



White House Leadership Development Program

2021 Nomination Guide

The following is a working document outlining the scope of the WHLDP nominations process. This document is subject to revision as the program progresses.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in nominating candidates to the White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP). This is an opportunity to identify high-potential career GS-15 employees or equivalent who would benefit from a unique placement and developmental experience that provides broad federal perspective on high-priority challenges. The program offers the opportunity for employees to gain experience on cross-agency initiatives, build the skill sets and network to address challenges through a cross-agency lens, and implement solutions across organizational boundaries. It is also an opportunity for program participants to work outside their area of subject matter expertise and to experience different cultures and ways of doing business.

For general information on the program, please visit: www.pic.gov/whldp.

The following information is provided to give agencies guidance in the nomination process:

- Candidate Nomination
- Attributes of Successful WHLDP Fellows
- Sample Agency Nomination Letter

Nomination Introduction

Interested agencies may nominate up to six candidates and are responsible for overseeing their own internal selection process, ensuring that the process follows applicable laws and regulations. Agencies are requested to submit 1 email with their candidates' applications.

We are now also accepting self-nominations via supervisor's approval. Candidates who are interested in self-nomination will go through a vetting process from the WHLDP leadership team. WHLDP will put forward a maximum of 6 candidates from each agency for interviews. For agencies interested in taking part in the self-nomination process, please confirm at whldp@gsa.gov.

The WHLDP is highly competitive and only accepts between 10 and 20 participants each year. Nomination by an agency does not guarantee final selection into the program.

NOTE: Detailed program information can be found in the WHLDP Manual. The WHLDP Manual and Program Application Form will be provided separately from this guide.

Required Nomination Information

- Candidate Resume
- WHLDP Application Form
- Formal nomination letter from Agency Deputy Secretary (if desired, the agency may include all candidates in one letter).

NOTE: *Each of the items requested above must be submitted in one email but as separate attachments. Please do not scan resumes and applications together.*

Program Timeline



- February 8, 2021 – Call for nominations
- April 16, 2021 – Self-nominations per supervisor’s approval due to WHLDP
- May 14, 2021 – Agency nominations due to WHLDP
- June 1, 2021 – WHLDP selection process begins
- June 7-11, 2021 – Interviews with Alumni
- June 21- July 16, 2021 – Placement Interviews
- July 26-30, 2021 – Executive Leadership Committee Interviews
- August 9-10, 2021 – Candidate notification of selection in the program
- August 16, 2021 – Onboarding process of finalist begins
- October 1, 2021– Welcome cohort 7

Please direct questions or requests for information to WHLDP Director, Amy Bontrager, at whldp@gsa.gov.

Attributes of Successful Candidates

All candidates are expected to be high-performing employees (with annual ratings of exceeds expectations, or the equivalent, or higher) with demonstrated commitment to public service. Candidates must also have an interest in stepping outside their current function to develop an enterprise viewpoint of government and a willingness to take on a variety of roles and types of work to further the mission of the placement assignments.

The roles that Fellows will serve in during the placement assignment are not direct supervisory positions.

The list below provides insight to some of the attributes that contribute to a successful Fellow experience. Agencies may want to consider this list in making final selections of candidates to the WHLDP.

Commitment to Service

Candidates should possess a clear desire to serve in the federal government and commitment to the spirit of public service. Candidates should have demonstrated interest in developing leadership skills to increase their ability to serve their agency as they move into positions of increasing responsibility. Candidates should also demonstrate interest in serving at the Senior Executive (or equivalent) level.

Adaptability

Candidates should be comfortable with unfamiliar situations and ambiguity. Candidates should also be able to adapt quickly to new environments and cultures and be able to work on projects without clear structure and objectives.

Collaboration

Candidates should hold the belief that the government can and should work collaboratively. Candidates should have experience working on a project or program that requires coordination across multiple groups.

Communication Skills (Written and Oral)

Candidates should possess strong written and oral communications skills and be able to synthesize complex programs and information into succinct and effective written and verbal briefings. Candidates should be able to communicate with a variety of audiences and team members, including soliciting a variety of perspectives and feedback from a diverse set of stakeholders.



Delivering Change

Candidates should be able to build and communicate a vision of success and engage relevant stakeholders to ensure they are invested in priority goals and outcomes. Candidates should possess the ability to translate vision into action.

Growing Networks

The WHLDP Fellowship will require the ability to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders. The ideal candidate should have demonstrated commitment to building networks and collaborating across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

Strategic Planning

Candidates should possess the ability to understand program objectives and implement long and short-term plans consistent with organizational, individual and team goals.

Political Awareness

Candidates should be able to identify internal and external politics that affect organizations and the impact on achieving program outcomes and should be able to change plans of action accordingly.

Motivation

Candidates should be self-starters and be able to identify paths and projects that are a value add to the placement assignment, especially in the absence of a formal structure. They should be able to position the project for future success by identifying new opportunities and by developing or improving programs, products, and services.

Ability to Identify and Overcome Challenges

Candidates should be able to identify challenges and problems that may negatively impact organizational outcomes. Candidates should also be able to identify and implement alternative solutions while taking calculated risks to accomplish project objectives.

Resiliency

Candidates should be able to focus on achieving objectives even in difficult circumstances; remain positive; monitor own emotional reactions; overcome obstacles; sustain high levels of energy following a setback; and withstand criticism and maintains composure.

Agility

Candidates should be able to think on their feet; respond positively and quickly to unexpected events/demands; and adapt approach to achieve objective in event of changing conditions, new information, or unexpected problems.

Team Player

Candidates should be willing to integrate into a small team; take on any task needed to move the project forward (no task is too small philosophy); lead through collaboration; step outside of traditional chain of command roles to find innovative ways to lead; be friendly and approachable; and be able to build trust.

Sample Agency Nomination Letter

On behalf of [Agency Name], it is my pleasure to nominate [Candidate's Name] to the White House Leadership Development Program.



The WHLDP provides a unique opportunity for an employee to gain experience in a placement assignment and through formal training on the skills and insight that career leaders need in order to address mission critical challenges through a broad cross-agency perspective. While the WHLDP experience requires highly talented individuals to enter the program, it will also allow these individuals to develop skills that will assist them and benefit their agency as they move into increasingly senior roles.

[Candidate's Name] possesses the requisite experience and traits to be an asset to the placement program as well as the motivation to develop the necessary skill sets to take on future leadership positions. Thank you for your consideration of [his/her] selection into the program.

Sincerely,

[Nominating Official]

Deputy Secretary [Position Title]

[Agency Name]

