

# SEA GRANT KNAUSS MARINE POLICY FELLOWSHIP

Manual for Finalists and Fellows

2016

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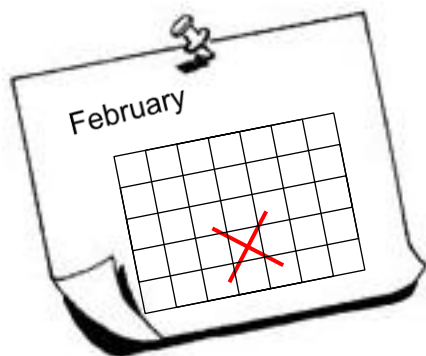
# Introduction

## Purpose of the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program

The Sea Grant (SG) Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship provides a unique educational experience to students enrolled in graduate programs in fields related to ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The program matches outstanding graduate students with “Hosts” in legislative or executive branch offices located in the Washington, D.C. area, for a one-year paid Fellowship.

## History of the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program

In 1979, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO), in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities, implemented the National SG Federal Fellows program to initially provide an educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative Branch of the Federal Government. Later, the program was expanded to provide opportunities within the Executive Branch of the Federal Government in the Washington, D.C. area. Recognizing the value of this program, in 1987 the U.S. Congress stipulated in P.L. 100-220 that the SG Federal Fellows Program become a formal part of the National Sea Grant College Program Act. The recipients are designated Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellows in honor of one of SG’s founders and former NOAA Administrator, John A. Knauss [33 U.S.C. 1127 (b)].



## Calendar of Application Process

**February:** Students submit applications to the state SG Program Directors by the deadline set in the NSGO program’s federal funding opportunity announcement.

**April:** Sponsoring state SG Directors submit applications for the national competition for up to six qualified students to the NSGO.

**May / June:** All SG Directors will be notified of the national competition selection results. Following notification, each state SG Director will contact and notify their applicants with the results.

**November:** Placement Week. Finalists are required to attend interviews with Hosts in Washington, D.C.

**February :** The first Monday of February, the new class of Fellows begins their assignments

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# Pre-Placement Week

## Money

Make sure you have about \$2500 to set aside for expenses (hotel, travel, food, etc.). You may be able to get a cash advance-check with your state SG Office. Find out how long it will take to get reimbursed, as it may take several weeks. Make sure you save all your receipts during placement week.

## Host

Read the Host offerings and look up the offices on the web. Remember, Fellows are not allowed to contact Host Offices prior to Placement Week. It is important that no finalist has an advantage (or even a perceived advantage) over other finalists; conversely, hosts should be on a level playing field as well.

## Recommended Attire

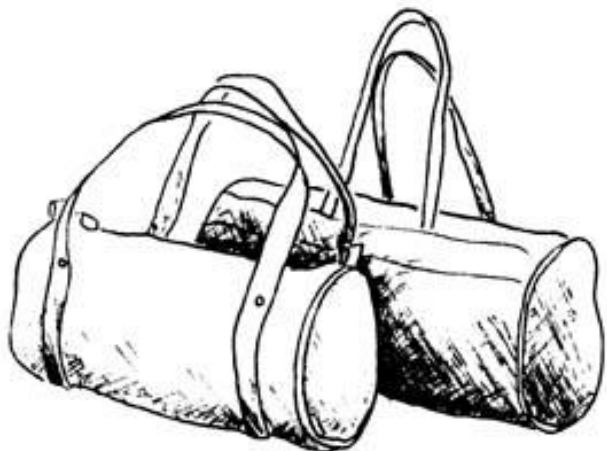
Be prepared to wear suits or other conservative, professional attire. You may want to bring comfortable shoes to wear in between interviews and during transit time, as you will be doing a lot of walking this week.

**Men** - Suit with dress shirt and tie; business casual would be a non-suit, i.e. a dress jacket (blazer, etc.) with dress slacks, dress shirt, and tie (optional). Dress shoes are an obvious component as well, and make sure that you break them in in advance. Two suits should be plenty for the boys.

