



GRADUATE ARCHER FELLOWSHIP

Policy Research Prospectus

Tips for Applicants to Write an Effective Prospectus

Graduate Archer Fellow Policy Research Paper

As a fellow, you will examine a current policy challenge and propose a realistic legislative solution that addresses this challenge. Throughout your fellowship, a policy expert will support your research and writing in a collaborative group setting alongside fellows focused on similar policy challenges.

Your research may include archives and libraries, think tank events, conferences, congressional committee hearings, interviews and oral histories, direct experiential learning in your internship, and other sources that are relevant to your topic.

By the end of the fellowship, you will complete a ten-page paper and presentation that both addresses the policy challenge and advances your own academic and professional goals.

Your Policy Research Prospectus

As an applicant, you should craft a policy research prospectus that encapsulates not just *what* you want to research, but *how* you want to approach your research question and *why* it matters for your academic and professional trajectory.

As you develop your prospectus, think about your readers. They will read for:

1. your nuanced description of the policy challenge, a clear identification of the stakeholders, and a well-reasoned policy recommendation;
2. your well-supported analysis of why this challenge is important;
3. the resources in D.C. that you will use to research this topic;
4. your plans to apply or build on this research after the fellowship.

1. Describe the federal policy challenge you wish to solve, identify the stakeholders, and explain why it is important.

As a fellow, you will spend significant time examining the policy challenge.

In your prospectus, you should describe the policy challenge and the key stakeholders. Rather than a broad topic—such as childhood poverty—narrow your focus to a more specific challenge—such as food insecurity for elementary school children.

Your prospectus should also clearly articulate why this policy challenge matters. You might argue for its importance on various grounds, for instance:

- economic costs or gains at stake
- impacts on individual, community, and societal quality of life
- benefits or harms to the environment
- ethical considerations

2. Articulate a policy recommendation that would effectively address the challenge.

As a fellow, you will refine and advocate for your recommendation to address the policy challenge.

In your prospectus, focus on a specific recommendation that is realistic and could meaningfully address the challenge. For instance:

- **Too broad:** a policy recommendation intended to eliminate domestic and dating violence throughout the U.S.
- **More realistic:** a policy recommendation that enhances victim services and the criminal justice response to intimate partner violence in Tribal communities.

3. Describe how you would approach researching the policy challenge while in Washington, D.C.

As a fellow, you will conduct research in D.C. to deepen your knowledge of the policy challenge and inform your recommendation. The research you conduct will reflect your topic and your approach to examining it.

In your prospectus, indicate the resources that you would access in D.C. These might include:

- Archival and library collections at the National Archives, Library of Congress, or Smithsonian Institution
- Talks and conferences hosted by think tanks and other organizations
- Congressional committee hearings or other meetings
- Interviews or oral histories with experts and other stakeholders
- Experiential learning in your workplace

To the extent possible, be specific. For instance, identify the congressional committees and subcommittees of interest or the think tank experts you would ask to interview.

4. Explain how you would use this policy research project to support your academic and professional aspirations after the fellowship.

As a fellow, you will craft a research paper that is more than an end in itself.

Your prospectus should identify a topic that is significant to you, reflects your academic interests, and aligns with your professional aspirations.

In your prospectus, explain to your readers how you will use, apply, or build on the research paper in your endeavors beyond the Archer fellowship. For instance:

- Adapting the paper to a memo or talking points that you deliver to a policymaker
- Excerpting the research paper in an op-ed or other public-facing project
- Refining the paper as a writing sample for future internship and job applications
- Expanding the paper into an article for submission to a journal
- Developing the paper into a writing sample for a PhD application
- Incorporating the paper into a thesis or dissertation

Supporting evidence

To be effective, your prospectus must cite supporting evidence when relevant. For instance, you might cite evidence that supports your claim about the importance of the policy challenge.

You must correctly format your citations using a citation style such as MLA, APA, or Chicago. If you have questions about citing evidence, please reach out to your academic supervisor or research librarian at your university for help.

Your citations are not included in the 500-word limit for the policy paper.

CONTACT US

Questions about the Graduate Archer Fellowship Program application can be directed to Archer Admissions.

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