External Funding Opportunities

CUNY Graduate Center

Economics Ph.D. Program

Fall 2021
This workshop provides a general overview of funding opportunities available for economics Ph.D. students at CUNY. The information offered in this workshop represents the views and experience of the author and not necessarily those of the Graduate Center nor its Economics program. This information is given as a summary for first and second-year students and is not an exhaustive guide of all resources. It remains the responsibility of the student to review carefully all information of the program of their interest. The Graduate Center and the Economics Department do not endorse a particular organization or program, but do encourage all students to seek external funding opportunities and apply to all programs for which they are eligible, at their own discretion.
Overview

1. Internal programs
2. External programs
3. Predoctoral Ford Foundation
4. NSF-GRFP
5. Key Takeaways
Aside from the funding packages offered by the Graduate Center for entering doctoral students (Graduate Center Fellowship, Tuition Fellowship, Provost Enhancement), there are other financial awards offered over the course of their studies and research.

Most of these are given at the stages of research and/or dissertation. The eligibility of applicants and amounts given vary across awards. See a complete list here.

Examples:
- Doctoral Student Research Grant (DSRG) – up to $1,500
- Graduate Center Dissertation Fellowship Competition – up to $25,000
There are other fellowships available at the Graduate Center that require a certain number of working hours.

These are not student employment (e.g., working at library, registrar, etc.) nor teaching jobs.

Examples:

- GC Digital Fellowship: Funded by the GC Digital Initiative, it seeks to integrate digital tools into research. Read more [here](#).
- The Futures Initiative Fellowship: It advocates for diversity and fosters collaboration across disciplines. Read more [here](#).
External programs

- National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)
  - Three-year fellowship for students pursuing graduate studies and research in STEM disciplines (including economics).
  - Administered and sponsored by the National Science Foundation (U.S. federal government agency).

- Predoctoral Ford Foundation Fellowship
  - Three-year fellowship for Ph.D. studies and research in humanities and sciences.
  - Administered by the National Academies of Sciences on behalf of Ford Foundation.
Predoctoral Ford Foundation

- Eligibility:
  - U.S. citizens, U.S. residents, DACA recipients
  - Minimum three years of remaining study in a Ph.D. by Fall 2022
  - No restrictions on previous graduate coursework
- Positive factors of selection:
  - Superior academic performance
  - Evidence and promising potential of research and teaching career
  - Engagement with diversity and underrepresented groups in classroom
  - Member of an underrepresented community
- Award:
  - Approximately 75 awards out of 2,000 applicants
  - Stipend of $27,000 annually for three years
- Caveats:
  - Not combinable with teaching/research assistantships or other external awards. Deferral is allowed, except for first year.
- Important dates:
  - September 7, 2021 – Application opens
  - December 16, 2021 – Application deadline
  - January 6, 2022 – Deadline for reference letter
Three written statements

1. Personal statement (two pages max) – How your life story and personal experiences have shaped who you are today and how that would help your future students of diverse backgrounds.

2. Statement of Previous Research and Scholarly Productivity (three pages max) – Summary of all academic experience and merits.

3. Proposed Research (two pages max) – Description a research issue of interest and justification of current institution/coursework. How this research fits with career goals and benefits a community. Keep it simple and not too technical!

Three reference letters (up to five)

- At least one letter from current faculty member
- Suggestion: Share complete application to reference writers

Other documents (Transcripts, verification forms, etc.)
Eligibility:
- U.S. citizens, U.S. residents
- Enrolled graduate students can submit only once in lifetime
- No graduate coursework of over a year by deadline

Award:
- Approximately 2,000 awards out of 13,000 applicants
- Annual stipend of $34,000 for three years
- Annual allowance to CUNY of $12,000 for three years
- Honorable mentions are awarded without funding

Important dates:
- October 19, 2021 – Application deadline for social sciences
- October 29, 2021 – Deadline for reference letters
- Early April – Award announcements
NSF-GRFP (Application components)

- Two written statements
  1. Personal statement (three pages max) – Description of background, both personal and professional/academic, and a convincing narrative how these intersect with your current goals. List of academic and/or professional milestones.
  2. Graduate research plan: Proposal that addresses an issue relevant to the well-being of society. Research that shows expertise in technicalities but is also readable and clear.

- Three reference letters (up to five)
  - Suggestion: Share complete application to reference writers

- The application material is succinct in text but copious in content. Applications are evaluated under:
  - Intellectual merit: Potential to advance knowledge.
  - Broader impacts: Potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes

- Other documents (Transcripts, etc.)
NSF-GRFP (Example)

Assume that you are interested in applied micro and labor economics, and that you have relevant experience in research and/or policy work.¹

- **Research issue:** Effect of affordable childcare on wages of parents

- **Personal statement:**
  - Intellectual merit: Personal background & academic credentials; coursework taken that led to labor economics; research experience in data (e.g., census, wages, etc.); publications; personal story
  - Broader impacts: Results of past work; Current path of rigorous technical training; experience in teaching in a diverse classroom.

- **Graduate research statement:**
  - Intellectual merit: Framework and background; How does it advance knowledge? Past work focuses on childcare and its effect on unemployment rate of parents of underrepresented groups.
  - Broader impacts: Why is it a pressing issue? Affordable childcare enables easier access of parents to workforce. Exemplify how results can be translated into policy.

¹Offered only as an example and to illustrate application components.
Getting funding can be very competitive and challenging. However, the first step is simple.

A good strategy for finding fellowship opportunities is
  ✓ Reading all information emails sent by the Economics program

A good strategy for a successful application is:
  ✓ Matching exactly the evaluation criteria
  ✓ Reading the program solicitation at least 10 times
  ✓ Tailoring application to intersect originality/creativity with the specific criteria
  ✓ Allot serious time to the application
Thank you!