



# WHITE HOUSE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

**2022 PROGRAM GUIDE**

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## INTRODUCTION

The White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP) aims to strengthen enterprise leadership across the government by providing senior-level federal employees with expanded perspectives and skill sets to address challenges facing the country. These increasingly complex challenges span agencies and jurisdictions, requiring senior leaders to work across agencies and organizational boundaries while leveraging networks on a greater scale than in the past to ensure the government continues to effectively deliver services to the American people.

The program is primarily focused on:

- » **Developing Talent:** Building the next generation of career senior executives with an enterprise perspective through a placement focused on the complex, cross-agency challenges that increasingly confront the Federal government. Also, strengthening enterprise leadership skills through targeted development sessions.
- » **Delivering Results:** Harnessing top talent from across the government to support the implementation of key priorities and to address mission-critical challenges.
- » **Building Community:** Building a strong community among current fellows and alumni that shares a common mission of strengthening each other's purpose, commitment, and ability to serve our nation.

The WHLDP requires fellows to leverage their skills to drive progress on mission-critical programs such as the President Management Agenda (PMA) and deliver long-term strategic results.<sup>1</sup> The PMA highlights 3 areas of importance:

- » strengthening the workforce,
- » excellent, equitable and secure service,
- » managing the business of the government.

The program will work closely with cross-government performance teams to allow fellows to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of organizational performance, measuring impact and delivering results. Also, by identifying new ways of doing business, embracing innovation, focusing on outcomes, and effective service delivery.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.performance.gov/pma>.



## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The WHLDP is sponsored by the Executive Office of the President (EOP) and the President’s Management Council (PMC). It is a 1-year placement that includes a year-long executive leadership development experience. WHLDP fellows will be placed in an assignment that is often outside the fellow’s subject matter expertise.

The WHLDP provides an opportunity for a diverse cohort of high-potential career employees to develop executive leadership skills as they seek to become future senior executives. Fellows spend approximately 80 percent of their time in a placement assignment gaining on-the-job experience. The remaining 20 percent of their time is spent in leadership development, which consists of navigating change, building community, and evolving as leaders.<sup>2</sup>

This guide provides more information on the program’s nomination and selection process, placement and leadership development experience, and post-program activities. Appendix A contains answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- » Provide fellows with a broad federal perspective on high-priority challenges and access to senior decision-makers with exposure to a wide cross-section of government.
- » Develop a cadre of leaders with the skill sets and networks to address challenges through a cross-agency lens while learning how to implement solutions across organizational boundaries.
- » Strengthen ongoing implementation efforts on specific cross-agency initiatives (including CAP Goals) that require broad coordination and long-term strategic planning to ensure delivery of tangible results.

<sup>2</sup> Note that, in a placement, fellows do not supervise teams.



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- » Increased exposure to a variety of different agencies - cultures, missions, functional areas, senior leaders and, new ways of delivering results in government.
- » Improved ability to address complex problems that cut across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries.
- » To build and leverage relationships that have an impact beyond their formal authority.
- » Heightened government-wide perspective on problem-solving, best practices, and real solutions that can be applied to related challenges within the home agency.
- » Experience relying on collaborative leadership skills, rather than technical expertise, to meet mission goals.
- » Firsthand experience integrating into a new culture and fast-paced, ambiguous environment with an emphasis on flexibility and entrepreneurial skills.
- » Increased ability to leverage newly expanded professional networks to identify innovative and collaborative ways of tackling organizational challenges in future positions.
- » Firsthand experience developing strategic performance frameworks and tools to drive progress on initiatives.

## PROGRAM PARAMETERS

- » This program is open only to career GS-15 and equivalent civil service employees.
- » Agencies can choose the application pathway:



### AGENCY NOMINATIONS

Through conducting an internal vetting process and providing the top six candidates (the current process). Agencies may nominate up to six candidates to the program to be considered for inclusion in the program (admission is competitive and nominees are not guaranteed to be selected).



