

## **USAID/BHA GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS** **IN HUMANITARIAN SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS – 2023 COHORT**

**Background:** The US Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) is the lead US federal coordinator for international disaster assistance, and a leading participant in the global humanitarian community.

USAID/BHA currently seeks to enhance its leadership efforts, improve its response programming in the humanitarian Shelter and Settlements (S&S) sector, increase the awareness of the sector in the U.S, and expand career options for those interested in S&S sector activities. USAID/BHA views S&S sector activities broadly to include not only provision of shelter to disaster/crisis-affected populations, but also the linked activities of settlements planning, disaster risk reduction, natural resource management, climate change adaptation, and proximate economic factors. USAID/BHA has also contributed to emerging humanitarian community interest in the Settlements Approach (integrated, multi-sector activities in socio-economically defined space), particularly in urban areas, and the linkage of this approach to follow-on recovery and reconstruction efforts.

**Fellowship Description:** USAID/BHA seeks to motivate fellows to professionally engage in the humanitarian S&S sector by supporting the thesis or professional report writing efforts of at least four fellows during 2023. Fellows will be U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are currently enrolled full-time in accredited graduate school programs in the U.S. or U.S. citizens studying abroad in disciplines like:

- City, Urban, Environmental, or Regional Planning, and
- Architecture or Architectural engineering
- Civil or Environmental Engineering
- International or Development Studies
- Humanities or Social Studies
- Or similar disciplines

Ideally, successful candidates would be first-year, Masters-level, graduate students, in the programs listed above, who are interested in commencing work on a thesis or professional report as a requirement for graduation. The topic of this graduate student research will take place in an international setting outside the U.S. Examples of possible research topics include, *but are not limited to*, any of the following research priorities identified by the Global Shelter Cluster:

- **The Longer Term, including Recovery.**  
Managing the transition of crisis affected households to longer term recovery in conflict and disasters contexts.  
**Research questions:**
  1. Which evidence exists to demonstrate how best to support households who have lost their shelter and settlements in the longer term?
  2. What are the barriers to supporting households who have lost their shelter and settlements in the longer term?
  3. How are households themselves able to recover in the longer term?

- **Cash and Markets in support of Shelter and Settlements-** How households effectively use cash to secure and support their shelter and settlements in conflict and disasters contexts.

**Research questions:**

1. Which evidence demonstrates criteria which indicate that cash programming will work well for those who have lost their shelter and settlements, in comparison with other modalities?
2. What is the impact of cash programming for households who have lost their shelter and settlements, in comparison with other modalities?

- **The Wider Impacts of Shelter and Settlements-** Measuring the contribution of shelter and settlements assistance to wider humanitarian outcomes in conflict and disasters contexts, especially with regard to livelihoods, physical and mental health, social cohesion, gender and society, risk from hazards and access to basic services.

**Research questions:**

1. Which evidence demonstrates the role of shelter and settlements in Gender-Based Violence - GBV/health/livelihoods/safety of households who have lost their shelter and settlements?
2. How do the wider impacts of supporting households who have lost their shelter and settlements indicate how support is best provided?

Graduate work on any of the above topics could entail travel to Washington, D.C., USA, or to sites in other countries. Work could also be performed at the home universities of graduate fellows, but international field research is preferred and highly encouraged if it is safe to do so (provided there are no travel restrictions in place in the selected country and fellows should accomplish all needed vaccination and insurance requirements).

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is collaborating with USAID/BHA to support these graduate student fellowships. The home university graduate student research/professional report advisor will oversee and be responsible for the quality, progress, and completion of the research and final deliverables. Both USAID/BHA and HFHI will receive e-copies of approved theses and professional reports from graduate students, encourage fellows to publish work in peer-review journals and humanitarian publications, host an end-of-project presentation of the research work, and would welcome the opportunity to serve on thesis or professional report committees.

**Awards:** USAID/BHA anticipates a minimum of four awards of up to \$19,000 each (made up of \$10,000 for stipend and up to \$9,000 for travel related expenses if necessary) to support graduate research. Awards will support fellowship research for approximately ten months and cover basic expenses that might include travel, lodging and research-related costs (e.g., medical evacuation insurance, visas, vaccinations, etc.). USAID/BHA, through HFHI, will provide basic administrative support for the graduate students. A final report and end-of-project presentation must be completed by January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

**Award Process:** Specific workspace assignments in Washington, DC, should they be needed, might be arranged by USAID/BHA, subject to applicable public safety requirements and travel restrictions at the time. It is anticipated that graduate students will spend the bulk of the summer at their home universities or at field sites, rather than in Washington, DC. The selected candidates may be able to travel to proposed international field sites while receiving fellowship support, subject to safety requirements, travel restrictions and the discretion of HFHI. Selected fellows will be required to adhere to the HFHI Accountability Framework and Safeguarding Policy and undertake the Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Training, and if the research work will involve direct contact with communities affected by disasters, a background check will be required.

**Application Process:** Candidates will submit three documents: a CV, a two-page statement of proposed work (including an executive summary), and a reference from their thesis or professional report advisor with a



statement confirming that the proposed work will directly support the candidate's thesis or professional report topic. A review committee representing HFHI, USAID/BHA and the InterAction Shelter & Settlements Working Group will be formed to identify successful candidates for this fellowship. The three documents must be submitted by **5:00 PM EST, Friday, March 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2023**. Applications from women and minority candidates are strongly encouraged.

Please attach the above-mentioned documents (pdf or MS Word) to [disaster@habitat.org](mailto:disaster@habitat.org) with the subject line "SHELTER FELLOWSHIPS-LastName". Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. No phone calls or email inquiries, please.

**Informational Webinar:** A virtual session with Q&A is scheduled on January 27th (12:00- 13:00 EST). The remote event will give potential candidates an opportunity to learn more about the fellowship and to ask questions to staff and former fellows. Our current 2022 fellows will be presenting their research experience in Peru, Indonesia, and Lebanon. Space is limited to participate in the webinar, so please [pre-register here](#).

For more information about the Fellowship program visit our Habitat-USAID/BHA's Humanitarian Shelter and Settlement [website](#).