2018 Legislative Fellowship Program

PAID, full-time, professional, 13-month experience for college graduates

The Ohio Legislative Service Commission

www.lsc.ohio.gov

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2018 Legislative Fellowship Program

2017-2018

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Program introduction

The Ohio General Assembly, through the Ohio Legislative Service Commission (LSC), has sponsored a legislative fellowship program for over 50 years, now with over 900 alumni. This unique program provides participants of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences with an introduction to state government and promotes careers in public service.

Traditionally, 20 fellows are assigned to work with members of the Ohio General Assembly, two with Ohio Government Telecommunications (OGT)/The Ohio Channel, and one or two with the LSC research or fiscal staff. The program objectives are to:

- Encourage outstanding college graduates to pursue careers in public service;
- Provide practical experience in the legislative process and legislative research;
- Develop a group of trained personnel from which persons may be recruited for permanent staff positions;
- Provide staff assistance to Ohio's elected officials.

Who should apply

Those who have an interest in public service, government, and/or the political system are encouraged to apply to the program, regardless of their college major or prior experience. Successful applicants are generally motivated by the opportunity to broaden their perspectives, gain practical experience, and have time for reflection regarding future career goals.

Fellow duties

LSC fellows engage in numerous activities and are given a variety of responsibilities. Specific duties depend on a fellow's assignment; however, most fellows perform some common duties. One of the primary responsibilities of most fellows is to assist legislators with constituent work. Constituent work requires fellows to assist the residents of a member's district when they have a problem or concern that involves a state issue or state program.

In addition to constituent work, fellows' duties usually include writing assignments such as press releases, newsletters, speeches, and committee memorandums. Fellows also may be asked to research public policy issues or legislation, and attend committees and other meetings.

Occasionally, a fellow may be asked to travel to a member's district for events and/or meetings. Fellows also assist with various office and administrative duties. These may include, but are not limited to, database maintenance, scheduling, filing, and office correspondence.

"The Fellowship experience led me to enriching interactions and provided me with an inside view of the workings of state government in Ohio. I trust I will use the skills I have gained and the relationships I have built to improve myself far into the future."

David Roper, 2014 LSC Fellow
B.A. Government and Foreign Affairs
Walsh University

Assignments

Twenty fellows are assigned to work in the Ohio Senate or the Ohio House of Representatives, though some may focus on communications work in caucus communications departments. These fellows normally engage in the previously described duties.

One or two fellows work directly for the nonpartisan LSC. Their duties may include researching legislative issues and drafting legislation or providing fiscal services. These fellows also monitor floor sessions of the Ohio House.

Finally, two fellows work with OGT/The Ohio Channel. These fellows operate cameras for broadcasting legislative sessions and assist with other studio and field productions. Please contact LSC for additional information describing the specific duties of the two OGT positions. The application deadline and requirements for the OGT positions are different from the legislative positions.

Seminars

In addition to their daily responsibilities, the fellows participate in monthly seminars designed to expand upon an issue or aspect of the state. Seminars may have various formats and have included visits to state facilities, meetings with state officials, and exploration of industries and issues around the state.

Qualifications

Applicants must submit a packet of all application materials by the **April 1, 2017, postmark deadline**, and have completed at least a bachelor's degree program by December 2017.

Persons with graduate or law degrees also may apply. There are no requirements placed on major fields of study except for the two fellows assigned to OGT/The Ohio Channel, who must have a telecommunications or related degree.

Most successful applicants have a strong academic record, and all have excellent written and oral communication skills.

Residents and nonresidents of the state of Ohio may apply. Prior political involvement or participation in a political party is not required.

"There is nothing like the Fellowship. The days literally fly by in the best way possible. Even though the year ends in a blink, the experience is truly rewarding. With all the amazing people you meet and the memories you can make every day, the Fellowship is an incredible opportunity."

Maggie O'Shea, 2015 LSC Fellow
B.A. English
Ohio State University

Benefits

LSC fellows are paid $31,200 annually with an opportunity to earn an additional bonus of up to $2,000 upon completion of the program. Fellows receive sick leave, personal leave, vacation leave, and paid holidays, and at the discretion of LSC, may receive compensatory time off for overtime worked.

Fellows are immediately eligible to participate in the health care plan offered by the state and, after one year of continuous state service, are eligible for dental and vision coverage.

All fellows must participate in the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. Deductions made on behalf of the retirement system are refundable, according to current federal law and state regulations, upon termination of state employment.

Future employment

The Fellowship program provides full-time, temporary employment lasting for 13 months. Two of the objectives of the program, however, are to "develop a group of trained personnel from which persons may be recruited for permanent staff positions" and to "encourage outstanding college graduates to pursue careers in public service."

The program has been successful in meeting these objectives. Although no promises can be made to any fellow regarding employment with the General Assembly or the state of Ohio following the program, many fellows are employed by state, local, or federal government agencies upon completion of their fellowships. Frequently, fellows are offered permanent positions with the General Assembly as legislative staff and as legislative liaisons for various state agencies. In the private sector, fellows have obtained employment with lobbying or public relations firms.

A directory of former fellows and their current professions is available on our website at www.lsc.ohio.gov/fellowship/directory.html.

Application procedures

To be considered for the 2018 program, one complete application packet must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2017, and must include each of the following items:

- a 2018 Legislative Application form;
- a resumé;
- official, sealed transcript(s) from each college or university attended (for more than one quarter or semester);

"The Fellowship is a wonderful opportunity to gain firsthand experience in the policy making process while also being able to network with others. Whether it is helping a constituent with an issue, performing legislative research, or taking advantage of LSC seminars, you are sure to receive a well rounded and comprehensive understanding of state government."

