



**Scott Family Liberia Fellows
Program Description
March 2007**

Liberia is beginning to rebound from 14 years of civil war that killed over 270,000 people, destroyed basic infrastructure, and left government systems in ruins. The war finally ended in 2003, and elections in 2005 led to the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The government has made significant progress in its first year, including balancing the budget, increasing government revenues by over 40 percent, turning on electricity and water to parts of Monrovia for the first time in 15 years, cracking down on corruption, beginning to rebuild roads, and quadrupling primary school enrolments by eliminating primary school fees and reimbursing schools for the cost of lost tuition.

Nevertheless, the government faces huge challenges, and its ability to address those challenges is constrained by severe capacity shortages at the sub-Ministerial level, since many skilled civil servants were either killed during the war or fled the country. The government is introducing several important measures to begin to attract skilled workers to return to Liberia and to train others, including an Emergency Capacity Building Project, a Senior Executive Service, its "Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Networks" (TOKTEN) program, and a full reform of the civil service. But the process of rebuilding capacity will take many years.

The Scott Family Liberia Fellows Program aims to make a small but vital contribution to partially filling the capacity gap and improving the productivity of Ministers and other senior officials. Under the program, approximately 5-6 Scott Family Fellows will be recruited each year for 2-3 years to work for one year as special assistants to key Government Ministers and other senior government officials in the Government of Liberia. The program will be funded by a generous \$1 million contribution from the family of Ed Scott.

Typical Fellows would be a young professional with Masters degree-level training (e.g., an MBA, MPP, MPH, or a law degree) and one year of related experience, or a Bachelor's degree with at least three years of related experience, ideally with some experience working in developing countries. They will have basic skills in economics, finance, health, education, water and sanitation, law, or other relevant areas. The Fellows might work with the Minister of Finance, Planning, Health, Education, Public Works, Commerce, or Agriculture; the office of the President; the Central Bank; or the Civil Service Reform Commission, among other possibilities. The program will make a special effort to identify and recruit qualified Liberians that might be interested in returning to their home country.

The Fellows will be expected to work long hours assisting the Ministers or senior officials on a range of tasks in policy formulation and execution, from mundane day-to-day administrative tasks to more profound policy issues. They may help follow-up on key decisions, design spreadsheets to track donor flows or other key data, draft letters or key policy papers, help organize the Minister's office and support personnel, or conduct basic analyses of policy options on a wide range of topics. The key attributes will be flexibility, a willingness to work hard, and willingness to support the work of senior ministers in a low-profile yet effective way.

From the perspective of the Government, the Fellows program will help key Ministers and officials to be much more productive in designing and implementing high-priority programs in the transition from conflict to reconstruction and development. It will help the government during these first critical post-war years to move much more quickly in jump-starting the process of reconstruction and development.

For the Fellows, the program will provide a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience working alongside the highest ranking government officials on a range of important issues. The program would allow the Fellows to work at a more senior level on a much wider range of issues at a much earlier stage of their career than most other post-graduate opportunities.

The Fellows in effect will be in a one-year professional internship program. They will receive a compensation package similar to other interns or research assistant positions, with a base salary and basic medical, dental, and evacuation insurance. The program will provide an economy class round trip ticket, and a small housing allowance meant to partially offset the high cost of even modest apartments in Monrovia.

A small volunteer Steering Committee in Washington will provide general oversight to the program and recruit the Fellows, in close consultation with the Government of Liberia, supported by JSI Research and Training Institute (JSI R&T, www.jsi.com) and the Center for Global Development (www.cgdev.org). Formally, the Fellows will be employees of JSI R&T, a leading global public health organization with several decades of experience supporting professionals working in overseas positions around the world. A JSI R&T staff person located in Monrovia will help provide some oversight and general support. On a day-to-day basis, the Fellows will report directly to the Minister or his/her designate, who will determine the precise responsibilities and priorities.

President Sirleaf announced the Scott Family Liberia Fellows program during a speech at a CGD event <http://www.cgdev.org/content/calendar/detail/6624/> on February 12 (see press release <http://www.cgdev.org/content/article/detail/12621/>). For more information, see the Program Description ([link to PDF](#))