



# White House Leadership Development Program

## 2019 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 (WHLDP). This is an opportunity to identify high-potential career GS-15 employees 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 skillsets and networks 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](http://www.pic.gov/whldp).

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

- Attributes of Successful WHLDP Fellows
- Sample Agency Nomination Letter
- Best Practices for Agency Vetting

Interested agencies may nominate up to four 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.

Please note that 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 resume and application together.*

## Program Timeline

- February 12, 2019 – Call for Nominations
- May 15, 2019 – Nominations Due to WHLDP
- June 3, 2019 – WHLDP selection process begins/ Round 1 phone Interviews
- July 15, 2019 – Round 2: In-Person Interviews
- August 6, 2019 – Round 3: Placement Matching
- August 12, 2019 – Candidate Notification of status of program and onboarding process of finalist begins



- October 7, 2019 – Formal onboarding begins

Please direct questions or requests for information to WHLDP Director, Amy Bontrager at [whldp@gsa.gov](mailto: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 government can and should work collaboratively. Candidates should have experience working on a project or program that required 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**

Focuses on achieving objectives even in difficult circumstances; remains positive; monitors own emotional reactions; overcomes obstacles; sustains high levels of energy following a setback; withstands criticism and maintains composure.

## **Agility**

Thinks on feet; responds positively and quickly to unexpected events/demands; adapts approach to achieve objective in event of changing conditions, new information, or unexpected problems.

## **Team Player**

Willingness to integrate into a small team, take on any task needed to move the project forward (no task is too small philosophy), and lead through collaboration. Ability to step outside of traditional chain of command roles to find innovative ways to lead. Friendly and approachable; 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]

