

# 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 master's degree programs in public policy, public administration, social work, business, law, and related fields to work at 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, and nonprofit and private sector leaders, and to 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 post-marked no later than **December 3, 2010**. To be considered for the position, applicants must provide:

- ☑ A fully completed application form
- ☑ A professional résumé
- ☑ 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 e-mailed to **[scholars@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:scholars@alleghenycounty.us)** or sent to the following address:

**Ms. Megan Good**  
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 in public policy, public administration, social work, business, law and related master's or other professional degree programs graduating within 18 months of the application deadline are eligible for this fellowship program. Although there is no residency requirement, candidates must be willing to move to the Pittsburgh region by the summer of 2011. Candidates will be selected on the basis of their academic and professional experience, demonstrated leadership potential, commitment to public service, communication skills, and creativity.

## **DO SCHOLARS HAVE TO ATTEND A PITTSBURGH-AREA SCHOOL?**

While much of our recruiting and outreach efforts will be focused on regional schools, we welcome and encourage applications from across the country.

## **ARE SCHOLARS REQUIRED TO BE U.S. 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 superior applicants to interview in Pittsburgh in January 2011. Candidates are required to pay their own way to the interview. 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 2011. Scholars begin work in the summer of 2011.

## **HOW MANY SCHOLARS ARE SELECTED EACH YEAR?**

Up to **two** Scholars will be selected for the 2011-2012 year.

## **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 and current 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.
- ☑ Analyze all prevention activities performed across the Department of Human Services for trends, evaluation opportunities, and opportunities for improvement in data collection.
- ☑ Develop a funding proposal to pilot access to innovative arts programming to youth in foster care and coordinate implementation of the pilot program.
- ☑ 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.
- ☑ Research best practice standards for case-based quality assurance activities, including those for youth involved in multiple systems and for the aging population.

## **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 possibly national conferences.
- ☑ Variety of events including outside speakers and seminars on relevant human service issues.

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

No. If Scholars complete their commitment, receive a favorable evaluation, and want to continue working for the County, every effort will be made to find appropriate positions at the end of the placement. However, there is no guarantee of a job after the one-year placement.

## **HOW MUCH ARE SCHOLARS PAID?**

All Scholars earn the same rate of pay, \$45,000 per year. The salary is taxable and non-negotiable.

## **DOES THE PROGRAM PAY FOR RELOCATION OR HOUSING EXPENSES?**

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

## **WILL I BE AN ALLEGHENY COUNTY EMPLOYEE?**

No, Scholars will be 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 2011.

## 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.
- ☑ 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.

