Analyzing Relationships Between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)

Small Grant Program for Graduate-Level Research

2022-2023 Request for Applications (RFA) and Application Instructions

Program Description

The objective of the ARDRAW Small Grant Program is to foster new analysis of work, rehabilitation, and disability issues, which may develop innovative and fresh perspectives on disability by providing research stipends to a broad spectrum of graduate students. ARDRAW focuses on research relevant to the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) work incentives and employment support - specifically rehabilitation, work and the disability program. This program is administered by Policy Research, Inc., (PRI) in Albany, New York.

SSA has provided guidance on issues that might be fruitful areas for research. Potential research areas of inquiry include, but are not limited to:
- Working conditions and characteristics of SSA beneficiaries who return to work
- SSA's work incentive programs
- Work accommodations and needs of SSA beneficiaries and other individuals with impairments
- Vocational and other types of service use by SSA beneficiaries
- Other factors affecting return to work efforts for SSA beneficiaries and individuals with impairments

Information on additional research topics can be found on the ARDRAW website.

Applicant Eligibility
- Applicants must be masters, doctoral, or post-doctoral-level part-time or full-time graduate students pursuing studies in accredited programs at the time of the award (Fall semester of 2022) with an academic emphasis in topics of interest to disability programs, including, but not limited to, public health, social work, economics, occupational medicine, vocational and rehabilitation counseling, public policy and administration, sociology, psychology, education, medicine, employment, and law.
- At the time of stipend award, selected graduate student researchers must be citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States, or must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, i.e., in possession of a currently valid Alien Registration Receipt Card I-551, or some other legal verification of legal admission as a permanent resident. Members of minority and historically disadvantaged groups are encouraged to apply.
- Students who are **not** eligible for the stipend award:
  - Individuals on temporary or student visas
  - Employees of SSA (including Disability Determination Services (DDS))

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o Students receiving funds from another SSA source (such as the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium) at the time of applying for an ARDRAW stipend
- Students are required to list any other federal funding for their research. As stated above, only federal funding from another SSA source would preclude an applicant from eligibility. However, you may not "double-dip" and request funding for a project that has already been funded.
- Applicants may submit more than one proposal for consideration per year, but can receive only one stipend award per year.
- ARDRAW funds are intended to support an independent research project; in other words, your final paper must be able to stand on its own. However, this project may inform or become part of the research for a doctoral dissertation or master's thesis.

Amount and Disbursement of Award
Students will receive a stipend of $10,000 for the one-year program: stipends may be subject to tax withholding. The stipend may be added to other financial support the graduate student receives from their university/research organization. The stipend is not provided as a condition of employment either with the federal government or PRI.

Payments will be disbursed directly to awardees in two installments: (1) after submission and approval of their research paper work plan (4-6 weeks following notification of the award) and (2) upon completion of the final research product and other deliverables as specified below.

Application Procedures
1. **Read** this RFA for complete details and requirements of the program and view the Suggested Research Topics to ensure that your proposal meets the goals of this program. As a further resource, you may read some of our previously funded research papers from ARDRAW Cohorts 1, 2, 3, 4 and from the predecessor Disability Determination Process Small Grant Program. Titles of current ARDRAW Cohort 5 papers can be accessed here.

2. **Familiarize** yourself with SSA's disability programs, the SSA Guide to Work Incentives, and tips for writing a strong research proposal. These resources are all available on the ARDRAW website.

3. **Attend the informational webinar on January 13, 2022 at 2:00 pm (ET).** The webinar is designed to provide an overview of a successful application. Potential applicants and their faculty mentors are strongly encouraged to attend. The webinar is recorded and will be posted on the ARDRAW website. **Please use the following link to register: https://prainc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAkf--vrT8uHdCgJ3wA0jHdSxs3gUfTY_kj**

4. **Complete** the online application and attach the following materials **by 5:00 pm (ET) on Friday, February 25, 2022:**
   a. **An abstract and five (5) page research proposal.** The proposal should be written in American Psychological Association (APA) style, excluding references, tables, and figures (12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, single-spaced). A cover page, abstract, and references will not be counted towards the five pages. Please see Evaluation Criteria below for further guidance.
   b. **Proof of Access to Data.** All applicants must submit a statement providing proof of access to data. Instructions for specific scenarios are provided below.

