



# Illini Science Policy Program

Scholar Guidebook 2023 to 2024

**Illinois  
Extension**

## Become a Part of the Land-Grant Mission



University of Illinois was founded in 1862 through a federal land grant known as the Morrill Act. In a departure from the trend of classical studies, land-grant institutions were charged with advancing practical, applied research and teaching, including in agriculture and engineering, to serve the public interest and provide professional development across all sectors.

This mission was further codified by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which established Cooperative Extension Services.

Through Extension, land-grant colleges and universities bring vital, practical information to state residents, including agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, individuals, and youth.

Public service has always been an important part of our university's history.

### Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives with Illinois Extension

Illinois Extension leads public engagement for University of Illinois by translating research into action plans that allow Illinois families, businesses, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities.

Extension offers educational programs in five broad areas:

- Energy and environmental stewardship
- Food safety and security
- Economic development and workforce preparedness
- Family health, financial security, and wellness
- Youth development

More than 1.5 million Illinois residents take part in Extension programs each year, including nearly 200,000 who participate in 4-H youth programs. Each month, Illinois Extension web pages draw more than 5 million page views, and people in more than 200 countries access Extension's web-based information.

Communities are directly served by Extension staff in 27 units located throughout Illinois. Extension educators in local offices and specialists located on the Urbana-Champaign campus develop and deliver in-depth programming locally, in regional venues, and through distance-learning technologies.



By becoming an Illini Science Policy Scholar, you become a part of the dedicated mission at University of Illinois for public service and extension.

## Illini Science Policy Program

### Overview

The Illini Science Policy Program matches highly motivated and qualified post-graduates with advanced degrees with hosts in public agencies or the Illinois legislature for a 12-month paid appointment. Hosts provide an educational opportunity to the Scholars who, in turn, provide substantial professional contributions to the office, drawing from the latest scientific and disciplinary advances at University of Illinois' flagship campus. The Illini Science Policy Program helps public service employers recruit and train top talent, supports University of Illinois graduates on their career pathway, and strengthens university-public partnerships.

Scholar assignments address Extension's critical issue areas — food, economy, environment, community, and health — and are identified by the host office, which may include municipal, state, and federal agencies and legislative offices in Illinois. Scholars are University of Illinois graduates who completed an advanced degree (Masters, Doctoral, J.D. or professional degrees) within a year and a half prior to the appointment start date. As part of the program, Scholars also contribute to Extension projects that align with their assignments. The program is an initiative administered by Extension's Office of Government Relations and supported by an Investment for Growth grant from the Office of the Provost at UIUC. Additional support comes from participating host offices, University of Illinois System's Office of Government Relations, and PepsiCo.

### Eligibility

The program is open to graduating students completing a Masters, Doctoral, J.D., or professional degree from one of University of Illinois' three campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, or Springfield between May 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023. Some extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19 may make applicants eligible for participation. Applicants should have interest and expertise relating to University of Illinois Extension's critical issue areas: food, economy, environment, community, and/or health. Scholars must complete all degree requirements before starting the appointment unless prior approval has been given.



### Length of assignment

The length of appointment is 12 months (non-renewable). Scholars begin between June 1 to August 31, as agreed with their host offices.

### Payment and reimbursement

Each scholar will receive a 12-month Academic Hourly appointment at an hourly rate of \$25.00 plus reimbursement for appointment-related travel up to \$1,500. Payment will be every two weeks with the submission of a biweekly timesheet. Additional travel associated with the appointment may be covered by the host agency at the agency's discretion. Participating Scholars will be eligible for health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

### Getting started

Maintain contact with your host office and supervisor prior to arrival. Be sure to arrange your start date with your host office. This will give you an opportunity to ask about necessary reading, visit the office prior to the start, or arrange possible early travel opportunities with your host. At the start of the appointment, review office policies including work hours; time needed (if any) to work on school commitments or finish your thesis; and attendance requirements at program functions, conferences, hearings, and meetings. Vacation and sick time should be determined by the Scholar and host agency early on.

## Participant Expectations

### Hosts

Participate in Scholar review and selection.

Supervise, mentor, and provide opportunities for Scholars to be involved in critical issues that support the Scholar's professional and educational goals.

With Scholar, co-develop a workplan of goals and tasks to be performed.

Partial support of the appointment. An interagency agreement **MUST** be in place before Scholar starts.

Appropriate office space and equipment, software, and transportation to fulfill the duties assigned.

### Extension

Payment of Scholar's stipend, travel and reimbursement.

Partial support of the appointment.

