

OVERVIEW

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, through its scholarship and grantmaking programs, helps exceptionally promising, low-income students, from middle school to graduate school, reach their full potential through education. Our work allows us to see first-hand how high-achieving, low-income students overcome obstacles and excel academically. Our research, however, has shown that many high-potential, low-income students are unable to successfully navigate these obstacles. In *The Achievement Trap* (2007), we found that there is a significant drop off in the number of low-income students who are identified as high-achieving throughout the primary and secondary education system. These student experiences raise important questions about the factors and contexts that help some low-income students overcome personal adversity, limited educational opportunities, and challenging socioeconomic circumstances to excel academically, and how a deeper understanding of such matters can be used to design programs and interventions that will help more low-income students identified as high achieving early in their primary and secondary school years to sustain their academic achievement levels through college and beyond.

In response to this gap in knowledge, the Foundation has created the Cooke Dissertation Fellowship for advanced doctoral students who are completing dissertations that further the understanding of the educational pathways and experiences of high-achieving, low-income students. The fellowship is intended to focus more scholarly attention on the population of students the Foundation serves in order to enable parents, policymakers, and practitioners to better support such students in achieving their full potential.

Dissertation fellowships are intended to support the doctoral student for work done after the student's dissertation proposal has been successfully defended. Applications are encouraged from a variety of disciplines such as, but not limited to, education, sociology, economics, psychology, statistics, and psychometrics.

The fellowship is a one-time award of up to **\$25,000**, which may be used for a period of not less than nine months and up to 18 months, beginning in May 2012 when award decisions are announced.

Before submission, applicants should visit www.jkcf.org to familiarize themselves with the Foundation's programs.

Incomplete applications will not be considered. **Deadline for submission is February 3, 2012**

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY

Applicants for Jack Kent Cooke Dissertation Fellowships:

- may be US citizens, US permanent residents, or non-US citizens;
- must currently be studying at a US accredited institution;
- must be advanced doctoral students, who have completed all pre-dissertation requirements (including the proposal);
- must not have previously received a Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, sex, age, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientation, or national origin. Foundation staff, board members, and their families are not eligible to apply.

SELECTION CRITERIA

With the assistance of a panel of national experts, the Foundation will select fellows using these criteria:

- Applicant's superior academic ability and achievement;
- Dissertation's significant contribution to exploring and understanding the factors that support and hinder high academic achievement for low-income students. Ideally, the results will enable practitioners, scholars, funders and policy makers to design strategies and programs to aid high-achieving, low-income students in reaching their full potential;
- The quality of the proposal with regard to its methodology, scope, theoretical framework, and grounding in the relevant scholarly literature; and
- The feasibility of the project and the likelihood that the applicant will execute the work within the proposed timeframe.

Jack Kent Cooke Dissertation Fellowship Guidelines

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Application*
- Cover letter describing relevancy of proposed research with the Foundation's mission (one page, single-spaced, no smaller than 11 pt. font, 1" margins)*
- Dissertation abstract (one page, double-spaced, no smaller than 11 pt. font, 1" margins)*
- Summary of the proposal – Limited to five pages (double-spaced, 11 pt. font, 1" margins) and should include all the following sections: 1) Objectives and purpose(s); 2) Perspective(s) or theoretical framework; 3) Methods, techniques or modes of inquiry; 4) Educational and/or policy implications of the study. In the summary, please address how your research relates to the Foundation's work: advancing the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need (e.g. Pell eligible, free/reduced lunch). References may be included in addition to the five-page limit. They should be single-spaced and prepared in accordance with the style required by your discipline.*
- Work plan (timeline) for completing the dissertation*
- One letter of support from your dissertation chair or advisor, including the Letter of Support form - The letter must confirm successful defense of the dissertation proposal, *including month and year of the defense*. This letter should include a brief clarification of the purposes, scope and quality of your dissertation research, an explanation of how the dissertation contributes to the field of study (in terms of theory and practice) and the Foundation's mission, and a discussion about why the work deserves fellowship support.*
- Official graduate transcript sent from your university – Contact your university registrar to have the transcript mailed to the Foundation to the attention of Barbara Schmertz. *Make sure to request your transcript early so it will arrive at the Foundation by the due date. Some schools can take 30 days or more to process.*

- Curriculum vitae*

* indicates material that can be submitted via email. The letter of support should either be sent in a sealed envelope (sign across the seal) to the Foundation OR from the email address of the dissertation chair or academic advisor, if submitted via email.

GENERAL

Selected fellows agree to comply with Foundation requirements and requests for the duration of the fellowship. Some key requirements and terms are:

- Fellows must be enrolled full time in a graduate degree program and provide documentation of academic progress each term.
- Fellows must attend the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholars Weekend August 2-5, 2012. The Foundation will arrange and pay for travel, lodging, and meals.
- Fellows may be asked to provide information (e.g., presentation, articles, synopses) on the results of their research with the Foundation community and fellow Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholars.

HOW FUNDING MAY BE USED

The Cooke Dissertation Fellowship may only be used to cover costs associated with writing a dissertation. This may include tuition, fees, books, room and board, research, and other approved expenses. Funding does not cover overhead.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Foundation will make the fellowship application available on its website in October 2012. The application must be submitted, and supporting documentation must be **received** by the Foundation by **February 3, 2012**.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Send application and materials to:

fellows@jkcf.org (include your name in the subject line) OR

Dissertation Fellowship
Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
44325 Woodridge Parkway
Lansdowne, VA 20176

Deadline for submitting application and supporting materials is **February 3, 2012**. Award decisions will be announced in May 2012.