

1. Introduction

The multidisciplinary Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities (Sherman Center) was established to advance George and Betsy Sherman's vision of improving learning experiences and outcomes for young children in Baltimore City. As part of this mission, it is establishing the Sherman Center Doctoral Student Research Award. This award seeks to expand knowledge about policies and practices that enhance the learning of young children, ages three through eight, in urban communities like Baltimore. Research topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- evaluation of new or existing school-based and out-of-school time learning interventions;
- school, teacher, family, and community factors associated with academic growth, socio-emotional well-being, and/or positive behavioral outcomes for young children; and
- the impact of school policies on family and community engagement in students' learning processes and outcomes.

The competition is open to doctoral candidates currently enrolled at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and in the University of Maryland School of Social Work who are eligible to submit applications for external support.

2. Awards

Sherman Center Doctoral Student Research Award recipients will be selected through the competitive review of proposals by members of the Sherman Center campus advisory committee. Awards of up to \$15,000 of funding for 12 months will be available. Award recipients will hold the designation of Sherman Center Doctoral Research Fellows during the timeframe of their study.

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative must include:

- a description of the project, the central research question(s), and the project's significance for early learning in urban communities;
- a summary of the conceptual framework and relevant literature, the relationship of the proposed research to that literature, and the new knowledge expected to result from the proposed research;
- a detailed description of the research design, methods, data collection instruments, and modes of analysis that the project will employ; and
- a project timeline including plan for dissemination.

Formatting requirements: The proposal narrative may not exceed 3,000 words; at the conclusion of the narrative, please note the word count in parentheses. Your reference list should follow your narrative in the same PDF and will not count toward the word limit. The text should be double-spaced and use a standard, readable 12-point font.

Additional documents can be included in the proposal as appendices. Examples of accepted appendices include survey instruments, interview protocols, and letters of agreement. No more than 10 additional pages can be included as appendices.

4. Proposal Submission Format

Complete applications must include the following components: the checklist page (provided), cover page form (provided), budget template and narrative forms (provided), current curriculum vitae (maximum, 10 pages), the proposal narrative, CITI confirmation, and two letters of recommendation.

- a) The **checklist** provides a convenient way to verify that the proposal is complete.
- b) The **cover page form** captures essential information from the proposal narrative,

including the project's goals and overall cost. The cover page requires a signature indicating endorsement of the entire proposal by the dissertation chair(s) of the applicant.

- c) The **budget template** captures common categories of direct expense and is required to be included in the proposal. Budgets may include project expenses, such as Supplies, Transcription, Equipment, Travel, etc. It is the Sherman Center's Policy not to pay indirect costs for any awards. Applicants should include a **narrative explaining each of their budget expenses**. All awardees are responsible for appropriate use and accounting for the funds provided. Any significant changes to the proposed budget with regard to types or amounts of expenditures must be pre-approved by the director of the Sherman Center.
- d) A **current curriculum vitae (CV)**, not to exceed 10 pages, should include current position; recent publications; amounts, dates, and PIs for funded grants; as well as other professional information deemed relevant by the applicant.
- e) The **proposal narrative** should clearly address the required content described in section three above.
- f) The **confirmation of CITI program certification for human subjects research** should include a certificate of completed training (see <https://research.umbc.edu/human-subjects-use-training-2/> for additional details).
- g) The **two letters of recommendation** should be written by the dissertation chair and another member of the student's dissertation committee.

5. Proposal Review

No fewer than three members of the Sherman Center Campus Advisory Committee, including faculty representatives from each of the campus' three colleges, and the Center Director will review and rank the applications. The selection panel will assess the content described in section three for initial review of all applications. Additional considerations used in the final selection of awards will include:

- **Setting and population** (Is the research conducted in Baltimore City?)
- **UMBC partnership development/expansion** (Does the research have the potential to establish or strengthen a school, community, or district-level partnership?)
- **Implications for practice** (Does the research have the potential to assist schools, districts, or community-based organizations in improving current practices?)
- **Research design** (Is the proposed research design – case study, causal/experimental - consistent with and appropriate for the research questions?)
- **Feasibility** (Can the research be completed as described?)

6. Proposal Submission and Deadlines

For the AY21-22 competition, the proposal deadline is January 25, 2022. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for this year's competition. Application materials (checklist, cover page form, budget and budget narrative, curriculum vitae, proposal narrative, and CITI confirmation) are to be submitted by e-mail to the director of the Sherman Center as a single pdf file. Applicants should coordinate with letter writers to ensure that recommendation letters are received by the deadline. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted. Awards will be announced by March 15, 2022.

7. Expectations of All Awardees

All awardees will be featured as Sherman Center Doctoral Research Fellows on the organization's web site and in Center communications. Additional expectations of awardees include:

- At the project's mid-point: submission of a progress report, including current status of the project and budget expenditures.
- Within three months of project completion: a budget summary for the full project and written report about key outcomes, which will be shared on the Center's web site and in other forums.
- Attendance and a possible presentation at Sherman Center activities and events.

Sherman Center Doctoral Student Research Award Proposal Checklist

2021-22

Please review the following list of elements and procedures required as part of the Sherman Center Doctoral Student Research Award and check that your packet proposal is complete.

- I have obtained the approval and signature of my dissertation committee chair(s) on the cover form.
- I have provided all requested information on the cover form page.
- I have included a detailed budget and budget narrative.
- I have included a current curriculum vitae.
- I have included a proposal narrative of no more than 3,000 words, excluding references and appendices.
- I have included a confirmation of CITI program certification for human subjects research.
- I have arranged for two letters of recommendation to be sent on my behalf, one written by my dissertation chair and another by a member of my dissertation committee.
- I understand that, if awarded the research funding, I will be required to carry out activities as a Sherman Center Doctoral Research Fellow.

**Sherman Center Doctoral Student Research Award
Budget Narrative, 2021-22**

Below, please include a brief explanation for each budget item.

Budget Item	Explanation