### SELF-NOMINATIONS

Through self-nomination with supervisor recommendation and approval. WHLDP will be responsible for vetting these candidates. WHLDP provides vetting to the self-nominated candidates, putting forward a maximum of 6 candidates per agency for interviews.



- » Program duration is one year, starting at the beginning of each fiscal year (October 1).
- » The placement is full-time (outside of home agency) and will include weekly executive leadership development sessions.
- » The placement is non-reimbursable. The fellow's home agency is responsible for the FTE's salary, continued employment, and benefits.
- » A Memorandum of Understanding will be developed between the home agency and gaining agency.
- » There is no guarantee for placement into a Senior Executive Service (SES) position as a result of participation in this program. Participation does, however, provide an experience that may be used in developing executive core qualifications.

## **PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

- » **October** - Fellows begin onboarding program
- » **October** - Fellows begin placements
- » **November** - First day of developmental programming
- » **September** - End-of-Year Honors
- » **September** - Off-boarding; fellows return to home agency

## **NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION PROCESS TIMELINE**

*The following are target dates and are subject to revision as needed.*

- » **February 7, 2022** - Call for nominations
- » **April 15, 2022** - Self-nominations per supervisor's approval due to WHLDP
- » **May 16, 2022** - Agency nominations due to WHLDP
- » **June 1, 2022** - WHLDP selection process begins
- » **June 6 - June 17, 2022** - Program Interviews
- » **June 27 - July 15, 2022** - Placement Interviews
- » **July 25 - August 5, 2022** - Executive Leadership Committee Interviews
- » **August 11 - August 12, 2022** - Candidate notification of selection in the program
- » **August 15, 2022** - Onboarding process of finalist begins
- » **October 3, 2022** - Welcome Cohort 8





## **AGENCY NOMINATIONS**

Interested agencies may nominate up to six candidates. Agencies will determine their internal processes to select nominees as long as such processes are competitive and follow applicable laws and regulations. According to Executive Order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce, agencies will be provided with information, resources, and a methodology to assess the current state of DEIA in their workforce.<sup>3</sup> Appendix B provides recommended best practices for agency vetting.

The deputy secretary of the agency or equivalent will formally nominate candidates to the program. The agency should provide the nominees and completed nomination forms directly to the WHLDP. Agencies should ensure that the nominees' direct supervisors are notified of their subordinates' nominations. For more information on the nomination process, selection criteria, and forms, see the separate White House Leadership Development Program Nomination Guide.

## **SELF-NOMINATIONS**

Candidates who are interested in self-nomination will go through a vetting process from the WHLDP leadership team. The WHLDP will put forward a maximum of 6 candidates from each agency for program interviews. For agencies interested in taking part in the pilot process of self-nominations per supervisor approval, please confirm at [whldp@gsa.gov](mailto:whldp@gsa.gov). Candidates must follow their home agencies' process.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

After reviewing formal nominations from agencies, and nominees vetted through the self-nomination process, the WHLDP team implements a rigorous selection process to determine program finalists. The WHLDP will extend acceptance invitations to between 10 and 20 finalists. All candidates will be notified of their status via e-mail at the conclusion of the selection process. Agencies will also be notified of their candidates' status.

The WHLDP team will implement a blind application review during the selection process. This results in the removal of all names and identifying information on resumes and applications. Candidates will be identified by a 4-digit unique identifier. The program selection process consists of three phases of interviews that take place from June to August.

Phases include:

- » program interview,
- » placement interviews,
- » executive committee interviews.

<sup>3</sup> "Executive Order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce (2021) <<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/reference-materials/diversity-equity-inclusion-accessibility-in-the-federal-workforce.pdf>>



## PLACEMENT

In order to be accepted to the program, candidates will interview with placement supervisors. Those who match with a placement assignment will be accepted to the program. Assignments are high-visibility initiatives that touch multiple agencies and stakeholders with the fellows driving cross-agency coordination, innovation, implementation, and performance management. Specific projects vary depending on the placement assignment.



Fellows are matched to a placement assignment that leverages broad skillsets outside of the fellows' areas of subject matter expertise. Placements are not meant to increase technical expertise but rather to provide an opportunity to use leadership and collaboration skills.



