

*Notice of Funding Opportunity
Summary Information*

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Talent Development Division
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Attn: Nathaniel Coley

Funding Opportunity Title: “Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program (DDETFP) Graduate Fellowship”

Announcement Type: This is the initial announcement of this funding opportunity.

Funding Opportunity Number: 693JJ318NF5227

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 20.215 Highway Training & Education

Key Dates: Notice Issue Date is June 1, 2018
Question Due Date/Time is June 8, 2018 at 11:59pm Eastern Time
Electronic Application Due Date/Time for

- Fiscal year (FY) 2018 is July 16, 2018 at 11:59pm Eastern Time.
- FY 2019 and FY 2020 will be specified in the Attachment 1 posted with this Notice.

Documentation Due Date/Time is 7 days after the Electronic Application Due Date at 11:59pm Eastern Time.

Primary Point of Contact: Ewa Flom, ewa.flom@dot.gov, 202-924-1125

Secondary Point of Contact: Universities and Grants Program Staff, transportationedu@dot.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
A	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	3
B	FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION	5
C	ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	6
D	APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	7
E	APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	10
F	FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	13
G	FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACT(S)	17

Pertinent Links:

- Transportation Fellows Interns and Contractor System (TFICS) at <https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx>
- General terms, conditions, and governing regulations (Effective March 6, 2015) that will apply to the Agreement are available online at www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/contractor_recip/gtandc_generaltermsconditions.cfm

Attachments:

1. DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement

SECTION A - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), hereby requests applications for assistance to result in the award of up to 100 new Grant Agreements, supporting the ***“Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program (DDETFP) Graduate Fellowship.”***

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of these proposed Agreements is to provide DDETFP Graduate Fellowship funding for students to pursue master's or doctoral degrees in transportation-related disciplines. The program objectives are: 1) to attract the Nation's brightest minds to the field of transportation; 2) to enhance the careers of transportation professionals by encouraging them to seek advanced degrees; and 3) to retain top talent in the transportation industry of the U.S. The DDETFP is intended to enhance the breadth and scope of knowledge of the entire transportation community in the U.S. The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship encompasses all modes of transportation.

2. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The current legislation governing the program is found in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Section 6002(a)(3) (Pub. L. 114-94). Authority is also found in Title 23, United States Code (USC), Section 504(c) and 502 (b)(3).

3. BACKGROUND

Individual students apply for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship. The FHWA makes awards to the Institution of Higher Education (IHE) (“Recipient”) on behalf of the student (“Student Designee”). The IHE must be accredited by a federally-recognized accrediting agency and must be located within the United States or its Territories. If a student is selected to receive a fellowship, the student, their faculty advisor, and the IHE will be responsible for completing and submitting all required paperwork to execute the Agreement. Students must be prepared to submit a copy of their application package and this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to their IHE. The Recipient will be responsible for allocating funds to the Student Designee as outlined in the Budget of the Agreement. The IHE will also be responsible for submitting all required Federal financial reports to FHWA.

4. GOALS

The goals of these Grants are to provide DDETFP Graduate Fellowships to 1) attract the Nation's brightest minds to the field of transportation, 2) enhance the careers of transportation professionals by encouraging them to seek advanced degrees, and 3) bring and retain top talent in the transportation industry of the U.S.

5. STATEMENT OF WORK

The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship provides funding to students for the pursuit of advanced degrees in a transportation-related field at an accredited IHE. The grant may cover a combination of the following:

- Tuition and fees
- Monthly stipend
- Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting travel

Tuition and fees and stipend are paid only for the time period the Student Designee is registered in a full-time academic program at the Recipient institution. The TRB Annual Meeting travel expenses (e.g. conference registration fee, transportation, lodging, meals, etc.) are provided for Student Designee to attend the event in Washington, DC.

Recipients are required to provide:

- Upon request, an abstract of Student Designee's research project for presentation consideration for the DDETFP Research Showcase at the TRB Annual Meeting.
- Within 90 days of the end of the Agreement, a copy of the Project Report (i.e. Student Designee's research project, thesis, or dissertation), final Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR), and Federal Financial Report (SF 425).

SECTION B – FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. FUNDING AND NUMBER OF AWARDS

The FHWA expects approximately \$1 million to be made available for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship in each fiscal year (FY) 2018 through 2020 from amounts authorized under section 6002 of the FAST Act.

The FHWA anticipates making up to 100 award(s) as a result of this NOFO in each FY 2018 through 2020.

The FHWA anticipates Federal funding up to a total amount of \$3,000,000 may be made available for these Agreements, subject to the availability of funds. Funding for each award can range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$35,500. Note: The Government reserves the right to award less than the anticipated number of awards and less than the maximum amount per award.

2. TYPE OF AWARD

The planned award type is a Grant Agreement.

3. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance for each Agreement will be for up to 1 year from the effective date of the Agreement.

4. DEGREE OF FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

The FHWA anticipates Federal involvement between it and the Recipient during the course of this project. The anticipated Federal involvement will include:

- Technical assistance and guidance to the Recipient;
- Close monitoring of performance; and
- Involvement in technical decisions.

The FHWA shall have the right to visit the Recipient institution and examine all material relevant to this fellowship grant, including books, records, documents, accounting procedures, bookkeeping practices, and other evidence. The material shall be of sufficient detail to reflect properly all direct costs of whatever nature claimed to have been incurred for the performance of this grant.

