Legislative Fellowship Program

Empowering college graduates to explore and
launch careers in public service since 1963

Program: History and Objectives

Since 1963, the Ohio General Assembly has sponsored a 13-month, full-time, paid (salary plus benefits) legislative fellowship program. Up to 24 individuals are selected each year to participate in the fellowship, which is administered by the Legislative Service Commission (LSC), in conjunction with the Ohio House of Representatives, the Ohio Senate, and the Ohio Government Telecommunications (OGT)/The Ohio Channel. The cohort typically includes ten fellows assigned to work with members of the House, ten with members of the Senate, two with LSC, and two with OGT.

The program objectives are to:

- Encourage outstanding college graduates to explore and pursue careers in the legislature and other arenas of public service;
- Provide fellows with professional experience in the legislative process, including assisting legislators and their constituents and conducting legislative research;
- Introduce fellows to the executive and judicial branches and the workings of state government in general; and
- Train fellows in the practical skills and knowledge needed to be ready and successful on day one of their post-fellowship professional career.

Compensation

Legislative fellows currently earn $46,675.20 per year (or $22.44 per hour) plus the same benefit package provided to all permanent, full-time state employees, including several types of paid leave (holiday, vacation, personal, and sick leave) as well as health care and retirement benefits. Fellows also receive compensatory time off for overtime worked.

Qualifications

Candidates must hold a bachelor's degree before the program starts. There are no requirements placed on major field of study except for the two fellows assigned to OGT/The Ohio Channel, who must have a media production or related degree or have acquired the requisite video production skills. Most successful applicants have a strong academic record, and all have excellent written and oral communication skills.

Post-Fellowship Employment

Although completing the 13-month fellowship program does not automatically guarantee permanent employment with the General Assembly or the state of Ohio, many fellows are offered permanent positions with the General Assembly as legislative staff or with state agencies as legislative liaisons as a result of participating in the fellowship program. Post-fellowship opportunities in the private sector have included positions with lobbying or public relations firms. A directory of current and former fellows is available on the program page of the LSC website.

What Kind of Work Will Fellows Do?

House and Senate. One of the primary responsibilities for most fellows assigned to the House or Senate is to assist members with constituent outreach, including responding to inquiries from district residents when they have a problem or concern. Writing assignments might include press releases, newsletters, speeches, and committee memorandums. Fellows also research issues and perform administrative work.

LSC. Fellows assigned to nonpartisan LSC draft and analyze legislation, including a bill's fiscal effects on state and local government, conduct research to provide answers to legislative inquiries, and staff legislative committees. Fellows assigned to the Office of Research and Drafting (ORD) focus more on the "legal" side of legislative services, while fellows assigned to the Legislative Budget Office (LBO) focus more on the "budget" side of legislative services. Fellows are assigned many of the same duties as permanent ORD and LBO staff.

OGT/The Ohio Channel. Fellows assigned to OGT/The Ohio Channel work as media production assistants. Their duties include studio and field production assignments such as camera operation, floor directing, control room directing, research, script writing, editing, lighting, videography, and audio and graphics production.

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I apply and how does the application process work?

The cohort application process opens in January. Links to the application and the latest salary information can be found on the fellowship program home page. Interviews take place in May, conducted by LSC fellowship program staff along with the House or Senate caucus staff or OGT staff. Final selection decisions are made at the end of May or early June.

What documents do I need to submit for my application?

As part of the application, you will be asked to upload: (1) résumé, (2) transcript from each college or university attended, (3) a 500-750 word personal statement explaining why you are interested in the fellowship program and what makes you a good candidate for the program, and (4) the names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of two individuals who can speak to your academic or employment record. If you apply for a media production fellow, you will also be asked to submit: (5) a five-minute demo reel.

May I apply in January if I am scheduled to graduate later in the year?

Yes! You may apply before your scheduled graduation date. You are only required to hold a bachelor's degree before the program starts in early September.

Will I receive any onboarding training to help me get started?

Yes! All fellows will be required to take part in a week-long orientation program at the start of the program. During orientation you will learn how the legislative process works, participate in workshops on useful resources and skills, meet with legislators and legislative staff, hear from members of the outgoing class of fellows and former fellows on their experiences, and tour the Statehouse and other government offices and facilities.

Will I have any professional development opportunities during the fellowship year?

Yes! Ongoing support and training opportunities will be provided to help you successfully complete the fellowship program. Periodic training sessions and seminars are designed to help you succeed in your daily responsibilities and to expand upon your knowledge of the state. Seminars may take various forms and have included visits to state facilities, meetings with state officials, and exploration of industries and issues around the state. Your success is important to the people you work with. Professional development opportunities are one way of helping you gain – and contribute – as much as possible as a fellow.

Can I find out more information about the program in person?

Yes! You are welcome to email LSC fellowship program staff or call (614) 466-3615 to schedule an informational tour.

Ohio Legislative Service Commission
Fellowship Program
Riffe Center
77 S. High Street, 9th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 466-3615
LSC Fellowship website

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