



## Civic Leadership Development Program Course Overview

City Hall Fellows aims to create civic leaders of skill, of thought, and of consequence by integrating a twelve-month comprehensive Civic Leadership Development Program with Fellows' job placements. The Program contextualizes both cities' actions and Fellows' own work as city employees within the broader context of how and why local governments function in theory and in practice. The Program trains Fellows how to actively and effectively shape local government policy and prepares them to be thoughtful leaders within their local communities.

### Goals and Objectives

The objectives of the Civic Leadership Development Program are to:

- provide Fellows with the analytical, theoretical, rhetorical, and functional workplace skills necessary to make a meaningful contribution to their host cities and to gain maximum personal and professional benefit from their work Placements;
- educate Fellows about the history, theory, and function of local government generally, and in their host city specifically, across all of the professions associated with local-level government, so that Fellows achieve an understanding of local governance, management, planning, and leadership in both an academic and applied context;
- integrate the academic and applied Program components in a way that enables Fellows to attain a broad-based knowledge base and skill set while simultaneously acquiring a holistic understanding of a specialized subject of specific interest to them;
- produce alumni who are trained to be highly productive city employees, thoughtful civic leaders and prominent contributors to the shaping of public policy at the local, state and national levels; and
- produce enlightened alumni who are highly sought out by employers and graduate schools and who are committed to devoting time and energy to civic and local leadership throughout their lives.

Through the Program, Fellows will:

- attain an understanding of the daily, yearly, and long term bureaucratic and technical functioning of local government;
- learn the multiple social, political, environmental, and economic contexts in which America's cities operate and provide services, as well as how these contexts impact how and why cities function as they do;
- be trained to evaluate both theoretically and pragmatically how municipal policies take physical form and create dynamic societies; and
- understand that the ways in which local governments respond to the challenges of their era will affect the shape of our world for generations to come.

### Course Overview

City Hall Fellows uses a uniform national curriculum, developed in-house (with the active involvement of academics and practitioners), to ensure continuity in the learning experience. While the curriculum structure and goals are the same for every City, Fellows learn the concepts and skills through examining the structure, politics, history and services of their host city.

The curriculum is divided into four phases: a 3-week orientation (Phase 1) followed by a 14-week session (Phase 2), an 18-week session (Phase 3) and a final 10-week session (Phase 4).

#### Phase 1: Orientation

The orientation will introduce Fellows to the program, to each other, to the city they are living in, and to the basics of local government. Through readings, moderated discussions, meetings with prominent local leaders from all sectors of the community and visits to key community sites (e.g. city hall), Fellows will be introduced to the structure and function of their host city's local government, as well as to its general and political history. Fellows' basic workplace skills (e.g. written communication skills, sensitivity to operating in a professional workplace, computer skills) also will be assessed and honed during this phase in preparation for the first day in their work placement. In addition, Fellows will complete any training and paperwork required by their host city.

#### Phase 2: The Structure of Local Government

*Goals & Topics:* This segment will build Fellows' skills in policy analysis, teach Fellows about the political, fiscal, and organizational structure of their host city, introduce Fellows to local politics and issues of the day in their host city, and expose Fellows to the role that state and national government play in municipal policy decisions. Fellows will examine the essential operational functions, responsibilities, and powers of their host city, as well as the overlap of responsibilities that exist with regional authorities and non-governmental organizations. During this phase, Fellows will visit relevant city sites and meet city officials (e.g. budget office, local tax collector, economic development district, regional authority).

*Service Project:* Fellows will each individually conduct an analysis of a particular city policy relevant to their work placement and write a 15 to 20 page analysis of the subject. The goal of this project is threefold: (1) to teach Fellows how to effectively analyze policy options, (2) to provide Fellows' work placement supervisors with a thoughtful evaluation they can use to inform departmental policy decisions, and (3) to develop an analytical writing sample that Fellows can use in post-fellowship job or graduate school applications.

*Trip:* Fellows will visit the state capital during this period. During the State Capital Trip, Fellows will:

- meet with the elected officials who represent their host cities, and
- meet with appointed officials, statewide policy leaders, and policy advocates whose work directly relates to local government or to the Fellows' host city.

### Phase 3: The Functions of Local Government

*Goals & Topics:* This segment will build Fellows' skills in policy development, teach Fellows how local government provides its services, explore how local politics affect the delivery of services, and expose Fellows to the role the federal government plays in city's decisions to deliver and implement services. Fellows will examine how their host city addresses issues of social welfare, justice, economic development, infrastructure and education. They will meet relevant city officials and visit relevant city sites (e.g. local prison, water treatment plant, homeless shelter, public school, traffic flow center). Fellows also will learn about how the media and city residents both perceive and influence their host city's provision of social services.

*Service Project:* Working in groups of 3 or 4, Fellows will develop a policy recommendation addressing a specific service-delivery challenge (e.g. community policing, recycling provisions, park safety) that their host city faces. Fellows will create a 15-20 page written proposal and will present their recommendation orally to their peers, senior city officials and City Hall Fellows' local partners.

*Trip:* All Fellows attend a national convention in Washington, D.C. during this phase. During the national convention, Fellows will:

- network and brainstorm with their peers from other cities,
- meet with the elected officials who represent their host cities, and
- meet with appointed officials, national policy leaders and policy advocates whose work directly relates to local government.

### Phase 4: Creating Public Policy

The final segment ties together the applied skills and knowledge base Fellows have developed over the previous nine months. A final full group service project – a policy analysis and recommendation chosen in conjunction with the Mayor's office – will engage the Fellows' collective knowledge, talents and experiences working within the city. The content and focus of Program sessions, speakers and site visits during this period will be dictated by the focus of this final project.

#### **Instruction**

The local Program Coordinator is responsible for running the Program sessions and mentoring Fellows through them. However, City Hall Fellows partners with local academics, public officials, NGO employees, local community groups, nonprofit leaders and other experts to lead sessions on the subjects in which they have expertise. Each Program partner commits to one of the following levels of involvement:

- **Mentors:** serve on the Local Advisory Board and help develop the localized curriculum components; lead at least three (3) Program sessions and moderate the resulting discussions; mentor one Fellow for a full program year; provide guidance on and lend their names to the Fellows' final project.

**CITY HALL FELLOWS  
COURSE OVERVIEW**

- **Scholars:** lead two (2) Program sessions and moderate the resulting discussions; review and provide feedback on Fellows' small group projects; periodically advise City Hall Fellows staff on curricular matters.
- **Experts:** lead one (1) Program session and moderate the resulting discussion.

Partners are *not* responsible for coordinating the logistics of sessions or site visits they lead. That responsibility lies with the city's local Program Coordinator.

**Structure of Program Sessions**

Program sessions for Phase 1 (orientation) will run full days every weekday for the first three weeks of the fellowship term. Program sessions for Phases 2-4 take place weekly on Wednesday afternoons between 12:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Each session may include some or all of the following components:

- a lunchtime guest speaker (e.g. senior city official, local business leader, local media celebrity);
- discussion of the Fellows' prior weeks' work, including comparing experiences and brainstorming about challenges they have encountered;
- a site visit or facility tour;
- presentations by Fellows about their service projects;
- guided instruction led by a subject-matter expert on the topic of the week; or
- a moderated discussion exploring the relationship between the day's topic and Fellows' work placements.

Some weeks Fellows also may participate in an after-hours networking event, such as a coffee hour with members of a local leadership program or dinner with a senior city official.

**Refinements & Measuring Success**

City Hall Fellows' National Director of Curriculum Development oversees the development and evaluation of the national curriculum, which will be reviewed and revised annually. A National Curriculum Advisory Board comprised of prominent academics from around the country provides advice and guidance on the curriculum and approves any changes to the curriculum or course material. Local Program Coordinators and Local Advisory Boards provide advice, guidance and course materials relevant to localizing the curriculum for their cities.

City Hall Fellows measures the success of the Program through regular communication with and surveys of both Fellows and their host city Work Placement Supervisors and by communicating with potential recruiters of Fellows. City Hall Fellows also will maintain an active alumni network through which it can track Fellows' professional progress.