

DAWN LAFFERTY HOCHSPRUNG DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Due: February 13, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST via email to: hochsprungcenter@sage.edu

The Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship 2025-2026

The Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Center for the Promotion of Mental Health and School Safety Doctoral Fellowship was established in 2021 in honor of Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung. Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung was the principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and a member of Cohort Six of the Russell Sage College Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. On December 14, 2012, she and 25 others were victims of one of the nation's most tragic school shootings. The mission of the Center is to explore, develop and share solutions that promote the mental health of each child and safe learning environments for all children.

The Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship is a *monetary award* to honor advanced scholarly research in the areas of mental health and/or school safety by doctoral students that is part of their dissertation for a doctoral degree at Russell Sage College. Students in the Educational Leadership doctoral program at the Esteves School of Education are eligible and may apply as an individual or a team.

The criteria for selection of the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Fellows are:

- Meritorious graduate research in mental health and/or school safety conducted by students
- Record of outstanding academic achievement
- Evidence of creative and innovative problem solving

To be awarded, Fellows must maintain outstanding academic status and satisfactory progress in their doctoral program. In addition, each Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Fellow is required to give a public lecture, at the Sage Graduate Research Symposium or a similar venue. Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Fellows will be recognized at commencement by wearing a green and white cord.

Overview

1. The Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship is open to current doctoral students who are actively engaged in the stage of designing, conducting and/or analyzing research data in the area of mental health and/or school safety as part of their doctoral degree program at Russell Sage College.
2. Maximum award for each individual researcher is \$500.

3. Awards will be given annually in the spring semester. Final application packets will be accepted as **one** PDF that includes all required documents (except recommendation letters) by February 13, 2026, via email to hochsprungcenter@sage.edu.
4. Student applicants are responsible for verifying that their submission is complete.
5. **Applications that exceed the Project Narrative ten-page limit or do not adhere to the specific details outlined in the instructions or are otherwise incomplete will NOT be reviewed.**
6. Awardees are required to present a summary of their research in an oral presentation at the RSC Annual Graduate Research Symposium, or an agreed upon alternative approved by the Fellowship Committee.
7. If you have any questions, please contact Joseph P. Dragone, Ph.D. at dragoj@sage.edu.

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Application Instructions

Submission Instructions

1. The complete PDF document of the application must be received by the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Center email account (hochsprungcenter@sage.edu) **no later than 11:59 p.m. on February 13, 2026.** *Late submissions will not be accepted.*
2. Applications should be submitted as a **single** PDF formatted to include the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship cover sheet, résumé for each participant, title page, Project Narrative (the Project Narrative section may NOT exceed ten pages), and reference page. Be sure to use 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, single spacing, and proper APA citation format in your Project Narrative and reference list. *Note: Incomplete applications or applications that do not follow instructions will not be reviewed.*

Detailed Instructions

The Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship Application Form

Submit one application as an individual researcher or research team. Make sure the form is complete and identifies all active research team participants. (All research team members should be listed on one form and appropriate demographics for each researcher includes duplicating the first section of the document, as necessary).

Sections I. and II.

Student Information: For each research participant provide the following information: (*Please list the Main contact person first and duplicate the individual section for other research team members*)

- Name and contact information for each applicant (list main contact person first). Complete information must be provided including name, address, telephone number (the best number to contact you if there are questions about your application) and SAGE email address.
- Cohort Number, location, expected graduation date
- Overall GPA at time of submission of the application (make sure the GPA is what is shown on the official program of study at the time of submission of the application)
- Dissertation chair and contact information including the person's title, affiliation, phone number and email address. The student or research team advisor is the Sage

faculty member with oversight for the research or a member of the student's dissertation committee.

- A copy of the résumé of the applicant(s)

Section III.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) status: Provide information about the status of the application to the Russell Sage IRB. While IRB approval is not needed to apply for the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Fellowship Award, it is required prior to commencement of the research and distribution of the award. Specifically, state if the project has not been submitted to the IRB, if it is under IRB review, or if the project has been approved. Please provide the IRB project review number, if applicable.

Section IV.

Formal Letters of Recommendation: Provide the names of two people who will submit letters of recommendation. One letter should be from a dissertation committee member and/or the student(s) research advisor.

Instructions for Letters of Recommendations

- Two letters of recommendation are required per application (individual or team); **Do not submit more than two letters.** In selecting a recommender be sure the individual can speak to all research participants' abilities. At least one of the recommendations must address the significance of the research from the perspective of a dissertation committee member and/or the student(s) research advisor.
- Instruct recommenders to submit ***signed*** letters of recommendation that include their title and contact information ***directly*** via email to hochsprungcenter@sage.edu. ***Unsigned recommendation letters will not be accepted, and the application will be considered incomplete.***

Section V.

