MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP

FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

2023 Post Selection Handbook

Table of Contents
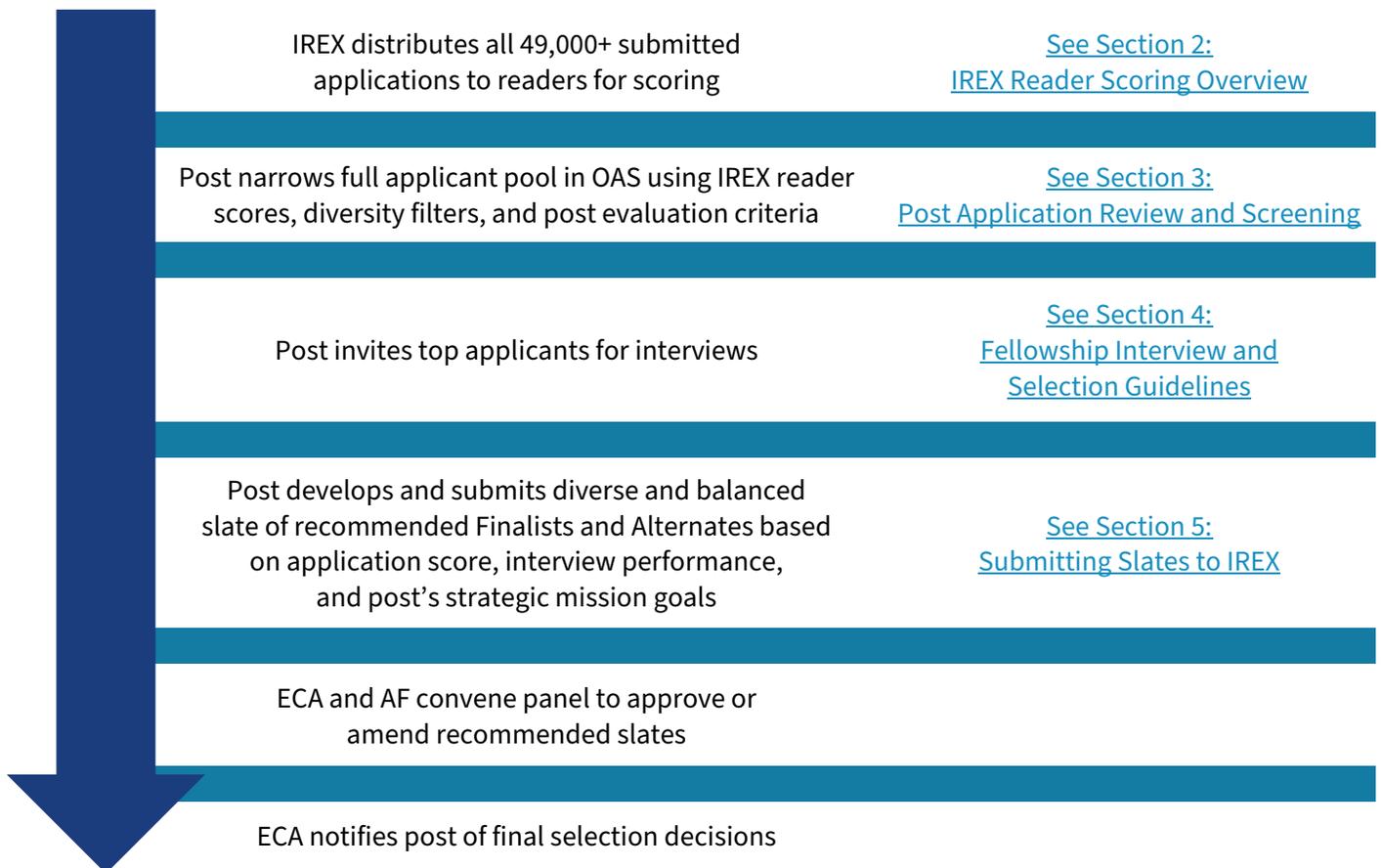
Introduction and Key Information

This selection handbook for the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders provides U.S. Embassies and Consulates (posts) with information and tools to assist in reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and submitting a ranked list of Mandela Washington Fellowship Finalists and Alternates. In 2023, the U.S. Department of State and IREX will select up to 700 individuals to be Mandela Washington Fellows. In addition, up to 100 Fellows will be competitively selected for a four-week, U.S.-based Professional Development Experience (PDE). For more background on the Mandela Washington Fellowship, please visit mwfellows.info.

If you need information regarding application review, interviews, selection, or the Online Application System (OAS) that is not contained in this handbook, please reach out to ECA Program Officer Natalie Spencer at SpencerNR@state.gov. More information is also available on the ECA Mandela Washington Fellowship SharePoint site.

Selection Process Overview

IREX distributes all 49,000+ submitted applications to readers for scoring	See Section 2: IREX Reader Scoring Overview
Post narrows full applicant pool in OAS using IREX reader scores, diversity filters, and post evaluation criteria	See Section 3: Post Application Review and Screening
Post invites top applicants for interviews	See Section 4: Fellowship Interview and Selection Guidelines
Post develops and submits diverse and balanced slate of recommended Finalists and Alternates based on application score, interview performance, and post's strategic mission goals	See Section 5: Submitting Slates to IREX
ECA and AF convene panel to approve or amend recommended slates	
ECA notifies post of final selection decisions	

Key Application Review Dates

Applications will be available for review in the Mandela Washington Fellowship's OAS on **September 19, 2022**. Reader scores will be available by **November 14, 2022**. A comprehensive timeline is included in Section 1 of this handbook.

See the OAS How-To Guide for Posts for more details on how to access the applications in OAS.

Applicant Residency and Citizenship

In OAS, you will see applications for all residents and citizens of your country. If post desires to interview an applicant who resides in your country but is not a citizen, please reach out to the Fellowship contact at the post of the applicant's citizenship to ensure that the applicant is not invited to two interviews. Similarly, if a citizen of your country resides in a different country, please speak with the Fellowship contact at the post in the country in which they are residing if you would like to consider the applicant. Applicants who are citizens of an eligible AF country, but who reside in a non-AF country such as the United Kingdom, France, or Egypt are not eligible for the Fellowship until they reestablish residency in an eligible AF country.

See Section 3: Post Application Review and Screening for more details.

Ideal Candidates

Ideal candidates for the Mandela Washington Fellowship:

- Have a proven track record of leadership and demonstrate a commitment to their community;
- Are open to learning from other points of view and respectful of opposing viewpoints;
- Can deal with interpersonal conflict and difficult situations with diplomacy and tact;
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Are able to apply academic content focused on U.S. cases to their country context or profession, even when the subject is not directly related to their work;
- Are positioned to benefit professionally from the Fellowship and have appropriate expectations of the academic components of the program;
- Have little to no prior experience in the United States (applicants who have obtained a degree in the United States or participated in other long-term programs are less competitive);
- Are focused on gaining new perspectives, experiences, and expanding their network rather than finding funding or investors as a result of the Fellowship; and
- Are capable of full participation in all aspects of a rigorous Leadership Institute.

See Section 4: Fellowship Interview and Selection Guidelines for more details on the ideal candidate, including eligibility requirements.

Slate Submission

Post slates are due to IREX on **February 1, 2023**. Posts are encouraged to submit slates prior to this date if their interviews are complete.

- You will email your slate as a spreadsheet to MWFellowship@irex.org. Please copy Natalie Spencer (SpencerNR@state.gov) on this message.
- The Post Slate Excel spreadsheet must be downloaded from OAS with the pre-populated data for all applicants from your country. You will enter rankings, recommendations, and comments for your selected finalist and alternate candidates only, not all applicants. **Post comments are VERY important, as they used in the selection and placement process and help ECA identify Fellows for special opportunities during the Fellowship.**

See Section 5: Submitting Slates to IREX and the OAS How-To Guide for Posts for more details on how to download and fill in the **Post Slate** Excel spreadsheet .

