



U.S. Public Service Academy

1225 I (Eye) Street NW, Suite 600 • Washington, DC 20005 • 202-712-9121
Chris Myers Asch: 662-207-4744 • Shawn Raymond: 713-899-9945
www.uspublicserviceacademy.org

The U.S. Public Service Academy Act: Congressional Co-Sponsors

The U.S. Public Service Academy Act was introduced in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1671) and Senate (S. 960) in 2007. Its leading sponsors are **Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)** and **Arlen Specter (R-PA)** and **Representatives James Moran (D-VA)** and **Christopher Shays (R-CT)**. Co-sponsors in the 110th Congress were:

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Endorsements

Legislatures & State Agencies

- Arlington County (VA) Board
- Bergen County (NJ) Board of Chosen Freeholders
- New Jersey State Senate

Organizations

- Americans for a National Service Act
- American Foreign Service Association
- American Society for Public Administration
- American Youth Policy Forum
- America's Promise
- AmeriCorps Alums
- Atlas Service Corps
- Bardoli Global
- Breakthrough Collaborative
- Brooklyn Young Republicans Club
- Building Tomorrow
- California Association of Student Councils
- Campus Progress
- Catholic Charities USA
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service
- Children for Children
- Citizen Schools
- City Year
- Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation
- College Outreach
- Common Cause
- Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States
- Democracy Matters
- Do Something
- Earth Force
- Everett (WA) *Herald*
- Florida League of Cities
- Florida State University Student Senate
- Florida Student Association
- Generation Change
- Generation Education
- Generation Engage
- Good Shepherd Services
- Greeks Going Green
- Houston Police Officers Union
- Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation
- International Public Management Association for Human Resources
- I Have a Dream Foundation
- Jumpstart
- Kentucky Child Now

Notable Individuals

- **David Abshire**, President, Center for the Study of the Presidency
- Error! Contact not defined., former Secretary of State
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- **Harold W. Brooks**, CEO, American Red Cross, Bay Area Chapter
- **Carol Browner**, former Director, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- **Yvonne Braithwaite Burke**, former U.S. Representative (California)
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- **Henry Cisneros**, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
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- **Thomas Daschle**, former U.S. Senator (South Dakota)
- **Tom Downey**, former U.S. Representative (New York)
- **Michael Driscoll**, Bishop of the Diocese of Idaho
- **Jonah Edelman**, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Stand For Children
- **Harold Ford**, former U.S. Representative (Tennessee)
- **Gil Garcetti**, former District Attorney, Los Angeles County
- **Seth Green**, Founder, Americans for Informed Democracy
- **David Halperin**, Director, Campus Progress; Senior Vice President, Center for American Progress
- **Lee Hamilton**, former Co-Chair, Iraq Study Group; former U.S. Representative (Indiana)
- **Will Harris**, Academic Dean, Center for the Constitution, James Madison's Montpelier
- **Wayne Huggins**, Executive Director, Virginia State Police Association

- New Mexico House of Representatives
- Washington, D.C., City Council
- Washington, D.C., State Board of Education

- Language Corps
- Mississippi Teacher Corps
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Coalition for the Homeless
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- National Peace Corps Association
- National Service-Learning Partnership
- National Student Partnerships
- National Urban League
- NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
- *Newsday*
- New York State Office of National & Community Service
- Operation Fly, Inc.
- Opportunity Knocks
- Outward Bound
- Pike County (PA) Youth Coalition
- Prince George's County (MD) League of Young Voters
- Project Linus New Jersey
- Public Allies
- ServeNext
- Service Employees International Union
- Service Nation
- Sojourners
- Suffolk University Public Management Department Faculty
- Swamp the Polls
- Teenage Democrats of America
- United States Senate Youth Alumni Association
- United States Student Association
- University of Florida Student Senate
- University of Idaho Student Senate
- University of Richmond Jepson School of Leadership Studies Student Senate
- Virginia 4-H Council
- Virginia State Police Association
- Volunteer San Diego
- Volunteer Tennessee
- WorldTeach
- Young Democrats of America
- Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana
- Youth Service America

