

2024 NASPEs AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated leaders and programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title: Pennsylvania's Innovative Workforce Development Programs State: PA

Contact Person: Shelly Forte

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NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nominator: Jason W. Swarthout **Title:** Acting Deputy Secretary for Human Resources and Management

State: PA **Agency:** Governor's Office of Administration

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ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

- Meet all eligibility requirements • Meet deadline requirements
- Include a complete nomination packet • Conform to all copyright laws

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DETAILS

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's executive branch has over 73,000 salaried employees, making it the second largest employer in the state. With 20 percent of its workforce eligible to retire, every position and every hire is more important than ever.

The PA Office of Administration (OA) has pursued efforts to increase the quality and quantity of candidates applying for state government positions through rebranding, highlighting benefits and other selling points, and adding new programs to create pathways into employment and reposition the Commonwealth in the talent marketplace. We recently have built an enterprise recruitment team spanning the entire state and created a Work-based Learning Division focused on creating new internship, apprenticeship, and fellowship programs to attract the best and brightest of all ages to public service with the Commonwealth. In July 2023, OA launched a new IT Help Desk Apprenticeship focused on recent vo-tech and high school graduates who have an interest in the IT field. The Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship was recently created to bring in fresh perspectives and expertise from the STEM field. OA is also engaging with the Govern for America Fellowship to offer a two-year program focused on diverse and first-generation college students.

The Shapiro administration eagerly anticipates harnessing fresh talent and new ideas to propel the state's critical initiatives forward. We are also hopeful these programs will spark interest from state agencies in partnering with OA to create additional career pathways to meet their current and future talent needs.

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1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's executive branch has over 73,000 salaried employees, making it the second largest employer in the state. With 20 percent of its workforce eligible to retire, every position and every hire is more important than ever. However, the Commonwealth's recruitment and hiring processes had put it at a competitive disadvantage among employers seeking new talent. Like many other public sector organizations, the Commonwealth faces stereotypes about government agencies and employees that make public employment unattractive to many job seekers. The tight labor market is an added challenge. The PA Office of Administration (OA) has pursued efforts to increase the quality and quantity of candidates applying for state government positions through rebranding, highlighting benefits and other selling points for Commonwealth employment, and creating new programs to provide pathways into employment and reposition the Commonwealth in the talent marketplace.

On his first day in office, Governor Josh Shapiro signed an executive order directing OA to review every Commonwealth job and remove college degree requirements wherever possible. Several months later in July 2023, OA launched a new IT Help Desk Apprenticeship focused on recent vo-tech and high school graduates. To promote the program, our recruitment staff performed outreach efforts and conducted presentations in the local, diverse high schools and vocational-technical programs. They highlighted the training opportunities, the benefits of working for the Commonwealth, and the guaranteed career path that the apprenticeship program brings.

In 2017, OA created the William and Hannah Penn Fellowship, which places master's degree or

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higher candidates in state agencies for two years to work on policy-related projects. The Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship was created in 2024 to bring in fresh perspectives and expertise in the STEM field. This one-year fellowship targets recent STEM graduates with advanced college degrees. Its purpose is to place fellows within various agencies to work on important agency initiatives. In its inaugural year, agencies proposed 13 impactful projects across different sectors, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application within governmental agencies. The program will also include regular professional development training, tours of Commonwealth facilities and operations, and networking with agency leaders and executives. OA is also engaging with the Govern for America Fellowship to offer a program for recent bachelor's degree candidates. Govern for America is a two-year fellowship program focused on bringing in diverse and first-generation college students. The program includes regular professional development training within the Commonwealth and with Govern for America, tours of Commonwealth facilities and operations, and networking with agency leaders and executives.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

The William and Hannah Penn Fellowship started in 2017. The IT Help Desk Apprenticeship started in July 2023. The Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship and Govern for America Fellowship will both start in 2024.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)

The overall goal of these initiatives is to increase the number of qualified candidates who apply for jobs by rebranding the Commonwealth as an employer of choice and offering various ways for fresh talent to come into the Commonwealth and experience the challenging and

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meaningful work the state offers. Upon completion of a program, we hope to retain them as permanent Commonwealth employees.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

The Office of Administration is creating new career pathway programs to attract the best and the brightest to public service in state government. The IT Help Desk Apprenticeship was created to establish a new talent pipeline beyond the traditional recruitment efforts for experienced help desk professionals and in support of the Governor's executive order to increase opportunities for state employment. The fellowship programs are designed to attract candidates with college degrees at all levels to the Commonwealth to work on agency initiatives and bring fresh ideas to address complex agency challenges.

5. What was the program's startup costs? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology, and staff already in place.)

Agencies fund the costs to take on apprentices and fellows. The startup costs for the Office of Administration were therefore minimal.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

The agency operational cost for the William and Hannah Penn Fellowship it estimated at \$130,979 per fellow which includes salary, benefits, and retirement. In 2023, agencies hired a total of 14 fellows at a total cost of \$1,833,706. The operational cost for the Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship is estimated at \$139,527 per fellow which includes salary, benefits, and retirement. For the inaugural year, agencies proposed projects for a total of 13 fellows at a total cost of \$1,813,851. The operational cost for the Govern for America Fellowship is estimated at \$95,263 per fellow which includes salary, benefits, and retirement. We are looking to hire three fellows in the first year at a total cost of \$285,789. The estimated operational cost

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for the IT Help Desk Apprenticeship is \$74,229 per apprentice which includes salary, benefits, and retirement. There are currently six apprentices, totaling \$445,374. The grand total for estimated operational costs is \$4,378,720.

7. How is this program funded?

Each agency funds their apprentices and/or fellows.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?

If yes, how does this program differ?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

We measure success by hiring full classes for each program to meet the demand from state agencies. During the first year of the William and Hannah Penn Fellowship in 2017, the Commonwealth hired 10 fellows. In 2023, we hired 14 fellows for the program. We are seeking to hire 13 fellows for the first year of the Governor's Science and Technology fellowship to staff all agency projects.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

The IT Help Desk Apprenticeship, Governor's Science and Technology Fellowship, and Govern for America Fellowship are new programs, but the William and Hannah Penn Fellowship has grown in numbers and agency interest since its inception. We anticipate that interest in the new programs will also increase over time and lead to growth in the number of hires. We are also hopeful that the future success of the new programs will spark agency interest in creating additional pathways into rewarding careers in public service to meet their current and future talent needs.

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