



**OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE
2009 SOCIAL WORK MASTERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
FOR GRADUATE LEVEL STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES**

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 10, 2008
APPLICATION FORM IS FREE AND CAN BE DUPLICATED
APPLY ONLINE AT <http://www.soros.org/grants/oas>
PAPER AND ONLINE APPLICATIONS ARE EQUALLY EVALUATED

INTRODUCTION

The Open Society Institute (“OSI”) is pleased to announce the Social Work Masters Fellowship Program for Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Program is designed to provide training in social work to implement reform, create policy and foster the development of social work in the participating countries. Upon the conclusion of the fellowship, fellows return home to apply their new knowledge in practice. The Program also introduces students from the participating countries to colleagues from other regions of the world and encourages cross-national dialogues among professional communities. Approximately 10 awards will be granted in 2009.

Fellows will be placed at universities in the United States for a two-year graduate program in social work beginning in July 2009 and concluding in May 2011. The participating host universities are Columbia University (www.columbia.edu/cu/ssw) and Washington University in St. Louis (www.gwbweb.wustl.edu).

ELIGIBILITY

The Program does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. The competition is merit-based and open to those meeting the following criteria:

1. Resident of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan;
2. Hold an undergraduate degree (4 or 5 year) at application deadline with an excellent academic record;
3. Proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application;
4. Able to demonstrate professional aptitude and leadership potential in social work;
5. **Committed to returning to home country after completion of the program.**

INSTRUCTIONS

Read all instructions and information carefully before completing the application. All forms are to be completed in English. Answer every question and write “Not applicable” if a question does not apply to you. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applicants can submit applications to their local Soros/OSI office or apply via the Internet at <http://www.soros.org/grants/oas> (available in late September). Paper and online applications are equally evaluated.

ATTACHMENTS: Attach the following items to your application in the order given below.

1. Essay. Should not exceed two typed pages or approximately 500 words.
2. Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV), in English. Your educational and professional history.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS: Mail all of the additional documents to your local Soros/OSI office in the order given below. Translations must have the stamp or seal of the English language faculty or notary or translating service confirming the accuracy of the translation. Applicant may not write or certify his/her own translation.

1. Three recommendation letters. Must include the stamp or seal of the organization or university or be written on letterhead. Recommendations in the local language must have a certified English translation.
2. Official copies of all university transcripts in original language. Official transcripts must bear the stamp or seal of the department or faculty of the university that issued it. For the purposes of this program, a transcript is a list of every course taken to receive a diploma, and the grade received in each course.
3. Certified English translations of university transcripts. English language transcripts must bear the stamp or seal of the department or faculty of the university that issued it.
4. Official copies of all diplomas in original language. Official diploma must bear the stamp or seal of the department or faculty of the university that issued it.
5. Certified English translations of diplomas. English language diplomas must bear the stamp or seal of the department or faculty of the university that issued it.
6. Photocopy of passport photo page (if available)

VERIFICATION: The Program reserves the right to verify all information submitted as part of an application. In the event that there is a discrepancy or information is found to be false, the applicant will be declared ineligible.

DEADLINE: Monday, November 10, 2008

SUBMISSION: Documentation (applications, attachments or additional documents) received after the deadline will not be considered. Documentation may not be submitted via email/fax nor enclosed in plastic covers/binders. Documentation will not be returned. Please include "Social Work Masters Scholarship Program" on the envelope addressed to your local Soros/OSI office.

- *Paper applications:* Please type or print in dark ink. Staple attachments and additional documents to your application in the above order. Submit one original and two copies of your application with all attachments and additional documents to your local Soros/OSI office.
- *Online applications:* Submit your application, essay and CV via the Internet. Print the additional documents cover sheet from OAS and include it with the additional documents. Submit one original and two copies of the additional documents to your local Soros/OSI office.

SUBMIT BY MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2008 TO THE OSI/SOROS OFFICE IN YOUR COUNTRY

AZERBAIJAN

Baku Education Information Centre (BEIC)
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Baku, AZ1014 Azerbaijan
Tel./ Fax ; (994 12) 48 28 45; 48 28 46
office@beic.osi-az.org
www.beic.aznet.org

GEORGIA

Open Society Georgia Foundation
International Student Advising Center
10a Chovelidze St.,
380008 Tbilisi, Georgia
Tel. (995 32) 93 89 99, Fax. 29 10 52
gaga@isac.osgf.ge
<http://www.osgf.ge/isac>

KYRGYZSTAN

Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan
Bishkek Resource Center
Logvinenko 55
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PROGRAM INFORMATION

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection is based on academic and professional merit, professional aptitude, leadership potential, long-term commitment to social work in applicant's home country, and English language ability. A U.S.-based selection committee comprised of U.S. professors and admissions officials from the participating host universities will review applications of candidates who meet the requirements and select semifinalists. All applicants will be notified of their status by January 31, 2009.

