



FACT SHEET: PREGNANCY & THE MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP

Information for Fellows who are Pregnant

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to supporting positive learning and networking environments for all Fellows. If you are pregnant and are at less than 20 weeks by the start of the Fellowship in mid-June, you should be able to fully participate in the program. Notifying IREX and U.S. Embassy of your pregnancy and expected due date as soon as you know will ensure we are able to help you have a healthy pregnancy during your time on the Mandela Washington Fellowship. Be sure to include information about your pregnancy in your pre-arrival questionnaire and medical form, if selected. If you learn you are pregnant after submitting these forms, please alert IREX as soon as possible by sending an email to mwf2020@irex.org.

For your health awareness if you are pregnant, note that the Mandela Washington Fellowship is an intensive program, which includes long days and extended periods of time sitting in the classroom or walking on excursions and site visits. On the busiest days, activities during the week days can run from 9am to 9pm. Additionally, keep in mind that the housing and meals provided during the Fellowship may be different from what you are accustomed to. While meals provided by our Institute Partners will offer a variety of options, there are limitations due to the fact that your meals may be primarily from a campus cafeteria. While most Fellows do not have issues, some Fellows do find it challenging to adjust to these dietary changes. If you have concerns about adjusting to these changes during your pregnancy, please contact IREX.



Questions or Concerns? Contact the Mandela Washington Fellowship Team at mwf2020@irex.org!

Prenatal Care during the Fellowship

For the duration of your stay in the United States, all Fellows are entitled to a Health Benefit plan provided by ASPE, the Accident & Sickness Program for Exchanges, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by Seven Corners, Inc. These benefits offset costs for treatment of medical emergencies during the program. Under ASPE, standard doctor visits related to pregnancy are covered under the benefit as “wellness check-ups.” Please note that you will still be responsible for the co-pay each time you visit the doctor, which may cost \$25-\$75 for each visit.

The medical care you experience in the United States may be different from what you are used to at home. Service providers may be primary care providers or specialists. When visiting a doctor for a prenatal consultation, it is recommended you see an OB (Obstetrics) Doctor, who specializes in prenatal care, health, and wellness.

Services provided during a prenatal consultation may vary from what you are accustomed to at home. For example, not all appointments will include an ultrasound or blood tests. These services may also have additional charges associated with them that will be at your own expense.

ASPE does not generally cover pre-existing prescriptions of medications for pregnancy. With this in mind, please remember to bring sufficient quantities of any medications you are on (such as prenatal vitamins) to last for the duration of the program. Medications can be costly in the United States, and the same medications you are used to may not be available here. We strongly recommend you come with enough prescription medications to last you the duration of the Fellowship.



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Prenatal Care during the Fellowship (cont.)

Please keep in mind that, while Institute staff can help you identify doctors, you are responsible for scheduling your own wellness appointments and arranging and paying for transportation costs to and from the appointments. Medical appointments will likely take place during program hours so please refer to your program agenda and ask your university host to advise when they anticipate free time in the schedule. Because doctor's offices often book appointments many weeks in advance, you will need to schedule wellness appointments prior to your arrival in the United States. We encourage you to do this as soon as possible to ensure access to a doctor while you are here for the Fellowship.

Please bring your medical records from your doctor at home to ensure you receive the appropriate care.

Scheduling Your Prenatal Appointments:

1. Obtain the name and phone number of the medical provider from your Institute contact.
2. Call the medical provider and request to schedule an appointment for a prenatal wellness checkup. Confirm that they accept your health care benefit plan by saying: "My healthcare plan utilizes the First Health International Network. Are you a First Health International participating provider?" To use ASPE, they must be a participating provider.
3. On the day of your appointment, arrive 15-20 minutes early. You may need to fill out paperwork upon arrival. Be sure to bring your ASPE card, identification, money for your co-pay, and any relevant medical documents.
4. Meet with your doctor, ask any questions you may have, and be sure to schedule follow-up appointments in advance.

Travel Guidelines during Pregnancy

Airlines have different policies for flying while pregnant and may restrict travel for individuals who are pregnant after a certain period in their pregnancy. Generally, individuals who are pregnant who have no complications can fly without issue during the first (0-13 weeks) and second (14-26 weeks) trimesters. During the third trimester, many U.S. airlines do not permit travel or require a doctor's note. Often airlines prohibit travel during the third trimester of pregnancy due to health risks for you and your baby.

Fellows who are more than 20 weeks pregnant by the start of the Fellowship will have the opportunity to discuss whether their situation warrants a one-year deferral. Please contact mwf2020@irex.org if you would like the U.S. Department of State to consider your request for a deferral; requests are granted on a case-by-case basis, pending you meet the eligibility requirements the following year.

Please do check with your doctor prior to your departure to ensure you are up to the physical demands of the program and will be able to safely travel to and from the United States.

Summary & Best Practices

We encourage you to keep the following points in mind when planning for your Fellowship experience:

- Before your arrival, consider what your health needs will be during the Fellowship and communicate this information in advance;
- Bring items (such as prenatal vitamins) with you from home and ensure you have sufficient quantities to last throughout the Fellowship; and
- Work with your Institute to schedule your doctor's appointments as early as possible upon your arrival to ensure you receive care in a timely manner.

With these details in mind and a flexible attitude, you can look forward to healthy, full participation in the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders!

