



2025 Junior Scholar Intensive Training (JSIT) Cohort

Call for Applications – Due by 11:59pm PST on Monday, February 17, 2025

JSIT Summer Workshop: June 9 – 13, 2025 (in-person)

JSIT Overview

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Retirement and Disability Research Center (UW-RDRC) in collaboration with Howard University is seeking applications for the 2025 Junior Scholar Intensive Training (JSIT) Cohort. The JSIT program centers around the Summer Workshop, a week-long, in-person intensive held in June of 2025 in Madison, WI.

JSIT brings together scholars from a variety of disciplines, including junior faculty (non-tenured), newly graduated PhD researchers, and dissertators, who are interested in topics related to social insurance and intersections with disability and retirement research. The goal of JSIT is to provide emerging scholars with training and mentoring to develop research ideas and to write an initial research proposal of relevance to the Social Security Administration, their programs, policies, and/or beneficiaries. JSIT scholars present their initial research idea at the Summer Workshop; receive peer and mentor feedback; continue to refine it over the summer; and present an updated project idea at the Fall Workshop. These proposals can then be entered into the JSIT Research Competition, which awards at least five scholars support to complete their JSIT research.

All training, mentoring, career coaching, course materials, travel, lodging, meals and incidentals (if applicable) are fully covered.

Summer Workshop – Research Intensive

The Summer Workshop is an interactive training that includes group and individual work, as well as seminar style presentations. Scholars will have individual time with UW-RDRC faculty mentors, as well as a JSIT mentor. Each JSIT scholar is paired with a mentor who will support and guide the development of the scholar's research proposal.

The Summer Workshop is an intensive research week covering the following topics:

- Understanding the social insurance research landscape
- Formulating and refining research questions and hypotheses related to SSA programs, beneficiaries, and their intersecting retirement or disability issues
- Identifying data sources and working with public data sets
- Strategies for working with and without administrative data
- Understanding the proposal development process
- Communicating and translating research
- Getting the most out of a mentor relationship



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This interdisciplinary training is led by UW-RDRC Faculty, a group of exceptional mentors, and experts in datasets that are relevant to the retirement and disability research community.

JSIT Mentors

Mentoring is a key component to the JSIT program. While most concentrated during the summer months, mentoring is provided year-round. Each scholar is paired with their main JSIT mentor who guides the scholar through their proposal development process, which is bookended by scholar presentations at the summer and fall workshops. Prior JSIT mentors have been:

- [Fenaba Addo](#) , The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- [Marcy Carlson](#) , University of Wisconsin - Madison
- [Marah Curtis](#) , University of Wisconsin-Madison
- [Corina Mommaerts](#) , University of Wisconsin - Madison
- [Kendall Moody](#) , Howard University
- [Anita Mukherjee](#) , University of Wisconsin - Madison
- [David Pate](#) , University of Wisconsin - Madison
- [Dan Sacks](#) , University of Wisconsin - Madison
- [Keisha Solomon](#) , Howard University
- [Justin Sydnor](#) , University of Wisconsin- Madison
- [Carly Urban](#) , Montana State University

Further, during both the summer and fall workshops, JSIT scholars receive continuous feedback from UW-RDRC faculty mentors:

- [J. Michael Collins](#), Consumer & Personal Finance, UW-Madison
- [Mike Levere](#), Economics, Colgate University
- [Jevay Grooms](#), Howard University
- [Sarah Halpern-Meekin](#), Human Development & Family Studies, UW-Madison
- [Callie Freitag](#), University of Wisconsin - Madison

Eligibility

An ideal candidate will have strong analytic and communication skills; advanced knowledge of quantitative/qualitative methods and/or experience with large survey and/or administrative data; interest in issues relating to the public social programs, social insurance, and/or retirement and disability. We are looking for scholars from a variety of disciplines, institutions and methods. Both quantitative and qualitative research is of interest, though scholars should have appropriate methodological training to conduct an independent research project, and detail their analytic training in the application. Suitable backgrounds include Economics, Policy/Policy Analysis, Demography, Public Health, Sociology and other related fields.

Applicants should be non-tenured junior faculty, postdoctoral researchers, or those in dissertator status. International scholars may apply. Note that successful applicants will need to complete a W9 form and have a Social Security number in order to be reimbursed for costs.



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JSIT Application

Submit your application [online here](#). **For priority consideration, submit your application by 11:59pm PST on Monday, February 17, 2025.** Applications will be reviewed and scored by staff from the UW-RDRC and Howard. Successful applicants will be notified in March 2025 and will have two weeks to accept their spot in the JSIT 2024 cohort, as space is limited. There will be minimal logistics and prep work in April and May 2025, along with some pre-reading to complete prior to the summer workshop.

Please note that **applicants may apply to more than one UW-RDRC funding opportunity**. Applicants should complete an application for each opportunity that is of interest. All opportunities will be listed on our RDRC training page: <https://rdrc.wisc.edu/training>

Application Scoring

Applications are scored by UW-RDRC faculty and staff, and reviewed by SSA program staff. Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria and weights:

- Research prospectus and capability (50%)
- Personal statement (20%)
- Writing and communication capability (15%)
- Recommendation letter (15%)

All JSIT projects will also be subject to review and approval by SSA program officials.

JSIT Timeline

Application Deadline	February 17, 2025
Notification	March 2025
Mentor Matching and Logistics	April 2025
Pre-readings	June 2025
Summer Workshop	June 9-13, 2025
Research Award Competition Deadline	September 15, 2025

More about JSIT

To learn more about the JSIT program, please visit our event page, [here](#) where you'll find scholar alums testimonial videos, previous workshop agendas, and articles on prior cohorts. JSIT is supported by the Social Security Administration's [Retirement and Disability Research Consortium \(RDRC\)](#). Visit the [UW-RDRC Research](#) page for the variety of research topics funded over the years.

UW-RDRC Contacts:



Retirement and Disability Research Center

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