**Women** - Suits (pants or skirts) with a blouse. Pantyhose is appropriate with skirt suits. Business casual would be slacks or skirt with blouse or dress sweater. Bottom line: Dress according to how you want to be perceived by the Hosts.

Business dress is recommended for Monday through Friday of Placement Week, particularly on days you will be interviewing: 2 days for Leg. Finalists and 2.5 days for Exec. Finalists.

The Sunday night of Placement Week will be a group dinner. Hosts will not be present. Business casual is okay that night as well as each night that we have evening activities, although you probably won't have time to change between interviews and the evening activities. Feel free to bring athletic attire if you want to go for a run or want to work out.



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## Arriving in D.C.

During the week of November 15-20, 2015, Finalists are required to travel to Washington, D.C. for interviews with Hosts. This trip is funded by the sponsoring state SG program for up to \$2,500 from the Fellowship award. Your expenses for Placement Week will be out-of-pocket and you will be reimbursed by your local SG program.

The finalists' hotel will be the Holiday Inn Express - 7990 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring MD, 20910. Information on how to make a reservation will be released nearer the date.

It is advised that you arrive at the hotel in Silver Spring by 4 PM on Sunday, November 16 to give enough time to get to the hotel, settled, and ready for the Finalists' dinner on Sunday night. Dinner Sunday evening (Nov 15, 2015) will start around 5 PM. Back-calculating from there, you will need to leave the hotel by 4:00 PM. You should plan to check into your hotel room no later than 3:00 PM. Arriving at Reagan National Airport (DCA) around 2:00 PM will give you plenty of time to get to the hotel. Flying into Dulles (IAD) or Baltimore International (BWI) will translate into 1.5 hr. of travel to get to the hotel.

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## Placement Process

By the first week of November, the National Sea Grant Office will make available via its website ([seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship)) information detailing with the Placement Week process. Information will include current Fellows' assignments, information about Finalists' interviews with Hosts (Placement Week), and information from the present class about lessons learned, housing possibilities, personal experiences, and other pertinent information. Selected applicants are known as Finalists, and do not become Fellows until they have been interviewed by Host Offices, been accepted by a Host Office, had that acceptance ratified by the NSGO, and the grant awarded by the NOAA Grants Office.

At the start of Placement Week, Host Offices will provide a 10 minute presentation to the Finalists outlining the principle duties of the office and the role the Fellow would play in that office. Hosts will also include their availability during the week for interviews, the location of the interviews, and the person conducting the interviews. One half hour is allocated for each interview.

Finalists can sign up to interview with every Host Office in which the Finalist is interested based on the opinions formed from the Host position descriptions (on the database), the Congressional Research Service briefing for the Legislative Finalists (it will describe the difference between House vs. Senate, personal vs. committee offices), current fellows briefing, and the Host presentations. It is encouraged that finalists interview with as many Host Offices as possible. It is well within reason to sign up for 12-15 interviews but it would be ambitious to do more than 20 interviews. Contact the Fellowship Manager to determine Host availability.

If there are new activities and/or achievements that you want hosts to know about that aren't on your resume or in your application package, bring this up verbally in your interviews. There's no need to update your resumes/CVs for Placement Week. Giving hosts a verbal update on your credentials will suffice and it will also serve as a good conversation starter.

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# Placement Process

## Preparing for Interviews

- Stay relaxed, be flexible, and stay open-minded.
- Don't pre-determine where you want to be placed.
- Remember this week, as well as the Fellowship itself, is an educational opportunity for you.
- Review the position descriptions and your application package.
- Have questions read to ask at each interview.
- Check to see if the office accepts international students (if applicable)

On the Friday of Placement Week, Finalists will be notified of the Host Office rankings, and Hosts and Finalists should reach their agreement on Friday, finalizing arrangements Friday afternoon.

After the placement meeting on Friday the remainder of the day should be spent making final arrangements and obtaining signatures on the ratification document. Finalists and Hosts must not make commitments and/or agreements concerning placement before group placement on Friday. This ensures an opportunity for the greatest possible interaction between Finalists and Hosts leading to optimal arrangements. Finalists will meet with the Knauss Program Manager to resolve any discrepancies or problems.