Semifinalists will be tested for English (TOEFL) and interviewed in the participating countries during January/February 2009. The Program will cover costs associated with the TOEFL and interviews. The selection committee will recommend finalists and determine placement. Applicants cannot select their own placements. All semifinalists will be notified of their status by May 31, 2009.

Please do NOT contact your local Soros / OSI office about your status; they will contact you after receiving notification from OSI – New York.

FINANCIAL TERMS

Fellowships will cover the following costs: program related travel, pre-departure and arrival orientation, all costs associated with the Pre-Academic summer school program, tuition (for Pre-Academic and Graduate programs), monthly living stipend (to cover room and board), textbooks, professional development support, accident and sickness insurance, and participation in Program meetings in the United States.

VISA SPONSORSHIP

Participants will enter the United States as a student on J-1 Exchange Visitor visa. They are expected to comply with all visa regulations and may be subject to a two-year home residency requirement upon completion of the program. Requests for visa renewals or extensions will not be considered.

DEPENDENTS

The Program does not offer any financial support or special provisions for dependent family members. Family members will have to apply for J-2 visas and may not be able to arrive in the US until fall 2009.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITY

Finalists must attend a four week Pre-Academic/Academic Writing summer school program (held in July in Istanbul), a pre-departure orientation, and an annual Program workshop. Fellows must uphold the academic standards of the Host University and undertake full-time study for the duration of the program. Fellows will not be permitted to change their assigned host university or field of study. Failure to maintain academic and professional standards may result in dismissal from the Program.

WHAT IS SOCIAL WORK?

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (Source: www.sozialarbeit.at/def.htm)

Social workers have traditionally worked on two levels in their efforts to help people: the “micro” level of direct practice with individuals, and the “macro” approach which involves advocating for change through civil action, community programming, or social policy development. Social workers often work to influence government policy through either direct involvement in the government, or through public advocacy, in an effort to improve the economic and social conditions of marginalized groups in our society. These groups can include the elderly, children and youth, low-income families and individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, and the disabled. Social work as a profession is dedicated to the concept of “open societies” through its fight for social and economic justice, and through its efforts to empower people in the struggle to create a more just and humane society.

Social workers often deal with individual clients who face a life-threatening disease or a social problem. These problems may include inadequate housing, unemployment, lack of job skills, financial distress, serious illness or disability, substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, or antisocial behavior. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, including those involving child or spousal abuse. Social workers practice in a variety of settings, below are some examples.

Social work planners and policy-makers develop programs to address such issues as child abuse, homelessness, substance abuse, poverty, and violence. These workers research and analyze policies, programs, and regulations. They identify social problems and suggest legislative and other solutions. They may help raise funds or write grants to support these programs.

International social workers help to promote economic and social equality internationally. They specialize in policy development or direct practice and programming for groups such as refugees and immigrants, and those coping with natural disasters and local conflicts.

Social work administrators perform overall management tasks in a hospital, clinic, or other setting that offers social worker services.

Clinical social workers offer psychotherapy or counseling and a range of diagnostic services in public agencies, clinics, and private practice.

Child welfare or family services social workers may counsel children and youths who have difficulty adjusting socially, advise parents on how to care for disabled children, or arrange for homemaker services during a parent’s illness. If children have serious problems in school, child welfare workers may consult with parents, teachers, and counselors to identify underlying causes and develop plans for treatment. Some social workers assist single parents, arrange adoptions, and help find foster homes for neglected, abandoned, or abused children. Child welfare workers also work in residential institutions for children and adolescents.

Child or adult protective services social workers investigate reports of abuse and neglect and intervene if necessary. They may initiate legal action to remove children from homes and place them temporarily in an emergency shelter or with a foster family.

Mental health social workers provide services for persons with mental or emotional problems. Such services include individual and group therapy, outreach, crisis intervention, social rehabilitation, and training in skills of everyday living. They may also help plan for supportive services to ease patients’ return to the community.

Health care social workers help patients and their families cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses and handle problems that may stand in the way of recovery or rehabilitation. They may organize support groups for families of patients suffering from cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, etc. They also advise family caregivers, counsel patients, and help plan for their needs after discharge by arranging for at-home services.

School social workers diagnose students' problems and arrange needed services, counsel children in trouble, and help integrate disabled students into the general school population. School social workers deal with problems such as student pregnancy, misbehavior in class, and excessive absences. They also advise teachers on how to cope with problem students.

