

BACKGROUND

In 2002, NASA established a single Agency process for Congressional Fellowship assignments to ensure that interested, high-potential candidates acquire this professional development experience and training. This developmental assignment initiative has proven to be very successful, and each Center Director and Headquarters Mission Directorate and Functional Office Official in Charge (OIC) is again requested to nominate an employee from his or her organization for a potential assignment on a Congressional staff. The assignment will begin in January 2010 and extend throughout the calendar year.

The direct experience and knowledge gained from the NASA Congressional Fellowship assignments will continue to increase the Agency's effectiveness in communicating with Congress, which provides the Agency with the resources to execute our mission.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The nominee should be a GS-13 or GS-14 whom the Center Director or OIC considers to have great potential for further advancement, although exceptions will be considered based on your recommendation. The Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, in consultation with the Office of Human Capital Management, will oversee the selection of finalists as well as placement in Congressional offices. The nomination package should include a letter of recommendation from the Center Director or OIC which personally endorses the nominee and an Individual Development Plan that includes potential work assignments for the individual when she or he returns from the fellowship program. Additional information on the nomination process, milestones, and candidate qualifications is provided below.

The sponsoring Center or Headquarters office will also be responsible for funding a trip to NASA Headquarters for the initial interview, to the Congressional office for a placement interview, to the mandatory Congressional Operations Course in January, and any additional travel expenses such as travel requested by the Congressional office. Below is a general listing of funding provided by the Office of Human Capital Management and the nominating organization.

SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENTS

Nominees will be selected for assignment based on the needs of the Agency, the needs of the Congressional office and the individuals' qualifications. Finalists will be eligible for assignment in the office of any Senator or Representative except the office of a Senator or Representative whose State or District includes the finalist's home Center. NASA will not be assigning any Fellows to Congressional Committees. To ensure that NASA gains the highest benefit from this investment in the Fellows, nominating organizations should ensure that these individuals are given assignments commensurate with their experience and training upon completion of their Congressional assignments.

Nominees will be considered for, **but are not guaranteed**, a Congressional Fellow assignment. In addition, selected Fellows may not necessarily be engaged in efforts related to NASA or space issues while on Capitol Hill.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further questions please contact Karl Stehmer or Maureen Muncy of the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Stehmer can be reached at (202) 358-1925; Ms. Muncy at (202) 358-1665.

NASA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP NOMINATION PROCESS

Fellowship Deadlines

July 17- Nomination packages due to NASA Headquarters, Attn: Jessica Frincke, 300 E Street, SW, Suite 4042, Washington, DC 20546.

August/September: Panel will convene at HQ to review nominations, interview selected nominees, and make recommendations to the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (OLIA) for candidates for placement as Fellows. OLIA will make the final selections.

October - November - Candidate Congressional Fellows interview with Congressional offices, with the advice and assistance of OLIA.

January – Required attendance by the selected Fellows at the Congressional Operations Course, selected by OLIA. Begin serving Fellowship.

General Information

Nominees should be highly motivated employees with potential to advance within NASA. Nominating organizations will ensure that potential nominees possess the requisite skills, experience, and position to leverage their Fellowship learning in support of the Agency. The nomination package will consist of the nominee's resume that includes all basic information such as name, grade, and job classification. The information will detail the qualifications, education, and professional experience of the nominee. The nominating package should include a letter of recommendation from the Official-in-Charge that personally endorses the nominee and an Individual Development Plan that includes potential work assignments for the individual when she or he returns from the Fellowship program.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

Selection Qualifications

It is particularly important that the nominees' resumes demonstrate the following qualifications:

- A broad knowledge of NASA.
- Outstanding written and oral communications skills.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills required to interface with constituents and business interests of the Congressional Member.
- An understanding of the Government program planning and budget process (e.g., the role of advisory committees, mission planning, NASA, and Office of Management and Budget preparations).
- Some knowledge of Congressional processes and budget cycles (e.g., the respective roles of budget, authorization, and appropriations committees).

Criteria for Placement

- OLIA will select potential assignments for candidates based on:
 - The needs of the Agency,
 - The needs of the Congressional offices (e.g., specific educational or professional background), and
 - The individuals' qualifications and experience.
- Candidates selected by OLIA will be eligible for assignment in the office of any Senator or Representative, **except** in the office of the Senator or Representative whose State or District includes the candidate's home Center.
- In order to avoid potential conflict with Congressional rules, OLIA will not place any nominee as a Fellow on the staff of a Congressional Committee.
- It should be noted that the final decision on whether or not to accept a Fellow resides with the Congressional office.

Requirements

The nominee should be made fully aware of and be willing to accept the following:

- An extended Temporary Duty (TDY) assignment for up to one year.
- Attendance at the required Congressional Operations Course(s) as determined by OLIA.
- Compliance with travel rules and regulations at their Center.
- Travel expenses associated with accompanying family members are at the candidate's expense.
- Work assignments in the Congressional office may include duties and oversight areas unrelated to NASA.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF NOMINATING ORGANIZATIONS

Expenses for all Nominating Organizations

Nominating organizations are responsible for funding the Congressional Operations Courses required of all Fellows and for the pre-assignment trip.

Nominating organizations should consider providing laptop computers, cell phones, and/or PDAs to Fellows. Fellows on extended TDY will not have access to NASA computer and phone resources required to access restricted NASA systems (e.g., Travel Manager) from the Congressional office.

Centers are responsible for funding a trip to NASA Headquarters (if required) in the October-November timeframe for interviews with Congressional offices and OLIA.

Additional TDY Expenses for Centers

It is Agency policy that the OHCM provide funding assistance commensurate with funding provided for NASA's Leadership Development Program (LDP). In general, funding covers:

- Enroute and return transportation between Washington, DC, and the home Center.
- Shipment of 350 pounds of household goods.
- Limited extended TDY funding (normally 55 percent of per diem) to cover meals, a one-bedroom apartment, rental furniture, utilities, basic telephone service, basic cable, cleaning service, and Internet.

See <http://ldp.nasa.gov> for additional details.

It is important to note that under the guidelines established by the OHCM for the LDP, funding provided by the Agency will not cover funding for the following:

- Daily commuting expenses.
- Parking fees.
- Larger rental space.
- Premium cable fees.
- Long distance phone calls.
- Monthly trips home (LDP limits trips home to one per quarter).
- Dry cleaning.

Nominating Centers may, *at their own discretion and expense*, provide additional funding for additional travel expenses (e.g., additional trips home or trips requested by the Congressional office) provided that the expense is allowable according to the Federal Travel Regulations and NASA's Financial Management Manual.