ECA Mandela Washington Fellowship Team Points of Contact

Our current team members and their responsibilities include:

Macon Barrow Branch Chief ECA/A/E/USS	BarrowME@state.gov (202) 632-3342	General Fellowship Questions
Jessica Zanikos Team Lead ECA/A/E/USS	ZanikosJL@state.gov (202) 632-3245	General Fellowship Questions, Post Consultations, Inter-Agency Coordination, Summit
Nnenna Ofobike-Lewis Program Officer ECA/A/E/USS	Ofobike-LewisN@state.gov (202) 632-9433	Institutes, Pre-Fellowship Orientations, Disabilities Accommodations
Maegen Smith Program Officer ECA/A/E/USS	SmithMC@state.gov (202) 340-7347	Alumni Opportunities, Communications, Social Media
Natalie Spencer Program Officer ECA/A/E/USS	SpencerNR@state.gov (202) 632-3276	Recruitment and Selection, Monitoring and Evaluation, Professional Development Experience, Funding

Section 1: Fellowship Timeline

August 16, 2022	Fellow application launches
September 13, 2022	Fellow application closes
September 14, 2022	IREX readers assigned applications to review
September 19, 2022	Posts given access to applications for their citizens and/or residents
November 14, 2022	**Scores from IREX readers completed and available to posts**
November – December 2022	Application review at posts
December 2022 – January 2023	Interviews at posts
January 2023	Slate review and finalization at posts
February 1, 2023	**Post slates due to IREX** (Posts are encouraged to submit slates prior to this date if their interviews are complete.)
March 1-2, 2023	Fellow and PDE selection in Washington, D.C.
March 3, 6-7, 2023	Fellow Leadership Institute placement process in Washington, D.C.
March 9, 2023	Posts receive lists of Finalists, PDE Finalists, and Alternates
March 14-15, 2023	**Posts notify Finalists, PDE Finalists, and Alternates** of their Fellowship selection and Institute placements
March 16, 2023	IREX follows up with required paperwork for Finalists to complete
March 23, 2023	Deadline for Finalists to send paperwork back to IREX
April 6, 2023	Notification of Fellowship termination sent to non-responsive Finalists
April – June 2023	PDE placement process
Late April – May 2023	Form DS-2019 hard copies sent to posts (depending on scheduled date of visa interviews and/or Pre-Fellowship Orientation (PFO))
Late April – May 2023	Visa interviews and PFO activities at posts, and Fellows complete pre-Fellowship learning modules
May 2023	IREX sends travel allowance to Fellows
June 21, 2023	Fellows arrive at their Leadership Institutes (Fellows depart for the United States on June 19 or 20.)
June 22, 2023	Leadership Institutes begin
July 30, 2023	Leadership Institutes conclude
July 31 – August 3, 2023	Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit
August 4, 2023	PDE Orientation and Fellows without PDEs return home
August 5, 2023	PDE Fellows travel to their PDE locations
August 7, 2023	PDEs begin
September 1, 2023	PDEs conclude
September 2, 2023	PDE Fellows return home

Section 2: IREX Reader Scoring Overview

The Department of State and IREX recruit readers beginning annually in June to read and score all submitted applications. Readers come from a variety of backgrounds, including higher education, government, and the private sector. Readers for the 2023 Fellowship will begin to read and score their assigned applications on September 15, 2022, and will finish scoring applications by early November 2022. If you access OAS during the reading period, you will see scores populate as they are entered. All applications will be scored by November 14, 2022. This phase of the selection process is intended to ensure that each application is read and scored at least once, and to simplify the selection process for posts. Posts are not obligated to read every application from their country. Posts are highly encouraged to use IREX reader scores and recommendation ratings to weed out unqualified and ineligible applicants and to consider seriously applications with high scores and recommendation ratings. IREX readers do not see applicants' demographic information, such as biological sex and gender; rather, posts are responsible for balancing gender and ensuring underrepresented groups are included in the interview pool. More information about posts' role is outlined in Section 3: Post Application Review and Screening.

Reader Scores and Recommendations

Each application will be read and scored by one reader. Each application will receive a numeric score (out of 30) and a rating of "Highly Recommend," "Recommend," or "Do Not Recommend." At the end of the reading period, numeric scores will be "adjusted" depending on that reader's scoring tendencies. For example, a reader who scores all applications generously will have their numeric (or raw) scores adjusted down, and vice versa. The conversion from raw scores to adjusted scores will be done automatically via an algorithm built into OAS. This adjusting will not be done until all raw scores are entered into the system for your country; the adjusted score will not change the reader's rating of "HR" (Highly Recommend), "R" (Recommend), or "DNR" (Do Not Recommend). You will notice that the "Adjusted Scores" column may be blank until all your country scores are in. Raw and adjusted scores will be in the system by November 14, 2022.

When posts receive access to applications on September 19, 2022, IREX will have removed any applications that are incomplete and those with low word counts in the essay questions from OAS. **Posts will only view completed and submitted applications that do not have low word counts.** IREX readers have been instructed to rate any applications that are not completed in English as "DNR" (Do Not Recommend) and score them as non-competitive in all review categories. Posts should also note that applications that are in any language other than English are not eligible for selection.

Applicant Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

The application collects sensitive information from applicants, including demographic details and personally identifiable information (PII). IREX has added safeguards in OAS and throughout the reading process to ensure the security of applicant PII. PII is removed from the application materials that readers review, including application PDFs. Sensitive information is also removed from the

applicant lists that readers view, and all data in OAS is encrypted. Removing PII avoids preferential treatment in review and scoring. If readers note a potential conflict of interest, applications are immediately reassigned.

Reader Materials

Readers receive detailed instructions on how to review and score applications. The reader information package can be found at the end of this handbook in the appendices. A complete reader package will also be uploaded separately to SharePoint. The reader package includes:

- Mandela Washington Fellowship Overview and Reader Instructions
- Reader Scoring Rubric
- Reader Presentation with PowerPoint slides
- Country Profile(s), created using the information provided by post in the *Post Recruitment and Selection Questionnaire*, for the country or countries related to the reader's assigned applications

In addition to the materials IREX readers receive, we have prepared an Interview Evaluation Sheet for posts to assist you in evaluating applicants during interviews; more information is provided in Section 4: Fellowship Interview and Selection Guidelines and at the end of this handbook in the appendices.

Section 3: Post Application Review and Screening

By November 14, 2022, all reader scores—both raw and adjusted—will be available in OAS. Note that raw scores will populate in real-time from September 15 to November 13, 2022, as applications are read, and adjusted scores will populate by November 14, 2022. The adjusted score **will not** change the reader's rating of "HR" (Highly Recommend), "R" (Recommend), or "DNR" (Do Not Recommend). Posts will use these ratings and adjusted scores along with filters in OAS to narrow the applicant pool before inviting top candidates for interviews.

Online Application System (OAS) Tools

When reviewing reader scores and applications in OAS, you will have access to several different tools to review and narrow your candidate pool. Note that you will only be able to view application information for citizens and/or residents of your post's country.

- **Dashboards:** In OAS, dashboards allow posts to visualize application data in real time. The dashboards provide an overview of application numbers, and posts can apply filters to see application numbers from specific provinces/regions, from certain demographic groups, and more. The data displayed on each post's dashboard is populated based on applicants' **country of residence**. Data for applicants who are citizens of post's host country, but resident elsewhere, will not be calculated.
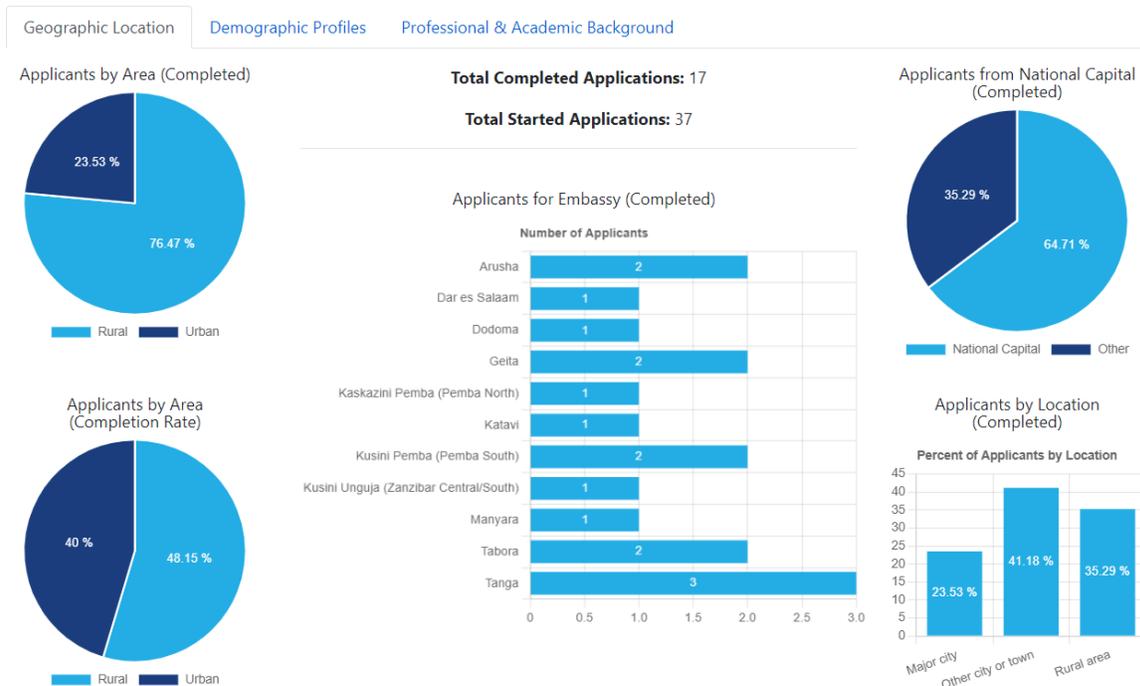
Screenshot of a sample country on the OAS Dashboard.