Support and guidance for both host agencies and Scholars.

Provide an Extension Mentor and co-develop a workplan to contribute to Extension programs.

Host meetings with all state Scholars, including an orientation and the Extension Annual Conference.

### Scholars

Make substantial professional contributions to the office.

Capable of working alongside agency partners, and excited to learn about and help with the process of management and policy-making.

Fulfill established workplan goals and complete impact report.

Participate in program activities including workshops, presentations, monthly check-ins, and media.

Participate in-person in a final showcase in spring.

Notify in writing of intention of early withdrawal from program.

## Managing your appointment Compensation

The appointment will be classified as University of Illinois Academic Hourly. Scholars must complete a timesheet every two weeks. Failure to submit timesheets by payroll due date will result in a delay of pay. Timesheets are due after you work your last minute for the pay period.

Working outside of the country or the State of Illinois is not generally permitted for Scholars. Any work that a scholar would like to perform out of the country or State of Illinois must be communicated to the ISPP Director for approval in advance of work occurring. A specific review and certain procedures must be followed to determine if working outside of the State of Illinois or the Country is permissible.

- Current payroll schedule: [my.aces.illinois.edu/timetracker/PayrollSchedule](https://my.aces.illinois.edu/timetracker/PayrollSchedule)
- Access Time Tracker and report your hours: [my.aces.illinois.edu/timetracker](https://my.aces.illinois.edu/timetracker)
- Time Tracker instructions: [go.illinois.edu/TimeTrackerInstructions](https://go.illinois.edu/TimeTrackerInstructions)

## Travel

All travel is required to be completed using the most economical method. If travel will occur in any way besides personal vehicle or for out-of-state travel, a travel comparison worksheet **must be** filled out prior to travel and reviewed/approved by the ISPP Director. Scholars are eligible for \$1500 in travel reimbursement as part of their appointment.

- Travel worksheets: [go.illinois.edu/TravelWorksheet](https://go.illinois.edu/TravelWorksheet)
- Lodging rates: [go.illinois.edu/OBSFReimbursementRates](https://go.illinois.edu/OBSFReimbursementRates)
- Commutes and mileage calculations: [go.illinois.edu/OBSFtravelstatus](https://go.illinois.edu/OBSFtravelstatus)

Scholars can travel any way they prefer. However, they will only be reimbursed up to the same amount as the most economical mode of transportation available (determined by the supervisor). Scholars should pay with personal funds so the reimbursement amount may be reduced to match the most economical option.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the allowable GSA rate, which is currently .655 cents per mile. While traveling, only the driver is eligible for reimbursement.

Meals are not reimbursable expenses. However, overnight travel is eligible for per diem at the University rate: [go.illinois.edu/TravelPerDiem](http://go.illinois.edu/TravelPerDiem)

Rental cars can be rented, but the University does not reimburse for rental car Liability Damage Waivers. Uber is allowable travel option as long as the travel has a legitimate business purpose, is approved by the supervisor in advance, and the ‘most economical Uber class of service’ is chosen; a class of service ‘upgrade’ is not allowable (i.e., ‘UberXL’).

Travel to host offices for required meetings or as part of hybrid arrangements are not reimbursable through ISPP funding.

All expenses for travel require detailed documentation, including receipts, agenda, and authorization forms. Attach all documentation relating to travel expenses to the expense report.

## Communication – Email

Given the nature of the work expected in this role, all Scholars are required to include the following in their outgoing email: [add Scholar Name] 2023 to 2024 Illinois Science Policy Scholar Funded in part by Illinois Extension, University of Illinois System, PepsiCo, and [add host agency name].

We also require that Scholar’s email signatures include a confidentiality statement, such as below – but will defer to any that the host agencies may require:

State of Illinois - CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this communication is confidential, may be attorney-client privileged or attorney work product, may constitute inside information or internal deliberative staff communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. Unauthorized use, disclosure or copying of this communication or any part thereof is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail and

destroy this communication and all copies thereof, including all attachments. Receipt by an unintended recipient does not waive attorney-client privilege, attorney work product privilege, or any other exemption from disclosure.

## Time Management

We know our Scholars are ambitious and seek opportunities to learn and give back. Although we cannot prevent you from taking on additional employment or volunteer opportunities, we do remind you that this position has a work commitment expectation of 40-hours per week. Some projects may require flexibility in schedule and occupy non-traditional workdays and times, such as work hours past 5 p.m. or over the weekends. Host and Extension mentors will communicate concerns in performance per university and/or agency guidelines.

