Hertz Fellowship: https://www.hertzfoundation.org/hertz-fellows/fellows-directory/?filter_school=california-institute-of-technology

What Is the Hertz Fellowship?

The Hertz Fellowship supports exceptional U.S. citizens or permanent residents pursuing a Ph.D. in applied science, mathematics, or engineering, with funding of up to $250,000 over five years. Beyond financial support, fellows benefit from lifelong mentorship, collaborative symposia, and a vibrant network of over 1,300 experienced peers.

Eligibility & Application Timeline

- **Who can apply?**
  Applicants must be college seniors, first-year graduate students, or individuals in a gap year preparing for graduate study—intending to pursue a Ph.D. in applied sciences, math, or engineering.

- **Application timeline**
  The portal typically **opens in mid-August** and **closes** at **the end of October** or **early November**. The **2026 application period** will **open on August 28, 2025**.

- **Selection process**
  - First-round interviews (typically via Zoom) occur in December or January.
  - Final-round in-person interviews follow for a select group of finalists.
  - Fellowships are announced in March, with funding beginning the following fall.

What Selection Committees Look For

Hertz seeks candidates who embody:

- Deep, integrated knowledge across scientific and technical disciplines
- Creative problem-solving and interdisciplinary thinking
- Commitment to the public good—applying research to national and societal challenges
- Track record of leadership and initiative, plus sustainable achievement
- A sense of moral duty, formalized through a nonbinding pledge to support the U.S. during national emergencies

Application Components & Strong Strategy

Essays & Personal Narrative

- Focus on your research vision, technical expertise, and long-term goals. Zahns like:

"Have a focused research direction and ensure all materials support your narrative."

Recommenders

- Submit contact details for four recommenders, who will receive structured evaluation forms—not general letters—and assess your promise as an applied scientist.

Interview Preparation

- Finalists engage in technical interviews. Fellows recommend practicing concise explanations of your research to non-specialists, and clarifying how your work differs from others.

Supplementary Materials

- The application does not require a formal research proposal, but you should describe your research experiences and intended direction.

Summary Checklist

▫ Confirm eligibility (U.S. citizen or permanent residence, early in your graduate track)
▫ Register for updates: Sign up on the Hertz website to receive timely application notices
▫ Craft your story: Ensure your essays and statements align with interdisciplinary impact and leadership
▫ Recruit: Choose evaluators who can speak to your technical depth and innovative drive
▫ Practice interviews: Explain your research accessibly and emphasize originality
▫ Use available resources: Watch Hertz info sessions/webinars-such as the August 2024 info session featuring current fellows

Useful Resources

- Apply-for-Fellowship page: Application opening dates, FAQs, FAQs, Info Session access links
- Advice from Hertz Fellows: Includes several recorded Zoom sessions on crafting essays, selecting references, and interview prep

- Eligibility & Benefits: Official details on fields of study, compensation model, participating schools

General Advice
The Hertz Fellowship stands out for its strong emphasis on intellectual ambition, real-world impact, and lifelong collaborative engagement. Success depends on the ability to weave a compelling academic story—grounded in leadership, creativity, and service—and aligned with pressing technological and societal challenges.