Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership
Call for Applications
Professional Development Scholarships for Practitioners

Description and Purpose of Scholarships

Overview

Scholarships for professional development are made available through the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP), a public-private partnership formed between the Virginia Chamber Foundation, the Virginia Higher Education Business Council, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). V-TOP is tasked with creating greater connectivity between students, institutions of higher education, and the employer community to expand paid and credit-bearing internships and other work-based learning opportunities (job shadowing, tours, mentorship, externships, apprenticeships, field experiences, etc.). V-TOP is organized through the Commonwealth Innovative Internship Fund and Program and administered by SCHEV.

Scholarships are available to professionals currently working in the field and to graduate students in selected degree programs. **These instructions are for applications by working practitioners.** The application for graduate students is available on https://virginiatop.org/highered/professional-development scholarships/

Statutory Authority

In 2019, the Virginia General Assembly enacted into law the Innovative Internship Fund and Program (Va. Code § 23.1-903.4). The purpose of the program is to expand paid and/or credit-bearing student internships and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Virginia employers. The program comprises institutional grants and a statewide initiative to facilitate the readiness of students, employers, and institutions of higher education to participate in internships and other work-based learning opportunities.

Scholarships for professional development facilitate the readiness of Virginia institutions of higher education to affordably scale high-quality paid internships and other work-based learning opportunities and to support students throughout the experience.

Scholarships are state funds and are subject to the rules and regulations governing state appropriations.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants are full-time or part-time employees whose job involves advancing work-based learning, such as by directly connecting students, institutions of higher education, and the employer community for the purpose of expanding paid and credit-bearing internship and other work-based learning opportunities or through research and scholarship that contributes new knowledge related to work-based learning.

Applicants must be employed at one of Virginia's:

- Public institutions of higher education, including community colleges
- Private non-profit institutions of higher education that participate in the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) Program
- Higher education centers (IALR, NCI, RHEC, SVHEC, SWVHEC)

Personnel employed in any department who have a role in preparing students for careers, connecting students to internships and supporting students throughout their experience, and/or engaging employers with the goal of connecting them to students are eligible. Researchers and scholars who are focused on work-based learning and college-to-career transitions are also eligible.

Applicants are not eligible to receive scholarship funding for the same conference in consecutive fiscal years. To maximize learning opportunities, applicants are encouraged to apply for conferences they have not previously attended. Selected conferences should focus on work-based learning and support the continued development of knowledge and skills in this area.

Scholarship Types, Number of Awards, and Amounts Scholarships may be awarded in two categories: (1) conference presentation/attendance and/or (2) fees for membership in professional organizations.

The amount of a scholarship will vary by category. Applicants may request up to the amounts listed below; awards may be for a lower amount. Scholarship amounts up to $2,500

Allowable Uses of Funds

Scholarship funds may be used for expenses related to presenting at or attending a conference and/or membership in a professional organization, including but not limited to the following:

- Conference registration fees, including pre-conference sessions
- Domestic travel following state travel regulations (i.e., mileage at the IRS rate; coach or economy class airfare; ground transportation; rental car; etc.)
- Up to four nights of lodging (following state regulations)
- Parking
- Tolls
- State per diem rates for meals and incidentals for overnight travel
- Costs associated with a presentation (i.e., handouts, posters, displays, etc.)
- Membership fees for professional organizations
- Professional development trainings or workshops for staff/entire office

Scholarship funds may NOT be used for:

- International conferences
- International travel
- Membership dues in organizations based outside the U.S., unless the membership is for a U.S. chapter

Scholarship funds must be spent within 12 months from the award announcement date.

Recipient Requirements

Conference scholarship recipients are expected to attend a full complement of educational sessions and networking events held during the conference. **Within seven business days of returning from the conference/obtaining membership**:

- If the recipient will be presenting at the conference, then the recipient must plan to offer the presentation to an audience in Virginia OR be recorded for a resource library.

- Record a short video (10-15 minutes) of a scripted response to the questions via the form response link.
- Provide written responses via the form response link.
- Video or written responses may be posted on V-TOP's website under Professional Development Scholarships. https://virginiatop.org/highered/professional-development-scholarships/.
- FAILURE TO COMPLY with this requirement will make you ineligible to receive future professional development scholarships through V-TOP.

Recipients of conference scholarships and recipients of scholarships for membership fees should also consider other activities, such as:

- Posting on social media while at the conference and referencing V-TOP support
- Participating in an interview with the V-TOP intern for the newsletter
- Volunteering to serve on the scholarship application review committee
- Becoming involved in the professional development organization, i.e., volunteering at a future event and/or joining a committee

Application Deadlines and Award Announcement Dates

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. **Scholarship applications must be submitted at least 60 days before the conference or event you plan to attend. This allows enough time for review and funding to be processed.**
For example: If you plan to attend a conference in April, you should submit your application no later than February 1."

Application and Submission Information

Contents of Application

Applications must be submitted by completing the online form. Please gather the information requested prior to starting the online application process. **Note that you must send separately by email your resume, travel estimate, W-9 and photo release forms** that you can download from V-TOP's website OR click on the links below. Send these forms to carolynsutphin@schev.edu. Your application cannot be reviewed until these documents are received.

- Resume/CV
- Scholarship Travel Estimate or Membership Dues Form
- Virginia W-9 (this form must be signed, and include the current date. Send only a clear, legible copy.
- Scholarship Photo Release Form

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The online application must be completed in one session. If you close the application form window, you will lose all the answers you have already entered. You will not be able to return to the form later to complete it.

To expedite the process, use the template/pdf (located on V-TOP's website) of the form and gather, download, and fill out the required documents PRIOR TO accessing the online application form. The required attachments should be sent to carolynsutphin@schev.edu at the time of the application submission.

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Application Processing, Review Criteria, and Award Application Processing
Review of applications is a two-step process. First, SCHEV staff will conduct an administrative review to ensure that the application is complete and conforms to the eligibility and other requirements in this Call for Applications. Some applicants may receive follow-up questions from SCHEV staff. Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will be eliminated from consideration for that review round.

Conforming applications will move to the second stage for evaluation and ranking by a team of interagency and intra-institutional professionals with relevant experience and knowledge. The review team will assess proposals based on the criteria below.

Review Criteria
Applications will be evaluated and assessed for impact based on factors such as:

- Whether the applicant's job involves the advancement of work-based learning, such as through connecting students to internships and supporting students throughout their experience, and the relationship of the conference's educational opportunity to the applicant's job
- The narrative of the candidate's journey to their current role clearly indicates that they have found their true passion; the likelihood that the candidate will continue working to connect students to employers and the appropriateness of the educational opportunity related to the applicant's career/goals.
- Impact on students and/or employers
- Future potential contributions of the applicant to the profession in Virginia and/or nationally
- Application readability, grammar and punctuation
- Compliance with application instructions
- Overall impact, such as the candidate's eagerness to learn and their plan to apply the skills and knowledge gained to advance work-based learning in Virginia, and to benefit their careers, their organizations, students, employer partners, and their communities

Award

SCHEV leadership and staff will examine the review team's assessment of the applications and make the final decision regarding awards. SCHEV staff may negotiate with applicants prior to making award decisions. SCHEV could consider many factors in making awards, including but not limited to the consensus evaluation expressed by the review team, reviewer comments, quality of the application, geographic distribution, and distribution across institutional types.

In addition to the Recipient Requirements described above, additional terms and conditions of the award are described in the last section of the application (see Appendix).