SECTION C – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This funding opportunity is open to students that are U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens. The students must be enrolled in an IHE which must be accredited by a federally-recognized accrediting agency¹ and must be located within the United States or its territories, both administratively as well as the campus the student is attending.

Current DOT employees are not eligible for the DDETFP.

All student applicants of the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship must:

- Possess a baccalaureate degree from, or be a confirmed graduating undergraduate senior at, an accredited IHE within the United States or its Territories by the Electronic Application due date listed on page 1;
- Demonstrate confirmation of acceptance in a graduate degree program at an accredited IHE in the United States or its Territories by the Electronic Application due date listed on page 1;
- Be enrolled in an accredited IHE within the United States or its Territories;
- Be pursuing a graduate degree in a full-time program in a transportation-related discipline;
- Have at least 1 full academic year remaining in program of study;
- Conduct ongoing research in one or more transportation-related disciplines; and
- Plan to enter the transportation profession after completing their higher-level education.

Non-U.S. citizens must also submit a valid copy of their Student and Exchange Visitor Information System Form issued by the IHE the student is enrolled in, or the Form I-20² “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status”, or the Form I-551 “Permanent Resident Card” issued by the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service.

2. COST SHARING OR MATCHING

Cost sharing or matching is not required. Although this program does not require cost sharing or matching, IHEs are encouraged to contribute resources to help leverage Fellowship funding.

¹ The U.S. Department of Education publishes a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies on <https://www.ed.gov/accreditation>

² Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Form I-20 is a Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status for foreign exchange students who attend an educational program in the U.S. Educational institutions issue Form I-20.

SECTION D - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants may obtain application information at grants.gov under the NOFO number cited herein, however the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship application requires **online submission through** the Transportation Fellows Interns and Contractor System (TFICS). No paper applications will be accepted.

Applicants must register in TFICS through the following Website to apply
fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx

General Instructions: Please read this NOFO and the respective Attachment 1 *DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement* for the respective FY cycle in their entirety before preparing application materials.

The Applicant must complete and submit all forms included in the application package for this Notice.

2. CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Only applications meeting the requirements in this NOFO and Attachment 1 *DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement* will be considered.

The application package must consist of the following:

- TFICS Electronic Application submission through
fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx.
- Documentation as indicated in Attachment 1 *DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement*.

Incorrect, missing documents/items, or incomplete applications are grounds for rejecting the application.

Prior to submitting an application in TFICS, Applicant will be prompted to certify that they have personally completed the application and that the information they are providing is complete and accurate. Information is subject to verification.

It is imperative that Applicants provide an accurate and current email address for themselves and their faculty advisor.

3. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Electronic Application Deadline: The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship application must be completely submitted in the FHWA TFICS by the Electronic Application due date and time listed on page 1.

Documentation: All supporting material as indicated in Attachment 1 *DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement* must be received no later than the Documentation due date and time listed on page 1.

The deadlines cited herein are the dates and times by which the agency must receive the complete application package with supporting documentation.

A late application will not be reviewed or considered unless the FHWA Universities and Grants (U&GP) Program Manager determines that doing so is in the FHWA's best interest.

4. UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD (SAM)

The Recipient is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to a Recipient until the Recipient has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If a Recipient has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the Recipient is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another Recipient.

5. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

An application under this NOFO is not subject to the State review under E.O. 12372.

6. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

The FHWA will not reimburse any pre-award costs or application preparation costs under this proposed Agreement. Indirect costs and overhead are not allowed under this proposed Agreement.

Restrictions on the use of fellowship funds by the Student Designee are as follows:

- No dependency allowances;
- Fellowship Student Designee is eligible for funding only during months of enrollment in full-time program leading to graduate degree;
- Unused funds must be returned to FHWA within 90 days of the termination date of the grant; and
- There is a limitation of \$10,000 in DDETFP funding toward tuition and fees per year.

The IHE has the responsibility of administering the funds and for making periodic payments to the Student Designee.

7. TUITION, TRAVEL, STIPEND, AND TAXES

Fellowship awards *may not* provide a full award (i.e. tuition, stipend, and travel to the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC). Fellowship awards will be based on the rankings from the National Selection Panel. Fellowship awards will provide a minimum of \$5,000 based on the ranking from the National Selection Panel and may include tuition, stipend, and TRB Annual Meeting travel funding.

Fellowship Student Designees shall be advised that **the stipend portion of the fellowship is subject to taxation** in accordance with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service regulations (Publication 970, dated Jan 31, 2018 available at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf>).

The anticipated stipends for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship are based on academic level. **Actual stipend level may vary based upon IHE formal policy and available funding.** Additional stipend amounts may be added by the IHE or other sources.

8. OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In the event of system problems or technical difficulties with the application submittal, Applicants should contact the FHWA point of contact designated on page 1. If Applicants are unable to use the system due to technical difficulties, Applicants must e-mail applications to the FHWA point of contact listed on page 1 no later than the application deadline cited above.

SECTION E - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. CRITERIA

The Government will evaluate applications on following criteria:

MERIT: FHWA will evaluate and rank the applications against the following technical evaluation criteria. These criteria are distinct from eligibility criteria (see Section C) that are addressed before an application is accepted for review.

The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship will be awarded on the basis of merit. In descending order of importance with the top three criteria being equal, merit includes:

- Academic achievement*
- Potential for outstanding career in transportation*
- Proposed research plan/plan of study and impact statement*
- Recommendations*
- Academic record*

After applying the above preferences, the FHWA will take into account the following key Departmental objectives:

- (A) Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level;
- (B) Utilizing alternative funding sources and innovative financing models to attract non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment;
- (C) Accounting for the life-cycle costs of the project to promote the state of good repair;
- (D) Using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and
- (E) Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance and achieving specific, measurable outcomes identified by grant applicants.

