

NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

Qualification requirements

The following are the qualification requirements for the program.

Citizenship. Because UGSP participants are employees of the NIH during their training at the NIH, you must qualify for Federal employment. This includes certain citizenship requirements.

You must be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or a qualified non-citizen. (Note that some permanent residents are qualified non-citizens. See below.)

A U.S. national is a person who, although not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. They are generally persons born in outlying possessions of the United States.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen, a) you must be eligible to work in the United States, *and* b) you must qualify for Federal employment.

a) Non-citizens may work in the United States only if they are 1) assigned by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) to a class of immigrants authorized to be employed (permanent residents, for example), or 2) expressly authorized by the BCIS to be employed. (Because your employment at NIH will take place in the future, your employment eligibility must be based on a permanent status, such as permanent residency. Individuals authorized to work in the United States on a temporary basis do not qualify.)

b) In general non-citizens, even if they are eligible to work in the United States, cannot be hired as Federal employees; however, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, if you are a U.S. permanent resident from a country allied

with the United States in a defense effort, you are eligible for Federal employment.

For a list of countries allied with the United States in a defense effort and for a complete list of exceptions to this rule visit www.ugsp.nih.gov/citizenship.htm. This site also contains additional information on all of the citizenship requirements.

If you are not a U.S. citizen or national, we recommend that you contact the UGSP before applying to determine if you meet the citizenship requirements.

If you become a UGSP finalist, you will be required to document your citizenship status.

Enrollment in an undergraduate institution.

At the time of application, you must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student for the 2009–2010 academic year at an accredited, 4-year undergraduate institution. The institution must be accredited by an agency recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The institution must also be located in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Territory of the Pacific Islands (the Republic of Palau), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Federated States of Micronesia.

The UGSP is not intended for students who already hold a bachelor's or other post-secondary degree.

Academic status. To apply, you must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 (on a 4.0

scale) or be ranked within the top 5 percent of your class.

Disadvantaged background. To be eligible, you must be from a disadvantaged background. This means that your undergraduate institution has certified you as having “exceptional financial need” (EFN), as defined by the Federal Government.

The table on this page lists the latest low-income thresholds used by the Federal Government and published in the *Federal Register*. If your family income for the most recent calendar year is less than that shown for your family size, you qualify as having exceptional financial need. If you qualify, but have not yet been certified by your school, please consult with your financial aid officer.

**Low-Income Levels Approved by Secretary of DHHS
to Determine Exceptional Financial Need**

Persons in Family (Includes only dependents listed on Federal income tax forms)	Family Income Level (Adjusted gross income, rounded to the nearest \$100)
1.....	\$20,800
2.....	28,000
3.....	35,200
4.....	42,400
5.....	49,600
6.....	56,800
7.....	64,000
8.....	71,200

Federal Register, Volume 73, Number 70, April 10, 2008, p. 19517.

Additional requirements

The following requirements also apply to applicants.

- You must be eligible for Federal employment.
- You must have no conflicting service obligations.
- You must be free of Federal judgment liens.
- You must be free of delinquent Federal loans.

Further information on each of these is presented in *The Fine Print* section on pages 18–20.

Filling out the forms

This application is available online at: www.ugsp.nih.gov.

Application forms for the 2009–2010 scholarship program are also enclosed with this packet. There are four separate forms:

- Application checklist
- Applicant information form
- Undergraduate institution certification form
- Applicant recommendation forms (3 copies)

Application checklist. The checklist should serve as a guide to ensure that you have completed all parts of the application. Please enclose a copy of the checklist with your application so that we can use it when we receive forms from your undergraduate institution and your references.

Applicant information form. This form requests basic information such as your address, daytime and evening telephone numbers, and undergraduate institution. More important, it asks you to discuss your commitment to

biomedical science and to assess your own abilities. This information—along with the recommendations provided by your references—will play an important role in the evaluation of your application.

You should not discuss your disadvantaged background in response to the questions on the application form.

Transcripts and test scores. An official copy of your school transcript is required as part of your application. If you are currently a college freshman, we require both your college transcript and your high school transcript. If you are a college student who has attended more than one post-secondary institution, you must send a transcript from each institution. If you are currently a high school senior, we recommend that you send a photocopy of your ACT and/or SAT scores.

Undergraduate institution certification form. The undergraduate institution you are attending or are about to attend must complete a certification form as part of your application to the UGSP. You should fill out Section A of this certification form and give it, together with one of the return envelopes, to the financial aid officer at your undergraduate institution. The institution will complete the form and return it directly to the NIH.

If you are not yet enrolled in an undergraduate institution, or if you are transferring to a new school, you should contact the school before submitting the form to explain your situation and ensure that they have the necessary financial information from you.

Applicant recommendation forms. Three recommendations are required as part of your application. You should select three individuals who have direct knowledge of your academic qualities (e.g., science teachers, research or lab

supervisors, academic advisors). Please fill out Section A of these forms and give the form, along with an attached return envelope, to each of your recommenders. They should return the form directly to the NIH. Recommenders may also complete the recommendation online. Direct them to www.ugsp.nih.gov.

Application Deadline

Applications for the 2009–2010 school year must be received by February 28, 2009.

Applicants will be notified of their award status by mid-July 2009.

Evaluation of applications

The NIH expects to award up to 15 scholarships for the academic year 2009–2010. Awards will be made on a competitive basis according to the selection factors and award priorities described below.

Screening for completeness and for meeting basic requirements. NIH UGSP staff will screen each application for completeness and basic eligibility. If your application is incomplete by the deadline or if you do not meet the basic requirements, you will be notified that you are no longer under consideration for the scholarship.

Evaluation process. All qualified applications will be reviewed by an evaluation panel appointed by the NIH.

A critical consideration for ranking the qualifications of applicants will be evidence of the applicant's commitment to a career in biomedical, behavioral or social science health-related research as an employee of the NIH. This commitment will be evaluated, in part, on the following:

- Your academic achievements.
- Recommendations and evaluations of your skills, abilities, and goals.

- Relevant extracurricular activities.
- Other information provided in the applicant information form.

Award priorities. The following priorities will be considered in assessing how the scholarships will be awarded:

First priority. Applicants who have completed at least 2 years of undergraduate course work, including four core science courses, and are classified by their educational institutions as juniors or seniors as of the beginning of the academic year of scholarship. (Core science courses include biology, chemistry, physics, and calculus; others may be considered.)

Second priority. Applicants who have completed four core science courses, as defined above.

Third priority. Applicants who are freshmen or sophomores.

Fourth priority. Applicants who are high school seniors and have been accepted for enrollment as full-time undergraduate students in accredited colleges or universities.

Personal interviews

At the discretion of the NIH UGSP, interviews may be conducted with scholarship finalists in person or by phone. If necessary, these interviews will take place during the summer.

If you are selected for an interview, the interviewers will review your research interests, awards, skills, accomplishments, current projects, and extracurricular activities—especially those related to science. The interviewers will also discuss your understanding of the service obligations and your post-service career plans. In addition, the interviewers may ask other questions raised during the evaluation of your application.

Notification of UGSP Application Award

When you apply to the UGSP, the NIH may contact your school(s) and recommenders to confirm information provided in your application materials. Additionally, if you are accepted as a scholarship recipient, the NIH will send notification of this prestigious national award to your school's financial aid office, your recommenders, your school's president, and your congressional representatives. The notification will indicate that you are a participant in the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds.