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# The White House Fellows Survey

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Thank you for taking the time to participate in this White House Fellows survey, sponsored by Rice University and administered by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. This survey aims to be a census of all current and alumni Fellows.

All the information you provide will be treated as confidential and used only for research purposes. Any information publicly released (such as statistical summaries) will be in a form that does not personally identify you. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any questions you prefer not to answer. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact us at [whfellows@norc.org](mailto:whfellows@norc.org)

For over four decades, the White House Fellows program has accelerated the leadership development of some of the nation's most exceptional men and women. We have always assumed that the Fellowship plays a role in the lives of Fellows, but until now, no one has collected empirical data to assess the program or its impact. We also want to learn about the background and attitudes of White House Fellows in order to compare them with those of other Americans, so we will ask you questions not only about the Fellowship, but also about your upbringing and your opinions. We appreciate your participation. We ask that you please complete the survey by **November 26, 2008**.

SU\_ID:

# The White House Fellows Survey

1. To begin, what initially motivated you to apply for the White House Fellowship?  
(please select all that apply)

- 1  Someone you knew encouraged you to apply
- 2  The opportunity to work closely with a senior leader in government
- 3  The quality of people who have been Fellows in years past
- 4  The opportunity to develop as a person and a leader

→ Skip to Q.2 unless you selected 'Someone you knew encouraged you to apply'

1a. If so, was this a former Fellow?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.2)

1b. If yes, who was it?

2. In the 12 months prior to being named a Fellow, how often did you do volunteer work for a charitable organization? Please do not count group membership alone.

- 1  Once a week or more often
- 2  At least once a month
- 3  Several times
- 4  Once or twice
- 5  Not at all

3. Prior to applying for the Fellowship, had you ever had a conversation with a high ranking leader in the federal government?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

4. Which of the following comes closest to describing your sentiments during the final selection weekend?

- 1  I can't believe I made it this far, but I surely won't be selected.
- 2  The people here are more impressive than me, but I have a slight chance of being selected.
- 3  I've had some good moments over the weekend. My chances are probably 50-50.
- 4  I can hold my own in this crowd. I bet this works out.

5. Why do you feel you were chosen to be a White House Fellow? If the allotted space is inadequate for this or any other open-ended question please feel free to attach additional information separately.


6. Think back to your first day as a White House Fellow. If you could choose only one word to describe what you were feeling that day, what would it be?

7. Who was your principal for the Fellowship, and what was his or her title? If you had multiple principals, please list them in chronological order.

1.
2.
3.
4.

8. Which of the following best describes the relationship you had with your principal (if you had multiple principals, think about the one with whom you worked the longest)? Was he or she more like a:

- 1  Parent
- 2  Mentor
- 3  Supervisor
- 4  Distant uncle
- 5  Friend

9. Since completing the Fellowship, has your principal: (please select all that apply)

- 1  Helped you get a job
- 2  Introduced you to someone who was important to your career development
- 3  Recommended you for an honor or award
- 4  Offered advice on an important life decision
- 5  Helped you or your family in some other way
- 6  Have not had subsequent contact with your principal

10. Did your relationships with immediate family and close friends experience hardship or suffer because of your Fellowship experience?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.11)

10a. If yes, how did they experience hardship or suffer?


11. How important was the Fellowship in your development as a leader?

- 1  Not at all Important
- 2  Somewhat Unimportant
- 3  No Opinion
- 4  Somewhat Important
- 5  Very Important

**12. Which of the following are critical for a Fellowship year to be considered successful:** (please mark one for each item)

- |   | Critical                   | Somewhat<br>Critical       | Not<br>Critical            |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Developing a close relationship with your principal                                | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Mastering a skill or domain of knowledge over the year that you didn't have before | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Being substantially involved in big decisions                                      | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Learning a great deal about your self and your personal leadership style           | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Taking advantage of all the educational opportunities available to Fellows         | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Having a big impact on the agency/place you were assigned                          | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Gaining a strong understanding of the executive branch at the highest of levels    | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |

**13. Was there one or more Fellow(s) in your class who:** (please mark Yes or No for each item)

- |                                       | Yes                        | No                         |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. had an unusually big ego           | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. was personally insecure            | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. tried to dominate the group        | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. was competitive with other Fellows | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |

**14. We also want to hear about your experience with the Director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Which of the following best describes your relationship with the Director? Was he or she more like a:**

- 1  Parent
- 2  Mentor
- 3  Supervisor
- 4  Distant uncle
- 5  Friend

**15. How much access would you say your Director had to the President and senior administration officials?**

- 1  A great deal of access
- 2  Some access, but not as much as was needed
- 3  Not very much access

16. During the Fellowship year, did you ever have a major conflict with your/an: (please mark Yes or No for each item)

- |                 | Yes                        | No                         |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Principal    | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Director     | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Other Fellow | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |

17. Which of the following would most accurately describe your relationship with other Fellows?

- 1  Friendship
- 2  Rivalry
- 3  Professional acquaintanceship

18. What was the most important project you worked on during your Fellowship year?


19. What was your most memorable experience as a Fellow?


20. Now think of your last day as a White House Fellow. What's one word that would describe how you felt then?

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21. Approximately what percentage of your class of Fellows do you still stay in regular contact with?

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 %

22. Did you change career directions after your Fellowship year, or did you continue in the same direction?

- 1  Changed directions
- 2  Continued in the same direction

23. To what extent have you remained connected to other Fellows through involvement in the White House Fellows Association and Foundation?

- 1  A great deal
- 2  Somewhat
- 3  Not very much
- 4  Not at all → (SKIP to Q.25)

24. Since completing your Fellowship year, have relationships formed through the White House Fellows Association and Foundation: *(please select all that apply)*

- 1  Helped you get a job
- 2  Introduced you to someone who was important to your career development
- 3  Recruited you to serve in government
- 4  Helped you or your family in some other way

25. Have contacts made through the White House Fellows program helped you advance your career?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

26. In terms of personal change, which of the following best describes your Fellowship experience?

- 1  It made you more humble as a person than before
- 2  It made you less humble as a person than before
- 3  You remained about as humble as before

27. What job offers did you receive immediately after being a White House Fellow? Please list all offers you received.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

28. What job did you take or return to after your Fellowship?

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*Now we would like to ask for your opinion on some social and political issues. Your answers will contribute to a better understanding of how attitudes of White House Fellows compare to other Americans.*

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29. What, in your opinion, is the best way to improve society?

- 1  To follow an overall program or theory
- 2  To allow changes to develop naturally by themselves
- 3  Neither/undecided

30. I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence in them? (please mark one for each item)

	A great deal of confidence	Only some confidence	Hardly any confidence
a. Banks and financial institutions	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Major businesses	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Organized religion	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Education	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Executive branch of the federal government	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. Organized labor	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
g. Press	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
h. Medicine	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
i. Television	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
j. U.S. Supreme Court	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
k. Congress	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
l. Military	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
m. Scientific community	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>

31. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree
a. Most people can be trusted	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Most people who don't succeed in life are just plain lazy	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. My friends and I are well-represented in our political system	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. The self-made man is likely more ethical than the man born to wealth	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Most people are interested only in personal gain	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

32. Below is a list of various aspects of life. We would like to know how important each of these aspects of life is for you. On a scale from 1=Not at all Important to 5=Very Important, how important are these aspects of life to you? Please take a look at all of the aspects first. Then, for each aspect, select a level of importance.

	Not at all Important	Somewhat Unimportant	No Opinion	Somewhat Important	Very Important
a. One's own family and children.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Career and work	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Free time and relaxation	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Friends and acquaintances	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Relatives	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. Religion and church	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
g. Politics and public life	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

33. In response to the nation's recent economic downturn, some commentators have suggested a cap on executive income. In your opinion, should there be a top limit on an executive's income?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.34)

33a. If yes, what do you think would be accomplished by this?


34. Next, we'd like to hear about your involvement in civic life and the professional world. In the past twelve months, have you gotten together informally with or worked with others in your community or neighborhood to try to deal with some community issue or problem?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

35. How successful do you feel in your work life? Do you feel:

- 1  Not at all successful
- 2  Not very successful
- 3  Somewhat successful
- 4  Very successful
- 5  Completely successful

36. What about your success in balancing your paid work with your family life? Do you feel:

- 1  Not at all successful
- 2  Not very successful
- 3  Somewhat successful
- 4  Very successful
- 5  Completely successful

37. Have you ever been on active duty for military training or service for two consecutive months or more?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.38)

37a. If yes, what was your total time on active duty?