Funding availability will also be considered in the award decision.

* more detail provided in Attachment 1 *DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement*

2. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The FHWA will utilize the following merit review process to evaluate applications:

Complete applications from eligible applicants will be provided to a National Selection Panel of transportation professionals to evaluate using the merit criteria listed above for Master's and Doctoral categories. The National Selection Panel may include representatives from Federal agencies, academia, or transportation industry. The panel will individually evaluate, rate, and rank each applicant. The panel submits scores for each applicant to the FHWA DDETFP Program Manager. The panel member scores are averaged and a ranked list is created. The DDETFP Program Manager determines the funding level based on several factors including number of applicants, panel scores, and funding availability and may establish a minimum score below which lower scoring applicants will not be recommended to receive awards.

Approximately the top 20 percent of applicant scores will be recommended in a first tier and approximately the next 20 percent in a second tier. The remainder of the recommended applicants will be placed in a third tier.

Agency personnel from the FHWA will conduct a risk assessment of the Recipient (i.e. the IHE the applicant is attending) prior to award as described below.

The Government will accept the application(s) that is (are) considered the most advantageous to the Government using the criteria cited above, and subject to the results of a Recipient risk assessment. Applications selected for possible award using the criteria cited above, will undergo the following risk assessment prior to award. The Government reserves the right to not make an award to a Recipient based on the results of the risk assessment.

The Agreement Officer (AO) is the official responsible for final award selection. The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this notice.

Risk Assessment

The Government will assess the risks posed by a Recipient before they receive an award. This Risk Assessment will include evaluation of some or all of the following items relative to the Recipient and/or sub-applicants as applicable:

- (1) Recipient's financial stability;
- (2) Recipient's quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200;
- (3) Recipient's history of performance;

Note: History of performance includes the Recipient's record in managing Federal awards, if it is a prior Recipient of Federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards, and if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards. The Government will evaluate the relevant merits of the Recipient's history of performance based on its reputation and record with its current and/or former customers with respect to quality, timeliness and cost control. The history of performance will be reviewed to assure that the Recipient has relevant and successful experience and will be considered in the risk assessment. In evaluating history of performance, the Government may consider both written information provided in the application, as well as any other information available to the Government through outside sources.

- (4) Recipient's audit reports and findings from audits performed on the Recipient pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F—Audit Requirements or the reports and findings of any other available audits;
- (5) Recipient's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities;

(6) Recipient's potential for conflict of interest if applicable;³ and

(7) Recipient's eligibility to receive Federal funding. Per the guidelines on government-wide suspension and debarment in 2 CFR Part 180, the Government will confirmation that the Recipient and any named sub-applicants are not debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal programs or activities.

Pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200.205, prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), Dun and Bradstreet, and "Do Not Pay." At a minimum, the information in the system for a prior Federal award recipient must demonstrate a satisfactory record of executing programs or activities under Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards; and integrity and business ethics.

If FHWA does not make a Federal award to a non-Federal entity because the official determines that the non-Federal entity does not meet either or both of the minimum qualification standards as described in 2 CFR 200.205, the FHWA will report that determination in FAPIIS.

3. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND FEDERAL AWARD DATES

The FHWA anticipates making award on or about **September 14, 2018**.

³ Note: The FHWA will review information provided by the Recipient, and any other relevant information known to DOT, to determine whether an award to the Recipient may create an actual or potential conflict of interest. If any such conflict of interest is found to exist, the AO may (a) disqualify the Recipient, or (b) determine that it is otherwise in the best interest of the U.S. to award to the Recipient and include appropriate provisions to mitigate or avoid such conflict in the Agreement pursuant to 2 CFR 200.112.

SECTION F – FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

If you are selected for award, FHWA will notify you, your faculty advisor, and the identified IHE by email. The FHWA will send award documents to the IHE for signature. Applicants not selected for award will be notified by FHWA by email.

Only the AO can commit the FHWA. The award document, signed by the AO, is the authorizing document. Only the AO can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

Notice that an Applicant has been selected as a fellow does not constitute approval of the application as submitted. Before the actual award, FHWA will enter into negotiations with the IHE concerning such items as program components, staffing, funding levels, and administrative systems, if necessary. If the negotiations do not result in an acceptable submittal, the FHWA reserves the right to terminate the negotiation and decline to fund the Applicant.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

General terms, conditions, and governing regulations (Effective March 6, 2015) that will apply to the grant Agreement are available online at www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/contractor_recip/gtandc_generaltermsconditions.cfm

Special terms and conditions follow:

A. PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

The Applicant agrees that the resulting deliverables/documentation submitted to the FHWA under the grant Agreement may be posted online for public access and/or shared by FHWA with other interested parties. The FHWA anticipates the documents cited herein may be posted on an FHWA Website or other appropriate Website.

B. INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are not allowable under the grant Agreement

C. DATA RIGHTS

The Recipient must make available to the FHWA copies of all work developed in performance with the grant Agreement, including but not limited to software and data. Data rights under the grant Agreement shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.315, Intangible property.

D. PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII)

Personally Identifiable Information as defined at CFR Part 200.79 and 2 CFR 200.82 at will not be requested unless necessary and only with prior written approval of the AO with concurrence from the Agreement Officer's Representative.

E. AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total estimated amount of Federal funding that may be provided under the grant Agreement will be listed on page 1 of the award document for the entire period of performance, subject to the limitations shown below:

- (1) Currently, Federal funds identified on page 1 of the award document, are obligated to the grant Agreement.
- (2) Subject to availability of funds, and an executed document by the AO, the difference between the current funding and the total estimated amount of Federal funding may be obligated to the grant Agreement.
- (3) The FHWA's liability to make payments to the Recipient is limited to those funds obligated under the grant Agreement as indicated above and any subsequent amendments.

F. KEY PERSONNEL

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.308(c)(2), the Recipient must request prior written approval from the AO for any change in Key Personnel specified in the award. The following person(s) are/have been identified as Key Personnel:

Name	Title/Position
[student designee]	
[faculty advisor]	
(***) to be filled in at award (***)	

G. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

The Applicant's technical application is accepted, approved, and incorporated herein as Attachment A. In the event of any conflict between the grant Agreement document and the Applicant's proposal and/or application, the grant Agreement document shall prevail.

H. DESIGNATION AS RESEARCH OR NON-RESEARCH AGREEMENT

The grant Agreement is designated as: NON-RESEARCH

I. DISPUTES

The parties to the grant Agreement will communicate with one another in good faith and in a timely and cooperative manner when raising issues under this provision. Any dispute, which for the purposes of this provision includes any disagreement or claim, between FHWA and the Recipient concerning questions of fact or law arising from or in connection with the grant Agreement and whether or not involving alleged breach of the grant Agreement, may be raised only under this Disputes provision.

Whenever a dispute arises, the parties will attempt to resolve the issues involved by discussion and mutual agreement as soon as practical. In no event will a dispute which arose more than 3 months prior to the notification made under the following paragraph of this provision constitute the basis for relief under this article unless FHWA waives this requirement.

Failing resolution by mutual agreement, the aggrieved party will document the dispute by notifying the other party in writing of the relevant facts, identify unresolved issues and specify the clarification or remedy sought. Within 5 working days after providing written notice to the other party, the aggrieved party may, in writing, request a decision from one level above the AO. The AO will conduct a review of the matters in dispute and render a decision in writing within 30 calendar days of receipt of such written request. Any decision of the AO is final and binding unless a party will, within 30 calendar days, request further review as provided below.

Upon written request to the FHWA Director, Office of Acquisition and Grants Management or designee, made within 30 calendar days after the AO's written decision or upon unavailability of a decision within the stated time frame under the preceding paragraph, the dispute will be further reviewed. This review will be conducted by the Director, Office of Acquisition and Grants Management. Following the review, the Director, Office of Acquisition and Grants Management, will resolve the issues and notify the parties in writing. Such resolution is not subject to further administrative review and to the extent permitted by law, will be final and binding. Nothing in the grant Agreement is intended to prevent the parties from pursuing disputes in a U.S. Federal Court of competent jurisdiction.

3. REPORTING

The Recipient must submit the following electronically to the FHWA U&GP Program Manager at FHWA_UGP@dot.gov:

- Upon request, an abstract of Student Designee's research project for presentation consideration for the DDETFP Research Showcase at the TRB Annual Meeting
- Within 90 days after the end of the grant Agreement period of performance, the Recipient must submit an electronic copy of:
 - Project Report (i.e. Student Designee's research project, thesis, or dissertation)
 - Final Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR):
 - To fulfill Block 10, Performance Narrative requirement, the Recipient can provide summary of Student Designees project report and confirmation that the report was submitted in electronic format to the U&GP Program Manager.
 - In Block 11, Other Attachments, include the information as attached pages for Federal Financial Report (SF-425)
 - Federal Financial Report (SF-425)

SECTION G – FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Address any questions to:

Universities and Grants Programs Staff
Federal Highway Administration
Talent Development Division
transportationedu@dot.gov

**DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER
TRANSPORTATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (DDETFP)**



ANNUAL ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

2021 AWARD CYCLE (MARCH 2021)

These guidelines are in effect until further notice and were prepared for participation in the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship. Earlier versions do not apply for this award cycle.

**Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program (DDETFP)
Graduate Fellowship**

Annual Announcement for Fiscal Year 2021

Attachment to Notice of Funding Opportunity number 693JJ318NF5227-2021

Table of Contents

SECTION 1: IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES	2
SECTION 2: QUESTIONS	2
SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM	2
SECTION 4: DISCIPLINES / FIELDS OF STUDY.....	3
SECTION 5: TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD (TRB) ANNUAL MEETING	3
SECTION 6: INTERNSHIPS.....	4
SECTION 7: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	4
SECTION 8: CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE.....	4
SECTION 9: SUBMISSION	5
SECTION 10: SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES.....	7
SECTION 11: HOW TO APPLY	7
SECTION 12: RESPONSIBILITY	13
SECTION 13: EVALUATION CRITERIA	13
SECTION 14: RETURN OF MATERIAL.....	13
SECTION 15: NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION.....	14
SECTION 16: PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT	14

