



AdoptUSKids Leadership Development

Notification of application

To be reviewed and completed by the applicant's supervisor or administrator

_____ has applied to the AdoptUSKids Leadership Development Program (APLD) program of AdoptUSKids. Nineteen fellows will be selected for Cohort Nine, which will begin in October 2026.

APLD is a 12-month program. The fellowship is designed to develop the skills of emerging leaders working in child welfare. Through the program, fellows will acquire competencies specific to policy, practice, research, and transformational leadership with a focus on adoption, guardianship, and kinship.

Criteria for eligibility

To be eligible for this program, candidates must currently be working in direct services in the child welfare field and have worked in child welfare for a minimum of five years in the US, including its territories and Tribal nations. Although there is no specific cap on the number of years working in direct services in the child welfare field, the fellowship is designed for emerging leaders. Candidates should have, at a minimum, completed their undergraduate degree.

APLD is open to a diverse group of emerging leaders who directly work in the child welfare field and have an interest in working on an action research project (ARP) related to adoption, guardianship, or kinship, specifically for children and youth who wait the longest for permanency.

In addition, APLD candidates should be:

- Seen as promising leaders and have a reputation for intellect, thoughtfulness, and collaboration.
- Comfortable interacting in virtual collaborative spaces, such as video conferencing and online courses.
- Able to devote time to actively participate in APLD which will require hours outside of work and family obligations. Comfortable interacting in virtual collaborative spaces, such as video conferencing and online courses.
- Committed to pursuing systemic change for children and families who are moving toward adoption or guardianship or who have already achieved permanency.
- Interested in advancing their skills and knowledge of adoption, guardianship, or kinship.
- Motivated to become transformational leaders.

- Committed to personal growth and learning and being part of a community of learning.
- Committed to participating in the yearlong project.
- Committed to putting their acquired leadership skills into action upon completion of the fellowship.
- Willing to complete an action research project related to adoption, guardianship or kinship during the fellowship. [Read more about action research projects \(102 KB PDF\)](#).

If the candidate is selected to participate in the fellowship, we ask their employers to clear some time for them during the regularly scheduled workday to complete the fellowship. Not only will fellows gain skills that will enhance their capacity within your organization, but they will also work on an action research project that could provide valuable information for your agency.

Listed below is the estimated amount of time candidates will need to dedicate to APLD throughout the fellowship.

Fellowship month	Activities	Total estimated hours (work and personal time)	Estimated hours only during work time
First month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a three-day on-site meeting • Attend two introduction webinars • Meet with the APLD program director via Zoom 	35	34
Months in between first and last	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in individual and group coaching • Meet with APLD program director via Zoom • Complete structured online work • Work on their ARP 	24	12
Last month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a three-day on-site meeting • Meet with the APLD program director via Zoom • Complete their ARP • Record their ARP presentation 	43	33

Fellows will participate in the following activities:

- Complete an action research project (ARP) on a topic related to adoption, guardianship, or kinship that can benefit their state, territory, tribe, or agency.
- Attend two in-person meetings in Washington, DC (travel expenses covered by the program). The meetings will be filled with three days of intensive skill-building and networking opportunities.
- Participate in Zoom meetings with the APLD staff to discuss their ARP and progress within the fellowship.
- Complete online courses on transformational leadership, research, practice, and policy.
- Participate in monthly group coaching calls with other fellows from their cohort.
- Attend monthly webinars on topics that enhance the learning done through the action research project and online curricula.

Supervisor agreement and benefits

For this program to be effective, we require that the fellows receive support from a supervisor or manager at their state, territory, tribal nation, or agency who will help them with their action research project and ensure that they have access to information, people, and data that may be required for successful completion of their project. This person will officially serve as the role of mentor for the APLD fellow.

The supervisor or manager who is identified as the mentor will also be required to attend the in-person meetings in Washington, DC (travel covered by the program). The mentors will receive guidance on how to be an effective mentor and have an opportunity to meet with other mentors on a quarterly basis.

Although the fellowship will require the applicant to dedicate time during work hours to this program, both fellows and mentors who have participated in prior cohorts have found it to be beneficial for their organization:

- Opportunity to invest in a staff person and provide them with a platform to dedicate time to work on and potentially resolve a challenge or issue identified at the local level.
- Professional development program for the organization's workforce that helps staff gain skills to become more effective leaders.

Signing below indicates that you have reviewed this document and that you understand that if the applicant is selected as a fellow, it will require them to devote time during regular work hours as estimated above.

If you require additional information, please email apld@adoptuskids.org.

Printed name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____