

IRP Dissertation Research Fellowship 2026–2027

Application Deadline: 11:59 p.m. CDT **March 16, 2026**

Posted: February 16, 2026

ABOUT FELLOWSHIP

The [Institute for Research on Poverty \(IRP\)](#) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is pleased to announce that it anticipates supporting one dissertation research project for 12 months, including the summer of 2026 or 2027 and the academic year 2026–2027, through IRP’s Dissertation Research Fellowship program. IRP invites proposals in support of all poverty-related dissertation projects, but special consideration will be given to projects that inform policy, possibly by providing estimates of program effectiveness.

ABOUT IRP

IRP is a center for interdisciplinary research into the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality and the impact of related policies and programs. As the National Research Center on Poverty and Economic Mobility sponsored by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, IRP coordinates the [U.S. Collaborative of Poverty Centers \(CPC\)](#) in an integrated set of activities with the ultimate goal of improving the effectiveness of public policies to reduce poverty and inequality and their impacts on the well-being of the American people.

TERMS

Eligibility

Only doctoral students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison who are pursuing a poverty-related degree and receive a recommendation by an [on-campus IRP faculty affiliate](#) are eligible to apply. Applicants should be in the final year or two of their PhD program. Preference will be given to students who have participated in the [IRP Graduate Research Fellows](#) (GRF) program.

Funding

The fellowship provides up to 50% [Graduate Research Assistant](#) support for 12 months.

Commitment

IRP Dissertation Research Fellowship awardee will be asked to present their work at a GRF seminar.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Student's demonstrated commitment to U.S. poverty research, including involvement with GRF (20%)
- Proposed research dissertation prospectus feasibility, quality, and focus on U.S. poverty (30%)
- Potential for impact on policy/practice and connection to IRP projects/research (20%)
- Student's potential based on prior experiences, projects, funding applications and funding record, and other evidence of capability (30%)

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit proposals via the [online Application Form](#).

Have your on-campus IRP faculty affiliate recommender submit a letter of recommendation via the [online Submission Form](#).

Applicants should provide the materials outlined below as one PDF file, in the order listed, by the application deadline. **Applicants are responsible for providing the link above to their recommender to directly submit their letter of recommendation by the application deadline.** Both the applicant and the recommender will receive a confirmation e-mail when the letter is submitted. Note that the letter of recommendation can be completed before or after the application is submitted but both the application and the recommendation letter must be completed by the deadline for the application to be complete.

Your application should include:

1. Cover page listing the following:
 - a. Student's name, department, contact information, and history of participation in the IRP Graduate Research Fellows program;
 - b. IRP faculty affiliate recommender's name; and
 - c. Project title and abstract.
2. Description of proposed work, no more than 4,000 words, to include:
 - a. Research question, original contribution to the literature, and to US poverty research;
 - b. Research design, methodology, and data sources; and
 - c. Current status/preliminary work and expected dissertation completion date.
3. Current curriculum vitae.

4. Letter from an IRP on-campus faculty affiliate, which should be uploaded directly (*separately from the rest of the proposal*) to [this link](#). The letter should address:
 - a. The merits of the dissertation project;
 - b. The IRP faculty affiliate's level of involvement (e.g., *chair of dissertation committee, collaborator on related project, etc.*); and
 - c. Expected dissertation completion date.

CONTACT

Questions should be directed to: IRP Apply | irpapply@ssc.wisc.edu

TIMELINE

Call Release	February 16, 2026
Application Deadline	March 16, 2026
Notification	Mid-April 2026
Contract Begins	Summer 2026 or Fall 2026
Contract Ends	12 months after award start date

Note: Contract dates and reporting requirement deadlines will be specified in the award letter upon notification.