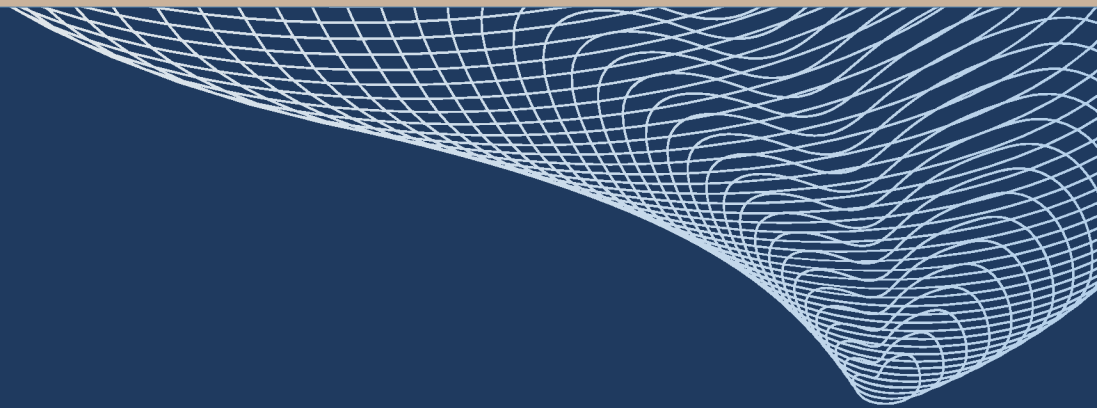


Hertz Fellowship



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Introduction

The Hertz Fellowship prioritizes depth of purpose over breadth of achievement. This fellowship does not require institutional endorsement.

The Hertz is STEM-only, funding PhD students in applied sciences, engineering, and math, and is focused on national scientific leadership.

OVERVIEW

Founded in the 1960s by the Fannie and John Hertz Foundation, the fellowship was created to identify and empower the next generation of American scientific leaders — researchers with both the intellectual depth and the moral commitment to address the nation's most pressing challenges.

Awards per year: Up to ~25

Fellowship value: Up to \$250,000

Duration: Up to 5 years

In addition to networking with some of the nation's preeminent scientists, Fellows also work with a dedicated mentor throughout their fellowship.

Funding

CORE COMPONENTS

- \$38,000 / nine-month personal stipend
- Full tuition equivalent
- Renewable annually for up to 5 years
- \$5,000/yr additional stipend for fellows w/dependent children
- Total value: up to \$250,000

IF COORDINATED WITH ANOTHER AWARD (e.g. NSF GRFP)

- \$44,000 / nine-month stipend during Hertz period
- \$9,000/year supplemental stipend during NSF period

BEYOND FUNDING

- choose your own advisor and research group, explore ideas outside grant constraints
- Dedicated mentor throughout the fellowship
- Summer internship opportunities with Gates Foundation, Breakthrough Energy, Analog Devices
- Annual retreats (East Coast and West Coast)
- Awards and recognition for entrepreneurship, thesis excellence, and leadership

Eligibility

Check here:
hertzfoundation.org/hertz-fellowship/who-can-apply

- US citizens or permanent residents only
- College seniors, first-year graduate students, or in a gap year preparing for graduate school
- Intend to pursue a full-time, in-person PhD in applied physical or biological sciences, mathematics, or engineering at a US institution
- Must direct studies toward solving major, near-term problems facing society
- No professional degrees (MD, JD, MBA), except the PhD portion of an MD/PhD
- No institutional endorsement required

Application Components

The Hertz Fellowship application consists of several key components that help assess the qualifications and potential of candidates. Below are the main elements required for the application:

Required Components

- **Personal Essays:** Applicants must write personal essays that reflect their motivations, experiences, and aspirations related to their field of study.
- **References:** Candidates are required to provide references who can speak to their academic and research capabilities. These recommenders can be from academia or industry.
- **Summary of Research Experiences:** Applicants should include a summary of their current and prior research experiences, highlighting relevant skills and knowledge.

Application Components

Optional Components

- **Research Project Proposal:** While the application allows for a summary of research interests, there is no requirement to submit a specific research project proposal. This flexibility enables applicants to focus on their overall research background rather than a single project.

These components are designed to provide a comprehensive view of the applicant's qualifications and potential contributions to their field.

FAQ Sample

Why does the application require reference forms versus letters of recommendation?

- We learn more about our applicants through our specific questions rather than a standard letter. This form also contains checkbox questions up front which are important for our review process.

How do I submit information for my references (recommenders)?

- In the application, you will be asked to submit contact information for four individuals that will serve as your “recommenders.” These individuals will be required to complete an evaluation form as part of the application process.

When will my references (recommenders) be notified?

- Once you've entered the recommender's name in the application system, the system will immediately email your recommenders to request that they complete a reference form. If your recommender does not receive the email, please ask them to be sure and check their spam folder. This form asks your recommender to evaluate various attributes. Specifically, they are asked to highlight notable examples of personal creativity in your work, your strengths and weaknesses at your current stage of training, as well as general comments regarding their endorsement of you for the fellowship.

FAQ Sample

What is the Hertz Foundation looking for in my personal essay?

- We want you to reveal your creativity beyond your research. This could be your favorite extracurricular activity, a leadership experience, or anything else that gives us a better sense of what makes you who you are.

Is there a word limit for my essay?

- Reviewers are less concerned with the word length and more so about the applicant's ability to adequately address the prompt. Therefore, you may go under or over the suggested length of 250–500 words for the various short essays and 500–1000 words for the Personal Essay.

Visit the Hertz “Application Help” site for more details.

<https://www.hertzfoundation.org/hertz-fellowship/application-help/faq/>

Selection Criteria

Five core attributes:

- **Deep, Integrated Knowledge;** reviewers probe the edges of your scientific understanding in rigorous in-person interviews
- **Creative Problem Solving;** ability to bring together expertise across disciplines to create solutions greater than the sum of their parts
- **Commitment to the Greater Good;** directing talent toward real-world problems affecting the nation and the world
- **Active Leadership;** self-starters who build consensus and deliver results
- **Lifelong Achievement;** consistent track record at every stage, with a desire to grow

Consider how your application reflects these (including letters of recommendation).

Application Timelines

Late-Aug 2026

Application opens

Late-Oct 2026 (exact date TBD)

Application deadline

Nov 3, 2026 (6p Pacific)

Reference Deadline

Dec 2026 –Jan 2027

1st review; selected applicants invited to first-round interviews

Feb 2027

2nd in-person technical interviews

Apr 2027

Fellowship offers made

May 2027

Public fellowship announcement

Does not require institutional endorsement.

Next Steps

- **Visit your campus fellowships office.** This scholarship does not require institutional endorsement, but we can provide tailored feedback on your application materials. (We also offer interview preparation advising appointments.)
- **Build your recommender network early.** Articulate your interest to others & share fellowship information.

Hertz Fellowship
<https://www.hertzfoundation.org/hertz-fellowship/>

- **Evaluate your experience with the five selection criteria.** This scholarship prioritizes service and leadership with purpose — not just achievement.
- **Mark your calendar.** Deadlines for applicants and reference writers are different.



**Take this
survey to
give
feedback!**

Questions?

We're here to help you navigate the process.

FASAOffice@caltech.edu

fasa.caltech.edu/fellowships

Rm 319, CSS Building