

U.S. Presidential Scholars Program 2017

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 Presidential Scholars based on three paths of accomplishment. The majority of the Scholars are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement. Approximately twenty additional students are selected on the basis of their academic and artistic scholarship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing. Another twenty students are selected on the basis of their outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

For the arts component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their artistic ability. Students must participate in YoungArts™, a national program identifying and recognizing young people demonstrating excellence in the arts. YoungArts™, the core program of the National YoungArts Foundation, nominates approximately 60 students 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, academic and arts candidates complete and submit candidacy materials, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts for review.

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 (CSSO). 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, all candidates complete and submit candidacy materials, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts for review.

The selection of approximately 4,000 original program candidates generally is made based on SAT and ACT scores. Test scores in each of the states/jurisdictions are reviewed, and the total SAT score is compared to the ACT Sum of Scores. Each student's highest test score (in a single test administration) is identified; duplicates and/or lower scores are dropped. In each state, scores

are ranked from high to low. Approximately twenty females and twenty males are selected as candidates from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad based on SAT and ACT scores. In addition, each Chief State School Officer (CSSO) may nominate up to ten male and ten female candidates, based on their outstanding scholarship, residing in the CSSO's jurisdiction. The program is also partnering with several recognition organizations that will each nominate up to 10 candidates from their individual programs. Students are considered in their states of legal residence, unless they have lived abroad for two years or more. Candidacy materials are mailed to students for participation in the program.

Application is by invitation only; therefore, students may not apply individually to the Program, nor may their schools nominate them.

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 an analysis of their essay. Approximately 800 candidates are named semifinalists and forwarded to the Commission for further review. All Arts and CTE nominees submitting candidacy materials are automatically advanced to the semifinalist stage.

In April, the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews the applications of all semifinalists based on the same criteria used by the review committee. The Commission selects up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars each year. All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during the National Recognition Program, held in June in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Presidential Scholars are guests of the Commission during the National Recognition Program and enjoy an expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials, educators, and other accomplished people. To commemorate their achievement, the Scholars are awarded the U.S. Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

For over 50 years, this unique federal program has honored over 7,000 U.S. Presidential Scholars, who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, and contribution to school and community. The work of the Commission on Presidential Scholars reaffirms, on behalf of the President, the Nation's commitment to education.

For more information on the program and to view eligibility requirements please visit the U.S. Department of Education website at: [US Department of Education: Eligibility Requirements for Presidential Scholars Program](#)