

2012-13 Kott Gerontology Scholars Program Description And Application Guidelines

Overview: Beginning in 2004, the Russell and Josephine Kott Charitable Trust has provided paid internships to advanced graduated students to train in a consortium of community-based social service agencies in the suburban Chicago area that provide services to senior citizens. The intent of the Kott Gerontology Scholars Program is to encourage and support graduate students in a variety of professional specializations, through an intense block placement, to develop skills that will prepare them to continue working with seniors after graduation. Data obtained from the Kott Scholars classes of 2004-2111 indicate that more than 75% of former Kott Scholars remain working in senior services after their internships.

The Consortium: The Kott Gerontology Scholars Program operates through a grant administered by West Suburban Senior Services. Determining eligibility criteria and admission decisions, and direct supervision of interns, resides with coordinators from the following agencies that currently comprise the consortium and serve as internship sites: Aging Care Connections (Lagrange), DuPage County Senior Services (Wheaton), North Shore Senior Services (Northfield), PLOWS Council on Aging (Palos Heights) and West Suburban Senior Services (Bellwood). All of the agencies have been designated by the Illinois Department on Aging as Case Coordination Units (CCU) to assess the needs and arrange and provide for services to seniors. Four of the agencies are Elder Abuse Provider Agencies for specific service areas. Each agency offers a set of core assessment and case management services, and individual agencies provide a range of other services that include adult day care, senior protective services, home delivered meals, homemakers, caregiver support, counseling and information and referral. A Kott Program Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the recruitment and admission of interns and organizing Kott-related events and alumni communications.

Scholarship Terms: Kott Gerontology Program scholarships provide \$10,000 for a complete academic year, paid directly to interns' universities for deposit into their personal student accounts. Three equal payments are disbursed in November, February and May. Interns are expected to be registered as full-time students during their internships. Partial and part-year scholarships are not offered. The funds are for use as directed by individual Kott Gerontology Scholars to defray their academic expenses, including tuition, loan repayment and other expenses, and not for deposit into general university scholarship funds. It is the responsibility of interns to ensure that payments are deposited into their accounts by their respective universities. **Interns are required to participate in no less than 720 hours of on-site field experience to receive academic credit, regardless of the field work requirements of their respective academic institutions. Interns will not receive field credit from consortium agencies until these hours have been completed in total.** Interns who fail to receive a passing grade in their field experience from their respective academic institutions for any grading period, withdraw from or change academic programs, voluntarily withdraw from the Kott Gerontology Scholars Program, or are terminated by their consortium agency for any reason, will not receive the balance of any remaining scholarship payments. Internship site assignments are the responsibility of consortium members, who take into consideration agency needs, interns' preferences, and commuting time in making assignments.

Kott Scholars Profile: Kott Gerontology Scholars represent a range of professions that have included social work, psychology, counseling, law, occupational therapy, art therapy, and physical therapy. The Kott Charitable Trust strives to expand through its internships the range of professionals that will continue to serve seniors after graduation. Students enrolled in graduate university programs accredited by the professional organizations that they represent, and students who have entered graduate programs with advanced standing in specific fields, such as social work, are considered for internships. Because of the time demands and skill level required to fulfill internship requirements, first-year students are not eligible for internships.

The Internship Experience: The Kott Gerontology Scholars Program provides intensive training. Interns are assigned to a primary agency for a placement that requires 720 hours of on-site participation over a complete and continuous academic year, or approximately three full days per week from September through May. In some cases, the internship is completed during another continuous period based on the schedule requirements of a specific academic program. In order to encourage interns to learn from each other and share their experiences, Kott interns meet together as a group on several occasions during the school year, participate in a dinner for all previous Kott Scholars, and are required to develop agency- or Kott Program-based projects together. Most students spend some time working at their respective agencies during school vacations to complete their hours and to provide continuity of service to clients. Because Kott consortium agencies serve clients in broad geographic areas, interns are required to provide their own automobile transportation and submit documentation of personal insurance for vehicles upon acceptance to the program. Interns do not transport clients in their work.

Application Procedures: To be considered for admission to the 2012-13 Kott Gerontology Scholars Program, applicants should complete the following steps in the on-line application process as soon as possible and **no later than April 1, 2012. Applications will be reviewed in the order that they are received.**

1. Complete the Kott Gerontology Scholars Program Application. Applications are available from Kott liaisons at universities and at **kottscholars@gmail.com, or www.kotttrust.org.**
2. Submit a resume that includes educational history, employment, and practicum and volunteer experiences.
3. Request two personal references. One reference must be submitted by a faculty member of their current academic program who is familiar with the applicant's academic performance and interest, preparation and experience in gerontology, or other experience relevant to the internship. The second reference should be from an individual who has supervised the applicant outside of the academic setting. **For applicants who previously have completed or are currently involved in a practicum experience, the second reference must be provided by the applicant's supervisor from that placement.** References will be accepted by e-mail attachments with electronic signatures or in pdf format that includes a signature.

Submit application materials and references by e-mail, with attached documents in pdf or MS Word-compatible format, to:

Benjamin S. Friedman, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Kott Gerontology Scholars Program
kottscholars@gmail.com

4. Applicants will be informed by e-mail when their applications are complete.
5. Kott coordinators from consortium agencies will review applications in the order that they are received and select candidates for individual, in-person interviews with representatives from the agencies. **Applications received after April 1, 2012 will be considered only if internships are not filled by applicants from the original deadline.**
6. Based on applicants' work and field experiences, academic records, statements of interest in gerontology, references and personal interviews, the consortium coordinators will select potential interns who will be contacted and offered scholarships.

For additional information on the Kott Gerontology Scholars Program or questions regarding the internship application process, please contact Ben Friedman at kottscholars@gmail.com.