

# Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program

## APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW TIPS

The Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program is highly competitive and receives hundreds of applications for approximately 20 placements. The fellowship is worth the effort of applying or reapplying and we have compiled the tips below to help prepare your application or for your interview if selected as a semi-finalist.

### Application Tips

- **Write with clear, concise language.** Target your writing style for a general, non-technical audience and avoid jargon to make it easy for application readers to quickly understand your main ideas.
- **Check your spelling in grammar!** Write your essays in a text editor before pasting into the application text box. Have a friend proof-read your application and consider reading everything you submit aloud.
- **Tell us why it matters.** Instead of listing accomplishments, strong applications go one step further to share the impact of those accomplishments and why they matter.
- **Review the selection criteria.** Each application will be evaluated against the published selection criteria, so be sure your application and reference letters clearly demonstrate how you meet those requirements.
- **Be thoughtful about which prospective mentor units you select.** After each application is reviewed by alumni and staff, prospective mentors from each unit will be invited to review applicant materials for those who selected their unit as one of their placement choices. If you have experience related to one of your selected units, make that clear in your application.
  - **Important:** *In order to reduce the impact of unconscious bias and increase equitable access to the program, we ask that applicants **please do not contact prospective program units directly**. Instead, please send all application questions to [mirzayanfellowship@nas.edu](mailto:mirzayanfellowship@nas.edu).*

- **Share who you are outside of your research interests.** Science policy work requires drawing on your broad range of experiences to understand and connect with new topic areas. Find space in your application to share what unique perspectives you would bring to policy conversations within your cohort and in your mentor unit. Don't be afraid to highlight experiences outside of your academic program (e.g., extracurricular activities, volunteering, hobbies and interests, etc.)
- **Show readers you will make good use of the opportunity.** We are looking for fellows who will take initiative to engage with all the fellowship has to offer, including networking and engaging with policy experts. Show readers that you know what the program is and how best to take advantage of the opportunities it affords.
- **Share your values in your policy issue statement.** You don't have to be an expert in the topic you discuss. Instead, help readers understand why it is important to you.
- **Choose your Letters of Recommendation requests thoughtfully.** Letters of recommendation should ideally share specifics about the kind of person you are and how your accomplishments demonstrate that. More than your research excellence, our readers want to hear about your interest in science policy and how your experience fits into that.

## Interview Tips

- **Do your homework.** Read the invitation to the interview closely and prepare any information requested. Proactively research the staff members who will be interviewing you and learn about your prospective unit placement in advance.
- **Prepare questions.** Prepare thoughtful questions that show that you've done your homework ahead of time to learn about the unit that will be interviewing you.
- **Project professionalism.** Plan to join the call early and prepare your space with a professional-looking background. Wear a business formal outfit to show you are taking the opportunity seriously.
- **Keep your introduction brief.** Prepare to introduce yourself in about 30-45 seconds or less to share the highlights of who you are and what you bring to the table.
- **Show your enthusiasm.** Explain why the fellowship would be a great next step for you.
- **Listen carefully to each question asked.** Answer questions as directly as possible and provide examples from your experience that demonstrate related knowledge, skills and abilities. Be sure to ask the interviewer(s) to restate a question if further clarification is needed.
- **Close on a high note.** Reinforce your interest in the position and thank the interviewer(s) for the opportunity to interview.