
Application Tips and Suggestions and Planning Timeline

Tips and Suggestions

- ✓ Review NSEP-Boren on-line resources @ <http://borenawards.org/>
 - This is a great site with a lot of resources. So, it will take time to review it all! Give yourself the time to look through it so that you understand the history and purpose of the scholarship program.
 - Review the goals and requirements of the scholarship to make sure it is a good fit for your study abroad interests as well as long-term career interests – recipients of the scholarship must complete a 1 year service requirement with a U.S. federal agency.
 - 2025 Boren Awards: may be applied to programs starting as early as June 4, 2025 or as late as March 1, 2026. At UW, we refer to this as the 2025-2026 award cycle.
- ✓ NSEP-Boren webinars
 - These are another great resource for you to learn more about the scholarship. Webinars are held throughout the fall and early in the spring semester. Topics include general information about the scholarship and also more specific topics like how to write a competitive essay or learning more about the service requirement.
- ✓ Draft essays
 - You should plan to write a minimum of 5-6 drafts of your required essays. Remember, you are competing against a national pool of applicants.
 - i. Essay #1 - You need to make a persuasive argument that is factual, demonstrates in-depth understanding of the topic: language, region, country and how it all relates to U.S. national security, and that is well structured.
 - ii. Essay #2 - The purpose of the second essay is twofold: it is an opportunity for you to describe your preparation for long-term, immersive overseas study, and to convince selection panels of your motivation for and commitment to careers in public service.
 - Readers of your drafts: Take advantage of both campus resources and your own to have your essay drafts reviewed. You should consider the following for possible proof readers:
 - Someone that knows you: a friend, relative, professor, job colleague.
 - Someone that knows the country/region/subject that is the focus of your essay; e.g. a professor whose academic interests are in the country/region of your interest or who academic area relates to the topic of U.S. national security. See the handout: *UW-Madison campus resources for preparing your NSEP-Boren Scholarship Application* for specific suggestions of identifying possible readers.
 - Someone who neither knows you well or the subject: This again could be a professor or acquaintance who doesn't know you well. Here you are looking for critical feedback on how well your argument is made; is it clear, well formulated; does it make sense to someone who has little or no background on the country/region or subject of your essay?
 - Include in your essays responses to all question prompts. One of the biggest, but simplest mistakes that you can make is to not respond to all prompts in the essay questions. Your readers can help you identify gaps but you should proof your essay to make sure you didn't miss anything.

Planning Timeline

August

- ✓ Meet with Kate Hamoonga, UW-Madison Campus Representative for NSEP-Boren scholarship.
- ✓ Review on-line resources at <http://borenawards.org/>
- ✓ Begin your research on possible federal government agencies of interest and possible positions to fulfill your government service requirement.

September

- ✓ Complete an initial draft of your application essay questions.
- ✓ Make revisions based on proof reader feedback.
- ✓ Register for a general information webinar about the NSEP-Boren Scholarship.
- ✓ Finalize your choice of federal agency and position for the government service requirement and conduct additional research on the position for inclusion of information in your scholarship application essays.

October

- ✓ Seek out additional readers for your revised application essay questions.
- ✓ Register for the NSEP-Boren webinar on how to write a competitive essay.
- ✓ Contact potential referees for the required 2 letters of recommendation. Recommenders may be academic contacts who can speak to your academic, linguistic, and personal preparation for your overseas study or future career, or professional contacts from a job or internship relevant to your future career plans. They should not be family or friends.

November

- ✓ Finalize your draft essays by having a final round of reviews.
- ✓ Send reminders to referees whom have not submitted their letter of recommendation – these are due by the UW-Madison campus deadline.

December

- ✓ Submit your completed NSEP-Boren application on-line by the UW-Madison campus deadline – you may wait to upload your official transcript until January.

✓ **2025-26 Campus Deadline: December 2, 2024**

January

- ✓ Prepare for your required meeting with the UW-Madison NSEP-Boren Scholarship committee by reviewing your essay questions – you will be given specific feedback by the committee about your essays and overall application.
- ✓ Meet with UW-Madison NSEP-Boren Scholarship Committee about your application.
- ✓ Make any final revisions to your application based upon your meeting with the Boren Campus Committee interview.
- ✓ Prepare and complete your final submission of your NSEP-Boren application by the national deadline.

✓ **2025-26 National Deadline: January 29, 2025**

April: Applicants will be notified if they have been selected in mid-to-late April of 2025.