- **Search and filter capabilities:** Post users also have access to search and filter applications using a robust set of filtering criteria. Posts can search for specific applicants, or apply filters to specific applicant groups, including citizenship, province, track, age, or other demographic indicators (such as applicants' self-identified gender or LGBTQI+ status). There are also advanced filters that allow posts to identify applicants without previous U.S. Government experience, U.S. travel experience, or U.S. study experience.
- **Bulk download options:** Posts will be able to independently download application PDFs in batches (i.e., through zipped files) for ease and convenience in OAS. These bulk downloads will have all applicant PII removed. New for 2023, Posts will be able to bulk download PDF applications based on the IREX reader rating (e.g., "Highly Recommend," "Recommend," or "Do Not Recommend"), as well as bulk download all applications.
- **Simplified application ID:** New for 2023, application PDFs and the *Post Slate* Excel spreadsheet will include a two-letter, six-digit simplified application identification number (e.g., ET001077). This identifier will help Posts match applications with applicant information in their *Post Slate* Excel spreadsheet.

For more information, see the OAS How-To Guide for Posts in the Appendices.

Applicant Citizenship and Residency

In OAS, you will see applications for all residents and citizens of your country. We ask that you consider all candidates (including citizens and/or long-term residents) in your selection process and include any qualified applicants in your final slates. The one exception is if the applicant appears to be residing in your country on a temporary or short-term basis (for example, they are studying there) and has plans to return to their country of citizenship. In this case, please flag the application for the post of applicant citizenship by sending an email to the Post contact(s) listed on the ECA Mandela Washington Fellowship SharePoint site.

For applicants who are refugees and may be living in a country that is not their country of citizenship, posts should apply the same principles as any other applicant who are citizens of one country and residing in another. Applicants who are refugees should have citizenship from one of the 49 Sub-Saharan African countries and should also be residing in a Sub-Saharan African country. For example, an applicant who is a citizen of the Democratic Republic of the Congo but is residing in a refugee camp in Malawi would be eligible for the Fellowship; however, if this applicant was residing in a refugee camp in Tunisia, they would not be eligible.

We have added a column to the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet template to help you easily identify which candidates indicated a country of citizenship that is different from their country of residence. For more information on how to access and complete the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet template, see the OAS How-To Guide for Posts and Post Slate and Excel How-To Guide in the Appendices.

If you are interested in interviewing an applicant who is not a citizen of your post's country, please check with the post of the applicant's citizenship to confirm they do not intend to interview the applicant as well. **We want to avoid the scenario of two posts interviewing and/or including the**

same applicant on two countries' slates. If you have questions about this, please contact Natalie Spencer at SpencerNR@state.gov.

It is imperative that post put forward candidates who are citizens and residents of Sub-Saharan Africa. This is a program requirement. For example, if an applicant is a citizen of Kenya but has full residency in Egypt or France, they would not be eligible to participate in the Fellowship.   For more information about citizenship and eligibility, please see Section 4: Fellowship Interview and Selection Criteria.

African Union Applicants

All applicants who are currently working for the African Union or another international governmental organization (e.g., United Nations, etc.) will be viewable by the U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU) through an automated process; however, this process may not catch all candidates.   If you identify applicants who are working with the African Union or any international or regional organizations or whose background would otherwise advance regional or continent-wide priorities, please forward a PDF of their application via **encrypted message** to the USAU main point of contact Heather Joy Thompson (ThompsonHJ@state.gov)   and Mezegebua Taddesse (taddessem@state.gov).

Reviewing Applications

There are many ways that posts can use the IREX reader scores and recommendations data to determine who to interview. **Posts are not encouraged to review all applications received,** since this has already been done by independent readers through IREX. Instead, posts are expected to use IREX reader scores and recommendations, along with the search and filter capabilities in OAS (e.g., filtering for age, gender, location, no previous U.S. experience, etc.) to narrow the application pool that your post will review. We suggest that you consider a comprehensive approach that may involve post staff reviewing **some** applications to identify targeted applicant groups that align with mission goals.

Best practices from the past eight years include:

- *Interview at least three times the number of applicants you are instructed to provide for your total slate* of Finalists and Alternates. For example, if you are sending 8 Finalists to the United States and have a total slate number of 20 (8 Finalists and 12 Alternates), then you would interview 60 individuals. In the ECA Mandela Washington Fellowship SharePoint site, you will find a spreadsheet outlining the required number of Finalists and the recommended number of Alternates we suggest you include in your slate.

- *Do not include Fellowship Alumni on your interview panels.* In past years, some posts have received comments indicating that the inclusion of Fellowship Alumni interview panelists contributed to a perception of potential bias in selection decisions. However, alumni from other USG programs may serve on interview panels.

- *Be sure to consider female applicants.* IREX application readers will not see the names or genders associated with the applications they are reading, so posts should pay careful attention to gender balance of their interview pools and final slates. (**Note**: *Posts will still have access to this information during their review. IREX application readers will not.)*

- *Be sure to consider applicants from rural or disadvantaged communities as well as applicants with disabilities* for interview and ensure that interview locations are accessible.

- *Promote buy-in from the whole mission* by asking various sections of the mission to take part in the review and interview process.

- *Provide all members of your post selection committee with clear guidance on the Fellowship* as well as post priorities and the selection materials. This may include an overview of the Fellowship, the Reader Scoring Rubric, and the sample Post Slate Excel spreadsheet template, among other resources.

- Take note of applicants who are not strong candidates for the Mandela Washington Fellowship *but who may be excellent fits for other exchange programs*.

When designing your post selection plan, please remember that your final slate should maximize the impact that the Mandela Washington Fellowship will have on your country over the next 10 years. To the extent possible, you should strive for a balanced slate.

More details on the composition of your final slate can be found in Section 4 and Section 5 of this handbook.

VidCruiter

Posts may choose to interview a select number of candidates using VidCruiter, an optional virtual interviewing platform.

If your post indicated that it would like to use VidCruiter in the *Post Recruitment and Selection Questionnaire*, IREX will provide instructional materials, resources, and administrative support on how to use and navigate the platform in early October 2022. If your post did not indicate an interest in using VidCruiter in the *Post Recruitment and Selection Questionnaire*, but would now like to leverage the platform, please email MWFellowship@irex.org prior to December 1, 2022.

Note that VidCruiter is an optional selection tool; it is not required that your post use the platform.

- **Pre-recorded interviews:** In pre-recorded interviews, applicants record their responses to pre-determined questions chosen by post. Applicants will see the question, have a short time to prepare to respond, and then the recording will begin. Posts can use the pre-recorded interview to conduct English assessments or pre-screen candidates before an official interview. Pre-recorded interviews **cannot** be used as the only Fellowship interview for

applicants. For pre-recorded interviews, post will send each invited applicant a link to complete the interview on their own time and by a specified deadline. Once the applicant has completed the interview, post will be able to review and rate the applicant directly in the VidCruiter platform.

- **Live interviews:** In live interviews, posts meet with applicants online at a mutually convenient time using the VidCruiter platform. Live interviews are similar to meetings on virtual platforms such as Zoom or Skype; however, VidCruiter enhances this interview with standardized questions and rating guides that appear directly within the platform. Live virtual interviews should only be used in **extenuating circumstances** when post is unable to conduct an in-person interview, such as in the case of major health and security concerns. For **live** interviews on the VidCruiter platform, post will first confirm the interview time with the applicant via email. Once the interview time has been confirmed, post will schedule the interview in VidCruiter and generate a unique link to send to the candidate and interviewer(s), similar to a Zoom link. At the time of the interview, the applicant and interviewer(s) will be able to join the interview via their unique link. During the interview, the interviewer(s) will be able to review and rate the applicant directly in the VidCruiter platform.

With VidCruiter, interviews can be completed on any device, including mobile devices, and applicants can complete pre-recorded interviews in segments, providing flexibility for those with unstable connections or limited bandwidth. Users can also adjust their resolution to optimize the video's quality to further account for connection issues they may encounter during the video interview.

All virtual interviews will include an additional question to verify the applicant's identity. Posts will also be required to respond to questions confirming the applicant's identity, including the name on their passport, date of birth, and citizenship. See Section 4: Fellowship Interview and Selection Guidelines for more details on the eligibility requirements and verifying applicant information.

As the interviews are completed and ratings are entered in VidCruiter, posts will be able to review the scores for all interviewed applicants directly in the VidCruiter platform and download an Excel spreadsheet with all their applicants' interview scores.

Note that in-person interviews remain essential to the Fellowship selection process and are enriching experiences for both the post and applicant. Virtual interviews should only be used to narrow your applicant pool or for applicants with extenuating circumstances. If you have questions or concerns about your post's ability to conduct in-person interviews, please contact Natalie Spencer at SpencerNR@state.gov.

