

## **Hey Jane!**

### **Advice for Finding Postdoctoral Fellowship Opportunities**

Welcome to Volume 40 of Hey Jane! This is a project of the SWS Career Development Committee. Questions are generated by the committee and SWS members.

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### **Hey Jane! I would love a post-doctoral fellowship, but I'm having trouble finding out what positions are available, because the listings are very scattered. Do you have any tips on finding post-doctoral fellowships?**

Postdocs—they're not just for physical and natural scientists any more! Postdoctoral fellowships are becoming more and more popular among sociologists. Over the past couple of decades, the postdoc market has expanded and now offers opportunities for both quantitative and qualitative sociologists. Often, these positions can be a great way to transition out of graduate school. Depending on the specific fellowship, postdocs can give you a year or two to work on publications or turn your dissertation into that book you've always wanted to write. In other positions, you may hone your teaching skills; still other positions broaden your research experience.

Seeing the appeal of postdocs is easy. Finding a postdoc is harder. Start by looking on ASA's Job Bank. However, there are many more postdocs out there than what appears on the Job Bank. One of the most comprehensive lists of postdoctoral positions can be found on Academic Jobs Wiki. At the moment, the "Humanities and Social Sciences Postdocs" list contains information on nearly 30 positions that start in fall 2017, and a new list for 2018 positions should start soon: [http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Humanities\\_and\\_Social\\_Sciences\\_Postdocs\\_2016-17](http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Humanities_and_Social_Sciences_Postdocs_2016-17) Some of these positions are more geared toward students in the humanities, but many others are seeking sociologists.

Websites that collect job postings can also be useful. On these sites, I suggest performing searches with the terms "postdoctoral" or "post-doctoral" (different jobs will be listed under different spellings) and "sociology." Three particularly useful sites are:

[h-net.org](http://h-net.org)

[higheredjobs.com](http://higheredjobs.com)

[chroniclevitae.com](http://chroniclevitae.com)

Additionally, there are types of postdoctoral fellowships that are offered across multiple institutions. Many schools have Mellon Fellowships that will fund a postdoctoral scholar for one or two years. Mellon fellowships are usually geared toward the humanities, but some fellowships also state that they are interested in "humanistic social sciences." Many universities also offer

postdoctoral fellowships through a Society of Fellows. However, these fellowships are usually open to scholars from every discipline, so the competition is fierce. The deadlines for the Society of Fellows positions also usually occur relatively early in the job market season. You can typically find these postdoctoral positions on the websites above, but if you have some extra time on your hands and want to be very thorough, Google searches like “Mellon postdoctoral fellowship” or “Society of Fellows postdoctoral” may turn up additional listings.

If you are interested in working at a particular institution—for example, if you are limited to a certain geographical area—you might find additional postdocs by performing a Google search for the name of the school and “postdoctoral.” This method can turn up some pleasant surprises. For example, you might learn that a nearby small liberal arts college has a research center that sponsors a postdoc every year!

To add to the postdoc confusion, some positions are never actually “listed.” Some scholars obtain postdoctoral positions through their professional networks. For example, a professor might be looking for research help and might ask one of your advisors or mentors if they know someone who could fill that role. Make sure your professors know you are open to postdoctoral positions, so they are prepared to suggest you if this situation comes up. And make use of your own networks among peers at other institutions to make your interest known and to learn about other potential positions. Always work toward broadening your networks – for example, be sure to check out poster sessions at professional meetings to become acquainted with early career people doing work related to your own.

Good luck with your search for a postdoctoral fellowship!