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2024 SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Spotlight: Brett Greenfield, Ph.D., MSW

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)
SRCD Policy Fellow 2023-24 cohort

In a few sentences, what is your role at the agency you work for?

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) functions as the principal advisors to the Secretary of Health and Human Services on policy development, and are responsible for major activities in policy coordination, legislation development, strategic planning, policy research, evaluation, and economic analysis. My role is in the Division of Data and Technical Analysis within the Office of Human Services Policy. In my first year as a fellow I have had the opportunity to work on policy relevant research using data collected from ASPE funded projects, provided technical assistance to state and local governments for ongoing data linking projects, and assisted with cross-agency coordination for international policy projects.

What interested you in becoming an SRCD Policy Fellow?

As a graduate student, I had multiple mentors who were alumni of the SRCD fellowship program, and seeing how their careers had been shaped by the fellowship was a significant factor for me in pursuing this opportunity. Not only did they gain first-hand experience with policy and government work, but formed decades long relationships with collaborators and colleagues that have continued to improve their scholarship. I was eager to have the opportunity to emulate their experiences through the fellowship.

What has been the most memorable project you have completed during your time at the agency?

One of the most memorable experiences I have had was serving as a subject matter expert reviewer for the U.S. Department of Treasury's Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results grant program. It was a validating experience to have my knowledge and skills as a social scientist be considered highly in an interdisciplinary environment. I was also able to learn more about cross-agency collaborations and improve my ability to communicate in interdisciplinary settings.

What piqued your interest in working in policy?

My career as a social worker has always primed me to be aware of how policies affect the lives of individuals and families. As I advanced in my career, I became more interested in how policies can be improved to benefit more people at a larger scale. During my Ph.D. program I was able to develop skills in understanding how to evaluate policies through research, and now have the opportunity to learn more about how that research is used to create and improve policies.

What has been an interesting professional development opportunity you have completed during the fellowship?

As an SRCD fellow, we have access to professional development opportunities with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Through AAAS, I was able to attend an Artificial Intelligence policy simulation at the RAND Corporation with a group of inter-disciplinary scholars from across the U.S. Government. It was a great opportunity to learn how my knowledge as a social scientist is valuable in a variety of settings, even when they are outside my direct area of expertise.

What is your favorite book?

I often say my favorite novel is Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, because I remember it having a significant impact on me, and it became one of my motivations for pursuing social work as a career.