



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

FEB 04 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE

SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellows Program

Section 932 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, Public Law 115-232, directs the Secretary of Defense to establish within the DoD a civilian fellowship program known as the John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellows Program.

As set forth in the attachment, this memorandum establishes policies and procedures for implementing the John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellows Program, which will be incorporated by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness into an appropriate DoD issuance within 12 months. The Washington Headquarters Services is responsible for program execution and will hire Fellows starting this calendar year.

For more information, my point of contact is Ms. Jimmie H. Vaughn, Associate Director, Talent Development, Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, who may be reached at (571) 372-2069, or jimmie.h.vaughn.civ@mail.mil.

Attachment:
As stated



OSD012866-19/CMD015819-19

**JOHN S. MCCAIN STRATEGIC DEFENSE FELLOWS PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1. Authority and Eligibility.

- a. Section 932 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, Public Law 115-232, provides that the Secretary of Defense shall establish within the Department of Defense (DoD) a civilian fellowship program known as the “John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellows Program,” hereafter referred to as the “Fellows Program.” This attachment, and the memorandum to which it is attached, constitutes the initial implementing regulations referenced in subsection 932(h) of the NDAA for FY 2019 to carry out this Fellows Program.
- b. The Fellows Program is designed to provide leadership development for the commencement of a career track toward senior leadership in the DoD. The purpose of the program is to acquire high performing and talented individuals with advanced degrees located throughout the United States, who will gain experience and develop their leadership capabilities through challenging opportunities to flourish into problem solvers, strategic thinkers and future leaders. Participants in the Fellows Program will be initially appointed and assigned for 1 year in certain offices covered by the Fellows Program, hereafter referred to as “covered offices,” with the potential for non-competitive appointment into various career fields throughout DoD at the conclusion of their Fellowships.
- c. Participation in this Fellows Program is open to citizens of the United States or lawful permanent residents of the United States in the year in which the individuals apply for the Fellows Program and either:
 - 1) Possess a graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States that was awarded not more than 2 years before the date of acceptance into the Fellows Program; or
 - 2) Will be awarded a graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States not more than 6 months after the date of acceptance into the Fellows Program.

2. Overview. Each year, up to 60 participants in the Fellows Program, hereafter referred to as “Fellows,” will be appointed as a GS-10 for 1 year to an excepted service position in a covered office. Upon successful completion of the Fellows Program assignment, the participant may be placed in a position in the excepted service anywhere within the DoD that was reserved for Fellows who successfully complete the Fellows Program, hereafter referred to as a “reserved position,” as defined in section 3.

3. Definitions.

- a. Accredited Institution of Higher Education – An institution that meets the definition in 20 U.S.C. § 1001(a), and that provides an educational program awarding advanced degrees such as master and doctorate degrees (or equivalents).
- b. Covered Office – The immediate office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) as defined at 10 U.S.C. § 131, and the offices of the Secretaries of the Military Departments. These offices are the only offices to which Fellows may be assigned during their 1-year Fellowships.
- c. From a Geographic Region – For the purpose of this program, an individual will be determined to be from a particular geographical region based upon the applicant’s current domicile. An applicant’s domicile is determined by the applicant having claimed and established legal residency in a particular State, U.S. insular area, or the District of Columbia by their initial physical presence combined with an intent to remain indefinitely. Evidence of intent to remain indefinitely includes, but is not limited to registration to vote, purchase of residential property, obtaining a drivers license, titling and registration of an automobile, payment of in-state tuition, and filing of non-federal income tax forms. Temporary absences by an individual from their domicile, for example to attend college, does not necessarily result in a change of the individual’s domicile unless the individual intends to change their domicile.
- d. Office of the Secretary of a Military Department – The office of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Secretary of the Army, and the Secretary of the Navy.
- e. Lawful Permanent Resident – A non-citizen who is lawfully authorized to live permanently within the United States. Also known as a “green card” holder.
- f. Reserved Position – One of not fewer than 30 excepted service positions anywhere within the DoD that have been identified as appropriate for Fellows who successfully complete an initial 1-year assignment and suitable for the commencement of a career track towards senior leadership. Such positions are not subject to, or covered by, a reduction in headquarters personnel required under any other provision of law.
- g. Senior Leadership Career Track – For purposes of this Fellows Program, a career track toward a position that may lead to a position at or above the GS-15 grade level (or equivalent).
- h. Temporary Duty – For the purposes of this Fellows Program, refers to travel or other assignment at a location other than the employee’s permanent duty station.

i. U.S. Geographic Regions –

- 1) The Northeast: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- 2) The Southeast: Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and U.S. Virgin Islands.
- 3) The Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin.
- 4) The Southwest: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
- 5) The West: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