Section 4: Fellowship Interview and Selection Guidelines

This section of the handbook provides an overview of the **final stage** of the interview process and should be applied to both in-person or virtual final interviews. As noted above, p**osts should not replace all in-person interviews with virtual interviews.** In-person interviews remain essential to the Fellowship selection process. Virtual interviews should be used to narrow your candidate pool or for candidates with extenuating circumstances.

From November 2022 through January 2023, Posts will review and interview applicants to determine whether they should be included on the final nomination list (slate) **that should be submitted to IREX by February 1, 2023**; *Posts are encouraged to submit slates prior to this date if their interviews are complete*.

The following information provides tools and guidelines for the interview and final slating processes. Posts are required to check an applicant's passport or other identification documents to verify their date of birth and citizenship; this information must be checked for both in-person and virtual interviews. Posts should also confirm the applicant's country of residence to ensure they are residing in a Fellowship country (listed under [Eligibility]). Please note any concerns about eligibility in the comments section of your Post Slate Excel spreadsheet, such as an applicant's inability to appear for an in-person interview due to long-term work or academic commitments in a non-Fellowship country.

As a reminder, all selected Finalists will need to have passports prior to their visa interview with validity through February 28, 2024 (or March 31, 2024, if selected for the PDE). This eligibility check can be a good time to remind candidates that they may need to acquire or renew their passports to ensure IREX can process Finalists' Form DS-2019s and flights in a timely manner. However, a valid passport is not required prior to selection.

Eligibility

While steps are taken to screen out ineligible individuals early in the application process, some candidates are not forthcoming in their written applications. Therefore, during the interview, please verify that all applicants meet **all** eligibility requirements:

- Are between the ages of 25 and 35 on or before the application deadline, although exceptional applicants ages 21-24 will be considered (*eligible applicants will have a date of birth from September 14, 1986, through September 13, 2001*);
- Are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Are eligible to receive a United States J-1 visa;
- Are not employees or immediate family members of employees of the U.S. Government (including a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, USAID, or other U.S. Government entity);
- Are proficient in reading, writing, and speaking English (applicants who are deaf should be proficient in reading and writing in standard English as well as proficient in American Sign Language);

- Are citizens of one of the following countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea- Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, or Zimbabwe;
- Are residents of one of the above countries; and
- Are not Alumni or prior participants of the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

Age

Applicants who are ages 21-24 are eligible for the Fellowship; however, **posts should limit these individuals to no more than 10% of your slate.** Fellows younger than 25 often have difficulty adjusting to their Institutes and gaining as much from the experience as other participants, and Institute staff may face challenges in best supporting Fellows below the age of 25. Additionally, these applicants will have additional chances to apply for the Fellowship, whereas applicants at the upper end of the age range will not. For these reasons, please limit the number of individuals younger than 25 that you place on your slates. The final selection panel may prioritize older candidates selected as alternates over younger candidates.

Citizenship and Residency

A key eligibility criterion for the Fellowship is that the applicant's country of citizenship **and** country of residency are eligible AF countries (49 Sub-Saharan African countries listed above under "Eligibility"). Within the application, an applicant must select their country of citizenship and country of residency from a list of Fellowship countries. During the IREX reader review process, readers are also asked to note whether the application contains information that leads them to believe the applicant is living outside of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, some candidates are not forthcoming in their applications; due to this, posts are **required** to confirm applicant citizenship and residency as part of their interview process.

During the interview, posts are required to check an applicant's passport or other identification to verify their citizenship (i.e., the country that issued the passport). Posts should also confirm the applicant's country of residency; posts are **strongly encouraged** to verify the applicant's current address for your records at the time of their interview.

Individuals studying or working long-term outside of Sub-Saharan Africa are NOT eligible for the Fellowship. Individuals who are traveling for business or pleasure outside of these countries are eligible as long as their travel is short-term. For example, an individual who lives in Sub-Saharan Africa and is traveling for three weeks to China for meetings (and will return to Sub-Saharan Africa after that time) is eligible. However, an individual who is a diplomat stationed in China for two years or an individual completing a master's degree in the United Kingdom is NOT eligible. The Fellowship is also not able to support travel to or from countries outside of Sub-Saharan Africa for either Pre-

Fellowship Orientation or the Fellowship itself. Selected applicants who are found to be permanent residents of countries outside of Sub-Saharan Africa will be disqualified from participation in the program.

English Proficiency

High-level proficiency in written and spoken English is required for the Mandela Washington Fellowship. Leadership Institutes are unable to provide English language resources or translation services for those who do not speak English proficiently. Applicants must be able to understand and engage with Institute content in English. Refer to the English Language Requirements section for more information on how to evaluate English language proficiency.

If you have any questions about the eligibility requirements outlined above, please contact Natalie Spencer (SpencerNR@state.gov).

Selection Criteria

Posts should rate each applicant according to the selection criteria and the English language requirement. All criteria are weighted equally. The selection criteria are as follows:

- A proven record of leadership and accomplishment in business or entrepreneurship, civic engagement, or public/government service;
- A demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship;
- A demonstrated ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and to respect the opinions of others;
- Strong social and communication skills;
- An energetic, positive attitude;
- A demonstrated knowledge of, interest in, and professional experience in the preferred sector/track;
- A demonstrated commitment to return to Sub-Saharan Africa and contribute skills and talents to build and serve their communities; and
- The ability to communicate effectively in English.

The Interview Evaluation Sheet (included as an appendix to this document) includes all these criteria except, "Strong social and communication skills" and, "An energetic, positive attitude." These criteria are better evaluated in person than on paper and are difficult to score. You will not give specific scores for these criteria; however, they should inform your overall recommendation. Note that you will rank English proficiency in a separate section using a five-point scale; the English proficiency score is not included in the interview score.

MANDELA
WASHINGTON
FELLOWSHIP
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

The Ideal Candidate

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is an opportunity designed for leaders and innovators in the fields of business, civic engagement, and public management.
As you conduct interviews, please keep in mind the following characteristics in addition to the criteria above.

1. *Proven leadership and commitment to community*
   An ideal Mandela Washington Fellow has a proven track record of leadership and demonstrates a strong commitment to contributing their skills and talents to strengthening and serving their community.

2. *Open-minded and respectful of others; committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion principles*
   As a leader, the Fellow should be open to learning from other points of view and approaches. The Fellowship will challenge Fellows by exposing them to individuals with different perspectives, among both the U.S. citizens they meet and other Fellows. Fellows are expected to be respectful of opposing viewpoints and to diplomatically and tactfully communicate with others who do not share their beliefs. While they are not required to relinquish their own values and opinions, Fellows should be prepared to gracefully handle exposure to a diverse group of people, experiences, and cultural practices during their Fellowship.

3. *Interested in broadening knowledge and perspective*
   The Fellowship is meant to expose Fellows to multiple overarching themes that will enable them to expand their base of knowledge about a wide range of topics. **It is not designed to cater to very specific individual goals** (although Fellows should plan to utilize the Fellowship to build their connections in their area of focus) **nor is it a replacement for a specialized degree program.** The Fellows who benefit most from the Institutes are those who can apply academic content (which is focused on U.S. cases) to their country context or profession, even when the subject is not directly related to their current work. Individuals who are narrowly focused on only their current work are often not as satisfied with the holistic, liberal arts approach of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Leadership Institutes. For this reason, Posts are encouraged to identify candidates who are interested in broadening their perspectives, both within their current sector and beyond.

4. *Career/formal experience level*
   Although the Fellowship is geared toward leadership and skills development for **mid-career professionals**, individuals with significant experience in their sector, high-level positions in well-established companies, or experience with other intensive leadership development programs may not benefit as much from the range of content included in the Institutes. Older candidates with experience should not be excluded, but Posts should confirm that they have **appropriate expectations of the academic components of the Fellowship**.

5. *Little/no U.S. experience*
   The Fellows who gain the most from the Fellowship are those who have **little to no prior**

experience in the United States. These individuals demonstrate the most significant change after both the Fellowship and PDE. Posts should prioritize individuals who have not studied in or earned a degree in the United States. Individuals who have participated in the YALI Regional Leadership Center activities, YALI Network, or English Access programs should **not** be disqualified or deprioritized from your slate, as these opportunities do not involve any travel to the United States. If you choose to put forward individuals with U.S. experience, please make sure to prioritize applicants who traveled to the United States on shorter programs (less than six weeks) over individuals who traveled on longer programs and/or applicants who traveled to the United States less recently (i.e., more than five years ago) over individuals who traveled more recently, and to clearly explain the reason for this selection in the Post Comments section of your slate. There is a column on the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet (*U.S. Experience*) to expand upon applicants' prior U.S. experiences and comment on what more they could gain from participating in the Fellowship. Finally, while Fellowship Alumni are not eligible to participate in the program again, posts are encouraged to actively consider applications from individuals who have previously applied but were not selected for the Fellowship (e.g., Alternate candidates from previous years).

