



African Peacebuilding
& Developmental Dynamics

APDD RPF FELLOWSHIP AWARD

APPLICATION GUIDEBOOK

2026 Edition



SOCIAL
SCIENCE
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

2026 Research Policy Fellowship (RPF)

Round 1 Application Guidebook

Application deadline: November 5, 2025, 11:59 PM EST

Applications must be submitted using the [Online Application Portal](#).

Email apdd@ssrc.org for questions.

The APDD Program's Research Policy Fellowship (RPF) is a six (6)-month grant offering up to \$12,000 in support of institutional affiliation, policy engagement, and writing in a regional or national policy think tank, institution, or civil society organization. Fellows will gain hands-on experience in the policymaking and advocacy processes, working closely with practitioner organizations to shape, evaluate, and influence peacebuilding policies at the national, regional, and continental levels.

Through the RPF, the program embeds a fellow in a policy institution to gain insights into its daily operations and support its in-house activities and events. The award provides the fellow with the opportunity to link their prior research to policy, advocacy, and practice, mobilize knowledge to inform or shape policy reforms, and/or propose actionable alternatives. Residency at the host institution for at least four (4) of the six (6) fellowship months is required.

Eligibility Requirements

This fellowship is open only to previous APN IRF award recipients (2021–2025) who are academics or practitioners currently based in Africa.

Application Requirements (Round 1)

Applicants must submit an application through the online portal consisting of the following components:

- Contact and Personal Information
- One (1) page Letter of Interest, including:
 - Title of proposed project
 - Duration of proposed project (not exceeding six months)



- o Specific policy dimension/policy framing of the research problem, and its relevance to peacebuilding mechanisms, policies, and practices in Africa
- o Preferred host policy institution for potential affiliation (optional)
 - *Applicants should note that preference for a host institution does not guarantee placement at that institution.*
- o Clear indication of how the proposed project builds upon the applicant's prior APN IRF-sponsored research

Application Guidelines

Application materials must be submitted in English, through the online application portal by **November 5, 2025, 11:59 pm EST**. Incomplete applications or those not meeting eligibility criteria, or adhering to program guidelines will be screened out and not considered.

Criteria

Letters of interest will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- Alignment with the listed program thematic priorities.
- Strength and clarity of policy framing, including the project's connection to specific mechanisms, policies, and practices of peacebuilding.
- Demonstrated link to prior APN IRF-sponsored research, showing how the proposed project will extend or build upon previous findings.
- Feasibility of the project's scope and timeline, not to exceed six (6) months.
- Potential policy impact, including the project's capacity to contribute to African policy debates, practices, or institutional learning.

Thematic Priorities

Prospective RPF applicants must submit applications covering a range of issues related to peacebuilding, governance, and developmental dynamics in conflict-affected contexts, including the following:

- Africa and the BRICS+
- Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and the prospects of peacebuilding
- African Peacebuilding Interventions: military and non-military norms and practices
- African Union (AU) Agenda 2063
- African Union (AU) Silencing the Guns
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Peacebuilding Policy and Practice
- Bridging the Gaps between Policy Research and Practice: Case Studies

- Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, and Mediation
- Continental and Regional Peace and Security Organs and Mechanisms
- Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism
- Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR)
- Digital Ecologies of (Mis)Trust, Disinformation, and Misinformation
- Early Warning and Response Systems
- Emerging Transnational Threats: Bioterrorism, Cyberterrorism, and Online Violence
- Financing Research for Policy Innovation
- Governance and Ethics of Digital Infrastructures in Peacebuilding
- Humanitarian Intervention, Human Rights and Peace
- Illicit Financial Flows
- Pan Africanism, Economic Integration, and Sustainable Development
- Peace Support Operations: UN, EU, AU, and the RECs
- Maritime Security
- Public Health, Conflict and Development
- Critical and Precious Minerals, War and Post-War Economies

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by the Program to submit full proposals.

For technical difficulties, please consult the portal instructions in the appendix below, or send an email to apdd@ssrc.org if issues persist.