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1. Secondary data (privately held): If secondary data is being used (data not collected by the applicant), a letter from the agency or organization clearly approving access to and use of data is required. If awarded, you will be required to sign a contract through which you agree to submit a copy of the data you are using in your research to the Federal Government upon request.
2. Secondary data (publicly available): If secondary data is publicly accessible, you must submit a short statement with a link to the data.
3. Primary data (to be collected): If primary data will be collected, applicants must submit a one-page statement with a detailed plan for recruitment and collection of this data.

c. **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Plan and Timeframe.** Projects must be reviewed by your academic institution's IRB. If you have IRB approval for your project, you must include proof of approval with your application. It is not necessary to have IRB approval at the time of application, but you must submit a separate statement addressing how this approval will be accomplished, if you do not already have it.

d. **A resume or curriculum vitae.** (12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, single-spaced)

5. **Two (2) Letters of Recommendation** must be emailed directly by the referrers to ardraw@policyresearchinc.org **by 5:00 pm (ET) on Friday, February 25, 2022:**
   a. One (1) from the **Faculty Mentor** for this project **clearly stating support of your proposed research as feasible and potentially impactful to the field, as well as a willingness to provide consistent supervision and guidance throughout the project.** Faculty Mentors are expected to participate in quarterly calls and review all student deliverables prior to submission. **A statement indicating your mentor's commitment to attend these calls and review deliverables should be included in the letter.**
   b. One (1) from an academic or professional contact who can comment on the qualities that make you an effective researcher and your potential for success with independent research.

6. You will be notified of any missing pieces of your application by **Monday, February 28, 2022** and will have until no later than **Wednesday, March 3, 2022** to submit the pieces identified.

Submission Checklist
- ☐ Online Application
- ☐ Abstract and five-page research proposal
- ☐ Proof of access to data
- ☐ Institutional review board approval plan and timeline
- ☐ Resume or curriculum vitae
- ☐ Two letters of recommendation submitted to ardraw@policyresearchinc.org

Evaluation Criteria
Applications will initially be screened for completeness and relevance to the research goals of the ARDRAW Small Grant Program. If judged complete and relevant, the application will be further evaluated by a panel of scholars. Your application will be evaluated **based on the following criteria:**

1. Statement of Problem and Literature Review (20%)
   a. Clear statement of the problem

b. Specific and relevant research questions designed to explore/strengthen relationships between work, rehabilitation, and disability
   c. Comprehensive literature review - your review should identify strengths and weaknesses of existing research and identify areas of further exploration

2. Understanding and Methodology (30%)
   a. Demonstration of researcher's understanding of the current relationships between work, rehabilitation, and disability
   b. Demonstration of researcher's understanding of relevant SSA programs and work incentives, as they relate to the proposed topic
   c. Appropriateness and soundness of methodology, including research design, choice of data, methods of analysis, and other procedures
   d. Explanation of how your proposed research might develop innovative and fresh perspectives on the relationships between work, rehabilitation, and disability

3. Outcomes and Implications (25%)
   a. Anticipated outcomes
   b. Statement of policy or programmatic implications relevant to SSA— how SSA will be able to use the findings from your research project

4. Project Feasibility (20%)
   a. Feasibility of completing project within a 1-year timeframe (reasonableness of time commitment related to data collection, analysis, and other procedures)
   b. Statement of how this project fits into your academic career (e.g. part of dissertation or master's thesis)

5. Strength of Letters of Recommendation (5%)
   a. Faculty Mentor: Support of your proposed research as feasible and potentially impactful to the field, as well as a willingness to provide consistent supervision and guidance throughout the project
   b. Academic or professional contact: Confidence in your abilities as an effective researcher and your potential for success with independent research

Award decisions are expected **by Thursday, April 21, 2022. Final approval is contingent on review and acceptance of the project's work plan.**

Deliverables
If selected for this grant, each award recipient is expected to:
1. Submit a detailed work plan indicating objectives, activities, and timeframes
2. Participate in an individual kick off call with grant recipients, faculty mentors, PRI, and SSA
3. Submit a letter of approval from their academic institution's IRB
4. Submit quarterly progress reports summarizing status of research activities
5. Participate in quarterly conference calls with their faculty mentor and PRI
6. Submit a 15-page research paper by **Friday, May 12, 2023**
7. Submit a revised research paper by **Friday, June 23, 2023**
8. Present their research on a webinar in **August 2023.**

For more information visit https://ardraw.policyresearchinc.org or contact us at ardraw@policyresearchinc.org.