

Become an AAI Public Policy Fellow and Visit Capitol Hill with AAI!



The AAI Public Policy Fellows Program (PPFP) provides early career researchers (within 15 years of their terminal degrees) with the opportunity to participate in the public policy and advocacy activities of AAI. Become an advocate for biomedical research, for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and for your profession . . . there has never been a more important time for you to speak up and speak out!

PPFP participants meet monthly with AAI public affairs staff and select members of the AAI Committee on Public Affairs to learn about the role of the President, Congress, and the NIH in determining and implementing the policies that affect biomedical research. AAI also teaches Fellows how to advocate for, and help shape, the policies that guide their careers, and engages them in special projects, including developing and refining resources for Capitol Hill visits. Through the PPFP, you can do all of this without leaving your job, and you will “graduate” ready to take on whatever lies ahead!

The fellowship year culminates in a trip to Washington, DC, to visit your Congressional representatives to describe your science, discuss the importance of immunology, and make your best case for increased funding for NIH!

Apply by January 22, 2025

Visit www.aai.org/Public-Affairs/PPFP for details.

For more information or to apply, contact Director of Government Affairs Jake Schumacher (jschumacher@aai.org).



“The Public Policy Fellows Program (PPFP) is a fun, impactful experience that I wish I could do twice! Walking on Capitol Hill and meeting my representative and senators is an experience I will never forget! NIH support in Congress is not universal. The PPFP offers researchers a chance to show Congress the importance of scientific research. Until the PPFP, I had no idea how empowering and impactful visiting my representative and senators on Capitol Hill could be. The PPFP gave me the confidence and knowledge to become a successful advocate. I firmly believe that all scientists should join this program and learn how to become successful advocates. If scientists don’t advocate for funding, we can’t complain when research funding doesn’t increase.”

— Nicholas Hess, Ph.D. (2019–2020 PPFP), Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI



“The PPFP offers fellows a bit of everything: interactions with fellow scientists, insight as to how science is funded, and an opportunity to play an important role in helping our elected officials better understand the importance of scientific research. Through the PPFP, I gained skills and now work more closely with my state’s elected officials to move forward science-backed legislation to improve vaccination rates in our community.”

— Stephanie James, Ph.D., M.B.A. (2012–2013 PPFP), Associate Professor, Rueckert-Hartmann College of Health Professions, Denver, CO

“The PPFP exposed me to health science policy and helped me appreciate the intricate process that governs biomedical science research funding. The opportunity to connect with like-minded folks across U.S. institutions and with my federal government representatives was a valuable experience. Moving forward, I feel better equipped to be a positive advocate for American biomedical science policy and to enact positive change on a local and national level. Jake, Lauren, and the AAI Committee on Public Affairs were excellent mentors and colleagues throughout the process.”

— Cody C. McHale, Ph.D. (2021–2022 PPFP), Assistant Professor of Medicine, Levine Cancer Institute Atrium Health, Charlotte, NC



“The PPFP was a great experience to learn about public policy and connect with talented scientists nationwide. The day on Capitol Hill was genuinely fun—a rush of adrenaline talking with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and an unexpected ride on the Capitol subway system! When interviewing for a senior management role in academia, I successfully harnessed my PPFP experience to demonstrate the importance of concise communication (distilling complex research into key points) to advocate for change.”

— Srin Ranasinghe, Ph.D. (2016–2017 PPFP), Associate Director, Center for Immuno-Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA

“The PPFP changed how I understood the biomedical enterprise by providing insight into how policymakers and STEM advocates engage with each other to improve training and public health. On a tactical level, it was very rewarding to have learned skills through the PPFP that enabled me to effectively work closely with other trainees to help advocate for NIH funding.”

— Caleph B. Wilson, Ph.D. (2011–2012 PPFP), Director, Axion Biosystems, New York, NY