SECTION 1: IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

- **Electronic Application Due Date/Time** for Fiscal year (FY) 2021 is **April 30, 2021 at 5:00pm Eastern Time.**
- Documentation Due Date/Time is 7 days after the Electronic Application Due Date at 5:00pm Eastern Time.
- The FHWA anticipates making award on or about September 1, 2021.
- Applicants are students seeking a DDETFP Graduate Fellowship. If selected:
 - Students will be referred to as “Student Designees” and “Fellows”
 - The Institution of Higher Education (IHE) the Student Designee is attending will be referred to as the “Recipient”
- Reimbursements of IHE administrative or overhead costs are prohibited.
- DDETFP Graduate Fellowship requires submitting application through Transportation Fellows Interns and Contractor System (TFICS)
<https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx>
- Paper applications will not be accepted.
- Applicants must certify that they have read and meet eligibility criteria defined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the respective DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Annual Announcement before submission.
- For transportation-related academic disciplines, please refer to section titled Disciplines/Fields of Study.
- **Applicants must upload a completed Standard Form (SF) 424 through TFICS.** The form is provided in the Grant Opportunity (www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=331800) in grants.gov in the “Related Documents” section. Only required items must be completed.
- Letters of recommendation must be uploaded through TFICS.
- The IHE in which the student is enrolled in must be accredited by a federally-recognized accrediting agency and must be located within the United States or its territories, both administratively as well as the campus the student is attending.
- Applicants should print a copy of their application and the NOFO for their files. The IHE may request these items if Fellowship is awarded.
- Only one type of DDETFP Fellowship may be awarded to a Student Designee in each award cycle.

SECTION 2: QUESTIONS

Contact the FHWA Universities and Grants Programs (U&GP) at transportationedu@dot.gov.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship provides funding for students to pursue master’s or doctoral degrees in transportation-related disciplines. The program objectives are: 1) to attract the Nation's brightest minds to the field of transportation; 2) to enhance the careers of transportation professionals by encouraging them to seek advanced degrees; and 3) to retain top talent in the transportation industry of the United States. The DDETFP is intended to enhance the breadth and scope of knowledge of the entire transportation community in the United States. The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship encompasses all modes of transportation.

The U.S. Department of Transportation encourages students from minority serving institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Asian and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (API) to apply for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowships.

SECTION 4: DISCIPLINES / FIELDS OF STUDY

Transportation-related Academic Disciplines / Fields of Study

Sciences

Architecture
Biology
Chemistry
Communication
Computer Science
Criminal Justice
Environmental Science
Information Systems
Mathematics
Physics

Business

Accounting
Business Administration
Finance
Economics
Management

Human Development

Human Factors
Human Resources
Psychology

Engineering

Chemical Engineering
Civil Engineering
Construction Engineering
Electrical Engineering
Electronic Engineering
Environmental Engineering
Geotechnical Engineering
Manufacturing Engineering
Mechanical Engineering
Structural Engineering
Transportation Engineering

Law

Environmental
Transportation

Public Policy and Planning

Public Policy and Analysis
Public Administration
Political Science/Government
Urban and Regional
Planning
Urban Studies

Aviation

Aeronautical Studies
Airway Science
Aviation Flight Management
Science

Transportation

Logistics Management
Planning
Policy

SECTION 5: TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD (TRB) ANNUAL MEETING

Student Designees will be provided funding for a **one-time** expenditure (up to \$1,500) for travel to Washington, D.C. to attend the TRB Annual Meeting held January. **Attendance at the TRB Annual Meeting is mandatory. Failure to meet this requirement will result in loss of funding designated for this activity.**

The Student Designees are responsible for arranging travel and hotel accommodations following IHE travel policy to obtain the most cost-efficient rates. Registration is to be completed by logging on to www.trb.org. In addition to attendance at the TRB Annual Meeting, Student Designees are also required to attend **all identified** DDETFP Research Showcase events. All students should plan to arrive in time to attend the Sunday morning event and leave **after** the

Networking Reception on Tuesday evening. If students have other commitments (i.e., presentations or poster sessions) during the TRB Annual Meeting they **must** notify the FHWA U&GP staff in advance to be excused from the Showcase session that conflicts with the event they would like to attend. **Faculty Advisor is responsible for ensuring Student Designee follows any institution-specific requirements for travel.**

Student Designees may be requested, regardless of funding level, to submit an abstract of their research (or proposed research) for review and consideration for presentation at the DDETFP Research Showcase. The abstract shall be submitted by the Student Designees (with a copy to their Faculty Advisor) to FHWA U&GP as indicated in the abstract request. The FHWA U&GP will notify Student Designee if their abstract was selected for presentation either on a panel or a poster session. Selected Student Designees will be required to deliver a presentation describing their research project at the DDETFP Research Showcase event.

Note: Faculty Advisor should ensure student travel arrangements (registration, lodging, per diem and airfare) for TRB Annual Meeting are completed as soon as practicable after grant agreements are fully executed.

SECTION 6: INTERNSHIPS

Student Designees may study or participate in research at transportation organizations during their tenure if:

- It does not constitute paid employment by the U.S. Department of Transportation.
- In the judgment of the Faculty Advisor such study will enhance their knowledge in transportation. The FHWA U&GP Program Manager **must** be notified of all internships.

SECTION 7: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility requirements are outlined in the NOFO.

Current U.S. Department of Transportation employees are **not eligible** for the DDETFP.

Applications must be submitted by the prospective fellow by the Electronic Application Due Date/Time which for FY 2021 is **April 30, 2021 at 5:00pm Eastern Time**. Applicants must be registered and use the FHWA TFICS system

([HTTPS://FHWAAPPS.FHWA.DOT.GOV/TFICSP/SIGNIN.ASPX](https://FHWAAPPS.FHWA.DOT.GOV/TFICSP/SIGNIN.ASPX)) to apply.

Confirmation of acceptance in a graduate degree program in a transportation-related major supported by DDETFP (see section of Disciplines / Fields of Study) is required at the time of application.