<input type="text"/>	Months	<input type="text"/>	Years
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37b. What was the highest rank you achieved?

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38. Have any members of your immediate family—that is, your spouse, parent, children, brothers, or sisters—ever served in the armed forces?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

39. Do you personally feel that the White House Fellows program is non-partisan?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No



40. Have you actively campaigned for a presidential candidate in any presidential election?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

41. Using the following five-point scale, how would you describe yourself? Are you a...

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strong Democrat          |                          | Strong Independent       |                          | Strong Republican        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |

42. Have you changed political party affiliation since your Fellowship year?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

43. Who are three public figures, currently living or deceased, whom you admire?

1.
2.
3.

44. What were the last two books you read?

1.
2.

45. Finally, we'd like to ask you some demographic and background questions. What is your marital status?

- 1  Single, never married
- 2  Not married, but living in marriage-like relationship
- 3  Married
- 4  Divorced/separated
- 5  Widowed

→ If not currently married please skip to Q.49

46. If you are currently married, what is your spouse's occupation?

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47. If you are currently married, were you married at the time of your White House Fellowship?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.49)

48. If you were married at the time that you began your White House Fellowship, are you still married to the same person?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

49. How many children have you ever had? Please count any children from previous marriages and any children who are now deceased.

	# of children
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→ If you have never had any children please skip to Q.52

50. If you have children, did you ever stay at home to take care of them for more than six months?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

51. If you have children, did your spouse ever stay at home to take care of them for more than six months?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

52. What is your date of birth?

□	□	□	□	□	□
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Day

Month

Year

53. Where did you grow up?

City

State/Province

Country (if other than the US)

54. What was your father's occupation?

55. What was your mother's occupation?

56. Were both your parents born in this country?

- 1  Yes → (SKIP to Q.57)  
2  No

56a. If no, where were your parents born?

Father's Place of Birth:

City

Country

Mother's Place of Birth:

City

Country

57. What is your religious preference—  
Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or  
something else?

- 1  Protestant  
2  Catholic  
3  Jewish  
4  Other  
5  None

*Skip to Q.58 unless you selected 'Protestant'*

57a. If Protestant, what church or  
denomination?

58. How important is religion in your own  
life?

- 1  Very important  
2  Fairly important  
3  Not very important  
4  Not at all important

*We would like to now ask a few questions about your health and well-being. While we understand that these questions may be perceived as sensitive, the information will contribute to a more complete understanding of the Fellows and how they compare to other Americans.*

59. Would you say your own health, in general, is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 1  Excellent
- 2  Good
- 3  Fair
- 4  Poor

60. How would you describe your life?

- 1  Very stressful
- 2  Somewhat stressful
- 3  Not very stressful
- 4  Not at all stressful

61. How tall are you without your shoes on?

Feet     Inches

62. How much do you weigh?

Pounds

63. At the time you were selected as a White House Fellow, how much did you weigh?

Pounds

64. During your Fellowship year, approximately how many days of work did you have to miss because of illness? Please do not count days spent taking care of a loved one who was ill.

Days

65. In the last year, have you been interviewed by the press?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.66)

65a. If yes, when was the last time you were interviewed?

Month     Year

65b. What was the subject of this interview?


66. In the last year, have you appeared on television?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → (SKIP to Q.67)

66a. If yes, when was the last time you appeared on television?

Month     Year

66b. What was the subject of this television appearance?


67. Have you ever lived in a country other than the United States?

- 1  Yes  
2  No → (SKIP to Q.68)

67a. If yes, what other countries have you lived in?

1.
2.
3.

68. Can you speak a language other than English?

- 1  Yes  
2  No → (SKIP to Q.69)

68a. If yes, please list all other languages you speak.

1.
2.
3.

69. Within the last 12 months, how often did you do volunteer work for a charitable organization? Please do not count group membership alone.

- 1  Once a week or more often  
2  At least once a month  
3  Several times  
4  Once or twice  
5  Not at all

70. Did you hold any leadership positions while in college?

- 1  Yes  
2  No

71. Finally, what single accomplishment in your life thus far are you proudest of?


72. Would you like to receive a copy of the results from this survey?

- 1  Yes  
2  No

**Thank you for participating in this survey!**

Please return this survey in the attached BRE to:  
c/o Lisa Setlak  
NORC at the University of Chicago  
1155 East 60th Street  
Chicago, IL 60637