform the following activities:
 - a. Guide Fellows in negotiating, writing, and submitting a scope of work/professional development plan within 60 days of beginning their duties in their placement offices. Guidance and a scope of work will help Fellows with the NIH Performance Management Appraisal Program (PMAP) that is mandatory for all NIH employees; provide the NIH COR with copies of each professional development plan.
 - b. Conduct evaluative surveys on the pre-orientation, post-orientation, and at the midyear and year-end points. Collate, summarize, and share results in the annual narrative report with NIH COR and each placement office.

- c. Conduct site visits to meet with AAAS Fellows, supervisors, and/or mentors. All visits should include the NIH COR; therefore, AAAS should make every effort to notify and include the NIH COR of proposed and scheduled dates when implemented.
- d. Inform the NIH COR of any issue/problem that arises with NIH Fellows, and collaborate to strategize and implement solutions either through NIH alone or in conjunction with AAAS, if applicable.
- e. Provide reporting guidelines and an online reporting template for Fellows to access and solicit midyear and year-end reporting; and
- f. Submit within 90 days at the end of each contract year (August 31), or by November 30, an annual narrative report summarizing the work performed and the results obtained by each Fellow placed at the NIH. The report shall include:
 - An Annual Report Narrative
 - AAAS Future Goals and Objectives for the Program
 - List of Current Fellows at the NIH, their degrees, their specific office within each host office and ICO.
 - A summary of the Overall Outcomes of the Fellows and their opportunities and gained knowledge
 - Any specific highlights or outputs of accomplishments of Fellows
 - Yearly recruitment plans and activities for recruiting Fellows into the program
 - A summary of the selection and placement activities, including total applications for NIH, number of selected finalists, and final number of Fellows placed at NIH
 - Synopsis of Professional Development activities held throughout the Fellowship year
 - Professional Development Calendar
 - Monitoring and evaluation activities, i.e. site visits, identifying issues and major factors that contributed to successful Fellowships for all participating federal agencies
 - Fellowship Program Evaluation Executive Summary and summary of NIH responses
 - Summary of each Fellows Activities and Accomplishments
 - List of HEHS and BDA Selection Committee Members