Steven Blalock, 2012 LSC Fellow
B.A. International Studies, Old Dominion University
M.A. Political Science, Ohio University

• two sealed letters of recommendation; and

• a carefully edited two- to four-page typewritten personal statement.

Letters of recommendation typically are written by persons familiar with your academic work, employment experience, and/or extracurricular activities. **Applicants are requested not to submit letters of recommendation from elected public officials unless they were employed by those officials and the recommendation relates directly to work performance.**

All items must be collected by the applicant and sent to the Ohio Legislative Service Commission as one complete application packet. LSC will not accept materials that are sent via fax machine or email.

Personal interviews are conducted with selected applicants during the months of April and May. Every effort is made to complete the selection process by the end of May. Those initially selected as fellows will be offered positions contingent on the satisfactory completion of a background check conducted with the applicant's prior approval.

Orientation program

The successful applicants will start their fellowship the first week of December 2017. A ten-day orientation program may include discussions of the legislative process; meetings with legislators, other elected officials, and staff; exercises in legislative research; workshops on useful skills and resources; and tours of state government offices and facilities.

Informational tours

LSC offers informational tours on most Mondays and Fridays in late January through March. These brief sessions provide detailed information about the program, which may assist individuals in deciding whether or not to apply for a fellowship position. The tours also provide an opportunity for prospective applicants to meet program staff and current fellows, and to see the Vern Riffe Center and the Statehouse. To sign up for a tour, contact program assistant Stefanie Thurman after the first of the year at (614) 644-1326.

"I am amazed at the amount of knowledge and insight I gained during my time as a fellow. I set out to learn the legislative process, but was destined for much more. Fellows have numerous opportunities to develop their communication skills, make professional contacts, and build long-lasting friendships. Skills acquired during one's time as a fellow are invaluable and sure to prove beneficial in future endeavors."

Andrea Magaña Lewis, 2013 LSC Fellow
B.S. Human Ecology & M.A. Middle Childhood Education
Ohio State University

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I am scheduled to graduate in December?
Applicants graduating in December are eligible to apply for the program; the only requirement is that you must be able to attend the majority of the orientation program during the first two weeks of December.

Do I have to be a recent college graduate to apply?
It does not matter when you received your undergraduate degree; we just require that you have one to be eligible for the program.

Will it hurt my chances of becoming a fellow if I do not attend an informational tour?
Not at all. The visits are meant to be informal and helpful in gaining more information about the program. They give you an opportunity to meet with current fellows and administrators and ask them questions, but we do not want anyone to unnecessarily miss work or class to come for a visit. If it is convenient for you, please schedule a visit.

Will you accept more than the required two letters of recommendation?
We will not accept more than the two letters of recommendation that we ask for, so please only submit two.

Is there a particular way the letters should be written and/or addressed? Can they be emailed and/or faxed to your office?
There is no particular way we would like the letters to be written; however, we do require that the letters be sealed and submitted with your application package. No faxed, emailed, or late submission of letters will be accepted or considered.

Is there a particular way the personal statement should be written?
You have free rein to write on whatever you would like; we just require that the personal statement be at least two pages but no more than four pages long. It can be single or double spaced. We will use it to evaluate your writing skills.

Do I need to fill out an Ohio civil service application?
No, the Legislative Service Commission does not accept civil service applications.

"I was not politically savvy before I started the Fellowship. Once notified of my acceptance, I tried to prepare as much as possible; however, there is nothing that can completely prepare you for the job. I've learned that fellows must be flexible and willing to press through whatever comes their way. I love the Fellowship program; this was one of the greatest experiences of my life!"

Lori White-Sanders, 2014 LSC Fellow
B.S. Biology, Edward Waters College
M.B.A. Business Administration Management, Ursuline College

Can application materials be sent in separately, or do they need to be sent in all together?
Materials must be sent together as one application packet. Request that all transcripts and letters of recommendation be sent to you first and then submit them unopened (sealed) with the other required materials.

Do my college transcripts need to be official, or can I send a copy? Do I need to send transcripts from all of the higher education institutions I have attended?
Transcripts must be official and sealed from your college registrar's office and must come from each college and university you have attended (for more than one quarter or semester), including community college and postgraduate work.

Does the packet of application materials need to arrive by April 1, or can it be postmarked by April 1?
All packets of application materials postmarked on April 1, or before, will be considered on time.

What are the required work hours? Will I have to work overtime? Will I have time to have a second job or attend classes after work?
The required work hours are 8:30 to 5:00, Monday through Friday. Depending on the activity of the General Assembly, you may be asked to work late hours or to come in early. Fellows may receive some compensatory time for additional time worked beyond the 40 hours in a week. In the past, some fellows have secured part-time jobs or attended evening classes, with the understanding that their first priority is their commitment to the Fellowship program, requiring them to keep their evenings flexible.

What is the application process for the telecommunications fellowship?
Two telecommunications fellows are hired to work with Ohio Government Telecommunications (OGT)/The Ohio Channel. Applicants must have a telecommunications-related degree or previous television production experience. A separate application is required and can be obtained from the LSC website or by contacting LSC. The telecommunications deadline is April 30. Applicants may apply to both programs.

Applicants needing an accommodation to participate in the application process, Statehouse tour, or interviews should contact the office listed below. Application materials may be obtained from the LSC website or by writing or calling:

Ohio Legislative Service Commission
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Columbus, OH 43215-6136
www.lsc.ohio.gov
(614) 466-3615

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