



## The William F. Helms Scholarship Program for Students in Plant Health Science and Related Fields



Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is a vital program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Our mission is to safeguard American agriculture against invasive pests and facilitate the safe trade of agricultural products.

PPQ forms America's first line of defense for plant health. Our nearly 3,000 employees work on many fronts to keep harmful pests out of the United States, control the spread of invasive species (such as the Asian longhorned beetle, spotted lanternfly, and giant African snail), and increase the safety of agricultural trade. This work is critical in helping American agriculture thrive—across the country and around the world.

We are proud to sponsor the William F. Helms Scholarship Program. Juniors and seniors who are academically qualified and enrolled part-time or full-time in an accredited college-level program related to agriculture or the biological sciences are eligible to apply. **Students can receive up to \$5,000 per year (\$10,000 maximum) for undergraduate studies.**

### Who Was William F. Helms?

After graduating from Auburn University, William Helms joined APHIS in 1958 and worked for PPQ in field offices in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. He was assigned to headquarters in 1980 as the Associate Deputy Administrator for PPQ and was subsequently promoted to Deputy Administrator, the highest ranking position in his division and the position he retained until his untimely death in 1990.

Helms was an active proponent for change and management improvement. He also looked for better ways of doing business. He never lost sight of what he viewed as the organization's most valuable asset, its people. An example of his feelings is reflected in a comment he once made: "...if you have good, dedicated people, you're going to get results. I think that's why APHIS has succeeded over the years."

The William F. Helms Scholarship Program continues the legacy Helms worked to establish and is further evidence of the agency's commitment to support and hire the best and brightest candidates.



### What Kinds of Career Opportunities Does PPQ Offer?

As a William F. Helms Scholarship recipient, you will further your education and gain valuable real-world experience in the field of agriculture. Working for PPQ, you may:

- Carry out trapping for invasive species,
- Conduct public outreach to raise awareness about invasive species,
- Perform surveys for invasive plant pests and diseases,
- Cooperate with other Federal, State, and local officials to apply best practices when outbreaks occur,
- Learn how Federal regulations are made,
- Observe technical discussions with international trading partners to develop plant health standards for imports and exports, and
- Learn how to inspect and certify goods for export.

### Scholarship Benefits

- Financial aid while pursuing a degree
- Tutoring assistance
- Mentoring
- Paid employment during summer and school breaks
- Career exploration
- Possible employment upon graduation



### Application and Eligibility

Interested students must apply at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). Locate the announcement using the key words “William F. Helms” in the search engine under the “Students and Recent Graduates” tab. Please note that you must have a USAJOBS account to apply. The announcement will open in the spring for approximately a 2-week period. Students must meet the eligibility criteria for the USDA Pathways Program in order to be considered. Students selected will begin receiving scholarship benefits at the start of the fall semester.

### Upon entrance of duty, you must be:

- A U.S. citizen;
- Enrolled part-time or full-time at an accredited college or university in a program related to agriculture or the biological sciences;
- At the end of your sophomore year going into your junior year, or at the end of your junior year going into your senior year; and
- In good academic standing, with at least a 2.0 grade point average.

### Required Documents

The online application system will prompt you to submit the following:

- Resume;
- Transcripts for all completed college work to date;
- Proof of current enrollment on a part-time or full-time basis and/or, if applicable, a letter of acceptance or letter of continuing education; and
- A copy of your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (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.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

This internship may be available annually. To check availability or learn more, email the PPQ Resource Management Services office at [PPQHelmsScholarship@usda.gov](mailto:PPQHelmsScholarship@usda.gov) or visit the APHIS Careers website:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/careers](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/careers)  
(click on “Are You a Student?”)

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