## Using Chrome River

Access the Chrome River webpage through [go.uillinois.edu/OBSFtravel](http://go.uillinois.edu/OBSFtravel) to find resources and job aids.

Click the CR icon on the right of the page to log into Chrome River and create an expense report.

For Extension-specific assistance and guides for using Chrome River and creating expense reports, login to [my.extension.illinois.edu/portal/](http://my.extension.illinois.edu/portal/) and select “Intranet” from top navigation. Then select “Fiscal” listed under “Statewide Resources”.

Contact [uietravel@illinois.edu](mailto:uietravel@illinois.edu) for general travel questions.

## Health Insurance

University of Illinois Extension does not provide health insurance, but Scholars can opt to sign up for the Affordable Care Act – RSL Basic Care. Find more information: [hr.uillinois.edu/benefits/aca](http://hr.uillinois.edu/benefits/aca)

## Tax Information

As an academic hourly, your income will be taxed, with tax withholding handled by University payroll. Scholars will be issued a W2 at the end of their appointment to file with taxes. Scholars can access and update state and federal income tax W-4 withholdings at [hr.uillinois.edu/pay/w4](http://hr.uillinois.edu/pay/w4) any time to adjust withholding amounts, if applicable.

For international citizens, federal taxes will be withheld at the highest rate until you complete an annual tax status appointment with University Payroll and Benefits (UPB). Register for an Urbana-Champaign Tax Status Review appointment: [go.illinois.edu/FNtaxReview](https://go.illinois.edu/FNtaxReview)

Additional tax FAQs: [go.illinois.edu/FICAfacts](https://go.illinois.edu/FICAfacts)

## Leave and Overtime

Academic hourly employees do not accrue vacation and sick leave. Because of this, your appointment pay rate is based on a 12-month calendar year. This allows for personal unpaid leave of up to 15 days. Leave should be communicated in advance with your host and Evangeline Pianfetti.

Leave days that align with state or university holidays will be approved by Extension, up to the day limit. Campus buildings and facilities may not be accessed on university holidays.

University holidays may be found on the Campus Holiday Schedule: [go.illinois.edu/CampusCalendar](https://go.illinois.edu/CampusCalendar)

As an Academic Hourly employee, you are eligible for overtime pay. We do not anticipate Scholars working overtime, and any overtime must be approved in advance by Evangeline Pianfetti. To request OT, please send an email in advance stating the anticipated day and duration of the request and what activities the OT will involve, such as meeting, research, etc.

## Early Program Withdrawal

Situations may arise over the course of the appointment year in which a Scholar decides to leave the program early. This may be due to personal reasons, conflicts with a host, or to move on to an employment opportunity.

Each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis. There will be an open discussion between the host, Scholar, and Extension staff to determine the Scholar's transition out of the program in a way that is acceptable to all parties.



## Class of 2024 Scholars



### Kehinde 'Kenny' Adesina

Degree/Program: Master of Arts in Communication

Hometown: Oyo, Nigeria

Host: Illinois Department of Agriculture, Division of Natural Resources

Kenny graduated from University of Illinois Springfield with a Master of Arts in Communication. He is passionate about developing new media communication and multimedia storytelling techniques, in combinations with social justice, to make a meaningful impact in his community. Kenny is determined to address inequalities and contribute to policies that benefit marginalized groups.

*I applied to ISPP to gain a deeper understanding of policy research, decision-making, and advocacy efforts while creating multimedia content that educates the public and positively impacts society.*



### Shuvam Das

Degree/ Program: Master of Science in Management

Hometown: Cuttack, Odisha, India

Host: Illinois Board of Higher Education

Shuvam recently earned his business degree from Gies College of Business with concentrations in management, strategy, and analytics. He's led teams of consultants, delivered client deliverables in fields like marketing management, growth strategy, and resource optimization, and conducted primary and secondary research as part of the program. Shuvam earned his undergraduate degree in prosthetics and orthotics in India in February '22. He also completed a one-year internship working with clinical teams and hospital administration to help patients with locomotor disabilities return to their normal lives. He also was a gymnast competing at the state level, a model for fashion brands, and an image consultant for wellness throughout his academic career.

*I applied to ISPP to boost my experience in data storytelling, policy research, and the communication of hard facts. Working with IBHE will not only strengthen my skills as a business professional but also build a network for my future endeavors in the field of consulting.*



### Ayushi Dubey

Degree/ Program: Master in Technology Management

Hometown: Delhi, India

Host: Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology

Ayushi is an accomplished and dedicated product manager with a strong technical background and a passion for driving innovation. With 5+ years of professional experience and a master's degree in technology management, Ayushi brings a unique blend of technical know-how and managerial abilities to this role. She holds professional certifications in CSPO (Certified Scrum Product Owner) and SAFe PM/PO (Scaled Agile Framework). Ayushi received a gold medal for academic excellence during her master's degree and bagged chancellor award for meritorious performance by being a university topper during undergrad.

