

Illinois Bridge Fellowship Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Bridge Fellowship?

The Bridge Fellowship is a statewide career accelerator for future Illinois principals that addresses the disproportionate number of women and/or people of color in principal positions. Bridge Fellows engage in job-embedded leadership experiences, coaching, and professional networking opportunities to:

- build instructional leadership skills through an in-school, paid fellowship.
- improve job market competitiveness.
- locate schools that are a good fit for them as a new principal, and
- succeed as a new school principal.

Who is eligible to be a Bridge Fellow?

A Bridge Fellow will:

- identify as a woman and/or a person of color.
- be certified with the Illinois Principal Endorsement or Type 75 Certificate.
- plan to apply for an Illinois principal position during the 2024-2025 school year.
- serve as an assistant principal or other school leadership position (preferred).
- work full-time in their school for at least a year.
- serve in a school outside of Chicago Public Schools, and
- serve in a school that administers the Illinois Assessment of Readiness and the 5 Essentials survey.

While full-time classroom teachers can apply, preference will be given to individuals in assistant principal or other school leadership positions.

What are the benefits of participating in Bridge Fellowship?

Successful completion of activities results in:

- \$5,000 honorarium
- 24 hours of continuing education hours towards license renewal.
- micro-credentials in Leadership for Equity and Social-Emotional Learning, which appear as specialized credentials on your educator license
- up to 30 professional development hours or IAA credit.

Bridge Fellows also have the opportunity to influence Illinois education leadership pipeline supports by participating in a research study about their experiences.

How do I apply to become a Bridge Fellow?

You can apply online to be a Bridge Fellow today by:

- completing the application at <https://tinyurl.com/bridgeapplynow>
- getting your principal to sign a letter of support for your Fellowship

What is the time commitment, as a *Bridge Fellow*?

If you are selected, we will support your work and learning over a two-year period:

- Fellowship Year (June 2023 - May 2024): Apply to be a principal
- Induction Year (June 2024 - June 2025): First year principal support and coaching

In the Fellowship Year, Bridge Fellows will be required to:

- attend an in-person kick-off on June 13, 2023 in Bloomington, IL.
- lead an instructional improvement team through learning cycles in your current school.
- engage in bi-weekly 90-minute virtual learning sessions
- meet bi-weekly for 60 minutes with a coach (in-person or virtually).
- meet with the supervising principal for 30 minutes weekly.
- complete reflections/assignments designed to extend the learning.
- pursue open principal positions.

The Fellowship Year requires 8 hours per week: Four hours for job-embedded learning, in your current school and four hours for outside-school learning activities.

In the Induction Year, all Bridge Fellows that become principals continue to:

- engage in one-on-one online or in-person coaching,
- participate in networked learning with new and more experienced principals, and
- can engage in the Illinois New Principal Mentoring program.

What is the nature of the coaching for the *Bridge Fellowship Candidates*?

Bridge Fellows will receive support and guidance through a blended coaching model. Bridge Fellows will meet bi-weekly for 60min with their coach, who will provide support with the implementation of Learning Cycles.

What does my current principal have to do to support my *Bridge Fellowship*?

Your principal is a partner in your Fellowship. Principals are expected to:

- attend a day-long, in-person meeting on June 13, 2023,
- create conditions for Fellowship success and learning,
- meet with the aspiring principal fellow 30 minutes per week to provide support,
- meet with the aspiring principal fellow's coach 30 minutes per month, and
- participate in Coaching Fundamentals Training (6 hours, virtual).

Is there any training or time commitment expected of teachers?

Through the Bridge Fellowship, candidates will be expected to lead a team of teachers through the learning cycle process over the duration of the school year. This will require the participation of an existing or newly created teacher team willing to participate.

For more information and to apply, please visit our dashboard at <https://tinyurl.com/bridgedashboard>.

If you have any questions, please contact us at thebridgeproject@wested.org.