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- **Carole Leigh Hutton**, President/CEO, Silicon Valley United Way
- **Roger G. Kennedy**, Former Director, National Park Service; Director Emeritus, National Museum of American History
- **Alan Khazei**, Founder and CEO, Be the Change, Inc.
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- **Sandra Day O'Connor**, former Justice, U.S. Supreme Court
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- **John C. Whitehead**, Chair, World Trade Center Memorial Foundation; former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State

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- **William Ferris:** Professor of History, University of North Carolina; former Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities
- **Al Guskin:** Former President, Antioch University
- **Steve Loflin:** Founder and Executive Director, National Society of Collegiate Scholars
- **Mike Mallory:** Executive Director, Ron Brown Scholars Program
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- **Andrew Rotherham:** Co-Founder and Co-Director, Education Sector
- **Irasema Salcido:** CEO & Founder, Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy
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- **Karen Kalish:** President, Kalish Communications; Estelle W. and Karen S. Kalish Foundation
- **Cathy Lamboley:** Former General Counsel, Senior Vice President and Corporate Secretary for Shell Oil Company
- **John O'Neill:** Partner, Howrey L.L.P.; Director, Center for the Study of Popular Culture
- **James J. Postl:** Former President and CEO, Pennzoil-Quaker State Company
- **Patricia Ross:** Vice President, Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation
- **Rob Rowland:** President of Associated Counsel of America; Treasurer, C Club of Houston
- **Ellen Susman:** Host and Producer of the PBS Series Balancing Your Life with Ellen Susman
- **Stephen D. Susman:** Name Partner, Susman Godfrey, L.L.P.
- **James M. Windham:** Founder, Windham Capital Advisory Services; Publisher, The Texas Pilgrim

U.S. Public Service Academy FAQs

In a nutshell, what is the U.S. Public Service Academy?

The U.S. Public Service Academy will be an undergraduate institution devoted to developing civilian leaders. Modeled on the military academies, the Academy will offer four years of tuition-free education in exchange for five years of civilian service following graduation.

How many students will it serve?

The Academy will serve roughly 5,100 high-achieving students from across the United States and the world.

How will students be admitted?

Spots for nearly 1,300 incoming freshmen will be allocated by state, following a congressional nomination process similar to that used for admission to the military academies. Nominees would compete against other nominees from their state, thus ensuring that each state will be proportionally represented on campus.

What kind of curriculum will Academy students follow?

The Academy's structured, academically rigorous program will focus on service and leadership. Its core curriculum will emphasize service-learning and international education, with challenging requirements for study abroad, public service internships, and summer leadership development. The combination of rigorous academic work with hands-on learning experiences will give our students the character, academic training, and leadership experience they need to serve the American people honorably and effectively.

What kinds of jobs would Academy graduates do during their five-year service requirement?

Academy graduates will spend five years serving our nation by working in education, health care, law enforcement, emergency management, and other critical public service fields at the local, state, and national levels. They will be placed in strategically important positions and geographic areas where they are needed most.

Where will the Academy be located?

That decision ultimately will be up to Congress, but one site that makes logical sense is Washington, D.C. Our nation's capital has tremendous opportunities for Academy students – internships where students would be able to get hands-on experience in public service; partnerships with government agencies that could provide speakers and visiting professors for Academy classes; easy access to research materials and subjects; and other concrete resources that would be hard to duplicate elsewhere. Nonetheless, the Academy could succeed in a number of locations. Philadelphia, Seattle, Atlanta, and Houston have all been suggested as possible sites.

How much money will it cost?

Roughly \$205 million annually – or about 70 cents per American per year. For less than the cost of bus fare, we can build a lasting institution sends a clear message to our young people – public service matters, and it matters enough that we have built a national public university dedicated to it.

