



Frequently Asked Questions

1. WHAT IS THE CRITERIA TO BECOME A SURGE FELLOW?

- African-American or Latinx leader between the ages of 28 to 40
- Bachelor's degree (minimum)
- Minimum of six years of work experience
- Employed in education or youth-serving role (district, charter, advocacy/public policy, higher education, non-profit or other) for the duration of the Fellowship
- Passion for positively impacting the lives of young people and their communities
- In addition to the above criteria, candidates must complete the Surge application, which includes supervisor approval to participate

2. BEYOND THE SPECIFIC CRITERIA ABOVE, WHAT MORE CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT THE IDEAL CAREER STAGE FOR THE FELLOWSHIP AND THE AGE RANGE CRITERIA?

Candidates who are at an inflection point in their careers and seeking a step change in their influence and impact

Regarding level in organization, it is difficult to put specific criteria around this because each case is different, but we prioritize leaders who are no more than 2-3 levels removed from the top decision-making positions in their organizations. Examples include but are not limited to: non-profit manager or director; a school leader or member of a school leadership team; a social entrepreneur who has an established venture and has strong potential to expand his/her impact.

3. IS THE CHICAGO SURGE FELLOWSHIP ONLY AVAILABLE TO AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINX CANDIDATES? IF SO, WHY?

Yes, the Surge Fellowship in Chicago is currently only available to African-American and Latinx candidates. This is an intentional decision driven by the fact that close to 85% of public school students in Chicago are African-American or Latinx, and our goal is to increase leadership representation of these large populations.

4. WHAT IS THE TUITION FEE FOR SURGE AND HOW CAN IT BE PAID?

The tuition fee is \$5,000 for the Surge Fellowship. It is expected that the fellow's organization pays the tuition fee. If the organization is unable to pay partial or full tuition, the fellow can apply for a scholarship from the Surge Institute; a limited number of scholarships are available. Scholarship recipients are required to make a personal commitment of \$500. Fellows may also pay the full tuition on their own. Tuition can be paid in two installments – one in October and the other in February.



5. HOW DOES ONE QUALIFY FOR A SURGE SCHOLARSHIP?

Qualification for a Surge scholarship award is handled on a case-by-case basis and is based on financial need. Please note, candidates for the Fellowship are not selected based on their financial status. Candidates apply for the Fellowship in the Memorandum of Understanding that is a required part of the application.

6. I HAVE A CONFLICT WITH THE SELECTION DAYS, COULD I SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW FOR ANOTHER TIME OR PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY?

Unfortunately, candidates must interview in person during one of the Selection Interview Days in order to be considered for the fellowship. This is due to the fact that the interview process includes multiple interview activities, including a small group activity. Applicants for the fellowship should make sure they are available on the designated dates.

7. WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR PARTICIPATING IN SURGE?

The fellowship begins in October 2019 and concludes in August 2020; the dates are listed on our website. The fellowship kicks off with a two and a half-day opening retreat and culminates in a two and a half-day closing retreat and graduation celebration.

From November 2019 through July 2020, the fellowship cohort participates in monthly full-day sessions that begin at 7:30 AM and end at 5:30 PM. Fellows are required to attend all retreats and monthly sessions in their entirety, arriving on time for each session and departing at the conclusion of the scheduled programming.

Fellows are also required to complete pre-work assignments and meet with their executive coaches two times per month. Additionally, there are supplemental activities and community events scheduled throughout the year that are highly recommended but not required.

8. ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE SURGE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT?

Fellows are required to attend all sessions and participate for the duration of the program. In the event that extenuating circumstances arise, exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis. Each cohort is intentionally curated, and it is important for all fellows to uphold a high standard of attendance and engagement to meet our design for an excellent learning environment and experience. Applicants for the fellowship should make sure they are available on the designated dates.



9. IS THERE A DRESS CODE FOR THE SURGE FELLOWSHIP SESSIONS?

There is no formal dress code for Surge Fellowship sessions, however, given fellows will interact with influential leaders from across the landscape, most wear business or business casual attire. Another factor that may impact your attire decisions is we often take professional, candid photos and videos during Surge sessions as part of our communications and marketing efforts.

10. IS THERE CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH SURGE AFTER THE FELLOWSHIP?

Yes, it is important to us to continue to cultivate the relationships and professional development of Surge alumni. We have an active alumni community and a local alumni committee that partners with Surge staff to design and lead alumni programming.

11. DO I HAVE TO LIVE IN CHICAGO TO BE A FELLOW?

While we do not have a residency requirement, we are focused on Chicagoland, and the core of our fellowship curriculum is about education in Chicago. Additionally, it is critical that fellows are able to attend session programming and build community in Chicago.

12. IS THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE A STRICT REQUIREMENT?

We review each application on a case-by-case basis and do give consideration to special cases in which an individual's trajectory as an emerging leader has not been impacted by them not having a Bachelor's degree.