Past placements include: *(Note: There is no guarantee that assignments will be the same for new cohorts.)*

- » Customer Experience
- » Diversity Equity Inclusion Accessibility
- » Leveraging Data as a Strategic Asset
- » Results-Oriented Accountability for Grants
- » Improve Transfer of Federally-Funded Technologies from Lab-to-Market (OSTP)
- » Workforce for the 21st Century
- » Climate
- » Cyber Security
- » Infrastructure Permitting





## THE FELLOW PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

WHLDP placements are challenging assignments that expose fellows to new cultures, new approaches, a whole-of-government perspective, and an enterprise leadership toolkit. Fellows are placed on cross-agency initiatives with no formal authority and a variety of stakeholders with competing priorities to manage. Fellows may experience:

**Flat Structures** - Most placements are situated in small offices with flat organizational structures (not typical chain of command), flexible roles, and a fast pace. Fellows will work on multiple levels (doing whatever work needs to be done - no task is too small) to achieve results.

**Leading Among Peers** - Due to flat organizational structures and cross-agency stakeholder management, fellows will coordinate and collaborate among peers and senior-level officials. These are often non-traditional leadership roles that require flexibility, entrepreneurship, and vision.

**Stakeholder Management** - Fellows will often have no formal authority, nor will they be in placements where they can fall back on their subject matter expertise. In order to achieve results, fellows will have to identify stakeholders, build relationships/trust and understand competing priorities and timelines, and work through formal and informal chains of communication to drive collaboration toward a shared goal/outcome.

**Environment** - Fellows will be asked to represent their cross-agency initiative and become comfortable with new cultures and ways of making an impact.

**Cross-functional** - Fellows will be in placements outside of their subject matter areas of expertise in order to encourage the development and use of leadership skills and tools. This includes taking on new functional roles and leveraging subject matter experts in a variety of fields.



**Placement Competencies** - Fellows must rely on a variety of competencies including emotional intelligence, adaptability, resiliency, agility, political savvy, conceptual/strategic thinking and collaboration.

## Program Conclusion

Participants may return to their prior positions within their home agencies or another placement they seek out. Agencies are also encouraged to find other opportunities within the agency for the fellow to leverage his or her experience as a WHLDP fellow, including a new position, project, or other ways to extend the experience gained during the placement in line with agency goals.

Following the end of the program and the return to their home agencies, Fellows can choose to stay connected to the WHLDP network through the WHLDP Alumni Association. All WHLDP Fellows who graduate from the program automatically become members of the Alumni Association:

The Alumni Association supports:

- » **Professional and Network Development** - by providing opportunities for continued development and professional growth, and to network and interact socially with other alumni, stakeholders, supporters, and leaders working across government.
- » **Ongoing Support to the WHLDP Program** - by supporting the Director and participating in candidate screening for future WHLDP cohorts, mentoring of current Fellows, and broadening awareness of the program through targeted outreach and communications.
- » **Alumni Directory** - by maintaining an Alumni Association website and a membership directory of past and present Fellows

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### Development Sessions

Fellows participate in a year-long executive leadership development experience that focuses on their ability to effectively lead in the future. Powered by the Partnership for Public Service, leadership development experiences include 4 phases to include: becoming self-aware, engaging others, leading change, and achieving results.

**Phase 1** - Becoming self-aware begins with an introspective understanding of your values, thought patterns and motivations, all of which are essential to personal development and better interactions with others. Self-awareness is an anchor, enabling you as a leader to stay true to yourself and perform at your highest level in service to the American public.



**Phase 2** - Engaging others, striving to foster an inclusive culture that encourages team members to offer constructive feedback, recognize good work and pursue professional development. This environment is the foundation for collaboration within and across federal agencies. Individuals, teams and agencies working together will have a greater impact on government effectiveness.

**Phase 3** - Leading change in a rapidly evolving federal environment means initiating, sponsoring and implementing innovative solutions. As a leader, you will help others succeed at managing change at an individual and organizational level.

**Phase 4** - Achieving results means managing skillfully, thinking strategically and making good decisions that deliver measurable outcomes and improve the quality of life for the world.