The NSGO will assist in this process by providing counsel, but cannot ensure placement in every case. Immediately following ratification of all positions, the NSGO will send an email notification to Hosts, Fellows, and SG Directors as to the final placements. Fellows will start their assignments the first Monday of February. Upon acceptance, Fellows have committed to the Fellowship program for a full year. Early withdrawal from the program (unless approved by the SG Knauss Program Manager) is deemed unacceptable and the student will forfeit the status and privileges of the Fellowship.

The interview week agenda can be found at

<http://seagrants.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship/FinalistsCurrentFellows.aspx>

## After Placement Week

### Health Insurance

Health Insurance coverage is mandatory, and your host office or agency will not cover your health insurance. Check with your Sea Grant program as to what possibilities are available. Documentation of Health Care coverage needs to be on record with the sponsoring SG program.

- Start checking into this soon-it may take 6-8 weeks for an application to be processed. Depending on your state you may qualify for health insurance through your university or through the state Sea Grant program.
- Find out about your status (student/non-student) through your university.
- When checking into health insurance, look into the following things:
  - Local/private providers
  - Deductible/co-pay
  - Local treatment if using a program from your own state.

Health insurance costs are covered by the \$9,000 non-stipend funds that come with the fellowship. Moving expenses and fellowship travel are also part of that \$9,000. Second, here's how you get the health insurance ball rolling:

- a. Call your state SG program and check to see if they enroll their fellows in a health insurance plan. Some SG programs will put their fellows on the same health insurance plan as other state SG employees (technically, you are an employee of your state SG program or your college/university, depending on how your money flows to you). If the SG program does in fact enroll you in their program, work with them on the details of how those premiums are paid, the details of the plans, etc. If not, go to step b.
- b. Most fellows not covered by your state SG program will search out health insurance on their own. Some will enroll in a policy in their home state before coming to D.C. Others will enroll in a plan once they get to D.C. There's no conventional wisdom here and where you enroll may depend on how long your current policy runs. Be sure to check on the dates of your current plan as well as the terms of potential plans you're shopping. You want to avoid a lapse in coverage.
- c. Married? If you're married and your spouse has his/her own health insurance plan, you might be able to get incorporated into your spouse's plan. This would circumvent the need to enroll in a policy for just yourself and would free up more money in your \$9,000 for moving expenses and travel.

## After Placement Week

### E-mail

Make sure you are in e-mail contact with your host office and the Fellowship Manager between the placement week and the start of the Fellowship.

### Pay

Get in touch with your Sea Grant's Fiscal Officer. They will help you get your payroll paperwork done before you leave your home state. There have been instances where Fellows did not receive their first paycheck until March 1st or later because of paperwork problems. Make sure that you have spoken to your state SG program about your payments, and have followed their instructions.

### Taxes

Neither your state SG program nor the National SG Office are allowed to give tax advice. Thus, we suggest you consult with a tax advisor. Here are some things to think about:

1. In which state should I be paying tax?
2. Will state or federal taxes be taken out of my paycheck?
3. Do I need to estimate them and pay quarterly (or pay penalties)? Here's how:  
[www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p505.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p505.pdf)

To register to vote in your new locale,  
In Maryland:

<http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/mdmanual/41electp/html/local.html>

(You'll have to navigate to your county, but this site provides all sorts of useful government info.)

In DC: <http://www.dcboee.org/>

In Virginia: <http://www.sbe.state.va.us/>

To locate a vehicle registration office, register your car, or get a new driver's license:

In Maryland: <http://mva.state.md.us/>

In DC: <http://dmv.washingtondc.gov/main.shtm>

In Virginia: <http://www.dmv.state.va.us/>

If you get a new driver's license in VA, there is an option to either put your Social Security Number (SSN) or a "Control" number on your license. The Alexandria police strongly suggest getting that control number. They report that the biggest crime wave that they are seeing is identity theft – and that it is a direct result of robbing an innocent of their wallet containing a license with attached SSN.



