

## **VA Congressional Fellowship Program**

VA's Congressional Fellowship Program provides opportunities for employees of the Department to learn the workings of the legislative branch of the federal government and serve in a position that capitalizes on the education and experience gained. Employees will acquire an in-depth understanding of the legislative process that will help VA interact more effectively with Congress. The length of the Fellowship is 12 months.

This Fellowship is one calendar year in duration beginning January and ending in December. There are three primary components: (1) training through the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA), (2) a legislative operations seminar through the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University, and (3) working on Capitol Hill.

For more information see [VA Directive 8003](#)

### **FAQs**

#### **What is the purpose of the program?**

Among what is mentioned in the announcement and VA Directive 8003, the program's purpose is for fellows to act as policy advisors to Congress and showcase the quality of the Department's workforce.

#### **Who would pay for my time in the fellowship?**

Fellows remain on their home office's payroll for the duration of the fellowship. Any relocation costs or payroll adjustments would be the responsibility of their home office. In addition, any travel while in the fellowship, or during the application and training period, would be funded by the fellow/applicant's home office. Applicants are responsible for determining their home office's ability to fund their fellowship prior to applying, and must have supervisory approval to meet the program's eligibility requirements.

#### **Are Title 38 employees eligible for the program?**

Title 38 employees are not currently eligible for the program.

#### **What is the timeline for applicants?**

After the application period closes, applications will be reviewed. Selected candidates will be invited to interview for the Fellowship. All candidates must be interviewed in person. Any costs associated with interviewing must be paid by the candidate's home office.

Candidates chosen for the Fellowship would then have two weeks of training that would occur at the end of November, beginning of December timeframe.

The fellowship itself begins at the beginning of January and continues to December of the calendar year. Once the fellowship is concluded, a fellow would return to their original position in their home office.

Applicants are responsible for determining their home office's ability to fund their potential travel prior to applying and must have supervisory approval to meet the program's eligibility requirements.

**Is there a follow-on assignment for Fellows after the conclusion of the fellowship?**

Currently, the fellowship does not include a follow-on assignment. Once the fellowship is concluded, a fellow would return to their original position in their home office.

**Why is the program limited to GS 11 – GS 15?**

VA currently lacks the resources necessary to consider all employees throughout the enterprise. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

**Can I apply even if I don't meet all the eligibility requirements?**

Applications that don't meet the eligibility requirements will not be considered for the program. There are no exceptions.

**Can I apply for this program even if I'm not stationed in Washington DC?**

Yes, however, all costs associated with the program are the responsibility of the home office. Fellows remain on their home office's payroll for the duration of the fellowship. Any relocation costs and payroll adjustments would be the responsibility of their home office. In addition, any travel while in the fellowship, or during the application and training period, would be funded by the home office. Applicants are responsible for determining their home office's ability to fund their fellowship prior to applying and must have supervisory approval to meet the program's eligibility requirements.

**Are there any living accommodations for fellows selected from outside the Washington, DC area?**

Fellows coming from outside the Washington, DC area are responsible for setting up their own living accommodations.

**How does placement with a Member of Congress work?**

Fellows are placed based on the assessed needs of the participating offices. Fellows will most likely meet with their prospective offices prior to beginning their fellowship. Any travel while in the fellowship, or training period, would be funded by the fellow's home office. Applicants are

responsible for determining their home office's ability to fund their fellowship prior to applying and must have supervisory approval to meet the program's eligibility requirements.

Please submit any further questions or comments to [CongressionalFellowship@va.gov](mailto:CongressionalFellowship@va.gov).