All Fellows, from the date of acceptance through completion or termination of the Fellowship must be enrolled in the degree-granting IHE accredited in, and having a campus located in, the United States or its territories.

SECTION 8: CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

All Fellows must conduct original research and prepare a paper or report suitable for publication on the topic for which they were selected. Recipients must make the results of the Student

Designee research available to the FHWA U&GP and the FHWA will retain an unlimited royalty-free privilege to use the results of the research.

Fellow's academic programs may include a reasonable amount of teaching as deemed appropriate by the IHE as contributing to the Fellow's academic progress.

The anticipated stipends for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship are based on academic level and shall be calculated as follows:

	<u>Monthly Stipend</u>
Master's Level	Up to \$1,700
Doctoral Level	Up to \$2,000

Actual stipend level may be lower based upon IHE formal policy and available funding.

- Student designees are advised that the stipend portion of the award is taxable.¹
- All program-related expenses must be supported by receipts/invoices
- All unused funds must be returned to the FHWA within 90 days of the end of the agreement.

Once an award is made, the proposed Research Plan may be changed **only** after consultation between the Fellow's Faculty Advisor and documented with a written agreement and must continue to be in a transportation-related discipline. Award funding is contingent upon the Fellow's satisfactory academic progress as determined by the receiving IHE policies.

SECTION 9: SUBMISSION

Individual students apply for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship. The FHWA makes awards to the IHE ("Recipient") on behalf of the student ("Student Designee"). An IHE must be accredited by a federally-recognized accrediting agency and must be located within the United States or its territories, both administratively as well as the campus the student is attending.

If a student is selected to receive a fellowship, the student, their Faculty Advisor and the IHE will be responsible for completing and submitting all required paperwork to execute the fellowship. Students must be prepared to submit a copy of their application package and the NOFO to the IHE. The IHE will be responsible for allocating funds to the Student Designee as outlined in the budget. The IHE will also be responsible for submitting all required federal financial reports to FHWA.

All applications for the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship must be submitted via the FHWA TFICS at: <https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx>.

¹ Refer to the Internal Revenue Service Publication 970 – Tax Benefits for Education.

We **strongly recommend** that Applicants complete or verify registration at least two weeks before the application deadline. This will ensure having time to address any registration challenges.

Do not submit application or supporting documentation via Grants.gov or mail. Only electronic applications submitted through TFICS (<https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx>) will be considered. Pages 1-6 must be completed and required documentation uploaded including the following:

- Personal Statement (Relevant background and future goals)
- Proposed Research Plan and Impact Statement (Research plan and plan of study)
- Transcripts are required from all institutions in which a degree was obtained
 - Applicant must upload official transcripts from institutions
 - Applicant must certify that the electronic transcripts have not been modified
- Identify at least two different individuals to provide letters of recommendation
 - **One of the letters must be from the applicant's current Faculty Advisor**
 - **Letters must be signed and dated by the individuals no more than 6 months prior to the Documentation due date for the respective fiscal year cycle.**
- Resume / Curriculum Vitae (Not to exceed two pages)
- Standard Form (SF) 424
 - Applicant must upload the SF 424, with the required fields completed
 - The SF424 is provided in the Grant Opportunity (www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=331800) in grants.gov in the "Related Documents" section.
- Citizenship status
 - Non-U.S. citizens must upload **valid** copy of current Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Form I-20 issued by the educational institution attending or Form I-20 "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status", or Permanent Resident Card Form I-551 issued by the USCIS.

After the applicant submits the Electronic Application, the **individuals** (identified by the applicant) will be sent an email message requesting to **upload** letters of recommendation **by the Documentation Due Date/Time**. Please note:

- Letters of recommendation must be **signed** and **dated** by the endorser no more than six months prior to the Documentation due date for the respective fiscal year cycle.
- One of the letters of recommendation must be from the applicant's current Faculty Advisor.

Applicants should not submit extraneous information or materials such as manuscripts or news clippings. These items will not be reviewed with the application. No additional information may be provided by links to web pages within the application, except as part of citations. Review of the application and letters of recommendation is based solely on materials received by due date/time for the electronic application and the documentation.

SECTION 10: SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

For FY 2021, Fellowship application must be submitted in the FHWA TFICS system by **April 30, 2021 at 5:00pm Eastern Time.**

Documentation Due Date/Time: This will be one week after the Electronic Application Due Date/Time as indicated **on page 1 of the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship NOFO.** All letters of recommendation must be uploaded into TFICS by the individuals the applicant identified.

SECTION 11: HOW TO APPLY

The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship application and required documents must be submitted in the TFICS. No paper applications will be accepted.

STEP 1: TRANSPORTATION FELLOWS INTERNS AND CONTRACTOR SYSTEM (TFICS) REGISTRATION

You must register in TFICS to apply for this grant. To register for an account, visit the TFICS website: <https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tficsp/signin.aspx>

Screen: TFICS Programs

- Click on the Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program link
- Enter your email address into the “New User” box. Click the  button.

Screen: FHWA Information Systems - Rules Of Behavior

- All users of Federal applications are required to acknowledge and accept security mandated "Rules of Behavior." Rules of Behavior outline what you are expected to do with regards to "Security" while using any FHWA Application. Please read the “Terms and Conditions” of Use and the “Rules of Behavior for a User” in their entirety.
- Upon completion, you are prompted to acknowledge that you understand, agree, and comply with the “Terms and Conditions” of Use and the “Rules of Behavior for a User”.
- If you agree, check the box at the bottom of the page and click  to create an account in TFICS.
- If you do not agree, click the  button. You will not be able to move forward in the application process in TFICS.