## After Placement Week

### Vehicle Registration and Parking:

If you are going to have a car here, be prepared to pay extra. Apartments will charge more if off-street parking is provided, and on-street parking can be very limited in some neighborhoods. If you need to do on-street parking, you will need to get a permit from the D.C. Department of Motor Vehicles that will allow you to park anywhere in your 'zone' of the city. And if you want to park your vehicle on the street for longer than 6 months, you will need to get DC tags. See <http://dmv.washingtondc.gov/serv/parking.shtm> for more info.

### Apartment Hunting

Realtors are helpful; often you can make an appointment and they can show you several places at once. Craigslist, Padmapper, and other apartment hunting websites are commonly used in DC. Don't be afraid to ask local residents if they know of any places available if you like the neighborhood – it's a good way to get a place before it's in the paper. Spend plenty of time walking around looking for signs and explore all the options. Once you find a place you like, be prepared to pay a \$20-40 application fee.

**Apartment Security:** When looking for an apartment, walk by it at night to make sure you are comfortable with the neighborhood. Each police precinct has someone who will give you a crime report for that area.

**Commuting:** Make sure you understand how long your commute might take at any potential apartment, and calculate the costs. Switching Metro lines can add a considerable amount of time to your commute.



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## Host Relationship

### Specific Items Requested of the Fellow

- Maintain contact with the Host Office and supervisor prior to arrival. Be sure to arrange your start date with your
- Host Office. This will serve two purposes. It will remind them that you are coming and give you an opportunity to ask about any necessary reading, opportunities to visit the office prior to the start, or possible early travel opportunities with your Host.
- At the start of the Fellowship, review office policies including work hours; time needed (if any) for work on school commitments; vacation; sick leave; and attendance at Fellowship functions, conferences, hearings, and meetings.
- Arrange and coordinate activities listed above (conference attendance, Fellowship activities, vacation, etc) with the Host Office/supervisor in advance.
- Fellows are asked to make their expectations clear with respect to the items above.

### Conflict Resolutions

Participation in the Fellowship program is a privilege, not a right, for both Fellows and Host Offices. To earn this privilege, Fellows must continue to justify this benefit by demonstrating diligence and adaptability to the Host environment. Likewise, the Host Office should be sensitive to the Fellow's educational needs. The SG Knauss Program Manager, after due consultation with and consideration of the mutual rights and interests of the Fellow, the Host, the sponsoring SG Director, and NSGO, will adjudicate problems that may arise.

### Early Withdrawal from the Program

Situations may arise over the course of the Fellowship year in which a Fellow decides to leave the program early. This may be due to personal reasons, conflicts with a Host, or to move on to an employment opportunity. Each situation will be handled on a case by case basis. There will be an open discussion between the Host, Fellow, and the SG Knauss Program Manager to determine the Fellow's transition out of the program in a way that is acceptable to all parties. Fellows that do not complete the Fellowship will not be considered alumni.

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## Essentials

### Reporting Requirements

SG Knauss Fellows will be administratively responsible to their sponsoring SG Directors during their terms in Washington, D.C., but must be responsive to the administrative and technical needs of the Host to whom they report. The role of the SG Knauss Program Manager in the NSGO is one of ombudsman between the Fellow, the Host, the SG Program, and the sponsoring institution.

The SG Knauss Program Manager will maintain regular contact with Fellows will occur throughout the year. If a conflict arises, a meeting with the SG Knauss Program Manager will be scheduled. The NSGO requires a Final Report from each Fellow that discusses his/her experience, particularly as it relates to meeting his/her education objectives.

### Start Date

The start date is flexible within 1-2 weeks of February 1. There have been fellows in the past who have needed to start earlier or later due to school- or personal-related matters. The fellowship will run 365 days from the time that you start (e.g. Start: Feb 1, 2015; End: Jan. 31, 2016). Having said that, it is strongly recommended that you inform Hosts during Placement Week of your scheduling needs. While Hosts are understanding and flexible on this issue, they prefer not to have any surprises. It is standard for offices to think about their staffing schedules well in advance.