## Agency Experiences

WHLDP fellows are invited to host an agency experience at their home agency. These sessions occur either at a location or virtually, depending on the nature of speakers and visit experience. Fellows develop a plan that highlights the agency's mission and culture. Cohorts have the opportunity to engage with agency leaders gaining awareness of mission and leadership culture.

## The White House Sessions

These are monthly engagements with leaders from the current administration at the White House, Executive Office of the President, and Federal Agency Appointees. Cohorts take part in informal discussions with leaders that help better identify mission and leadership philosophy while delivering on the needs of the American people.





## Fed2Fellow

Fed2Fellow are monthly sessions with the current cohort and alumni to gain exposure to the different functions and lines of business that senior leaders need to leverage to meet an agency's mission. Leaders from different functional areas join the WHLDP community for fireside chats.

- » Human Capital - Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council
- » Finance/Budget - Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Council
- » Information/IT - Chief Information Officers (CIO) Council
- » Acquisition - Chief Acquisition Officers (CAO) Council
- » Agency Operations - President's Management Council (PMC)
- » Organizational Performance - Performance Improvement Council (PIC)

## Executive Core Qualifications Writing

Fellows take part in a 3-day ECQ workshop powered by American University.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, fellows learn how to:

- » Analyze audience and purpose
- » Ensure the document (or any other communication) gets to the point
- » Organize content for the audience
- » Use standard formats for personnel evaluations—CCAR
- » Use standard formats for introductions and executive summaries
- » Revise content and organization to catch logical fallacies and for collaborations
- » Edit for coherence, including keywords, transition words, vertical lists, and graphics

## Assessment and Executive Coaching

- » The Public Service Leadership Model 360 assessment: The assessment will help you understand how your colleagues and managers perceive your strengths and areas for growth around the core values, competencies and sub-competencies defined in the Public Service Leadership Model.
- » One-hour debrief on your individual 360 results.
- » Twelve (12) hours of one-on-one executive coaching throughout the duration of the program. Executive coaches are certified.

<sup>4</sup> Note: Neither the White House Leadership Development Program nor American University is able to certify ECQs. The White House Leadership Development Program is NOT recognized as a Candidate Development Program (CDP). See also Appendix A.



## **WHLDP ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following roles and responsibilities are provided as a guide for nominating agencies, candidates, and placement assignments. Further information on roles and responsibilities will be provided to those candidates who ultimately enter the program.

The WHLDP expects that candidates accepted into the program will rotate out of their position of record for the duration of the fiscal year. During that time, the program participants will be expected to work on their placement assignment full-time, except for the time devoted to developmental programming. To obtain maximum benefit from the program, the expectations are:

### **Fellow**

- » Transition workload to designated staff and ensure continuity in the home agency.
- » Prepare for the program by researching the host agency and placement assignment, once assigned.
- » Participate and engage in all aspects of the program.
- » Attend all scheduled development sessions in their entirety.
- » Craft an Individual Development Plan (IDP) at the start of the program.
- » Make time for reflective thinking on personal and professional experiences throughout the year to unveil new discoveries, understandings, and insight into their leadership style and goals.





- » Expand networks and build new relationships.
- » Maintain an open mind to diverse perspectives and new areas of learning.
- » Provide ongoing formal and informal constructive feedback to the program.
- » Participate in leadership assessments (StrengthsFinder, EP10, and others as available).
- » Schedule regular check in meetings with his/her home agency supervisor to provide progress updates and ensure the home agency timekeeper is aware of time and attendance.
- » Following program completion, join and participate in the WHLDP Alumni Network.
- » Serve as a mentor to future cohorts of WHLDP fellows.

