

Tips for a Successful Fellows Research Project

A hallmark of the Fellows program is the applied research project. We asked our NCSC consultants and researchers for a few words of advice based on their experience advising candidates.

Here's what they had to say.

- 1. Choose a project you're passionate about.** Fellows is an intense program, so believing in what you're working on may be the inspiration that gets you through the cold, lonely nights in front of a computer monitor. By deeply studying an issue, you have a chance to uncover problem areas and suggest improved processes or practices. In the end, you may become the go-to expert in your workplace and a champion for reforms.
- 2. Get buy-in and support from your judges/court staff.** You will often depend on them for space, resources, time, guidance, and emotional support. You may also need their assistance for data collection, either at your own court or other jurisdictions. By letting them know early on why your project is important and how it can help them/the court, you increase the chances of them answering your surveys, providing data, etc. Also consider sharing preliminary research results to spark their interest and support.
- 3. Keep a research approach in mind when asking questions.** Be willing to learn and use new methods for inquiry and look at examples of court research and writing for inspiration and guidance -- in addition to utilizing program support such as the course work and advisor.

Some additional tips for choosing a topic include:

- **Review** existing publications and documentation from past Fellows projects and NCSC initiatives for ideas.
- **Strategize** by selecting a topic that will assist your court or current position.
- **Consider** what data is available and think broadly about what data looks like.

And don't forget that we're here to support you every step of the way. Our team of experienced program staff, instructors, and advisors are committed to helping ICM Fellows candidates succeed.