

I FALL 2026

STATE SCHOOL FINANCE

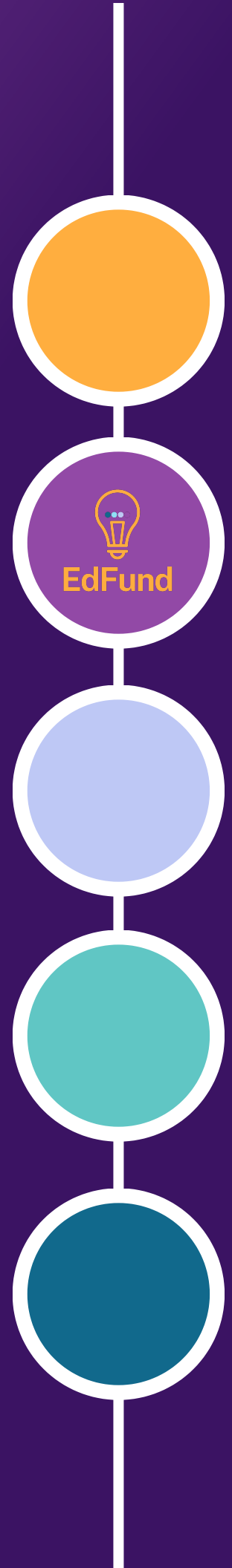
FELLOWSHIP

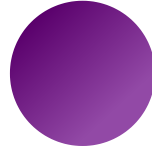
Where research meets real-world policy decisions.

A selective, cohort-based program for graduate students and postdoc researchers shaping the future of education finance policy.



Apply by June 22, 2026
Send questions to fellows@ed-fund.org
Acceptances released in early August 2026





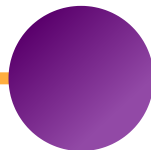
EdFund envisions evidence-based state funding policies that align with district and student needs. To achieve this vision, we need new research to support the decision-making of policymakers and advocates who advise how \$800 billion is raised and spent for public schools annually. While interest in studying education finance has increased, a recent EdFund survey of students and early career academics demonstrated that those in the research community feel disconnected from the policies that determine how states fund schools.

To support the expansion of the field, we are continuing our competitive program into its second year, offering graduate students and postdoctoral researchers to deepen their understanding of education policy, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement. This cohort-based program will bring together twelve participants for an intensive six-workshop series, featuring discussions with leading experts in policy, legislation, and journalism. Participants will gain valuable insights into education funding and policy translation while developing practical skills to bridge the gap between research and policymaking. Each participant will receive a \$1,000 stipend upon successful completion of the program.

Read our [Research Agenda](#) to learn more and apply [here](#) by **June 22**.

Acceptances are released in early August 2026 and kick-off calls will begin in September 2026. Programming will start in October 2026 and end in April 2027.

If you have any questions, email fellows@ed-fund.org



Program Overview

EdFund is dedicated to making research more policy relevant. In service of that goal, we are offering an exciting competitive opportunity for graduate students and postdocs to take a deep dive into education policy research, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement. This cohort will include up to twelve individuals who will participate in a six-workshop series and engage with experts in the research, legislative, and journalism fields. Each participant will earn a \$1,000 stipend at the end of the term.

Benefits & Expectations

Benefits for workshop attendees include:

- Virtual monthly workshops that feature hands-on learning opportunities led by some of the most prominent professionals in the field
- Two in-person events with hotel and travel reimbursed
- Needs-based scholarship to register for AEFPP
- Opportunities to revise, brainstorm, and workshop research projects
- Data training from expert partners
- Assistance with promoting and platforming findings to advocates, policymakers, and journalists
- Membership in a community of practice with two in person meetings
- Curated opportunities to discuss your work and interact with high impact policymakers and journalists
- A \$1,000 stipend awarded at the end of the term upon successful attendance and participation in four two-hour virtual workshops and two in-person events

Qualifications

- Students participating in master's or PhD programs, postdocs
- Completed **application**: CV, Letter of Interest (why do you want to participate?).
- Letter of Recommendation sent to fellows@ed-fund.org

***Policy experience is not required; the program will be a learning experience.**

Workshop One: October 2026

In-Person Session

Exploring the Landscape of School Finance

Led by EdFund's Executive Director and other prominent voices in the education policy field

This session will cover:

- The central questions and ongoing debates shaping the field of school finance and how different perspectives influence policy decisions
- How to connect your research to real-world policy conversations, ensuring your work resonates beyond academia
- A deeper understanding of how funding decisions are made, including the collaboration, tradeoffs, and structures that shape outcomes
- Strategies for engaging with peers and experts to build meaningful connections and foster long-term collaboration
- An opportunity to meet co-fellows in person and begin building a strong, collaborative network

Workshop Two: November 2026

Introduction to Policy and Its Connection to Research

Led by education policy experts specializing in school funding and the interplay between local, state, and federal funding systems

This session will cover:

- The key terms and subtle distinctions that shape how researchers, policymakers, and advocates talk about school funding, and how those conversations translate into action
- A closer read of funding models, not just how they're designed on paper, but how they behave in practice
- A look beneath the surface of school finance systems: the policies, tradeoffs, and implementation realities that determine how dollars actually flow
- An inside perspective on the policies and structures that determine how funding is raised, distributed, and put into practice across schools and communities

Workshop Three: January 2027

From Research to Reform: How School Funding Policy Changes Happen

Led by state advocates and legislators who have recently reformed or revised school funding reform in their state

This session will cover:

- The drivers and conditions that lead to changes in school funding formulas
- Strategies for navigating the political dynamics and building support for policy reform
- The role of research in informing, shaping, and advancing policy decisions
- Lessons from translating evidence into actionable policy change at the state level.

Workshop Four: February 2027

The Data Reality: the Future of Education Finance Research

Led by seasoned data analysts who have decades of experience working with national and state level finance data

This session will cover:

- How to identify reliable data sources for policy research
- Best practices for data cleaning and organization
- The role of a data dictionary in ensuring consistency and clarity in research
- The emerging tools for accessing clean, accurate, and longitudinal school finance data
- How to navigate and apply new data resources for research, analysis, and advocacy
- Key considerations in how education finance data is collected and maintained
- The implications of reduced federal capacity on data quality, availability, and long-term research use

Workshop Five: March 2027 at AAFP

In-Person Session

Crossover Event with Past and Incoming Fellows

This event will allow you to:

- Meet the incoming group of Policy Fellows and the research shaping their work
- Get acquainted with the previous fellowship cohort members and how they have translated what they learned into impact across research, policy, and practice
- Organically discover ways to partner with others focused on education finance research

Workshop Six: April 2027

Talking the Talk: Translating Research for Broader Audiences

Presented by nationally recognized communications professionals and political strategists

This session will cover:

- How to simplify complex findings for different audiences
- Best practices for effectively communicating research to non-experts
- Tips and strategies for ensuring accuracy while making findings accessible
- The difference between generalist journalists and subject-matter experts in education reporting
- Best practices for engaging with the media and ensuring accurate representation of research



Acknowledgements

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We are grateful for the guidance and support for our work that we receive from our Advisory Board members: Julien Lafortune (co-chair), Josh McGee (co-chair), E. Jason Baron, Barbara Biasi, Christopher Candelaria, Adam Harris, Cara Jackson, Kent McCarty, Carlas McCauley, Jennifer O'Neal Schiess, Katie Roy, and Ericka Weathers. Bios for each are available at ed-fund.org.

