



Greater Research Opportunities (GRO) Undergraduate Fellowship Program Frequently Asked Questions

Do I qualify for a GRO Fellowship?

To be eligible for the fellowship, undergraduates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a U.S. citizen or lawfully admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence. Resident aliens must include a green card number in the application. Before a fellowship is awarded, the residency status of all aliens will be confirmed with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services.
- Must be pursuing a bachelor's degree in an environmentally related field of specialization.
- Have at least a "B" average (3.0 or better).
- Have two full-time years of study remaining before receiving a Bachelor's degree.
- Must attend a four-year accredited institution full time, or a two-year accredited institution with plans to attend a four-year institution following graduation. Furthermore,

Which schools are eligible for the GRO Undergraduate Fellowship?

Institutions must be a U.S. academic institution that receives less than \$35 million in federal research and development funds may apply for this fellowship. For the purposes of this solicitation, EPA considers such institutions to be those listed in the National Science Foundation's publication, Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges and Nonprofit Institutions (<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/publication-series.cfm?seriesId=21>). These universities and colleges include, but are not limited to, most Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Native American Tribal Colleges (TCs), Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (NHSIs), and Alaska Native Serving Institutions (ANSIs). Note that not all such institutions are eligible since some receive more than \$35 million in research and development funds.

My school is a two-year institution. Do I qualify?

Students who are currently enrolled in a two-year institution that meets the eligibility criteria, and who will be entering a four-year institution for their junior year are eligible for the fellowship.

Also, regarding students who are attending community college, note that only those institutions that are either four-year baccalaureate-granting institutions with degree programs in one or more eligible academic fields, or two-year institutions that grant associate degrees and participate in Articulation Agreements with four-year institutions, are eligible to participate in this fellowship program.

An Articulation Agreement is a signed contract between a community or technical college and a four-year college or university that guarantees that a student who earns an associate degree at a participating two-year institution can transfer all of the general education core credits to the four-year institution toward the completion of baccalaureate degree requirements. More information can usually be obtained directly from the institution's Registrar.

What type of assistance do Fellows receive?

A more detailed breakout of the funding covering stipend, tuition, and expenses is as follows:

- **Stipends**
During the nine-month academic year, \$800 stipend will be paid to the fellow each month, for a total annual stipend of \$7,200. Stipends are paid directly to the Fellow. Each institution may

choose to supplement a Fellow's stipend from institutional funds in accordance with the supplementation policy of the institution.

- **Tuition and Academic Fees**

Up to \$11,000 per year will be paid directly to the institution for allowable tuition and fees. For the purposes of this fellowship, health insurance is not considered to be an academic fee even if it is required by the institution. Health insurance costs may, however, be paid from the expense allowance.

- **Expense Allowance**

Up to \$2,500 will be provided to pay for items and activities for the direct benefit of the student's education, such as for health insurance, books, supplies, equipment, and travel to technical and scientific meetings. Specific instructions regarding the disbursement and management of the expense allowance will be provided during the award process.

- **Internship Allowance**

During the summer internship, the fellow will receive a total of \$8,600 for the three-month period. This amount includes \$1,000 for travel to and from the summer internship site, \$1,000 getting started fee (relocation and related expenses); \$1,000 for travel while at the site, and a stipend of \$5,600 for living expenses.

How many years does this award cover?

The award provides financial support for the final two years of study, beginning in the fall. Students with less than or more than two years remaining toward their Bachelor's degree are not eligible.

Is the summer internship a requirement for this award?

YES! The summer internship is a requirement for undergraduate fellows. The EPA will provide a fellow with a paid internship at one of its laboratories, regional offices, or headquarters programs in the United States. Also, a stipend and temporary relocation support will be provided during the internship.

What should be included in my Personal Statement?

The Personal Statement provides you with an opportunity to explain your interests and goals. You should give serious attention to this part of your application, answering the specific questions posed in the RFA. Give enough information so that you may be adequately evaluated. Note that there is a one page limitation for the Personal Statement. Your Personal Statement will be reviewed on how well you demonstrate the following criteria:

- Commitment to the stated academic and career goals; and potential for success in the proposed course of study;
- Organizational, analytical, and written skills;
- Commitment to environmentally-related study; and commitment to the environment.

Who should provide my letters of recommendation?

You will need three letters of recommendation from different individuals. One of these should be from your school advisor. The remaining two letters should come from faculty members who can attest to your interests and potential. It is important to choose faculty members who know you very well and can describe your abilities in great detail. Letters could also be written by past or current employers or others who know your potential and interests. The letters must be recent.

One of my professors would like to e-mail a letter of recommendation. Is that okay?

No. Letters of recommendation must be submitted electronically through the fellowship recommendation page. All letters must arrive by 11:59:59 P.M. Eastern Time on the closing date of the

solicitation and must clearly identify the applicant and the funding opportunity number. Read the announcement for details.

When, where, and how do I submit my application?

START EARLY! Grants.gov requires a new individual registration to submit an application for this solicitation; however, registration is not required to view the application package. To register, go to Grants.gov, click on "Get Registered," click on "Individual Registration." Allow at least one day for the registration to be activated. Safeguard your username and password, as this information can take a great deal of time to retrieve should it be misplaced. Note that the use of an organizational registration (e.g., an academic institution registration) will result in a Grants.gov rejection.

I am having problems with my online submission through grants.gov. Can someone help me?

Please read the solicitation again. If submission problems continue, contact Grants.gov for assistance (Telephone: 1-800-518-4726 or e-mail: support@grants.gov). Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

Are there any official forms that I must complete?

If you are selected for a fellowship, EPA will send you two federal forms which must be completed and returned before the award can be made.

If I have another fellowship, must I give it up to be eligible for the EPA Fellowship?

Possibly not. You cannot receive any other federal assistance – scholarships, grants, fellowships, or traineeships – at the same time as the EPA fellowship. However, if the funding source of your other fellowship is not federal, you can accept both awards.

How will my application be reviewed?

Depending on the number of applications we receive, the review process could consist of mail reviews, convened panels or a combination of the two. Each application will be reviewed by experts in the general field of specialization that you have identified. Reviewers are given detailed guidance on the review process, including the review criteria. We will make award decisions based upon the recommendations of the peer review panel, EPA needs and available funds.

What is the best advice you can give me for completing this application?

Please review the instructions carefully. Use those underlined instructions as a checklist to insure that you follow all of them completely and within the deadlines given.

How do I know that you got my application?

Grants.gov will send several emails during their processing of the application. The last email will state that the application has been transferred to the Agency and is undergoing review. Save these emails for documentation purposes; however, the critical email is the one acknowledging receipt by EPA's National Center for Environmental Research Fellowship Program. This email will be sent from receipt.application@epa.gov.