



Allegheny County
Scholars in Local Government
Looking for the Next Generation of Leaders

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY SCHOLARS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM?

The Scholars in Local Government Program is an initiative to attract recent graduates of masters and doctoral level programs of social work, public policy, public administration, law, business, and related fields to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Candidates compete for one-year appointments during which they complete high-profile projects and analyze difficult problems. In addition to on-the-job training, Scholars are given unique opportunities to meet with high-level government officials, foundation executives, nonprofit and private sector leaders and participate in educational and professional development opportunities. The Scholars program runs along the County fiscal year, from July to June.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Application materials, described below, must be submitted and postmarked no later than December 4, 2015. To be considered for the position, applicants must provide:

- A fully completed application form
- A professional resumé
- A copy of each application essay, as outlined in the Scholars application form
- Two letters of recommendation (one from an academic institution and one from an employer)
- Official transcript from every post-secondary educational institution attended

WHERE DO I SEND MY APPLICATION?

Completed application materials may be emailed to scholars@alleghenycounty.us or sent to the following address. Original transcripts must be sent by mail.

Ms. Kelly Wilkinson
Attn: Scholars in Local Government application
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
One Smithfield St., 4th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Recent graduates of masters and doctoral level programs of social work, public policy, public administration, law, business, and related fields graduating within 18 months of the application deadline are eligible for the Scholars Program. Although there is no residency requirement, candidates must be willing to move to the Pittsburgh region by the summer of their Scholars year. Candidates are from diverse backgrounds and are selected on the basis of academic and professional experience, demonstrated leadership potential, commitment to public service, communication skills, and creativity.

DO SCHOLARS HAVE TO ATTEND A PITTSBURGH-AREA SCHOOL?

No, applicants from any graduate school are eligible for the Scholars Program.

HOW MANY SCHOLARS ARE SELECTED EACH YEAR?

Up to one Scholar will be selected for the 2016-2017 year.

ARE SCHOLARS REQUIRED TO BE US CITIZENS?

No, non-US citizens are eligible for the program as long as they can provide the necessary documentation to prove identity and employment eligibility. However, this program cannot sponsor visas.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING SCHOLARS?

A committee of reviewers from the Department of Human Services and partner organizations will evaluate all applications and invite suitable applicants to interview in Pittsburgh in January 2016. At this session, applicants will be evaluated based on an individual interview and analytic exercise. Candidates will be informed of their status by late February 2016. Scholars begin work in the summer of 2016.

WHAT TYPES OF WORK WILL SCHOLARS PERFORM?

The Scholars Program will provide opportunities to obtain practical experience in program development, human services administration, public policy, and analysis and evaluation. Specific projects are tailored to the unique skill sets and interests of the Scholars. Some examples of duties and responsibilities of former Scholars include the following:

- ✔ Utilize Excel, SPSS, and GIS mapping to analyze and present data that improves administrators' understanding of community needs, consumer needs, service utilization and national best practices.
- ✔ Develop a funding proposal to pilot access to innovative arts programming to youth in foster care and coordinate implementation of the pilot program.
- ✔ Analyzing financial statements and operations throughout DHS and making efficiency recommendations.
- ✔ Prepare and present child welfare cases at multidisciplinary reviews aimed at continuous quality improvement.
- ✔ Design and implement a process for publishing reports prepared by department staff and university partners which led to the dissemination of over fifteen reports to date.

DO SCHOLARS RECEIVE SPECIAL TRAINING?

Yes, Scholars will participate in regular required and optional development activities. Leadership and professional development activities include, but are not limited to:

- ☑ Meetings with area leaders
- ☑ Local and national conferences
- ☑ Professional development programs and seminars
- ☑ Variety of events including outside speakers and seminars on relevant human service issues

ARE SCHOLARS GUARANTEED A JOB AFTER COMPLETING THE ONE-YEAR PLACEMENT?

Scholars are not guaranteed a position. However, Scholars who complete their commitment, receive a favorable evaluation, and want to continue working for the County will be given special consideration for full-time employment.

HOW MUCH ARE SCHOLARS PAID?

Scholars earn a salary starting at \$45,000 per year. The salary is taxable and the employment package includes a range of fringe benefits.

DOES THE PROGRAM PAY FOR SCHOLARS' RELOCATION AND/OR HOUSING EXPENSES?

No, Scholars are responsible for their own relocation and housing expenses.

WILL I BE AN ALLEGHENY COUNTY EMPLOYEE?

No, Scholars are officially employed by Great Lakes Behavioral Research Institute.

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THE SCHOLARS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE?

The employment package includes a full range of fringe benefits.

ARE SCHOLARS ELIGIBLE FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR COURSEWORK COMPLETED DURING THE PLACEMENT?

No, tuition reimbursement will not be available during the one-year placement.

IS THE START DATE NEGOTIABLE?

Yes, within reason. We understand that many applicants may have prior commitments, such as preparing for the summer Bar Exam, and we will accommodate these commitments on a case-by-case basis. However, applicants are strongly urged to start work between June and July 2016.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M A GOOD CANDIDATE?

The knowledge, skills, and abilities desired in a candidate include:

- ✔ Excellent interpersonal, communication, written and oral presentation skills
- ✔ Demonstrated interest in public service
- ✔ Outstanding time management, planning and organizational skills
- ✔ Diverse background and experience
- ✔ Strong quantitative technical/analytical skills
- ✔ Demonstrated skill in researching and analyzing data and complex information and presenting results in a professional manner
- ✔ Interest in designing and refining data-driven programs to improve service delivery
- ✔ Ability to establish external relationships and collaborate with other organizations, corporations and individuals
- ✔ Consistent ability to exercise sound administrative judgment
- ✔ Self directed and flexible, with strong problem-solving abilities
- ✔ Demonstrated ability to set priorities and accomplish a wide variety of tasks
- ✔ Strong leadership potential
- ✔ Sensitivity to cultural diversity in the workplace and towards clients
- ✔ Ability to exchange information using tact and persuasion as appropriate
- ✔ Desire for personal and professional growth