Project support: Provide a brief description of any additional financial support that has been sought or received for the proposed project.

B. Project Narrative (not to exceed 10 pages excluding title page and references): In this section provide a detailed description of the project.

- *Project Narrative formatting requirements:* Please use one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, single spaced, with proper current APA citation format. You may include in the header or footer the last name(s) of the student applicant(s) and page number; please number the pages sequentially starting with

“1”. A table of contents is not required. Adhere to the page limitations as indicated above. Applications that do not follow proper formatting requirements will be considered non-compliant and will NOT be reviewed by the committee.

- *Title Page*: Provide the project title and a brief description of the project and list all active researchers. **(The title page is not counted in page limit.)**
- *Introduction*: Introduce the study by including the primary study aims and purpose of the study. **The study should have a focus on some aspect of mental health, school safety and/or social emotional learning**
- *Background*: Provide context for the study including an abbreviated Literature Review.
- *Research Methodology*: Describe the proposed research methods including study methodology, data collection, data analysis, study limitations and proposed timeline for submission of your research. **Note**: If you are using a survey, questionnaire, or other data collection tool, please provide a copy of the instrument. If applicable, provide the source and permission to use the instrument in the research project with your application (**not counted in the page limit**; include this information in the appendix and refer to it in the project narrative).
- *Proposed Budget and Justification* (aligned with the proposed research methodology): Students must submit a budget for funding up to a maximum of \$500 per proposal. Proposals that do not include any financial request will *not* be reviewed by the committee, as the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Fellowship includes a monetary award.
- In certain instances, projects may be only partially funded based upon the decision of the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Committee. You should provide detailed information about any internal or external funding sources received (or pending) at the time of submission of the proposal.
- Funds may be requested for costs that support the research or the dissemination of the study: equipment purchases; software used for data collection or analysis; academic resources needed such as a textbook or journal subscriptions not otherwise available; transcription services; travel for data collection or attendance at networking events; printing and postage of surveys; conference attendance where the student has been accepted to present or where there is a clear need to attend a conference to support networking or learning relative to research; and other expenses directly related to data collection and analysis. No student stipends will be considered. Please justify *each item in your research budget*.

- *Projected Dissemination Plan*: Awardees are required to present a summary of their research in an oral presentation at the Russell Sage College Annual Graduate Research Symposium or an alternate, approved by the Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Fellowship Committee. If an alternative presentation venue is requested, plans should be provided in detail with intended submission dates and format of the presentation. Students should also state their plans for dissemination and translation of their research beyond the Research Symposium or alternate venue.
- *References* (not counted in page limit): The reference list should be formatted following current APA guidelines.

Please note: Application reviewers include faculty and EDL alumni from Russell Sage College. The student applicants are responsible for the content and quality of the submitted materials. Upon submission, the student applicant(s) certify that the application reflects their own original work and includes formal approval for any external sources (e.g., measurement tools) integrated into the conduct of the research study. Applicants are responsible for verifying that the contents of their application are complete, prior to final submission. Applications that are incomplete will not be reviewed or considered for the Doctoral Fellowship Award.

Contact:

The Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship Committee at hochsprungcenter@sage.edu

Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Doctoral Fellowship Application Checklist

Cover Sheet

Student information (Section I & II):

- Researcher(s) contact information (name, address, phone, email)
- Cohort, location, expected graduation date
- Overall GPA (from official program of study at the time of submission of the application)
- Dissertation chair (name, title, affiliation, phone, email)
- A copy of the résumé of the applicant(s)

IRB Status (Section III)

- Project review status
- IRB Proposal Number if applicable

Recommendations (Section IV)

- Name of the two people who will submit a letter of recommendation. One **MUST** be the applicant's dissertation chair.

Project support (Section V)

- Internal/External funding requested / received

Application Narrative: *Project details (not to exceed 10 pages excluding Title Page, Research Data Collection Instruments, and References pages):*

- Title Page (not counted in page limit)
- Introduction
- Background
- Research Methodology
- Proposed Budget and Justification
- Projected Dissemination Plan
- References (not counted in page limit)
- Appendices (not counted in page limit)

Format

- Single Spaced
- 12pt Times New Roman font
- One-inch margins
- APA style in-text citations
- APA style reference list