### Travel Requests

The additional \$9,000 will be used to cover mandatory health insurance for the Fellow and moving expenses. Any remaining funds shall be used during the Fellowship year to satisfy academic degree-related activities, and for Fellowship-related activities respectively. During the year, the Executive Hosts may provide supplemental expenses for work-related travel by the Fellow, i.e., conferences, workshops, short courses, or similar opportunities. Legislative Hosts, due to their rules, cannot pay for any Fellow's travel.

The Host and the sponsoring SG Director must approve all travel in advance. A letter of request (paper or email) should be initiated by the Fellow and approved by the Host. This request will be sent to the state SG Director, explaining the reason for the trip and approximate costs. This process must be completed well in advance to ensure adequate opportunity for the Host and SG Director's comment and approval. If the travel is in question, the SG Knauss Program Manager will mediate the situation as needed. All international travel must be approved by the SG Knauss Program Manager in advance.

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# Guide for Legislative Fellows

## Working on the Hill

Office Policy: As soon as you start work, review your office's policy manual. It will be important to conform to office policy as much as possible, but remember that you are not an official employee of Congress so some rules (of course, those about pay or benefits) will not apply to you. Your office does not pay your salary (Sea Grant does), so they should accommodate your personal and educational needs (e.g., for days off) to a reasonable extent. Be flexible, as each office has their own approach for working with Fellows. On Senate committees, you will need to fill out quarterly forms verifying that you are paid from outside the Committee, so see your Chief Clerk about these.

Dress Code: Check with your Office Policy. There is great variation between offices on what is allowed. When the member is not in the office and no votes are scheduled, the dress is often business casual. When the member is in the office or if floor votes are scheduled, business suits are required. For women, there is more flexibility in what is considered business but a suit is always appropriate and often the easiest option. Some offices will have more strict dress codes, so adapt as needed. Many people who walk to work like to leave their dress shoes under our desks and wear comfy shoes back and forth.

Working Hours: Most offices work 9-6 in session, 9-5 in recess (at a minimum; days often run well into the evening). Be prepared to stay late (perhaps midnight or later) when your work is subject of ongoing floor debate. Sometimes the state time zone makes a difference (e.g., offices of western states may end later).

Days Off: Some offices will give you a set number of days; others will allow days off on an as-needed basis. Try to plan them out of session if possible.

Sick Days: If you get sick, there is a nurse in almost every building. Also, you can call in sick as needed.

Constituent Mail: Some offices will require you to answer constituent mail. If you are on the House side, you may need to attend a Quorum class to learn how the mail system works. You can write form letters to answer 3 or more letters on the same topic, or you can write individual letters to answer 1 or 2 letters or VIPs. There are many examples of both types of letters available in your office from which you can learn.

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## Guide for Legislative Fellows

Memos and Talking Points: Depending on your office, you may need to write many memos and talking points, up to several each day if a lot is happening. Memos, often one page long, are used to summarize information on evolving issues and update your member as well as other office staff. Talking points are generally short bullet lists of statements that your member can use to summarize his or her understanding of and perspectives on an issue. Each office will have different formats and preferences to guide the writing of memos and talking points. Few issues have never been brought up in Congress before, so if you need to write these, the subject is most likely somewhere on your hard drive in a document written by previous fellows or office staff. The best way of learning office style is to imitate or ask. Don't make more work for yourself by starting from scratch. If there is a corresponding one or two-page document, you can attach it to the memo.

Dear Colleagues: You may send and will receive many "Dear Colleague" letters. These are general paper/electronic letters that a member sends out to other members of Congress (or an appropriate subset, like members of coastal states) seeking to inform or gain support on a given topic. They generally contain information on what is being sought (for example, a signature on a letter) as well as background information on the issue. There are specific rules to follow when sending these from your office. Your office should already have a contact list that they often use to send out Dear Colleagues; if not, consider creating one.

One-Minutes: One-minutes are speeches a House member may make on the floor, generally related to legislation on the floor schedule for the day. These provide a good opportunity for your boss to comment on an issue.

