



## **Pennsylvania Clearinghouse for Education Research: Expanding the Policy Impact**

*To apply for this fellowship, please go to the Stoneleigh website and complete the individual application. Send the completed application to RFA. Contact: Adam Schott, Senior Policy Analyst: [aschott@researchforaction.org](mailto:aschott@researchforaction.org); (215) 823-2500, x536*

Research for Action is a Philadelphia-based independent, non-partisan education evaluation firm engaged in research that informs educational policy and practice. For over two decades, RFA has conducted rigorous studies to equip a broad range of education stakeholders with actionable information to improve student outcomes, support educators, and strengthen schools and communities. Locally, regionally, and increasingly at the state and national levels, RFA works alongside these partners to promote educational reforms that are effective, equitable, and sustainable. RFA staff include a diverse array of qualitative and quantitative researchers, education leaders, and former policymakers—a team enhanced by the diverse contributions and experiences of interns and volunteers, including a Stoneleigh Emerging Leader Fellow in 2010-11. Please refer to our [website](#) to learn more.

Earlier this year, RFA introduced a new initiative, the **Pennsylvania Clearinghouse for Education Research**, or PACER, which is designed to infuse education policy debates by crafting timely policy briefs on emerging topics with the best-available evidence of what works. Reliable research from PACER comes at a critical time in Pennsylvania. Controversial issues with the potential for wide-ranging implications such as teacher evaluation reforms, tuition voucher programs, and new systems of academic standards and assessments—occurring against the backdrop of historic funding pressures—are all on the horizon and reflect the most intense period in Pennsylvania school reform since the 1950s and 60s. While “research” is routinely cited to support and advance positions on both sides of the political aisle, much of it is supported by vested interests with stated policy goals. RFA’s PACER project is designed to break this cycle, and instead put rigorous, objective research at the heart of state and regional education policy debates.

The Stoneleigh Emerging Leader Fellow would join RFA’s PACER team of experienced former policymakers and researchers. S/he would partner with education stakeholders to identify priority policy issues and develop research questions; conduct original research to inform the work of policymakers and stakeholders; and frame publications and public forums to ensure that findings have application for a variety of audiences. In addition, with the support of RFA’s communications team, the fellow would build relations with area journalists to ensure that rigorous research helps to shape the dialogue around these education issues—an increasingly vital role given newsroom cutbacks and curtailment of in-depth education coverage.

RFA views the Emerging Leader Fellowship as a chance to grow the experience of a promising education scholar in the area of research and policy formation; we, in turn, see the contributions of the fellow as important to expanding RFA’s capacity to affect important education policy debates. We place a priority on applicants who bring intellectual curiosity to their work and are guided by a belief that researchers, practitioners, community leaders, parents, and students can learn from one another to advance responsible, sustainable reform. To ensure that our research has traction, we seek confident, clear writers who are committed to developing their skills in translating complex and even technical issues into writing that is accessible to a range of audiences. And, as a growing but still relatively small organization, we value flexibility, humility, and a sense of humor.