Congressional Healthcare Policy Fellow Program

A Partnership of Virginia Commonwealth University, the American College of Clinical Pharmacy and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Guidelines and Instructions for References

Reference letters for the Congressional Healthcare Policy Fellow Program applicants are confidential and must be submitted directly, as an email attachment, to the Fellow Program Director at Virginia Commonwealth University at kzimmerman@vcu.edu. All letters must be received by January 31 in order for the applicant’s application to be complete and considered by the selection committee.

NOTE: If after submitting an application you learn that one or more of your references cannot submit on your behalf by the deadline, please contact the Fellow Program Director at Virginia Commonwealth University immediately and provide the name and contact information for an alternate reference.

Letters of recommendation are a critical component of the application. They must be from individuals who can comment on your professional competence and other qualities and interests that make you especially qualified to serve as a Fellow. Select your references carefully. It is helpful for your references to review the criteria and information on the fellow program in order to enhance the relevance of their comments. They should also review the Guidelines & Instructions for References provided on the Congressional Healthcare Policy Fellow Program website at Guidelines and Instructions for References. References should be given ample notice to write a solid recommendation on your behalf.

The overarching goals of the Congressional Healthcare Policy Fellow Program is to increase the capacity of pharmacists to inform the discussions and influence the decisions of individuals and institutions that determine health care policies, and to provide scientific knowledge and analysis to support decision-makers who are confronting increasingly complex healthcare and technological issues. The Fellow Program aims to:

- educate pharmacists on the intricacies of federal policymaking;
- foster positive exchange between pharmacists and policymakers;
- empower pharmacists to conduct policy-relevant research that addresses challenges facing society; and
- increase the involvement and visibility of pharmacists in the public policy realm.
The Congressional Healthcare Policy Fellow Program is extremely competitive. Thus it is to the applicant’s advantage if you provide the information outlined below in a clearly identifiable fashion in your letter of recommendation.

1. How long and in what capacity you have known the candidate.

2. Reference Statements that comment on the following items:

   - The applicant’s technical and professional accomplishments and relative standing of the applicant among his/her peers. (300 words)
   - The applicant’s ability to communicate, both orally and in writing, and to interact productively with individuals and groups, especially non-scientific audiences. (300 words)
   - The applicant’s maturity and judgment.
   - The applicant’s interest and experience in applying his/her expertise to the resolution of societal issues. (300 words)
   - The applicant’s professional future, including possible impacts as the result of their participation in the fellow program. (250-500 words)
   - Any other comments that may be relevant to the Congressional Healthcare Policy Fellow Program application.