Criminal justice social workers make recommendations to courts, prepare pre-sentencing assessments, and provide services to prison inmates and their families. Probation and parole officers provide similar services to individuals sentenced by a court to parole or probation.

Occupational social workers help workers cope with job-related pressures or personal problems that affect the quality of their work. They often offer direct counseling to employees whose performance is hindered by emotional or family problems or substance abuse. They also develop education programs and refer workers to specialized community programs.

Gerontology social workers specialize in services to the aged. They run support groups for family caregivers or for the adult children of aging parents. Also, they advise elderly people or family members about choices in such areas as housing, transportation, and long-term care; they also coordinate and monitor services.

Excerpts from "Nature of the Work" Occupational Outlook Handbook 2000-2001; US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Graduate programs in social work begin with learning the foundations of social work to ensure that all graduates have the same knowledge base upon entering the social work profession.

Foundation courses focus on studying theories, issues, and practice methods dealing with both human behavior and the social environment. After the foundation is established, students choose a practice method and a social problem area (described in detail below). For example if you are interested in developing policy on pensioner's issues you would choose social policy (the method or the way you would like to work) and gerontology (the problem area or the population you would like to work with). To receive a degree, fellows must take all of the courses required by the department and the university. In addition to coursework, most universities require that students take examinations, write papers, or conduct a research project. In Social Work, students are also required to gain practical experience working in the field – also called a practicum or internship – where the knowledge gained in the classroom is integrated into supervised social work experience. Students often do fieldwork and attend classes at the same time.

METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (Source: www.columbia.edu/cu/ssw, www.gwbweb.wustl.edu)

Clinical Social Work / Family Therapy (Counseling) - Emphasizes assessment, intervention, and evaluation, using individual, family, group, and case management strategies; clinical application of risk and resiliency theories and research to at-risk populations; and clinical issues with specific client populations.

Generalist - Emphasizes direct practice; community practice; movement from case to cause; development of innovative and responsive social programs and of program resources, including staffing and funding. Learn to provide direct services for clients, advocate on behalf of at-risk individuals and groups, form coalitions to influence policy and legislation, develop innovative, responsive social programs that can survive, and locate new sources of support and funding.

Social Administration / Management - Building knowledge, skills, and values in administering social service programs includes areas of program planning, program evaluation, financial management, marketing, and fundraising, staff development and training, human resource management, and management information systems.

Social Policy - Policy analysis and advocacy are the focus, including the knowledge, values, and skills to define policy issues from a social work perspective, collect and analyze relevant data, develop policy options, prepare testimony, and present recommendations.

Social Research - Emphasizes advanced social work research methods; data analysis and statistics; application of research methods to social work problems and constituencies.

SOCIAL PROBLEM AREAS (Source: www.columbia.edu/cu/ssw, www.gwbweb.wustl.edu)

Children, Youth, and Families - The economic and social status and service needs of families, youth, and children; laws, funding streams, and service organizations; family support and child care services; preventive and protective services; school-based services; teenage pregnancy/parenting services.

Gerontology - The role and status of the elderly as a population/potential client group; social problems affecting them; sociology of the family; age stratification; policies providing financial support, health, and social care for the elderly; and social service provisions for the aged.

School - Work within the population of school-aged children; legal and policy issues in public education; problems of school failure; design, administration, financing, delivery, and evaluation of child and family services that are either school-based or school-linked; and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Work - The composition, status, and needs of the labor force; conditions interfering with work roles; services for clients as workers and for their dependents; collective bargaining; discrimination and unequal opportunity; interdisciplinary initiatives; and legislation related to work and social welfare.

Contemporary Social Problems - Emerging problems (e.g. homelessness, violence, substance abuse); their etiology, epidemiology, and interconnections; relevant policies, programs, and practices; and coordination or lack of coordination among service systems that seek to address this problem.

Health, Mental Health and Disabilities - Emphasizes clinical practice with individuals, families, and groups experiencing health-related problems in a variety of settings, and management or administrative roles in health-related organizations. Identification of health factors and social stressors that affect clients; program development and evaluation; fiscal, legal, and organizational sanctions and influences; assessment of system entry points for client care and advocacy.

International Social Welfare and Services to Immigrants and Refugees - Global social problems; international trends in social policies and programs, including response to disasters; needs of immigrants and refugees; community development; and activities of major international organizations and voluntary agencies working internationally.

Social and Economic Development - Centers on the problems of underdevelopment, in the U.S. and around the world. The challenges of development include improvements in living conditions and economic opportunities in urban neighborhoods, rural areas, nations, and regions that are struggling to achieve basic necessities.