4. Responsibilities.

- a. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible for the development of DoD policies for the Fellows Program.
- b. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy (DASD(CPP)) is responsible for ensuring consistent implementation and continuous application of the Fellows Program through the DoD.
- c. The Director, DoD Human Resources Activity provides support to the DASD(CPP), as appropriate, in the execution of the duties and responsibilities of the Fellows Program.
- d. The Director, Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) shall:
 - 1) Promote enterprise-wide participation of organizations throughout the DoD.
 - 2) Carry out appropriate outreach to inform potential applicants of the nature and benefits of participation in the Fellows Program.
 - 3) Designate how applications for the Fellows Program shall be received each year.
 - 4) Develop a comprehensive agreement that will serve as an Individual Development Plan (IDP) as well as provide details on Fellows Program expectations, responsibilities and requirements. At minimum, the agreement will describe the assigned mentor-mentee relationship with a schedule of regular meetings; the required training and development; the performance management and appraisal program; and the overall requirements for successful completion of the Fellows Program that may result in a non-competitive appointment.
 - 5) Select participants each calendar year from among the applications received in that year by verifying candidate's eligibility for Fellows Program participation.
 - 6) Qualify participants by matching their skills and experience to the requirements of the positions available for Fellows Program placement.
 - 7) Publish the names of the individuals selected for participation in the Fellows Program on a website of the DoD that is available to the public.

- 8) If funds are available, establish a process by which Fellows may apply for repayment of student loans that meet the requirements of 10 U.S.C. §§ 16301(a)(1)(A), (B), or (C).
 - 9) Ensure participants in the Fellows Program receive opportunities and support appropriate for the commencement of a career track potentially leading to a future senior leadership position within the DoD, including ongoing mentorship support by appropriate personnel within the DoD.
 - 10) Ensure participants who successfully complete the Fellows Program are provided with appropriate opportunities for employment and advancement with the DoD.
 - 11) Work with OSD Component Heads and other DoD Component Heads to ensure not fewer than 30 positions are reserved in the excepted service for the potential placement of fellows who successfully complete the Fellows Program.
 - 12) Noncompetitively appoint, or work with other DoD Component Heads to non-competitively appoint, a participant who successfully completes the Fellows Program, taking into account performance and accomplishments, into a reserved position.
 - 13) Ensure adequate and appropriate funding and resources are available for execution of this Fellows Program.
- e. Each covered office shall:
- 1) Submit each year to the Director, WHS, or designee, the qualifications, the skills, and the position security clearance requirements for participants in the Fellows Program to qualify for assignment in the applicable office.
 - 2) Designate or nominate an individual to serve on the Fellows Program selection panel.
 - 3) Ensure a Fellows Program job opportunity is available each year to serve in a covered office.
 - 4) Ensure Fellows Program participant(s) are assigned a mentor from entities within the DoD, such as the Defense Business Board or the Defense Innovation Board, to receive the appropriate support while in the Fellows Program.
 - 5) Identify position(s) in the excepted service that will be reserved for potential placement of Fellows Program participants who successfully complete the Fellows Program.
 - i. Such position(s) may not be subject to or covered by a reduction in headquarters personnel required under any other provision of law.
 - ii. If determined appropriate, such position(s) may include a rotational opportunity to work at another OSD or DoD Component for between 12 and 24 months.
 - 6) Provide input to the Director, WHS, or designee, regarding the participant's performance/accomplishments during the Fellows Program for the Director, or designee (or selection panel), to take under advisement when deciding on future placement of the participant.
 - 7) Adhere to procedural guidance established by WHS for execution of this Fellows Program.

f. Funding.

- 1) Each fiscal year, the Director WHS shall annually program from the appropriated operation and maintenance funding for use DoD-wide, an amount up to \$10 million to be made available to carry out the Fellows Program.
- 2) The Director, WHS shall create a Fellows Program fiscal year operating budget itemizing the available funding in order to determine the total number of Fellows Program participants for any given year.
- 3) Each covered office will be responsible for funding the temporary duty (TDY) costs for any training or development applicable during the Fellows Program assignment.

5. Allocations.

- a. The number of individuals selected to participate in the Fellows Program in any given calendar year, may not exceed:
 - 1) Ten Fellows from each of the geographic regions of the United States:
 - i. The Northeast;
 - ii. The Southeast;
 - iii. The Midwest;
 - iv. The Southwest; and
 - v. The West.
 - 2) Ten additional individuals.
- b. The total number of participants selected for the Fellows Program is contingent upon the amount of available funding. The amount available must be known before selections can be finalized.

6. Recruitment and Assessment of Eligible Individuals.

- a. Each calendar year, each covered office shall submit to the Director, WHS, or designee, the qualifications, the skills, and the position security clearance requirements by participants in the Fellows Program for assignment to a position.
- b. Each calendar year, the Director, WHS, or designee, shall verify applicants eligible to participate in the Fellows Program and qualify them based on character, conduct, commitment to public service, academic achievement, extracurricular activities, and other such qualifications as considered appropriate. Application of veterans' preference is not required.