## **Nominating Agency**

- » Manage internal agency selection process and nominate up to six, high-quality candidates for consideration to the program.
- » Identify one or two senior team members to participate in the selection process.
- » Obtain deputy secretary approval for each candidate.
- » Allow candidates the opportunity to participate in the WHLDP selection process and interviews.
- » Consent to allowing the individual to participate in the program if selected and to return to the home agency once the program is complete.
- » Continue to pay the salary and benefits of any agency candidate selected into the program.
- » Ensure there is a point of contact for the program to provide information and other communications to the home agency.
- » Allow time for transitioning the fellow's workload to another employee.
- » Identify opportunities for fellows to remain connected to their team during their program year.
- » Facilitate meeting between the fellow and agency deputy secretary or other senior leaders as appropriate to discuss the placement assignment and benefits of the experience to the home agency, if not nominating agency.
- » With input from appropriate agency points of contact, work with the fellow to craft a re-entry plan 2 months prior to completion of WHLDP placement and support the fellow's transition back to the home agency upon completion of the placement. See Appendix B for Re-Entry Best Practices.



- » Along with the re-entry interview, home agencies are encouraged to find other opportunities within the agency for the fellow to leverage his or her experience gained as a WHLDP fellow to best support the agency mission. See Appendix B for Re-Entry Best Practices.
- » Following completion of the program, participants will become part of the alumni network. The alumni network will hold events and continuing development activities from time to time and home agencies are encouraged to allow employees time to participate in WHLDP mentoring and alumni network programming.

### **Placement Assignment/Host Agency**

- » Notify WHLDP of any security requirements/clearance, procedures, conflicts of interest, confidentiality issues, etc.
- » Provide a workspace, laptop, mobile phone, building access, or any necessary tools to perform the assignment.
- » Determine mutually agreeable work schedule and flexibilities (e.g., AWS, telework).
- » Provide a positive onboarding experience to support the success of the fellow; introduce the fellow to the cross-agency project team.
- » Provide background materials regarding the project assignment to fellow prior to placement beginning.
- » Establish concrete objectives for the fellow and work with WHLDP and fellow to complete project scope documents.
- » Allow the fellow to attend weekly development sessions.
- » Provide work to the fellow that is at a minimum GS-15 level or higher and identify stretch opportunities to provide experience and exposure for the fellow.
- » Provide feedback to the program and the fellow's home agency.
- » Craft a position description for the placement assignment that lays out broad duties and projects, including areas where the fellow can take a leadership role on key projects.



## **APPENDIX A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Who will pay the fellow's salary?**

This is a non-reimbursable placement. Therefore, the fellow's home agency will pay his or her salary.

### **Where will the fellow be located?**

The fellow will be co-located with the EOP Lead, CAP Goal Leader, or the Goal Team to maximize the experiential learning opportunity. This may be at an EOP office or agency, depending on the goal and the specific work the fellow will be doing. Additionally, participants will meet for development sessions in the New Executive Office Building, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, or the General Services Administration, depending on the agenda.

### **Will the fellow have to/get to travel?**

Generally, no. There may be some travel within Washington, DC. If the host agency would like the participant to travel as part of the placement assignment, the host agency must fund the travel.

### **Does the fellow have to be located in Washington, DC?**

The placement work assignment will be located in Washington, DC. Should an agency nominate candidates from outside of the Washington, DC area, the agency and candidate will identify an agreement for expenses associated with travel/relocation expenses if the candidate is selected for the program.

### **Is this a Candidate Development Program (CDP)?**

No - This is a developmental placement.

### **Does the placement qualify as a CDP developmental assignment?**

No - The placement assignment is non-supervisory.

### **Will the fellow's position be executive level?**

The White House Leadership Development Program placements are meant to build a foundation for enterprise leadership – giving a fellow experience working on cross-agency initiatives at a larger scale and outside of their agency perspective. The fellow is often one of the only full-time people to work on the cross-agency initiative and is not in a traditional leadership role with clear authority. Additionally, many of the positions are housed in small teams that do not have support staff. Fellows work all aspects of the program to drive the mission and are not set up to be in a traditional chain of command leadership position.



If a fellow is using the program as their placement for a CDP, the fellow's position must be executive level. Typically, positions are at the GS-15 level and may not meet CDP requirements. However, each placement provides significant exposure to senior leaders, the ability to learn and apply new organizational performance tools, and the opportunity to engage in high-level work on a large cross-agency scale. Fellows have the ability to help craft their positions and identify ways to add vision, value, and leadership to complex, cross-agency challenges, and the experience and type of work are largely fellow-driven.

