

# The Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans

## Description

The purpose of The Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans is to provide opportunities for continuing generations of able and accomplished New Americans to achieve leadership in their chosen fields and to partake of the American dream. Fellows must have shown potential in the fields for which they seek further education; the capacity for creativity, persistence and work; and the commitment to the values of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which protect the American dream. The Program is established in recognition of the contributions New Americans have made to American life and in gratitude for the opportunities the United States has afforded the donors and their family.

## Fields of Study

Open. Graduate study in the U.S. for New Americans. A Fellow may pursue a graduate degree in any professional field (e.g., engineering, medicine, law, social work, etc.) or scholarly discipline in the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences. The Fine and Performing Arts are included. The Trustees strongly encourage applications from candidates who have not yet begun their graduate studies, but full consideration will be given to candidates in the first or second years of graduate studies in their current program.

## Who is eligible to become a Fellow?

A *New American* is an individual who (1) is a resident alien; i.e., holds a Green Card or, (2) has been naturalized as a U.S. citizen or (3) is the child of two parents who are both naturalized citizens.

The Program is open to individuals who retain loyalty and a sense of commitment to their country of origin as well as to the United States, but is intended to support individuals who will continue to regard the United States as their *principal* residence and focus of national identity.

The applicant must either have a bachelor's degree or be in her/his final year of undergraduate study. Those who have a bachelor's degree may already be pursuing graduate study and may receive Fellowship support to continue that study. Individuals who are in the third, or subsequent, year of study in the same graduate program are not, however, eligible for this competition. Students who have received a master's degree in a program and are continuing for a doctoral degree in the same program are considered to have been in the same program from the time they began their work on their master's degree.

To be eligible you must not be older than thirty years of age as of **NOVEMBER 1**, of the application year.

## Criteria for Selection

Candidates must demonstrate the relevance of graduate education to their long-term career goals and potential in enhancing their contributions to society. Fellowships are not solely awarded on the basis of academic record. The academic record is relevant as evidence of the candidate's ability to complete successfully a graduate degree program and it strengthens the demonstration of achieving the Program's specific criteria for selection.

A successful candidate will give evidence of at least two of the following three attributes or criteria for selection: (1) creativity, originality, and initiative, demonstrated in any area of her/his life; (2) a

commitment to and capacity for accomplishment, demonstrated through activity that has required drive and sustained effort; and (3) a commitment to the values expressed in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The third criterion includes activity in support of human rights and the rule of law, in opposition to unwarranted encroachment on personal liberty, and in advancing the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society.

### **Application Information**

Deadlines for applications are in November of every year; we encourage candidates to submit and get their collateral material to us before that date. Life being as it is in universities, however, there is a crush of material on the 30th. Letters of recommendation are often late, making a full consideration more difficult. Once the application and other materials are in hand, teams of at least three readers consider the candidacy and determine who will be invited for interviews. Like every strong fellowship program, the Soros Fellowships have many more able people applying than can ever be invited for interviews. Painful though the decision process is, 84 are eventually invited—36 to Los Angeles and 48 to New York. The interviews are held the last week in January and the first week in February, with an early March announcement.

The selection panels for New American Fellowships consist entirely of successful New Americans and Soros Fellowship alumni. Twelve people are interviewed each day, preceded by a dinner the previous night. The purpose of the dinner is for candidates to meet staff and some panelists, to learn more about the interview process, and to meet each other. It has been the experience of past dinners that candidates get to know and appreciate each other, but they also are grateful to discuss their New American experience with others.

With two teams of panelists, each candidate has two thirty minute interviews. The objective of the interviews is to allow the candidates to tell their story as they wish to tell it and then elaborate on items they included in their two essays. It cannot be emphasized too greatly how important these essays are to having a good interview. Candidates are interviewed either in the morning or afternoon and are then free to return to their home or institution. The Soros program pays for transportation and accommodations.

If someone is successful in receiving the Soros Fellowship, what is expected? In addition to the frequent e-mail and correspondence so that the Program can get maintenance checks to the Fellows and half-tuition to the university, the obligations are four-fold. First, the Program Director will expect at least once in the Fellowship period to visit the Fellow's institution to see how things are going, meeting with the dean, financial aid officer, and major professor. Whenever the Director visits a campus, a dinner is usually held for all the Fellows in the area (i.e., Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington) and it is hoped all Fellows can manage to attend. Second, each semester the Fellow is expected to forward to the New York office a copy of the transcript. Third, twice in the Fellowship, the Fellow is expected to attend a Fall Conference in New York City, where all the Fellows have a chance to meet each other and the Soroses and members of our National Advisory Council, share views on such common concerns as immigration and human rights, and visit key cultural places in the City (usually the Metropolitan Opera, the Metropolitan Museum, and a Broadway show). The Program pays for transportation and accommodations. Finally, at the end of Fellowship, each Fellow is asked to write an "end-of-Fellowship" report. While not "required," it is hoped that all Fellows will keep in touch with the Program office and each other through the newsletter and the website chatroom.

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