

## **THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM FACT SHEET**

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields. Each year, up to 161 students are named U.S. Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the U.S. Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.

Students have the opportunity to become U.S. Presidential Scholars based on three paths of accomplishment. The majority of the Scholars are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement. Approximately twenty students are selected on the basis of their academic and artistic scholarship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing. And, approximately twenty additional students are selected on the basis of their ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

Each year over 5,000 candidates are identified for the component of the program that focuses on academic achievement and based on having scored exceptionally well on the SAT or the ACT. Eligible students are U.S. citizens and legal permanent U.S. residents graduating or receiving a diploma between January and August of the current program year, who have taken the SAT or ACT Assessment on or before the preceding October. The highest test score (from a single test administration) is identified. We do not use superscores. The scores associated with the top 20 male examinees and top 20 female examinees are used to select candidates from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. A universal score is determined for both males and females from that state. Students meeting these requirements are automatically considered for participation. Initial inclusion in the pool of eligible candidates is determined by the information (e.g. graduation year) provided by the student on his/her SAT or ACT test registration. Also, each Chief State School Officer (CSSO) may nominate ten male and ten female candidates based on their outstanding scholarship, residing in the CSSO's jurisdiction. Additionally, the program is partnering with several recognition organizations that will each nominate up to 40 candidates from their individual programs.

Candidacy materials are mailed to students for participation in the program. Application is by invitation only; students do not apply individually to the program, nor do their schools nominate them.

For the arts component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their artistic excellence. Students must apply to YoungArts, The National Foundation for the Advancement of Artists annual competition, be named a YoungArts winner at the finalist

level and participate in YoungArts Week. YoungArts nominates 60 students who meet the U.S. Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements. Candidacy materials are mailed to those selected students, inviting them to apply to the program.

For the career and technical education component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their accomplishments in career and technical education fields. Students are nominated through their Chief State School Officer. Each CSSO can nominate up to five candidates who meet the U.S. Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements. Candidacy materials are mailed to the selected students, and they are invited to apply to the program.

To confirm their interest and assist in the selection process, all candidates complete and submit candidacy materials for review, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts. A review committee of qualified individuals experienced in secondary and post-secondary education evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and the quality and content of their essay.

Approximately 600 candidates are named semifinalists, and their names and supporting materials are forwarded to the Commission for further review.

In April, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews the applications of all semifinalists, applying the same criteria used by the review committee. The Commission selects up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars each year.

U.S. Presidential Scholars are honored for their accomplishments during the National Recognition Program each June. To commemorate their achievement, the Scholars are awarded the Presidential Scholars Medallion.

Since 1964, this unique federal program has honored almost 8,000 U.S. Presidential Scholars, who have demonstrated scholarship, leadership, artistic excellence and selfless service to others. The work of the Commission on Presidential Scholars, on behalf of the President and his Administration, reflects recognition of the immense value and potential of our Nation's youth, and a deep commitment to ensuring that every child in America receives the benefits of a world-class education.

For general information about the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, please contact [Presidential.Scholars@ed.gov](mailto:Presidential.Scholars@ed.gov) or visit <http://www.ed.gov/psp>. For general information on the Arts component of the program, please visit <http://www.youngarts.org>. For specific questions regarding the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program application, contact [PSP@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:PSP@scholarshipamerica.org) or 507.931.8345.