



Information for Fellows who are Pregnant

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to supporting positive learning and networking environments for all Fellows, including those who are pregnant. Applicants who are pregnant or who may become pregnant are encouraged to apply. If selected, pregnant Fellows will be provided with pre-natal support and can expect to be able to fully participate in the program if they are at less than 20 weeks by the start of the Fellowship in mid-June. The 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. Fellows who are more than 20 weeks pregnant or up to six months postpartum by the start of the Fellowship will have the opportunity to discuss whether their situation warrants a one-year pregnancy deferral. After Fellows are selected in March 2023, all pregnancies should be disclosed to IREX as soon as possible by contacting MWF2024@irex.org so that arrangements can be made.

More information about the support services available to pregnant Fellows is outlined below.

Eligibility and Application Process

Q: Should I apply for the Fellowship if I am currently or may be pregnant?

A: Applicants who are pregnant are encouraged to apply. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to supporting positive learning and networking environments for all Fellows, including those who are pregnant. Notifying IREX of your pregnancy will not negatively affect your eligibility to be selected for the Fellowship, but rather will help the U.S. Department of State and IREX provide you with the care and support necessary to ensure a healthy pregnancy and full participation in the program if you are selected.

Q: If I become pregnant after submitting my application, will I still be eligible to participate in the Fellowship?

A: Pregnancy does not make you ineligible for the Mandela Washington Fellowship. If you become pregnant after being selected as a Fellow, please alert IREX as soon as possible by sending an email to MWF2024@irex.org. Selected Fellows who are more than 20 weeks pregnant or up to six months postpartum may request that the U.S. Department of State consider a one-year pregnancy deferral to be granted on a case-by-case basis, pending you meet the eligibility requirements the following year.

During the Fellowship

Q: Will there be pre-natal care available for me during the Fellowship?

A: For the duration of their stay in the United States, all selected Fellows are entitled to a Health Benefit plan provided by the Accident & Sickness Program for Exchanges (APSE), 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 selected Fellows will still be responsible for the copay each time you visit the doctor, which may cost \$25-\$75 for each visit.

The pre-natal medical care selected Fellows experience in the United States may be different from what they are used 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. For more information about what selected Fellows can expect, please refer to our Pregnancy Fact Sheet that is provided to selected Fellows.

Q: Can I fully participate in the Fellowship if I am pregnant?

A: If you are selected and are less than 20 weeks pregnant by the start of the Fellowship, you should be able to fully participate in the program; however, since all pregnancies are different, please consult with your healthcare provider to confirm there are no health risks for you or your baby from your participation in the Fellowship. Note that the 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 weekdays can run from 9am to 9pm. Additionally, 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 since your meals may be primarily from a campus cafeteria. While most pregnant Fellows do not have issues, some Fellows do find it challenging to adjust to these dietary changes. If you are selected and have concerns about adjusting to these changes during your pregnancy, or if you will be more than 20 weeks pregnant by the start of the Fellowship, please contact IREX at MWF2024@irex.org to discuss the best course of action.

Travel

Q: Can I fly while pregnant?

A: 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 and who have no complications can fly without issue during the first (0-13 weeks) and second (14-26 weeks) trimesters. During the third trimester of pregnancy, many airlines often prohibit travel due to health risks for you and your baby. If you are selected and will be in your third trimester at any point during the Fellowship, please contact IREX at MWF2024@irex.org to discuss your options.