6. *Correct expectations for funding/investment opportunities*
   The Fellowship is designed to provide an environment for Fellows to build connections with U.S. individuals and organizations in addition to their Fellow cohort. **The Fellowship is not intended to serve as a funding platform for Fellows' businesses and organizations, and applicants whose primary goal is acquiring U.S. investors during their Fellowship should not be selected.**

In addition to full consideration of the points above, posts are asked to identify candidates that will contribute to building a **balanced slate** for the selection process. A balanced slate will reflect the post country's demographics: representation from urban and rural areas, equal gender parity, inclusion of individuals with disabilities, and appropriate distribution among all three tracks. Posts should also select Fellows who will assist in meeting their strategic mission goals. More information about the diversity of slates is included under [Slate Diversity](#).

Sector Tracks

Applicants rank their first-, second-, and third-choice tracks within the Fellowship application. You will be asked to select the final track for which you are recommending an applicant, and you will enter that track in the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet in the blank column labeled "Recommended Institute Track." If recommending an applicant for a track other than the one they selected as their first choice, please include your rationale in the "Post Comments" section of the Post Slate spreadsheet. During interviews, we encourage you to discuss the possibility that applicants may not be placed at an Institute in their first-choice track. While we strive to maintain applicants' choices, we may find that there is a track better suited to their background, interests, and future professional goals. Applicants should be encouraged to keep an open mind to the learning possibilities in each track regardless of where they are placed. See the chart for details on the characteristics we are looking for in each track.

Candidates	Business	Civic Engagement	Public Management
Who they are	Young leaders who are starting to pioneer new trends in their fields and are critically positioned to expand their businesses or start-ups.	Young leaders who are civically engaged and serving the public through NGOs, community-based organizations, and volunteerism.	Young leaders who are promoting reform to make their institutions more efficient and transparent.
What they've done	Created a new product, process, or strategy at their companies; formulated a business idea in response to an identified need in their communities.	Addressed current challenges in diverse sectors of civil society and leadership.	Begun to advocate for new approaches to policy or practice.
How you'll distinguish them	They are developing new trends or technologies in their sectors, keeping in mind the needs of their communities.	They are influencers who have a proven record of leadership and accomplishment, and who have demonstrated experience in civic engagement.	Their leadership is recognized within their institutions and communities and their innovations in the public sector are having positive effects in their communities.

Scoring

You will be asked to document the following scores for each candidate and populate them into the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet:

- Candidate Rank (1 should be the candidate that is your top choice)
- English Language Proficiency (out of 5)
- PDE Rank (if applicable, 1 being the candidate that would most benefit from a PDE)

An Interview Evaluation Sheet is provided in the Appendices for written notes, comments, and scores during the interview and review period. The use of this evaluation sheet is optional. You will not submit these sheets to IREX.

See Section 5: Submitting Slates to IREX and the Selection Materials Appendices for more details on how to enter scores and comments into the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet in preparation for sending your candidates to IREX.

English Language Requirements

All Fellowship interviews, whether in-person or virtual, should be conducted in English. All Fellowship activities will be in English, including academic sessions, discussions, meetings, cultural activities, and

social interactions. Applicants should be able to communicate effectively and confidently in English on a professional level and participate fully in university-level classroom sessions. Applicants should also have English language skills adequate for networking with government and university officials, managing coursework, giving public presentations, and, if selected for a PDE, working for an English-speaking organization.

Qualified applicants should be able to understand questions and converse freely during the interview. Interviewers should ask several questions during each interview that the participant would not necessarily anticipate to establish a sense of their ability to respond without preparation.

Posts should reference the English Language Proficiency Scale provided as an appendix to assist in determining the applicant's English language abilities. Competitive Fellowship applicants will generally have scores of 4 (advanced) and 5 (very advanced) on this scale.

Posts may also wish to use VidCruiter as a tool to assess candidate's English language abilities before inviting them for a final interview.

When assessing your candidate's interviews, rate the applicant's English abilities separately from the overall interview score. The interview score and English score will be entered in separate columns in your Post Slate Excel spreadsheet. English abilities should be rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highly proficient. As noted above, competitive Fellowship applicants will generally have scores of 4 (advanced) and 5 (very advanced). Although entered separately from the overall interview score, the English language score **should** be considered as you determine your final slate of recommended candidates.

Applicants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Posts are encouraged to follow up with any applicants requiring accommodations to ensure they have the resources needed (e.g., interpretation support, etc.) to successfully complete their interview. If a candidate requires accommodations, it is incumbent on posts to grant accommodations as needed.

For applicants who are deaf, note that interpretation in the United States will only be available in American Sign Language (ASL) and Fellows should be proficient in, or be prepared to learn, ASL prior to their arrival in the United States. Prior to the start of the Fellowship, selected Fellows who require sign language interpretation during their Institute will have the opportunity to learn ASL through a pre-Institute training at Gallaudet University, the world's only liberal arts university for deaf individuals. These Fellows will also be able to utilize an ASL toolkit through the Fellowship Portal prior to the Fellowship.

Professional Development Experience
(Only if candidate has applied.)

As part of the Fellowship application, individuals may apply to participate in a Professional Development Experience (PDE) at a U.S. NGO, business, or governmental agency. The PDE is designed to provide Fellows with practical training and the opportunity to learn transferable skills, expand their professional networks, and apply concepts learned at their Institutes to real-world situations in the U.S. context. Placements will relate to each Fellow's professional sector but are typically not an exact match to their current position at home. Rather, the PDE is an opportunity to introduce Fellows to new perspectives in their fields, deepen their awareness and understanding of issues present in both in their home countries and the United States, and learn best practices that can be applied to their work at home. PDEs will be intensive and demanding. Up to 100 Fellows will be competitively selected for the PDE and will be placed independently at organizations across the United States. Selected Fellows must be available to be in the United States for a total of approximately 11 weeks (including the Leadership Institute, the Summit, and the placement with a U.S.-based organization).

The applicant's interest in or ability to take part in the PDE component should not impact post's assessment of their suitability for the core Mandela Washington Fellowship activities. All applicants should first be evaluated based on their eligibility for the Mandela Washington Fellowship. If an applicant is applying for the PDE, please ask PDE-related questions and score the applicant's responses **separately** from the interview score. This score will not be incorporated into the applicant's interview final score.

Please note that IREX readers have not read or scored the applicants' PDE questions. Posts will need to read and score that section directly to make recommendations based on the essays and interviews.

Post may nominate up to five candidates on their slate for the PDE. Please only provide PDE scores and rank candidates if they applied for a PDE; applicants will not be considered for the PDE if they did not apply as part of their original application. Applicants for the PDE may change their minds between the time they submit their application and the interview. As such, please confirm with applicants for the PDE that they are still interested in the PDE and can participate in the full four weeks of the PDE (i.e., they will not leave early) before recommending them for a PDE. To avoid confusion, please put "N/A" in the "PDE Rank" column of the slate for all semi-finalists who did not apply for or who are no longer interested in a PDE.

PDE applicants should be reviewed using the following selection criteria:

- Potential for growth through the PDE, with the applicant demonstrating that they have some prior work experience but also have room to grow and learn through the PDE.
- Clear focus on specific goals the applicant hopes to achieve through the PDE and demonstrated vision of how they see their career progressing.
- Identification of transferable skills the applicant hopes to gain through the PDE and an openness to a variety of learning experiences, rather than a focus on a specific type of host institution.

MANDELA
WASHINGTON
FELLOWSHIP
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

- Demonstrated English fluency.
- Understanding that the goals of the PDE are for the applicant to both learn in and contribute to a U.S. organization.

Some factors to consider when interviewing PDE candidates include:

- *Ideal candidates are poised for significant career growth.* Candidates should have at least 2-3 years of experience in their field or area of interest but would benefit from concentrated mentorship, skill development, and on-the-job learning with a Host Organization. PDEs offer practical skills and experiences that are different from what Fellows learn in a classroom; while all Fellows benefit from the academic component of the Fellowship, a Fellow with many years of experience may not gain as much from a PDE as someone earlier in their career. Additionally, Fellows who have already spent an extended period studying or working in a Western country are less likely to experience significant growth during a PDE, given previous exposure to Western organizations and similar internship opportunities.

- *Ideal candidates have a focused career trajectory.* While most Fellows have diverse interests and are involved in several parts of their communities, Fellows are most successful in PDEs when they have clear professional goals in mind that can be achieved within the four-week long PDE. Candidates should be focused on using their PDE to develop transferable skills that will further their organization, personal project, or long-term goals rather than using their PDE as a first career experience or to start a new side project in a field in which they have little to no experience. Fellows who are more focused also provide greater value to a Host Organization and gain more from the PDE overall.

