



INTRODUCTION TO THE FELLOWSHIP GUIDE: Academic and Site Mentors

We are excited that you are considering being an Academic or Site Mentor for a Fellow or Scholar's proposed project! The following document should answer any questions you have about being a mentor.

Why Volunteer as a Site or Academic Mentor?

Our hope is that working with our Fellows not only helps you serve your community more effectively but also gives you the opportunity to help develop the skills of highly motivated, service-minded students who are the best and brightest of our emerging health leaders. You will also be invited to Fellowship events and activities like the Evening of Difference.

Each Fellow or Scholar will work under the supervision of a Site Mentor from the participating agency and an Academic Mentor of the student's choice from the student's current academic institution. The Executive Director (ED) and Fellowship staff are also key sources of support and guidance throughout the Fellowship year.

About Us

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Houston-Galveston (ASFHG) is a 501c3 nonprofit that offers graduate and undergraduate students the opportunity to design and implement a year-long mentored community project that addresses an unmet health need for an underserved population in our area. We were founded in 1940 by Albert Schweitzer and we are one of 13 chapters nationwide. Students are paired with Site Mentors from the host organization, Academic Mentors from the student's home institution, a Public Health Mentor (PHM), and for those who request it, a Fellow for Life (FFL) mentor, a former Fellow from our alumni network, to enhance the mentorship given by ASFHG staff. Projects should extend the services of existing community organizations who serve vulnerable populations, with the goal of creating immediate and lasting impact in the Houston-Galveston area.

Please visit our website (www.asfhg.org) for a list of current Fellows and their projects, a listing of staff and Board, application guidelines, past Fellow projects, and other agencies we have partnered with.

Our Executive Director is Andrea Link, MD and she can be reached at Andrea.Link@asfhg.org or her cell 713-927-8025. The rest of the staff will be introduced in the ASFHG Mentor Guidebook, which will be sent to you when Fellows and Scholars have been accepted into the program.

Project Basics

Fellows may choose to develop a totally unique project in keeping with Dr. Schweitzer's directive that everyone should find their own Lambaréné—their own special place to serve, and way of serving. Alternatively, applicants may carry on a current Fellow's project. Projects should:

- Provide a direct service that meets a community-defined need and reflects national and local health priorities.
- Have a sustainability plan as they are expected to be of enduring value to the community/agency served
- Have an evaluation plan so that impact can be assessed.

Service Hours

- Senior Fellows (graduate students) must design and carry out a service project of at least 200 hours.
- Junior Fellows (undergraduate students) and Scholars (physicians who are in residency or fellowship) commit to projects that are less time-intensive at 100 hours.

At least half of the required hours must be spent in **direct**, face-to-face contact with the population being served (e.g., Senior Fellows must complete at least 100 direct hours and Junior Fellows and Scholars must complete at least 50 direct hours). These direct service hours do not include administrative duties or research.

Fellowship Basics

In addition to the project, Fellows are required to:

- Attend all monthly meetings that provide Fellows with leadership development, skills-based workshops, interdisciplinary discussions, time for reflection on community service, and an opportunity to network with like-minded students from diverse fields as well as professionals in areas of interest to them.
- Submit monthly reports to their Public Health Mentor, Academic Mentor, and Site Mentor.
- Senior Fellows and Scholars receive \$1000 and Junior Fellows receive \$650, which should go toward supporting their projects.

Fellowship Timeline

In the fall and winter before their year of service, ASFHG recruits students and applicants to reach out to potential Mentors to start planning their proposed project.

Applications are due in early February with top candidates invited to interview in March. Final decisions are emailed to the candidates and their mentors by early April.

The Fellowship year officially begins in May with the summer used primarily for planning and then the fall, winter, and spring for implementation and evaluation.

Time Commitment of Mentors

It is the expectation that Site Mentors and Academic Mentors will likely spend **one to two hours a month** working with the Fellows. Both Academic and Site Mentors are asked to touch base with the Fellows as needed. This depends on the capacity of mentors and the need of the project.

Expectations of the Mentors

BEFORE Fellows Have Been Accepted into the Fellowship

- Discuss the project with the applicant making sure that Site Mentors feel it is a feasible project that meets the needs of the agency, and the Academic Mentor feels the project is a good fit for their area of expertise;
- Fill out the Mentor Survey that can be found on our website under the Apply tab or by clicking [here](#).

AFTER Fellows Have Been Accepted into the Fellowship

SITE MENTORS:

- Engage with the Fellow to help them understand the needs of your agency and the community you serve;
- Provide practical guidance to the Fellow on project implementation and ongoing evaluation, including overcoming challenges within the project or agency;
- Orient the Fellow to the organization, including its personnel, policies, physical facilities, clientele, and the surrounding geographic area;
- Facilitate introductions between the Fellow and agency staff and/or stakeholders;
- Communicate any safety issues to the Fellow;
- Meet with the Fellow and the mentoring team (PHM, Academic Mentor and Fellow(s)) twice a year and then as needed;
- Review the Fellow's monthly reports sent via email and respond if appropriate;
- Complete a site mentor survey at the end of the Fellowship year and
- Report any concerns to the ASFHG staff.

ACADEMIC MENTORS:

- Along with the ASFHG staff, specifically the assigned Public Health Mentor (PHM), assist in designing and implementing the Fellow's project to include curriculum review and verification strategy development;
- Assist the Fellow in determining if the project needs Internal Review Board (IRB) approval and guide the Fellow through the process if/when necessary;
- Be available by telephone and/or email throughout the Fellow's project to discuss the project's implementation or to help solve any problems that may arise;
- Meet with the Fellow and the Advising Team (PHM, Site Mentor and Fellow(s)) twice a year and then as needed;
- Provide general guidance in the personal and professional development of the Fellow and assist the student in balancing academic obligations with the service project when necessary;
- Act as a resource to the Fellow for professional contacts that may assist them over the course of the Fellowship;
- Review the Fellow's monthly reports sent via email and respond if appropriate; and
- Report any concerns to the ASFHG staff.

As mentioned, the ASFHG Mentor Guidebook will be provided to all mentors after Fellows have been accepted into the Fellowship. This will provide ASFHG staff contact information, expectations of mentors, important dates to the Fellowship timeline for 2025 - 2026, an All-Team Meeting description, time commitment of mentors, and when mentors should reach out to the ASFHG staff. Thank you for your time and interest in becoming a mentor to our future Fellows and Scholars!