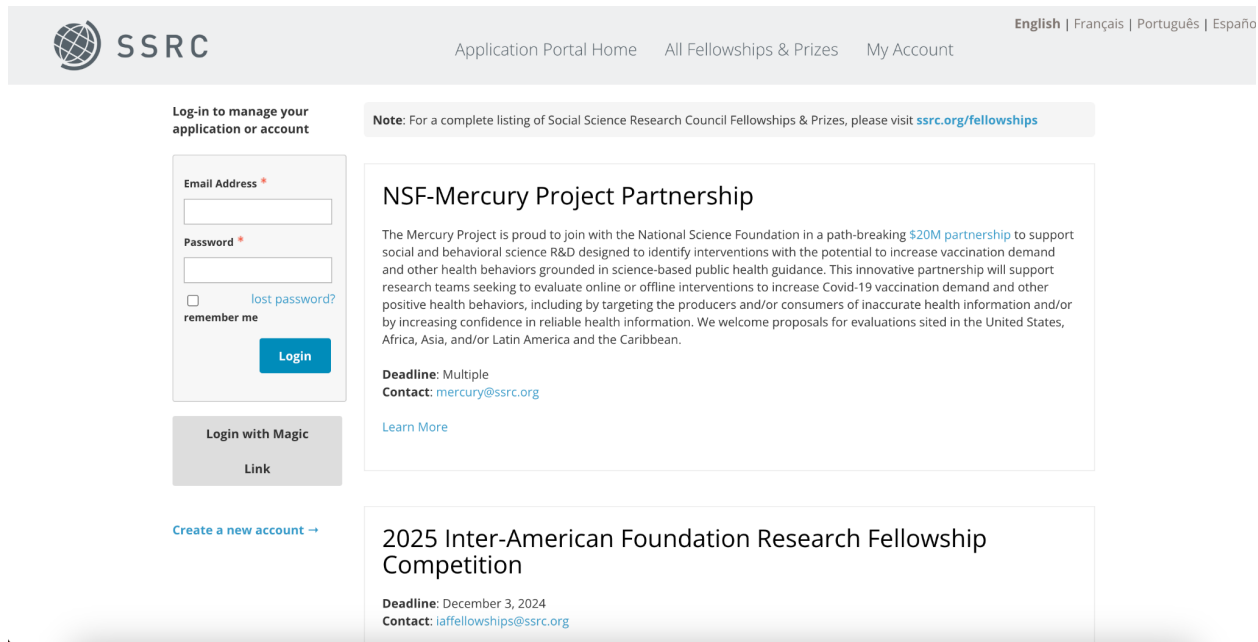
Do you have questions? Visit the [RPF Frequently Asked Questions](#) to learn answers to common questions.

Appendix

Online Application Portal

All applications must be uploaded through the SSRC's [Online Application Portal](#).

Please click this [link](#) to either create an account or access an existing one.



The screenshot shows the SSRC Online Application Portal. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the SSRC logo, the text "Application Portal Home", "All Fellowships & Prizes", and "My Account". To the right of the navigation bar are language options: "English | Français | Português | Español". Below the navigation bar, there is a "Log-in to manage your application or account" section on the left. This section contains a login form with fields for "Email Address" and "Password", a "remember me" checkbox, a "lost password?" link, and a "Login" button. Below the login form is a "Login with Magic Link" section with a "Link" button. At the bottom of the login section is a "Create a new account" link. To the right of the login section, there is a "Note" box stating: "For a complete listing of Social Science Research Council Fellowships & Prizes, please visit [ssrc.org/fellowships](#)". Below the note, there are two featured fellowship announcements. The first is the "NSF-Mercury Project Partnership", which describes a partnership with the National Science Foundation to support social and behavioral science R&D. It includes a "Deadline: Multiple" and a "Contact: [mercury@ssrc.org](#)" link, and a "Learn More" link. The second is the "2025 Inter-American Foundation Research Fellowship Competition", which includes a "Deadline: December 3, 2024" and a "Contact: [iaffellowships@ssrc.org](#)" link.

How to create an account

1. Click "create a new account" at the bottom of the left-hand side of the screen.
2. Enter the requested information, including all of the prompts marked with red asterisks.
3. Once you have completed all the information, click "register."

How to log back into an existing account and revisit the application

You may save your application and come back at a later time to continue working on it. To log into your account and continue the application:

1. Click "Login with Magic Link" at the bottom of the left-hand side of the screen.
2. Enter the email address registered with your existing account.

3. Access your email and look for an email from Open Water with a link, which will grant you access to your account.
4. Once in the online portal, click “My Applications” on the left-hand side list of options and find the 2025 APN and Next Gen application you have previously started.
5. After updating your 2025 APN and Next Gen application with new information, please click “save” at the bottom of the page to ensure your application has been updated.

Please note: If the Magic Link is not redirecting you to your account and showing an error page instead, copy the link directly from your email into the search bar of your search engine. Additionally, click this [link](#) again to be directed to the portal’s opening page, where you should now be logged into your account.

How to proceed through the Online Application

You must complete each section of the application marked with a red asterisk (*) before you can submit your entire application. The website will instruct or re-direct the applicant to fields that must be completed to successfully submit the application.

Click “save” at the bottom of each page before exiting the page so you may return at a later time or proceed with your application in another section.

Please note: if you are unable to proceed to the next page after clicking “next,” review the top right-hand corner of your browser for error messages notifying you of any issues.

How to successfully submit an application

1. To submit your application, click “submit” on the final page of the form.
2. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email confirming your application has been successfully submitted.
3. If you do not receive the confirmation email, reach out to apdd@ssrc.org to have an APDD team member confirm the status of your application.

Contact Information:

apdd@ssrc.org

Funded by:

