



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: THE ROOSEVELT SCHOLARS ACT

WHAT IS THE ROOSEVELT SCHOLARS ACT AND WHY IS IT UNIQUE?

The Roosevelt Scholars Act is a new idea that will help the federal government recruit the best and brightest talent in key fields. The Act will create a graduate-level scholarship program for individuals who are pursuing advanced degrees in high-skill, high-need areas. Upon completion of their degree, Roosevelt Scholars will make a commitment to working for the federal government. The model is similar to the military's ROTC program, which has proven to be an outstanding source of new talent for our nation's armed forces.

The Roosevelt Scholars program will be unique in its focus on graduate education and mission critical occupations. Scholars will be enrolled in graduate-level programs across the country, taking advantage of our country's excellent institutions of higher education. Scholars will be required to complete an internship in a federal agency at some point during their graduate studies. They will then return to their respective campuses to serve as an information resource for their peers and university career services professionals on career opportunities with the federal government.

A small nonprofit Roosevelt Scholars Foundation will be established to administer the application, selection and ongoing support aspects of the program. In an effort to improve the hiring process, the Foundation will have the ability to initiate the security clearance process while students are finishing their degree. This will allow Scholars to transition more smoothly into a federal job.

In addition, the Foundation will be tasked with acting as an umbrella organization that can be the one-stop-shop for information about other federal scholarship programs. The Foundation and scholarship program will help restore prestige to federal service by raising awareness about federal opportunities and rebranding the government as a place where the best and brightest go to make a difference.

WHAT ARE "MISSION-CRITICAL" OCCUPATIONS?

A mission-critical occupational area refers to those hard to fill positions that a federal agency defines as essential to achieving its strategic goals. These positions are determined through agency workforce planning. The Foundation will collect this data from agencies and will maintain a comprehensive list of mission-critical occupations. Individuals enrolled, or intending to enroll, in corresponding advanced degree programs will be eligible to apply for the scholarship. Mission-critical occupations will vary over time based on the need for talent and expertise in particular areas.

In 2007, the Partnership for Public Service asked agencies to project their future hiring needs and found that agencies need to hire more than 193,000 new employees for mission-critical positions through FY 2009¹. These mission-critical occupational areas include engineering, medicine and public health, foreign languages, information technology, and law, among others.

WHAT WILL THE PROGRAM COST?

The Roosevelt Scholars Act authorizes \$10 million to create the Foundation, establish an endowment and administer the first year of the Roosevelt Scholars program, funding roughly 50 Scholars. Over time, the Foundation will build upon its initial endowment and eventually be self-sustaining, generating income from interest on the endowment. The Foundation may accept funds from private sources, as well. As funding for the program increases, the number of Scholars in each cohort may also grow.

WHY CREATE A FOUNDATION TO RUN THE PROGRAM?

A Foundation will be established to oversee the administrative functions of the scholarship program including reviewing and selecting scholars, assisting with internship and job placements, overseeing cohort-based activities and managing a student

¹ *Where the Jobs Are*, Partnership for Public Service, July, 2007.

ambassador program. The Foundation will also act as an umbrella organization charged with marketing other federal service programs and thereby raising the profile of federal public service.

HOW DOES THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS WORK?

The application process will include an institutional level review and nomination by the appropriate faculty coordinator as well as a national review and interview process which will be conducted by the Foundation. Applicants must be enrolled in or seeking admission to an accredited full-time graduate degree program in a mission-critical occupational area. Applicants may be nominated by the appropriate faculty member or representative of the institution in which they are enrolled, of which they are a graduate, or to which they are seeking admission, or by another individual, approved by the Foundation, who has direct knowledge of the candidate's academic work experience.

HOW WILL THE FOUNDATION ENSURE A DIVERSITY OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS?

The Foundation will extensively market the scholarship program to diverse populations and will adopt selection criteria and procedures to encourage a diverse cohort of scholarship recipients each year.

WHAT IS THE AMOUNT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD?

Roosevelt Scholars will receive tuition plus a stipend (not to exceed \$12,000) which would cover room and board, books and fees for each academic year they are enrolled full-time in their graduate degree program. Total annual awards are not to exceed \$60,000. Scholarships may be awarded annually for a period not to exceed five academic years. Roosevelt Scholars receiving support from other scholarship programs will not be allowed to duplicate support.

HOW WILL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS FIND A POSITION IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

The Foundation will partner with federal agencies and will assist scholarship recipients with internship and job placements. Roosevelt Scholars will enter federal service under a two-year excepted appointment authority with the possibility of an extension for one additional year upon prior approval. Upon determination that an individual appointed under this authority meets all qualification, suitability, and performance requirements, the employing agency may noncompetitively appoint the Roosevelt Scholar to a full-time, permanent position in the competitive service.

WHAT IS THE SERVICE COMMITMENT?

Upon graduation, Roosevelt Scholars will be expected to fulfill a minimum of three years of service in an Executive agency as defined by section 105 of title 5, United States Code. Scholars completing a degree of longer duration (e.g., MDs or PhDs) will be expected to complete an additional year of service for each year of support beyond three years for a maximum of five years. Scholars are expected to fulfill their federal service requirement in full; however, Scholars may move between agencies should positions be available and the Scholar meet qualifications.

WHAT HAPPENS IF AN INDIVIDUAL DOES NOT FULFILL THE SERVICE REQUIREMENT?

If a Scholar fails to fulfill his/her service commitment, he/she will be required to repay the Foundation the total scholarship amount (tuition plus stipend) or a percentage of the scholarship money received based on the amount of service fulfilled. The Foundation, in consultation with the Office of Personnel Management, has the authority to waive the service requirement in select circumstances.

WHY DOES THE FOUNDATION PROVIDE AN UPFRONT GRANT RATHER THAN LOAN REPAYMENT?

Upfront scholarships will provide an incentive for students to commit to public service at the outset of graduate school. In addition, a scholarship will provide an instant benefit to the recipient. An upfront grant allows students to enter into federal service with little or no educational debt. Scholars will not have to apply for, and then accrue interest on, hefty loans over several years. Ultimately, it will encourage young people to enter into federal public service immediately after graduation when they might otherwise choose a career in the private sector in order to pay off their debt.