*I am excited to bring my expertise in project management and strong commitment to social change to drive impactful projects. I look forward to collaborating with a diverse and inclusive team that shares values and is dedicated to making a positive impact on the world.*



### Kaung Nyein

Degree/ Program: Master of Urban & Regional Planning

Host: Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, Office of Broadband

Kaung's areas of expertise and passion lie in fostering inclusive and equitable community engagement and development. Throughout his academic journey, Kaung conducted research on fair and efficient disaster management and recovery strategies. He gained practical experience by interning with local government agencies, including the City of Champaign and the City of Indianapolis. Kaung envisions himself working for government agencies in the future, further contributing to public service. Outside of his academic pursuits, Kaung finds joy in playing soccer, indulging in books, and exploring new destinations while traveling.

*I applied for ISPP/DCEO because I believe in providing equitable digital literacy as well as contributing to and serving to the constituents of Illinois at the state level. I am passionate to be part of the change by unlocking barriers and providing opportunities to share ideas and voices through internet and digital space.*



## Angelique Evans

Degree/ Program: ABD, Educational Policy, Organization, & Leadership

Hometown: Columbus, Ohio

Host: Illinois Legislative Black Caucus /Black Caucus Foundation

Angelique is a double major in Global Education and Diversity and Equity in Education. Her research focuses on the historical and continued exclusion of Black folx and locations within the Black Diaspora in global education programs, more specifically study abroad programs. Her doctoral work inspired her to create a non-profit, Hei Butterfly the Initiative, as a pragmatic solution to address accessibility and equity issues Black and Brown students may encounter that hinder study abroad participation. Since its inception, Hei Butterfly has raised over \$10,000 and awarded over 20 passport grants to Black and Brown students nationwide.

*I applied to the ISPP to learn more about educational practices and policies in real-life contexts beyond the classroom. I am excited to engage with policymakers, community leaders, and to address issues and make a sustainable impact for Black folx in the state of Illinois, especially in issues concerning equity and accessibility.*



## Drake Materre

Degree/ Program: Master Public Health

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Host: Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus / IL Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation

Drake was born and raised on the south side of Chicago. He is a two-time alum of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign receiving both a B.S. in community health and an M.S. in public health. He serves as the senior project manager of Natural Path Nutrition Inc., a community health organization primarily serving the south side of Chicago conducting health and wellness fairs and numerous nutrition and political education sessions. Drake served in multiple elementary educational settings, including as a long-term substitute teacher for fifth-grade, a two-time servant leader intern, and a site coordinator for Children’s Defense Fund. Drake has collaborated with many organizations on issues such as food insecurity, health equity, and the recruitment and retention of Black students and staff at Illinois. Drake is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

*As a grassroots organizer, I applied to gain experience to bridge policy and community and be effective in ensuring policy change while remaining committed to organizing at the grassroots levels.*



## Theodora Kourkoulou

Degree/Program: PhD, Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership

Hometown: Kalamata, Greece

Host Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of the Broadband

Dora Kourkoulou successfully defended her doctoral dissertation in August 2023 under the supervision of Dr. Cameron McCarthy. Her research focuses on video games pedagogies, issues of digital design justice and human rights. She holds both a B.A and M.A in Greek and Latin Literature, and an Ed.M. in Human Resource Development. She has published in the fields of the digital humanities and education, and, among other projects, is currently editing a book on AI-mediated education and inclusion.

*“My hope as an ISPP Scholar is to make a difference in the field of digital equity by helping communities realize their creative potential, as well as fulfill their needs for participation in digital cultures and civic behavior, besides building sound infrastructure.”*







## Host Offices: State Agencies

### Illinois Department of Agriculture, Division of Natural Resources

Created in 1961, IBHE oversees higher education in Illinois. IBHE is responsible for planning and coordinating the state's system of higher education in five major areas: master planning; higher education budget; information systems; grant administration; and program approval and operating authority.

IBHE is currently developing a 10-year strategic plan for higher education, in cooperation with the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. This strategic planning process is designed to address systemic inequities that have affected Illinois' postsecondary outcomes, the needs of the state's economy, and postsecondary attainment.

### Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Broadband

DCEO's mission is to support and maintain a climate that enables a strong economy for our customers — taxpayers, businesses, workers, and communities — by keeping, attracting and growing businesses, maintaining a skilled workforce, and enhancing communities so that the climate here is one in which businesses, small and large, and workers, can succeed to the greatest extent possible.

Created in September 2019, the Office of Broadband is housed within the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. As a primary charge, the office is responsible for administering the Connect Illinois broadband infrastructure grant program. In addition, the office will develop and administer related programming — such as in the areas of community planning and capacity building and digital literacy, adoption, and inclusion.

### Illinois Board of Higher Education

Created in 1961, IBHE oversees higher education in Illinois. IBHE is responsible for planning and coordinating the state's system of higher education in five major areas: master planning; higher education budget; information systems; grant administration; and program approval and operating authority.

IBHE is currently developing a 10-year strategic plan for higher education, in cooperation with the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. This strategic planning process is designed to address systemic inequities that have affected Illinois' postsecondary outcomes, the needs of the state's economy, and postsecondary attainment.

### Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology

DoIT became an agency by statute on July 20, 2018 being charged with responsibility for the information technology functions of agencies under the jurisdiction of the governor.

DoIT delivers statewide technology, innovation, and telecommunication services to state government agencies, boards, and commissions as well as policy and standards development, lifecycle investment planning, enterprise solutions, and privacy and security management.

DoIT manages the Illinois Century Network (ICN), a service that creates and maintains high-speed telecommunications networks providing reliable communication links to and among Illinois schools, institutions of higher education, libraries, museums, research institutions, state agencies, units of local government, and other entities that provide service to Illinois residents.

## Host Offices: Legislative Offices

### OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, JULIANA STRATTON

Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton serves Illinois as the state's 48th Lieutenant Governor. In this role, her portfolio includes leading the Justice, Equity and Opportunity Initiative and chairing the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, the Military Economic Development Council and the Illinois River Coordinating Council. Lieutenant Governor Stratton currently serves on the Executive Committee of the National Lieutenant Governors Association as the Treasurer.

The Lieutenant Governor's Office works to advance programs that support agricultural equity, address food insecurity, and provide strategic support for the K-12 teaching shortage. Statewide listening tours provide insight to support much work in these areas.

### ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS AND BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION

The ILBCF works to assure that the interests of African American citizens are given equitable representation in the General Assembly and that legislative action is directed to address those interests.

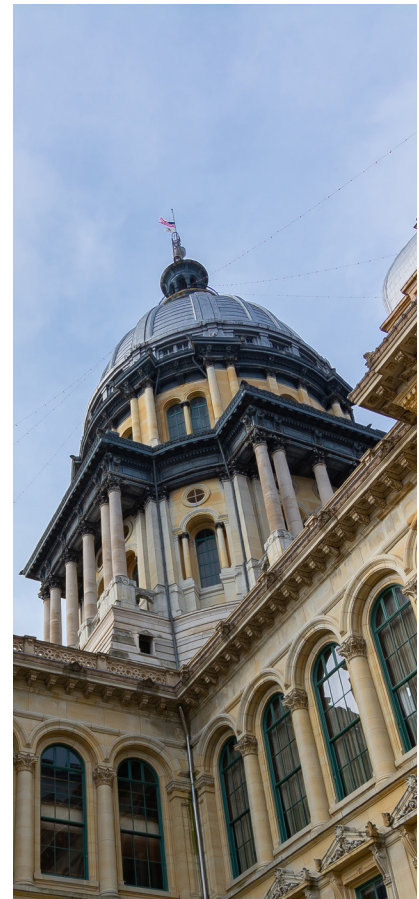
The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation, founded in 1968, stands for the progression of the African-American community by promoting education equity, health and welfare equity, minority business enterprise, job creation, consumer education, and criminal justice reform.

### ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS AND LATINO CAUCUS FOUNDATION

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus works to empower Illinois Latinos, assure equitable representation in the General Assembly and promote legislative action directed to address those interests.

ILLCF is a non-partisan and tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization established in 2002. The mission of the organization is to foster the next generation of Latino leadership while advocating for the needs and wants of the community. Its long-term vision is to expand its work by leveraging the connections of the Foundation to increase their social capital and provide financial and leadership opportunities so that new leaders can emerge, ensuring that the community directly informs the Foundation's policy priorities. This ensures that the voices of the Illinois Latinos are heard and advocated for, and provides the ILLCF board with opportunities to engage, learn, and experience the issue areas together to promote united advocacy efforts.

The Foundation's Board of Directors includes members of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus and others from Illinois Latino communities.





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