Screen: TFICS New User Registration

- Here you will add your personal contact information and create your password.

Password Rules: Must be 12 to 25 characters in length and must include: one upper case letter, one lower case letter, one numeric digit, and a special character.

- You are required to complete all fields that have a red asterisk. Once complete, click the  button at the bottom of the page.
- You should receive notification that you have successfully registered.
- Your TFICS User ID is also included in this message. ***Please make a note of your User ID and Password. This is required for any subsequent logins to TFICS.***

STEP 2: DDETFP GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

BEFORE YOU APPLY

- You must read the NOFO.
- Make sure you meet the eligibility requirements listed in the NOFO.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Your permanent address and contact information.
- Information about your education (i.e. transcripts, study plan, research topic).
- Information about your employment experience (i.e. resume).
- Letters of recommendation (at least 2, one from your Faculty Advisor, must be uploaded by endorsers after applicant submits the Electronic Application)
- Completed SF 424 (available on grants.gov: www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=331800)

HOW LONG IT TAKES

- The time frame will vary from applicant to applicant.
- If at any point you need to exit, you can save your information and return to complete your application before the Electronic Application Due Date.
- You will need your TFICS USER ID and PASSWORD to update your application.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Letters of recommendation, official transcripts, and non-U.S. citizen documentation (if applicable) are required to complete the application process.
- Letters of recommendation must be received by the Documentation date and time listed on page 1 of the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship NOFO.
-
- No mail or hand delivery of application materials will be accepted.

ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN?

To access the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship Application, enter TFICS and click the DDETFP hyperlink.

Below the “Background” section, you will see information on the “Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)”.

Please use the button to

[Click here to Read NOFO before completing the Application](#)

When the DDETFP application cycle is open, you will be able to click the

[Click here to apply for DDETFP](#)

button and begin your electronic application.

You do not need to complete all pages or sections during one session. You have the option to SAVE the information you have entered into TFICS and return later to complete the application. You will need your USER ID and PASSWORD to reenter TFICS.

Once you SUBMIT your application, you may **NOT** make any changes.

At the bottom of each page, you may have the option of clicking one of the following buttons:



Directs you to a page.

Save

Saves your information.

Next

Takes you to the next page.

Submit

Submits your application. Once done, no changes can be made.

Application – Page 1: Personal & Current Education Information

Here you will submit your personal and current information. All fields with (*) denote a required field. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide accurate information. If your email address is not accurate you will NOT be notified of your application submission or if your application was accepted for award.

Please ensure the information you have for your Faculty Advisor is correct. At the end of the application, you will be required to confirm that the Faculty Advisor's email address you provided on the first page of the application form is accurate and your application information will be shared with your Faculty Advisor.

Non-U.S. citizens must submit a **valid** copy of their Form I-20 "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status", or Form I-551 "Permanent Resident Card".

Prior to submission, you will be prompted to certify that you have personally completed this application and that the information you are providing is complete and accurate. Information is subject to verification.

Application – Page 2: Education and Experience

Institutions of Higher Education Attended

Applicants are required to upload transcripts for all institutions in which a degree was obtained.

- Applying for a Doctoral Fellowship: Official transcripts must be sent from the institution where you obtained your Master's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, and your current institution.
- Applying for a Master's Fellowship: Official transcripts must be sent from the institution where you obtained your Bachelor's Degree and your current institution.

Prior to submission, you will be prompted to certify that the electronic transcripts have not been modified and reflect complete and accurate information from the institutions. Information is subject to verification.

Employers

Please highlight all transportation related experience. Please note that current U.S. DOT employees are not eligible for the DDETFP.

- List only those internships/employers where a transportation function was performed.

Later, you will be required to upload a professional resume or curriculum vitae to the TFICS system as directed. You can only upload .pdf or .doc files. This file cannot exceed 2 pages.

Academic Honors, Scholarships, Offices Held in Student / Professional Organizations, etc.

Self-explanatory

Community Activities/Organizations

Self-explanatory

Experience in Transportation Education Programs

Self-explanatory

Application – Page 3A: Personal Statement

The Personal Statement should include relevant background and future goals. Please outline your educational and professional development plans and career goals. Describe how graduate school will prepare you for a career in transportation. (Limit 8000 characters including all references, citations, charts, figures, images, and lists of publications and presentations.)

Application – Page 3B: Research Plan and Impact Statement

The Research Plan and Impact Statement should summarize both your plan of study and research plan. Describe how your research will impact and enhance the field of transportation, contribute to an understanding of transportation, and provide societal benefits. The proposed research must be conducted in one of the **approved transportation-related academic disciplines**. (Limit

8000 characters including all references, citations, charts, figures, images, and lists of publications and presentations.)

Application – Page 4: Recommendations

During the application process, applicants will be prompted to provide the names and email addresses of at least two (2) individuals that will provide a letter of recommendation on their behalf.

- Letters must be **signed and dated**, by the individual writing the letter of recommendation, **no more than 6 months prior to the Documentation due date** for the respective fiscal year cycle.
- One of the endorsements **must be from the student's current Faculty Advisor**.

TFICS will not send an email to the identified individuals until the application is SUBMITTED. Please plan accordingly to allow enough time for these individuals to upload their letters prior to the Documentation due date.