### **Will fellows be promoted as a result of or at completion of this program?**

This program does not guarantee promotion or entry into the SES or any other position. However, it provides development and experience that may help the fellow obtain such a position in the future.

### **What will happen to the fellow's home position while on placement?**

The WHLDP is a non-reimbursable developmental placement. As such, the fellow will retain his or her position at his or her home agency and will be allowed to return to that position at the conclusion of the placement. However, nothing prevents the fellow from assuming a different position following the program placement should the fellow seek out such an opportunity or the agency engage in a structured talent development plan with the fellow.

### **Is a security clearance required?**

No. Fellows do not need to possess a certain clearance level for this program. Should a clearance become necessary, agencies will be alerted to this change before formal nominations are due.

### **Who will conduct the fellow's performance review?**

The fellow's home agency supervisor will conduct formal performance reviews, but the placement assignment supervisor will provide feedback to the fellow's home agency supervisor and will work with the fellow to create a performance plan based on the placement assignment. The placement assignment supervisor will also provide feedback to inform the final performance review at the end of the 1-year placement.

### **How will the performance of the WHLDP be assessed?**

The WHLDP will have several levels of evaluation built in during the 1-year development placement. To assess the development of the fellows, individual fellows will receive a self-assessment at the beginning of the program and a follow-up assessment at the conclusion of the placement. For organizational performance, fellows will be given five to seven CAP Goals or other project objectives for the duration of their placement that will be used to assess individual and organizational progress and outcomes on CAP Goals or projects. These measures combined will be used to determine overall program performance.



## What happens if the placement is not a good fit for the fellow or the fellow cannot complete the program for personal/work reasons?

The WHLDP program director will meet regularly with fellows to check in on their progress and fit with the developmental and placement pieces of the program. The director will also receive feedback from placement assignment supervisors. Should the placement assignment not be a good fit with the fellow, the program director will work with the fellow to identify a new placement assignment.

Should the fellow be unable to complete the program for personal or professional reasons, the fellow must notify the program director as soon as possible. The program director will work with the fellow and host supervisor to ensure that any work with which the fellow was involved is transitioned and that necessary stakeholders are briefed on the status of the project. The fellow's slot will not be refilled mid-program.

## APPENDIX B: POST DETAIL RE-ENTRY TO HOME AGENCY AND PRACTICES

Placements are recognized as a way to build executive skills, improve flexibility, and create new ideas. The following are best practices of how agencies and fellows can make the most of this experience.

- » For fellows: Stay engaged throughout the year. At least quarterly check-ins with supervisors on how the program is going are a great start.
- » For agencies: Encourage fellows to utilize the tools and newfound knowledge at their home agency.

### Promising Practices

As the WHLDP partners with agencies, several promising practices have come to light. These are shared as options that agencies nominating candidates to the program may consider in developing re-entry plans.

- » Identify a career sponsor for the fellow - this should be a senior executive from the fellow's home agency (not necessarily a mentor) who can help facilitate introductions to other agency executives, engage senior leadership, and help ensure the fellow has a touchpoint and stays visible at the home agency.
- » Create a link between the home agency executive sponsor and fellowship executive supervisor so the latter has a good idea of the executive-level work that the fellow did while on placement.





- » Assign a mentor or executive coach (outside the supervisory chain) to the fellow at the home agency and consider inviting the fellow to CDP or other developmental sessions as appropriate.
- » Create a utilization agreement to be completed by the home agency and fellow after acceptance into the program. The agreement should lay out who from the agency will reach out to the fellow to stay connected, what the frequency will be, what the fellow can do to stay connected, and how the agency will utilize the fellow's experience after the placement ends.
- » Set up briefings with senior executives in the home agency that have interest in, or are stakeholders in, the placement issue area.
- » Set up a briefing with the home agency deputy secretary or other senior officials as appropriate.
- » Have a re-entry plan in place two months before the fellow's placement ends.



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