- c. Eligible individuals seeking to participate in the Fellows Program shall submit an application that includes all of the following elements:
 - 1) Transcripts of educational achievement at the undergraduate and graduate level;
 - 2) A resume;
 - 3) Proof of citizenship or lawful permanent residence;
 - 4) An endorsement from the applicant's graduate institution of higher education on the institution's letterhead;
 - 5) An academic writing sample;
 - 6) Letters of recommendation addressing the applicant's character, academic ability, and any extracurricular activities;
 - 7) A personal statement by the applicant explaining career areas of interest and motivations for service in the DoD;
 - 8) Proof of Domicile; and
 - 9) Such other information the Director, WHS or designee may consider appropriate.
- d. Fellows Program positions and reserved positions are exempt from the DoD Priority Placement Program beginning when the individual enters into the Fellows Program and, if applicable, upon the non-competitive appointment into a reserved position.

7. Position Requirements and Assignments.

- a. Participants in the Fellows Program shall be assigned to a position in a covered office, as defined in section 3.
- b. In any given year, the number of participants assigned to an office of the Secretary of a Military Department shall not exceed five. In any given year, each of the six Offices of an Under Secretary of Defense shall be assigned at least one participant.
- c. Candidates may not participate in the Fellows Program unless the individual undergoes a background investigation, receives a favorable suitability determination, and meets all requirements applicable to a sensitive position.
- d. The initial appointment of a Fellow shall be to a position in the excepted service under a time limited appointment not to exceed 1 year and may not be extended.
- e. An individual participating in a 1-year Fellowship shall be compensated at the rate for employees at the GS-10 level. Additionally, the individual shall be an employee of the United States during the assignment, including for purposes of eligibility for health care and retirement benefits.
- f. As a condition of employment, participants must sign an agreement that outlines the goals and expectations for the Fellows Program assignment.

8. Appointing Authority. Appointments in the Fellows Program are made using the following Legal Authority Codes/Legal Authorities:
 - a. For the initial fellowship appointment under a time limited 171- Exc Appt NTE 1 year: ZLMM/NDAA FY19, Sec. 932, P.L. 115-232, 8/13/2018
 - 1) Remark YJM - Reason for temporary appointment will be recorded as “John S. McCain Strategic Defense Fellows Program”
 - b. If selected for non-competitive appointment for commencement of a career track towards senior leadership: 170 or 570 – Exc Appt ZLMM/NDAA FY19, Sec. 932, P.L. 115-232, 8/13/2018
9. Career Development.
 - a. Participants in the Fellows Program will be offered training and development opportunities and support appropriate for the commencement of a career track within the DoD leading toward a future position of senior leadership.
 - b. To facilitate focused training and career development during the short duration of the Fellows Program, supervisors are required to ensure that participants IDPs include participation in the following DoD Enterprise training and career development opportunities:
 - 1) The DoD Acculturation Course, designed as an online foundational course focused on the DoD’s mission, culture, and interactions with the Military Departments, Defense Agencies, and Combatant Commands.
 - 2) The DoD Civilian Emerging Leader Program, is a foundational leadership residency program, which prepares the DoD’s emerging leaders for increased responsibility by providing training, mentoring and educational experiences leading to increased leadership responsibilities. Participating organizations are responsible for funding the TDY costs for each fellow.
 - 3) All DoD Enterprise Mandatory training as outlined DoD Instruction 1400.25, Volume 410, Appendix 3.
10. Reserved Positions and Noncompetitive Appointments.
 - a. No fewer than 30 positions in the excepted service shall be held in reserve for the permanent placement of participants who successfully complete the Fellows Program. These positions, known as reserved positions, must be appropriate for the commencement of a career track toward senior leadership within the DoD.
 - b. Upon successful completion of the Fellows Program, the individual may be noncompetitively appointed into a reserved position without regard to the competitive provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, U.S.C., if it is determined such an

appointment contributes to the development of future senior leaders for the DoD. Sections 3323, 3326, and 3328 of chapter 33, subchapter 1 of title 5, U.S.C., and corresponding Code of Federal Regulations provisions related to selection and appointment, remain in effect.

- c. Participants who previously participated in and successfully completed the Fellows Program may be considered for noncompetitive appointment into a reserved position provided appointment is made within 3 years of the date of successful completion of the Fellows Program.
- d. Employees who are noncompetitively appointed upon successful completion of the Fellows Program must serve at least a 2-year probationary period. Time spent in the initial 1-year Fellows appointment in a covered office is creditable towards completion of this probationary period, provided the non-competitive appointment to another position is made immediately after completion of the Fellowship