- TFICS provides six (6) spaces for applicants to provide the names and email addresses of individuals, however only two (2) letters of recommendation are required for the application to be complete.
- It is imperative the email address provided is correct. TFICS will send a system generated email to the individuals identified. If the email address is not correct, applicants could jeopardize their application because they may not have the required number of recommendations by the identified deadline.
- Applicant must follow up with the individuals to ensure:
 - They received communication from TFICS requesting to submit a letter of recommendation.
 - They submit the letter of recommendation. Applicants should notify individuals of the deadlines and electronic submission requirements.
- If two original letters of reference are not received by the identified deadline, the application will not be considered for review.
- Please do not submit recommendations via U.S. Mail or email. Letters of recommendation must be submitted through TFICS.

Application – Page 5 Documents

Upload files as directed in TFICS. All uploaded files must be legible. You can select up to total size of 5MB and can only upload .pdf or .docx files to TFICS.

Transcripts

- Transcripts are required from all institutions in which a degree was obtained;
 - Applying for a Doctoral Fellowship: required from the institution where you obtained your Bachelor's and Master's Degree, and your current institution.
 - Applying for a Master's Fellowship: required from the institution where you obtained your Bachelor's Degree and your current institution.

- Upload transcripts from IHEs to the TFICS system as directed. All uploaded files must be legible. You can only upload .pdf or .docx files.

Resume / Curriculum Vitae

- Must be typed and cannot exceed two pages. All uploaded files must be legible

SF-424 Individual Form

- Download this form [here](#) and upload to the documents section

Citizenship Documentation (if applicable)

- Non-U.S. Citizens must upload a copy of their valid Form I-20 “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status”, or Form I-551 “Permanent Resident Card”.
- Please **do not** upload other documentation (i.e. Social Security Card, Driver’s License) as it will not be considered.

Select the Upload Type. Locate the file you are uploading. Click the **Upload** button. As you upload files, they will appear in the list at the bottom of the page. If you do not see your files, the upload process was not successful.

Before you proceed, please review and confirm that all files are uploaded. All uploaded files must be legible. You can select up to total size of 5MB and can only upload .pdf or .doc files to TFICS.

Application – Page 6 User Agreements / Confirmations

Applicants are required to:

- Confirm that you have read and understand the current Notice of Funding Opportunity;
- Confirm that you have read and understand the information related to required documents;
- Certify that you personally have completed this application and that the information you are providing is complete and accurate. Information is subject to verification;
- Acknowledge that you understand that the application information may be shared with your Institution when you SUBMIT the application, and that the Faculty Advisor email address you provided in the first page of application form is accurate and current;
- Certify that the electronic transcripts you have uploaded with your Application Package in TFICS have not been modified and reflect complete and accurate information from the institutions. Information is subject to verification; and
- Acknowledge that you understand that after you SUBMIT your application, a system generated email will be sent to the individuals you have identified for providing a letter of recommendation.

You can print the final application for your records, and then click the  button.

Once you submit your application, you will see a box that indicates “your application was successfully submitted.” Keep the application number as a reference. You will receive an email

that provides you with a summary and within the following months you will be notified of your application status.

If an applicant is selected to receive a fellowship, the applicant, their Faculty Advisor and the IHE will be responsible for completing and submitting all required paperwork to execute the fellowship. Students should be prepared to submit a copy of their application package and the Notice of Funding Opportunity to the IHE.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

After applicant submits the Electronic Application, the identified **individuals** will be sent an email message with a link to **upload** letters of recommendation **by the Documentation Due Date/Time**.

- Letters must be signed and dated no more than 6 months prior to the Documentation due date for the respective fiscal year cycle.
- One of the endorsements must be from the applicant's current Faculty Advisor.

All supporting documentation for DDETFP Graduate Fellowship must be received by **the Documentation due date and time listed on page 1 of the DDETFP Graduate Fellowship NOFO**.

SECTION 12: RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the electronic application is submitted by the deadline. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure endorsers submit letters of recommendation by the documentation deadline.

SECTION 13: EVALUATION CRITERIA

The DDETFP Graduate Fellowship will be awarded on the basis of merit. Merit includes (in descending order of importance with the top three criteria being equal in importance)

- Academic achievement: Level of academic accomplishments, recognitions, and demonstrated leadership.
- Potential for outstanding career in transportation: Demonstration of applicant's potential through personal statements summarizing long-range professional goals in transportation, including transportation work experience (if applicable).
- Proposed research plan/plan of study and impact statement: Demonstrates alignment of research/study plan to impact and enhancement of the field of transportation; to contribution to an understanding of transportation; and/or to provide societal benefits. The proposed research must be conducted in approved transportation-related academic disciplines.
- Recommendations: Caliber of endorsements of applicant's qualifications and of planned study in chosen research area.
- Academic record: Class standing and grade point average

SECTION 14: RETURN OF MATERIAL

Applications and supporting documentation becomes the property of FHWA U&GP and will not be returned to applicants.

SECTION 15: NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

Selected Fellows and their Faculty Advisor will be contacted by FHWA U&GP via email to notify of award selection. It is the Applicant's responsibility to provide an accurate and current email address for themselves and the Faculty Advisor.

SECTION 16: PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

The information is required under the authority of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended and Title 49 U.S.C. 332(b) (3) (4) (5). Your application cannot be processed unless all required data is submitted. Disclosure of your race and ethnicity are optional. Refusal to furnish your race and/or ethnicity will not result in the denial of any right, benefit or privilege provided by law. Records maintained in the TFICS are routinely used to determine eligibility/qualifications for fellowships and for program evaluation and analysis purposes