- *Ideal candidates are open-minded, proactive, and eager to learn from a U.S. organization but not set on one specific company, institution, or government agency.* Candidates should understand that placements at specific organizations are not guaranteed, and in some cases, Fellows may be paired with organizations in a different sector than at home (i.e., Fellows working for NGOs may be placed in the U.S. public sector) because their field may be organized differently in the United States. Candidates should also understand that they will be paired with an organization that is a match for the transferable skills they want to develop, which may or may not be in their direct field. Ideal candidates will also be proactive self-starters who will take an active role in shaping their PDE.

- *Ideal candidates should be open to learning transferable skills.* Candidates will be learning from an organization that can offer functional expertise in a skill area they hope to grow. Some examples of these skill sets include program management, organizational management, finance, volunteer recruitment, human resources, and strategic planning. Candidates should note that their field and similar organizations may be organized differently in the United States than in their home country. For example, a Fellow who runs a company trying to spur economic development would likely be placed in a public sector organization with that focus in a U.S. community. Oftentimes, U.S. non-profit organizations or government agencies are well-established experts in fields in which Fellows may be trying to run a social

business at home. Fellows who can identify concrete skills that they wish to develop or build on while in the United States will likely be better candidates than those looking exclusively for a project-based experience.

- *Ideal candidates have at least 2-3 years of experience working in an office environment.* The vast majority of PDEs are in a traditional U.S. office rather than in the field. Candidates must have at least an intermediate level of fluency in basic office computer programs, such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and be comfortable using technology and operating in an office environment. Specialized software skills are also beneficial.

- *Candidates must have a high level of English fluency.* Candidates will be required to work 35-40 hours per week at their Host Organization and must have English skills advanced enough to read, write, comprehend, and hold conversations throughout the workday. They must also be comfortable and confident English speakers who feel prepared to speak and write in English exclusively with their Host Organization. **Candidates who speak English well relative to most of their country still may not be prepared for an English-speaking work environment**, and this can lead to significant challenges for both the Fellow and Host Organization during the PDE. Candidates who are deaf should be proficient in, or be prepared to learn, ASL prior to their arrival in the United States, as PDE Host Organizations and available interpreters may only know ASL.

- *Candidates should understand that the goals of the PDE are both for them to learn in and contribute to a U.S. organization.* The PDE is a chance to expand their network and skills, but it is **not** a fundraising opportunity. All candidates should be excellent individual representatives of their countries and the Fellowship, even when apart from a group. Their goals and demeanor should reflect an ability to be an effective ambassador who will help build connections with Fellowship partners.

- *Candidates in fields typically located outside metropolitan areas should be aware that they may be in a more remote location for a PDE placement.* While most Fellows will be placed in cohorts in metropolitan areas, Fellows who are focused on agriculture, ecological preservation, or another sector prominent in more rural areas will likely find themselves in more isolated environments if they wish to focus on hands-on work in the field rather than broad transferable skill development. While some Fellows embrace the solitude and time for personal reflection that come with rural placements, others struggle with this type of location. ECA and IREX will discuss this with Fellows who are potentially going to be in rural areas, but it is helpful for post to begin setting expectations for Fellows with interests that may lead to rural placements.

- *Candidates should understand that they will be expected to dedicate some of their free time at their Institutes to preparing for the PDE.* As the PDEs are just four weeks long, Fellows will need to use the unstructured time at their Institutes to have regular conversations with their PDE Hosts, review introductory materials, complete any onboarding paperwork, and draft their Work Plan in collaboration with their PDE Host Supervisor. Fellows should be prepared for

this time commitment during the Institutes so that they can balance it with other activities and networking accordingly.

- *Some ideal candidate backgrounds for PDE placements include:*
  - Business professionals interested in working in an established U.S. company or start-up that can help them hone functional areas of expertise, such as finance, human resources, strategy, business development, or organizational management;
  - Public sector professionals interested in exploring program management and/or policymaking on a local, state, or federal level;
  - NGO and non-profit professionals interested in exposure to the management of a U.S. non-profit organization and developing skills like grant writing, board development, and partner management; and
  - Community development professionals interested in working in an organization that manages community-focused initiatives focusing on economic development, training and education, children, or women and girls.

- *We are **not** able to accommodate the following types of PDE placements:*
  - United Nations, World Bank, IMF, or other multilateral or non-U.S. Governmental organizations;
  - Placements solely practicing clinical medicine in the United States (though there are opportunities in public health and community health-focused organizations);
  - Placements at organizations that are fully remote and do not have physical office locations. Tech professionals with a focus on software or app development, where a high number of U.S. organizations are operating remotely, should demonstrate openness to a variety of technology-related placements; and
  - Education-focused placements in classrooms. Most schools are not in session during the PDE, so education professionals would be focused on education policy, school management, curriculum planning, and/or teacher development rather than classroom management and teaching pedagogy.

Slate Diversity

The Department of State and IREX are committed to selecting and supporting a diverse cohort of Mandela Washington Fellows.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship does not discriminate against applicants because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic as established by U.S. law. The Fellowship is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusion.

Each country has been allocated an approximate number of Finalist slots, but Posts will submit a slate of candidates above this number to account for both Finalist and Alternate candidates. The final slate numbers, which are inclusive of Alternate candidates, will be posted on the ECA Mandela Washington Fellowship SharePoint site. Your proposed slate should be as diverse as possible. **A diverse and**

balanced slate is more likely to be accepted without changes. When finalizing your slate, please remember that your slate should maximize the impact that the Mandela Washington Fellowship will have on your country over the next 10 years. We do not impose quotas or specific targets for the types of candidates you select. However, you should submit a balanced slate of candidates that reflects your Post's priorities and the following guidelines:

- Maintain gender balance, including representation from non-binary applicants;
- Balance representation among the three tracks;
- Seek an appropriate balance of candidates from urban and rural areas based on your country's demographics;
- Consider diversity in **every** sense of the word, including religious, ethnic, socio-economic, etc., as well as persons with disabilities; and
- Include individuals with varied professional backgrounds and interests (for example, not all candidates should work in the health sector).

Please also keep in mind the following:

- Individuals on your slate should have limited or no academic experience in the United States; applicants who have spent a significant amount of time in the United States (for example, a semester or more at a U.S. college or a degree from a U.S. university) are not ideal candidates for the Fellowship.
- Individuals who have participated in other U.S. Government-funded exchange programs (for example, programs like the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) or Study of U.S. Institutes (SUSI), especially longer-term and more recent programs, are also **not** ideal candidates for the Fellowship.

Posts are encouraged to submit a full slate that includes the complete number of both finalist and alternate candidates as noted in the final slate numbers. Posts should submit a diverse slate that is gender-balanced and provides the requested percentage of candidates in each track. In the past, some posts have found it difficult to put forward a full slate of candidates that they consider to be excellent. If you do not feel the quality of your candidates allows you to put forward a full slate, please submit a partial slate. It is better to put forward only excellent candidates, as you will be working closely with the Fellows upon their return home. Additional candidates from countries with very strong applicant pools can be selected to balance the Fellowship numbers between countries, if need be.

Note: During the selection process in Washington, D.C., we do our best to respect post slates, provided that posts submit full slates and that they reflect the diversity factors stated above. Equal balance of gender and appropriate track representation is the most important of these factors. In cases where a candidate is unable to participate in the Fellowship, we will attempt to replace them with an Alternate candidate from your slate of the same gender and track. **If you do not have Alternates who match the background of the Finalist who dropped, you may lose that slot on your slate.**

All selections and replacements will be managed by ECA in Washington, D.C. Posts should never offer individuals Mandela Washington Fellowships without first consulting with the ECA program office. This year, ECA and IREX will have a replacement deadline at which point we will no longer be able to replace Finalists who drop/withdraw from the program. Please keep this in mind as you are selecting applicants and working with Finalists and Alternates so you can ensure they are fully committed to participating in the Fellowship.

Sample Interview Questions

Below are some recommended sample interview questions, categorized by the selection criteria they will help evaluate. Alternatively, posts can create their own questions to assess candidates against the Mandela Washington Fellowship selection criteria. If posts create their own questions, please consider sharing them with Natalie Spencer (SpencerNR@state.gov) so that we can incorporate them into future selection materials.

1. Proven record of leadership and accomplishment in business or entrepreneurship, civic engagement, or public/government service:

   - Explain a time that you have been innovative within your present company or organization.
   - How have you influenced other people to work with you to create change?
   - What do you find most valuable or motivating about working in your company or organization? What compels you to work there?
   - Tell us about how you began working in [track]. What drew you to the field? What keeps you there?
   - What are some traits that you admire in other leaders? What have you learned from others in life/work or from historical leaders?

2. Demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship:

   - Identify a project that you would like to do when you return home that would provide mentoring opportunities to residents of your community.
   - What experience do you have mentoring others in your community or organization?
   - What role does mentoring play in the overall development of capacity-building and leadership development?
   - What causes have you volunteered with/for in the past? How did you work to raise awareness for those causes?

3. Demonstrated ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and to respect the opinion of others:

   - Give an example of a time when you have worked cooperatively in a diverse group.
   - Give an example of a time your opinion was challenged. How did you respond to others' opposing viewpoints?

- Have you ever had a professional disagreement? Describe how you handled the disagreement. Were you able to resolve the disagreement?
- Describe a personal or professional challenge that you have faced.
- How would your colleagues or supervisor describe you?
- What is your philosophical perspective on getting along with others? What would you say is key to building harmonious interpersonal relationships?

4. Demonstrated knowledge of, interest in, and professional experience in the preferred sector/track:

- What are some of the challenges your community, organization, industry, or country is currently experiencing? What do you see as key barriers to resolving this challenge?
- What are your professional goals? How will the Mandela Washington Fellowship help you meet those goals?
- If you could accomplish one professional goal while in the United States, what would it be?
- Identify three or four things you would like to learn while in the United States that would contribute to your success when you return home.

5. Demonstrated commitment to return to Sub-Saharan Africa and contribute skills and talents to build and serve their communities:

- After completing the Fellowship, how do you plan to use the knowledge you gained in the United States in your current capacity?
- Describe the steps you would take to address the challenges you have indicated for your community, organization, industry, or country.
- What role would you play as a leader to implement strategies needed to overcome the stated challenges?
- What do you appreciate about your country? What can your country and/or community teach the United States?

6. Communication skills and English language ability:

- When did you begin studying English? How do you use your knowledge of English in your everyday life?
- What is an aspect of American culture that you find particularly interesting?
- *In order to ensure that participants can converse about more than their professional achievements, please ask a few personal questions, such as asking them to describe their home city, family, etc.*

7. Energetic, positive attitude:

   - *Post is welcome to ask additional questions regarding this criterion, but this may also be assessed through the applicant's demeanor throughout the interview and will not be given a unique score on the sample interview evaluation sheet included in the appendices.*

8. Potential impact of PDE on work and long-term career goals (only for those applying for PDE):

   - Describe how a Professional Development Experience would help you achieve your short- and long-term career goals.
   - Identify a particular sector or focus of a PDE that would contribute to your success when you return home.
   - What types of skills are you hoping to strengthen during your Fellowship? How do you think a PDE could contribute to these skills?
   - Do you feel comfortable using technology and basic software such as Microsoft Word and Excel within an office environment as well as speaking English full-time in a U.S. office?
   - Are you prepared to spend four weeks living in a U.S. city or town and working in a U.S. office, perhaps without other Fellows? Have you lived on your own for an extended period of time before? Fellows are obligated to work for the full four weeks of the PDE and cannot leave early.

Fellow Expectations

When conducting your interviews, it is important to remind applicants of the rigor and intensity of the Leadership Institutes. As Fellows, and per the Fellowship Terms and Conditions that each Fellow signs, they are required to attend and fully participate in all scheduled Institute activities and site visits. The Fellowship will offer networking opportunities, but Fellows should research and identify potential connections to contact on their own during unscheduled time. **The Fellowship is not designed to help Fellows identify funding for their projects or organizations.**

Recommendation

In the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet, you will enter your post's final recommendation for each nominated applicant based on your review, interview, and overall assessment of the applicant's suitability for the Fellowship. You will also provide a recommendation for candidates that you are nominating for the PDE.

- **Highly Recommend:** The applicant is a stellar candidate for the Fellowship and meets, if not exceeds, all the Fellowship selection criteria and post priorities. The applicant meets all technical eligibility criteria. The applicant is highly proficient in English and has received an English score of 4 or 5.

- **Recommend:** The applicant is a good candidate for the Fellowship and meets most, if not all, of the Fellowship selection criteria and post priorities. The applicant meets all technical

eligibility criteria. The applicant is highly proficient in English and has received an English score of 4 or 5.

- **Do Not Recommend:** The applicant is not a suitable candidate for the Fellowship and does not meet most of the Fellowship selection criteria and post priorities. The applicant may not meet all technical eligibility criteria. The applicant is not highly proficient in English and has received an English score of a 3 or below.

Ideally, each applicant included on your post's final slate will have a recommendation of "Highly Recommend" or "Recommend." If your post does not have sufficient qualified candidates or anticipates other issues with meeting your slate number requirements, please reach out to ECA prior to slate submission.

Post Comments

Post comments are **very** important, as they are heavily utilized in the selection and placement process that takes place in Washington, D.C. and help ECA identify Fellows for special opportunities during the Fellowship.

In the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet, please include concise comments (3-4 sentences) about each candidate you put forward. Please also comment, as relevant, on candidates' former U.S. experiences and how they would benefit from their participation in the Fellowship. It is important that posts provide the correct comments for the correct applicant, especially as some applicants may have the same first or last names.

See notes regarding [writing comments](#) *in* [Section 5: Submitting Slates to IREX](#).

Section 5: Submitting Slates to IREX

Posts must submit final slates via email to IREX at MWFellowship@irex.org **by 4:00 PM ET on February 1, 2023.** Please copy Natalie Spencer on this email (SpencerNR@state.gov).

If there is additional information ECA and IREX should know about your slate (for example, if you could not balance your slate by gender or could not provide a full slate), please note this in the email when you submit your slate to IREX. IREX will follow up via email to confirm any missing information if necessary.

Please use the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet downloaded from OAS to submit these nominations; do not attempt to create your own (see the *OAS How-To Guide for Posts* and the *Post Slate and Excel How-To Guide* in the [Appendices](#) for details on how to download the spreadsheet). **Slates must follow this format.**

Number of Candidates

Each country has been allocated an approximate number of Finalist slots, but Posts will submit a slate of candidates above this number to account for both Finalist and Alternate candidates. The final slate numbers, which are inclusive of Alternate candidates, will be shared on the [ECA Mandela Washington Fellowship SharePoint site](#). Posts are encouraged to submit a full slate that includes the complete number of candidates as noted in the final slate numbers. For example, if your post's slate number is 21, your post should submit 21 candidates. Post should submit a gender-balanced and appropriately track-balanced slate to the best of post's ability.

Deferred Candidates from 2022

If post deferred 2022 Finalists for any reason and a deferred 2022 Finalist re-applied for the 2023 Fellowship, then post must put that candidate as their first ranked nomination on the slate to ensure the candidate is selected during the selection panel in Washington, D.C. **The one-year deferral from 2022 can only be honored if the deferred candidate re-applies and meets the eligibility requirements for the 2023 Fellowship.**

Entering Post Scores and Comments in the Spreadsheet

You will enter interview scores and comments directly into the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet downloaded from OAS (see the *OAS How-To Guide for Posts* appendix for instructions on downloading this spreadsheet). This spreadsheet will contain data for all your post's **applicants**; however, you only need to enter scores and comments for your nominated candidates.

The Post Slate Excel spreadsheet will include two application numbers for each of your applicants:

- **Column A: Application ID**
    - This is the 20-digit, long application ID used by OAS to identify applications.
- **Column B: Short Application ID**
    - This is the simplified application ID (e.g., ET008408) that is included on at the top of the application PDF (including bulk-downloaded PDFs). It is recommended that post use this simplified application ID to match applicants with their PDFs and information on the *Post Slate* Excel spreadsheet. Once you have interviewed applicants and decided which candidates you wish to put forward, you will need to enter the relevant information for those candidates ONLY. Please delete the rows of other non-nominated applicants.

Some applicants may have the same first or last names; it is important that posts include the correct candidate on their Post Slate Excel spreadsheet. It is recommended that you refer to the simplified application ID (column B) to ensure you are entering your comments for the correct candidate.

You are asked to enter data for your selected candidates in the columns noted on the spreadsheet downloaded from OAS. **Please DO NOT edit any of the information in any of the other columns, which are pre-populated by the system**:

- **Column F**: **Candidate Rank**
    - Enter the numerical rank for each candidate from 1 (the highest-ranked candidate) to the lowest-ranked candidate (number will depend on the number of slots your post has been allotted).
    - Please **do not** give the same rank to more than one candidate.
- **Column G**: **English Score**
    - Using the English Language Proficiency Scale linked as an appendix for reference, enter a score of up to 5 for each candidate's English ability, with 5 being highly proficient in English.
- **Column H: National Capital?**
    - Enter "Yes" if the candidate currently works in the national capital and "No" if the candidate does not currently work in the national capital.
    - A national capital city is the seat of your federal or national government (e.g., Abuja, Nigeria, or Dakar, Senegal).
- **Column I: Current Work Location**
    - This should correspond to applicant's primary work location.
    - Enter one of the following options: Major city, Other city or town, Rural area.
        - "Major city" is defined an urban area with a large population of about 100,000+ people (e.g., Cape Town, South Africa).
        - "Other city or town" is roughly defined as a semi-urban area with a population between 2,500 – 100,000 people (e.g., Lamu, Kenya).
        - "Rural area" is defined as any area with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants and is distinctively not in an urban area (e.g., Chachani, Tanzania).