Who came up with the idea for a U.S. Public Service Academy?

The Academy is the brainchild of two Teach For America/AmeriCorps veterans, Chris Myers Asch and Shawn Raymond. After having taught in the Mississippi Delta in the mid 1990s, Asch and Raymond teamed up to create a non-profit educational organization for at-risk teenagers, the Sunflower County Freedom Project. Now, they have set their sights on helping America give its young people more opportunities to serve their country in a meaningful way.

Why do we need to do this now?

We need to build a Public Service Academy now for several reasons:

- **America faces a serious shortage of public servants:** The Partnership for Public Service warns of a looming “Federal brain drain” as more than 90% of the federal government's leadership becomes eligible to retire in the

next decade. Eight in ten police agencies nationwide cannot find enough qualified candidates to fill empty positions, and the Border Patrol has difficulty retaining college-educated recruits. The State Department struggles to find enough foreign language specialists in critically-needed languages such as Arabic, Korean, Chinese, and Pashtun.

- **Young Americans have a strong ethic of public service, but they are often priced out of public service:** More than 70% of the 2006 collegiate freshman class expressed a desire to serve others, according to the Higher Education Research Institute, the highest rate in a generation. But according to the Project on Student Debt, the average college student graduates \$20,000 in debt, which makes public service careers difficult to pursue. In the past 25 years, public policy programs such as Columbia University's School of Public Affairs have seen a 50% drop in the percentage of graduates pursuing public service.

- **America does not offer a national civilian college for students interested in serving their nation in a civilian capacity:** Nearly 15,000 students attend the nation's five federal military service academies. Fewer than 15 percent of these students are female, while women constitute a majority (57%) of college students nationwide. In service organizations, women are an even larger majority: 58% of Peace Corps, 61% of City Year, and 71% of Teach for America participants are women. The military service academies are among the nation's most competitive colleges. They reject tens of thousands of applicants each year, often for medical or physical reasons.

How will Academy graduates be different from public policy or government graduates from other universities?

No undergraduate institution offers a program as intense, practical, or service-oriented as what the Academy will provide. Four years at the Academy will be an education in service, an unparalleled experience that produces graduates with:

- **Stronger bonds:** Like cadets and midshipmen at the military academies, Academy graduates will form strong bonds during the course of four years of service-oriented training. The campus culture of service will unify graduates with a shared sense of mission that will span across graduating classes, creating an invaluable network of people who can share knowledge and experiences.
- **More experience:** The Academy's educational program will be designed to give students regular hands-on experience in the real world of public service. While some universities require an internship to give their government majors hands-on experience, the Academy will require internships, community service, study abroad, and foreign language mastery for all students.
- **Longer commitment:** The Academy will require five years of national service following graduation. There is no similar commitment from any other civilian institution.

Why not create a public service scholarship program that could be instituted at a variety of colleges?

Creating a public service scholarship program is a worthy, but limited, idea. It ignores the symbolic importance of creating an institution that can raise the visibility of public service and transform how young people across the country perceive, prepare for, and pursue public service. As a prestigious, national institution, the Academy will capture the imagination of a new generation of young people and channel their energy into public service. It will send a powerful message about the value we place on public service in this country – much the way that refusing to create a Public Service Academy (while offering *five* military academies) sends the message to our young people that public service is somehow less important, less legitimate, or less patriotic than military service.

A scholarship program also would not be able to offer the intensive culture of service that a separate institution devoted to public service would instill in its students. Existing institutions have their own set of priorities and procedures; scholarship money would benefit individual students but would not necessarily alter the overarching mission of their institutions. Having a stand-alone campus is the only way to create a unique, unified campus culture that develops a strong *esprit de corps* around a public service mission. Like cadets at the military academies, Academy students would give up the traditional college life to focus on serving their nation. The result? Students gain a more intensive, more focused, more rewarding education, while the nation gains stronger, better-trained, more dedicated young leaders required to serve their country for five years.