Lobbyists: Part of your job will be meeting with lobbyists, who are usually based in DC and hired to represent a group in your district. They may dress and talk like they are from your district, but they may not be. They will generally schedule a meeting with you and possibly the member to inform you on an issue. Try to give the member a memo on the group and their request prior to the meeting, if possible. Once you are in an office, you'll need to learn any other office protocol about handling these meetings. Learn the rules for accepting gifts – there are limits on what you can accept for lunches, travel, entertainment, and other gifts.

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## Guide for Legislative Fellows

Federal Budget: You will need to read the President's budget when it comes out, specifically the sections on agencies relevant to your office. Be looking for items that affect your member's state. This will lead right into appropriations.

Appropriations: See if you can find copies of what appropriations request letters were sent from your office last year. Definitely, look for requests to Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary, as well as any other types of requests. It is likely that a lot of last year's requests will be repeated, so you need to know who asked for what and how much they got, if any, and how much the President's budget allots for that area this year.

Congressional Research Service (CRS): The CRS is part of the legislative branch. CRS, which is a department of the Library of Congress, works exclusively as a nonpartisan analytical, research, and reference arm for Congress. The CRS will do research for you on any topic of interest to your Member or Committee. They also offer many types of orientations, seminars, and on-line briefing documents that may be useful to you. Take advantage of all the classes possible while working as Congressional staff. It will make your work life easier and the classes are FREE.

For more information see: <http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/>

As a staff member, you have access to borrow books from the Library of Congress for your personal use (e.g. they have a very complete and current selection of Lonely Planets).

Receptions: Keep aware of evening receptions offered by agencies and special interest groups, as they provide great networking opportunities. Also, the Congressional Legislative Staff Association (CLSA) hosts embassy events and briefings for a \$20 yearly membership, for which you can sign up here: <http://www.uscongressionalstaff.org/?sectionid=60&sectiontree=60>

### Other Things to Know –

Capitol Tours: Staffers may give Capitol tours without a reservation by entering through the staff-led tour door. Reservations will make the process smoother, but even with one you may still have to wait in line.

Mail: All DC mail, even your home mail and FedEx, is now being irradiated, so it takes a little longer to get to you.

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## Guide for Executive Fellows

Office Policy: As soon as you start work, review your office's pertinent documents. It will be important for you to understand the "official policy" of your office, as you are now a representative and will be working toward those objectives. In some offices, this may be more important than others. You should also be familiar with any legislation that guides your office or projects.

Dress Code: Individual offices have different dress codes. Generally, business casual is acceptable. Even jeans are acceptable for some offices, unless you are meeting with someone. For women, there is more flexibility in what is considered business attire – you will get a feeling for that once you are here – but khaki dress slacks (or skirt) are appropriate and often the easiest option. Sandals are OK in some offices. Some offices will have more strict dress codes, so adapt as needed. Ask the current or past Fellows if you need more guidance.

Working Hours: The standard work hours are 5 eight-hour days. Some offices can offer flextime or flex-hours. Each office policy will vary. Some offer 4 ten-hour days per week, others offer 9 nine-hour days, with the tenth day off. Check with your office to find out if there are core hours, flextime, or flex-hours.

Don't forget to take time for events (Fellowship-sponsored activities, Hill events, etc.) and talk to your supervisor about taking time off for these activities.

Days Off: Some offices will give you a set number of days; others will allow days off on an as-needed basis. There is no set policy. Ask what your office/supervisor will allow. Make sure you let your office know if you are planning to take time off for conferences or school. These do not count against your vacations days.

Sick Days: If you are sick, you must inform your supervisor that you will not be coming into work by 9 am. There are urgent care facilities around the DC metro area if you need a doctor.

Security: Security will differ between agencies. In general, you will be required to wear a security badge. Be prepared for a full security check with the names and addresses of previous employers, roommates, and character references (and they do check).

If you are going to have visitors at work, you will need to notify security in advance. Each agency has a specific protocol for this, so ask your office.

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## Contacts

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[seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/KnaussFellowship)