- o Only use one of the specified options above and **do not list specific cities or towns** in this column.
- **Column J: Post recommends for Mandela Washington Fellowship?**
  - o Enter either "Highly Recommend" or "Recommend" for each candidate.
  - o Posts are discouraged from including candidates with a "Do Not Recommend" rating on their slates.
- **Column K: Recommended Institute Track**
  - o Enter the track (Leadership in Business, Leadership in Civic Engagement, or Leadership in Public Management) that would be most appropriate for each applicant. The recommended sector track does not have to be the applicant's first choice; rather, post should enter the track that it believes is most appropriate.
- **Column L: Post recommends for PDE?**
  - o Enter either "Highly Recommend" or "Recommend" for each candidate. If the applicant has not applied for the PDE, is no longer interested in the PDE, or you are not nominating the applicant for the PDE, enter "N/A".
  - o If you enter a recommendation for a candidate that did not apply for the PDE, they **will not** be considered.
- **Column M: PDE Rank**
  - o Similar to the interview rank, but only for those who are applying for the PDE, 1 is the candidate who you would most like to see obtain a PDE.
  - o Please do not give the same rank to more than one candidate.
  - o Any applicants who did not apply for the PDE, are no longer interested in the PDE, or are not nominated for the PDE should have "N/A" written in this column.
  - o If you enter a rank for a candidate that did not apply for the PDE, they **will not** be considered.
- **Column N: Post Comments**
  - o Your comments are essential for ECA, AFPD, and IREX to make informed decisions about Mandela Washington Fellowship Finalists and Alternates, and **they are the most important component of your slate**. See the suggestions in the *Post Comments* section for writing useful and comprehensive comments for each candidate.
  - o Address any potential concerns about the applicant and include thorough justification for post's ranking and recommendation.
  - o Include any relevant comments here about a candidate's gender. Gender is how the candidate identifies: female, male, or non-binary. This can be different from a person's biological sex or their identity documents. If a candidate identifies as non-binary, please note any preferences on how they wish to be addressed.
  - o It is important that your post provide correct comments for the correct applicant, especially as some applicants may have the same first and/or last names.
- **Column O: U.S. Experience**
  - o Please expand upon and explain applicants' prior U.S. experience and comment on what more they could gain from participating in the Fellowship.

It is crucial that post completes all the above columns for all candidates on the slate. If submitted slates are missing information in the above columns, the slates will not be considered finalized, and

post will need to revise the slate and resubmit to IREX. Please ensure all the above columns are completed before submitting your slate.

Post Comments

Post comments are very important, as they are heavily utilized in the selection and placement process that takes place in Washington, D.C. and help ECA identify Fellows for special opportunities during the Fellowship.

To help facilitate the final selection of candidates, please include 3-4 sentences of comments on the Post Slate Excel spreadsheet highlighting why each candidate should or should not be selected for participation. Comments on Finalists' English speaking and comprehension abilities as well other criteria are strongly encouraged. Please also include information about the applicant's current work, demonstrated commitment to the community, and attitude and openness to diverse views.

It is important that posts provide the correct comments for the correct applicant, especially as some applicants may have the same first or last names. It is recommended that you refer to the simplified application ID (column B) to ensure you are entering your comments for the correct candidate.

Examples of useful comments that will help to inform selection include:

Ms. C founded the NGO Teenz Global Foundation (TGF) in 2011 to combat destructive teen behaviors. CITY, the capital of COUNTRY, has major problems with teen violence and drug abuse that hamper economic development in large areas of the city. Under Ms. C's leadership, the foundation has evolved to create Teens Care (guidance and counseling programs), Teenz Tym (weekly educational programs airing every Saturday reaching 30,000 viewers), and free distribution of TGF Magazine, which contains articles geared toward orienting teens towards positive change. Ms. C, a compelling speaker and educator, plans to use the Fellowship to broaden her knowledge of fundraising and advocacy campaigns. Professional Development Experience: Yes, she would benefit from developing skills in positive youth development, ideally at an organization that manages mentoring programs.

K is a confident, dynamic, and well-presented business leader. Taking over a fledgling family accounting and consultancy firm at the tender age of 26, he has completely turned the business around. Highlighting the need for honest, professional accounting services in COUNTRY, K eloquently drew a direct link between the work of his firm and the foundation of trust necessary to keep international donors' funds working for COUNTRY's development. K is a model business leader in his company and his community.

A civil servant on the COUNTRY's Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Mr. A, although a junior member of JAMB, has secured agreement to move JAMB from a 19th-century paper and filing system to a 21st-century system of computer software management. Mr. A identified inefficiency and graft as among the biggest problems in government, with poor computer literacy and an ossified mindset abetting the problems. His innovation in JAMB is his

own internal push to get the government to compel computer training for all government workers and draw up plans for computerization of all government organizations and operations. He also wants to learn about developments in the field of human resources: "I know it's more than just staff recruitment, equipment acquisition, pay, and promotion."

A "U.S. Experience" column for posts to complete to provide additional context on applicants' prior U.S. experiences, as relevant. If an applicant has never traveled to the United States before, you can input "N/A" in this column. If an applicant has traveled to the United States, studied in the United States, and/or previously participated in a U.S. Government-funded program, please explain their program participation and what more they could gain professionally from their participation in the Fellowship.

Examples of useful comments that will help to inform selection include:

Mr. B studied for one semester at the University of Maryland in 2015 as part of his undergraduate studies. While he was in the United States for four months, he did not spend extensive time studying TRACK and still sees value in exploring that during the Fellowship to help develop his skills in SECTOR.

In the summer of 2018, D participated in a Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI) program. While she was able to gain valuable insights into U.S. educational institutions, she still hopes to develop further expertise in TRACK through the Fellowship.

Slate Nomination Review During the Selection Process

All information included in post slates is reviewed carefully by the selection panel in Washington, D.C. While we do our best to respect the slates submitted by post during the selection process, ECA and AFPD have full discretion to select the final candidates, and there may be changes made to the candidates nominated by post to balance for diversity of the final cohort. The selection panel will use the following guiding principles to ensure that the 2023 Mandela Washington Fellowship cohort is diverse and balanced:

- Balanced gender representation across full cohort, with equal representation of female- and male-identifying applicants and inclusive of non-binary applicants;
- Maintain track balance, ensuring that each of the three tracks have the correct number of Fellows;
- Include Fellows from diverse regions within home countries;
- Include Fellows from both urban and rural areas; and
- Include Fellows with disabilities, broadening accessibility to a diverse set of disabilities (visual, hearing, mobility, medical, etc.).

Disqualifications

Submitted slates may also be changed during the selection process due to disqualifications. The applications of all candidates nominated by post are carefully reviewed for technical eligibility and plagiarism, and some candidates may be disqualified through this process. Any applicant found to not meet the Fellowship's technical eligibility requirements will be disqualified; examples of technical eligibility disqualifications include applicants over- or under-age to participate in the Fellowship, applicants working for the U.S. Government, and applicants not living in a Fellowship-eligible country.

Cheating and/or misrepresentation during a virtual interview will also result in disqualification. Application essays will also be reviewed for plagiarism, and if applicants use language copied from other Fellowship applications (including other applicants' or those of Fellowship Alumni) or from other sources (including websites), their application will be disqualified. All applicants are provided with information about plagiarism in the Fellowship application and are required to confirm their understanding that their application will be disqualified if they submit answers that are not their own original work.

Appendices

Selection Materials

These materials will assist Post in conducting selection activities:

Online Application System (OAS) How-To Guide for Posts
Instructions on navigating the OAS platform, utilizing the search and filter capabilities, and bulk-downloading Fellowship applications.

Post Slate and Excel How-To Guide for Posts
Instructions on navigating the *Post Slate* Excel spreadsheet and using Microsoft Excel functions.

Post Slate Excel spreadsheet template
Blank spreadsheet example of what the *Post Slate* Excel spreadsheet will look like.

Interview Evaluation Sheet
Fillable PDF version of the Interview Evaluation Sheet.

English Language Proficiency Scale
A scale that may assist in determining an applicant's English language abilities.

IREX Reader Review Materials

These materials are given to readers to explain the Mandela Washington Fellowship and to guide them in scoring applications:

Fellowship Overview and Reader Instructions
An overview of the Mandela Washington Fellowship and its components and instructions to readers on how to access and score applications.

Reader Scoring Rubric
The rubric that readers will use in determining application scores.

Reader Presentation
A presentation that provides an overview of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, reader instructions, scoring rubric, and the technical details of the OAS platform.