

USDA Pathways Program: Adel A. Malak Scholarship

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). FSIS is on the front line every day inspecting meat, poultry, and egg products. The Agency coordinates inspection and enforcement activities in more than 6,500 federally inspected establishments nationwide, as well as at import establishments, ensuring that the products that FSIS regulates are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled.

Our Agency protects the public from foodborne illness. Assisting in this mission are dedicated Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs) who are trained in public health and regulatory medicine. FSIS is the largest federal employer of veterinarians in the United States.

The USDA Pathways Program offers opportunities for students and recent graduates to work in agriculture, science, technology, math, environment, management, business, and many other fields. FSIS participates in this program, offering the Adel A. Malak Scholarship to create a pipeline to attract and retain talented veterinarians to protect public health through food safety.

History of the Adel A. Malak Scholarship

Dr. Adel A. Malak started his professional career with FSIS in 1985 as an in-plant PHV in Phoenix, AZ. He advanced his career with several promotions to a staff officer in the Western Regional Office in Alameda, CA and later as the Deputy District Manager of the Alameda District Office. Dr. Malak was also instrumental in recruiting and mentoring many students from the University of Fresno and California Polytechnic State University. FSIS lost a beloved friend and colleague when Dr. Malak died in 2012. He was a giving and caring employee, and contributed greatly to the mission of food safety. FSIS created the Adel A. Malak Scholarship to encourage veterinary students to choose a career in public health and food safety.

Scholarship Experiences

As an Adel A. Malak Scholarship recipient, you will experience and take on a variety of PHV responsibilities to more fully understand the important work FSIS does to protect public health through food safety. Working in federally inspected establishments, you may:

- Assist in the examination of livestock and poultry for the purpose of detecting diseases or abnormalities that would render the meat unfit for human food purposes. Work with food inspectors to perform visual, tactile and incisory inspections of heads, viscera, carcasses, and edible offal.
- Assist a FSIS PHV in making dispositions on abnormal animals, carcasses, or birds retained for veterinary examination. These include findings of infectious diseases, neoplasms, trauma, contamination, chemical residues, metabolic disorders, etc.
- Assist inspection program personnel performing foreign animal disease surveillance.
- Assist a FSIS PHV in performing activities to verify that animals are handled and treated humanely.
- Observe conditions in the establishment to ensure that it meets prescribed sanitary requirements.
- Observe conditions in the establishment to ensure the plant is following its sanitation standard operating procedures.

Scholarship Benefits

The Adel A. Malak Scholarship provides students:

1. \$15,000 scholarship funding for tuition, books, tutors and laboratory fees awarded for each year in the program, up to four years.
2. Paid employment during summer and school breaks as a Veterinary Student Trainee while you complete your DVM. The work schedule during the academic year is negotiable. The Adel A. Malak Scholarship provides the opportunity to work a minimum of 640 hours to meet Pathways Program requirements for conversion to SPHV upon graduation.
3. Conversion without further competition to a permanent appointment with promotion potential to the GS-12 level with FSIS upon successful completion of the program with a DVM degree, training, and other work requirements. Note that upon conversion, the employee may be assigned supervisory responsibilities. The location of the position will be discussed with the student prior to conversion to federal employment.
4. Comprehensive mentorship and professional development program.
5. Participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan (401K plan) and paid vacation and sick leave.

After completing all of the mandatory requirements for the program, the student must convert to an in-plant PHV, GS-701-11/12, for at least 1 calendar year (12 months) for each school year (2 semesters, 3 quarters, or the equivalent) that the student was covered by the scholarship. If the student does not accept an employment offer from FSIS as a field employee, he or she must reimburse all financial assistance received under the Adel A. Malak Scholarship. Anyone who fails to serve the entire length of the mandatory employment period must reimburse the agency a prorated share of the funds awarded.

Application and Eligibility

Interested students must apply online via www.usajobs.gov. Locate the announcement using the key words “Adel A. Malak” in the search engine under the “Student and Recent Graduates” tab. Please note that you must have a USAJOBS account to apply. The announcement typically opens in January of each year for approximately a 2-week period.

Upon entrance on duty, you must:

1. Be a U.S. citizen.
2. Be enrolled full-time in a degree-seeking DVM program at an accredited veterinary college or university that is a registered entity in the System for Award Management.
3. Have completed not more than 2 full academic years of study in veterinary medicine.
4. Be in good academic standing.
5. Agree to work for FSIS during school breaks for at least 640 hours prior to completion of studies.

Required Documents

The online application system will prompt you to answer self-assessment questions and to submit the following:

1. Résumé.
2. Transcripts for all completed college work to date.
3. Proof of current enrollment on a full-time basis and/or, if applicable, a letter of acceptance to veterinary school.
4. A copy of your DD-214 if you are claiming veterans' preference.

Additional supplemental information and documentation will be requested at a later date if you meet eligibility and initial application requirements.