Request for Proposal (RFP) for the AASHL Leadership Fellowship Program Evaluation

December 2023

AAHSL is issuing a Request for Proposal from evaluation professionals to conduct an assessment of its Leadership Fellows Program from 2013-2023.

Below is the background and specifications for the evaluation.

Send RFP response to: AAHSL Office (office@aahsl.org)

Deadline date: February 20, 2024

For additional information: Contact office@aahsl.org or Program Director, Judy Cohn, Judith.s.cohn@gmail.com

Project, Overview, Scope, and Budget
The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) proposes to conduct an evaluation of the Leadership Fellows Program (LFP). The LFP is co-sponsored by AAHSL and the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The scope of the evaluation will be limited to fellows who participated in the program, and will cover the last nine cohorts, specifically those from the following years: 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023. This comprises a total of 9 cohorts, with five to six fellows in each cohort, for a total of approximately 45 fellows. This evaluation will use a mixed-methods approach that will include a survey, that where possible, will align with the last evaluation survey conducted in 2013. The purpose is to gauge and assess the program’s impact and changes over time. The survey will be complemented by web conferencing interviews to gather additional qualitative data. Unless the vendor can provide a compelling rationale for including the mentors, this group will be out of scope for this evaluation. The budget for the entire evaluation is $10,000. Members of the AAHSL Future Leadership Committee (FLC) can support aspects of the evaluation to ensure the work can be accomplished within the time frame and budget.

Background and Introductory Information
The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) was established to foster excellence in academic health sciences librarianship. The AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program (LFP) program was conceived and began in 2002 for the purpose of developing future academic health sciences library directors. It is jointly funded by the NLM and AAHSL. The program runs for an academic year (e.g., 2002-2003, 2003-2004, etc.) starting each September. The program has been evaluated twice in the past. The first evaluation covered the first three cohorts (2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005), and gathered information from both fellows and mentors. The second evaluation, completed in 2013, gathered information from the following seven cohorts: 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012. Both
were mixed methods evaluations comprised of a survey of both mentors and fellows the first
time, and a survey of only fellows the second time; each complemented by telephone
interviews to gather more qualitative data. The prior evaluations found that the program was
successful in preparing mid-level, aspiring health sciences library leaders to become academic
health sciences library directors. The contact for this evaluation is Louise Miller, AAHSL Office,
office@aaahsl.org or Judy Cohn, LFP Program Director, who can be reached at:
judith.s.cohn@gmail.com.

Description of Services Sought
We are seeking a program evaluation that identifies and documents the Leadership Fellows
Program’s successes, best practices, areas for improvement, trends, changes, challenges, and
opportunities in academic health sciences library leadership over time. It should also include
recommendations for future program content and direction. Our ideal vendor has expertise in
program evaluation, exhibits evaluation best practices including modeling, data collection, trend
identification, forecasting, identifying future opportunities and challenges, making
recommendations for future program goals, and developing overall areas for program
improvement. In addition, the vendor will have a clear process for ideation, production,
revision, and final delivery. Unless the vendor cogently recommends otherwise, our ideal
evaluation would consist of a mixed methods approach incorporating questions asked in the
previous 2013 survey so that the same measures of the program are evaluated over time.

In 2013, the following questions were asked of fellows in the form of a survey with most
answers being multiple choice with room for free text responses. We propose repeating the
questions asked in the previous survey augmented with additional questions.

1. In what year did you complete the Leadership Fellows Program?
2. How would you rate the positive impact of the LFP on your own professional
development?
3. How much did the LFP help you in defining your learning needs?
4. How well did the program components address your learning needs?
5. How much did participating in the LFP help you in defining your career goals?
6. How did participating in the LFP assist you in achieving your career goals?
7. How did the LFP affect your interest in becoming an academic health sciences library
director?
8. How has your position changed since you began participation in the LFP?
9. If you have not been appointed to a director position, what is the most important
reason?
10. How relevant is what you learned from the LFP to your work responsibilities?
11. How helpful has the LFP been to you in addressing issues facing libraries in a changing
environment?
12. How would you rate the overall program design?
13. How much have the relationships you formed during the LFP helped you achieve your
career goals since completing the program?
14. What were the most significant components of the program for you?
15. What was the most significant benefit of the program for you?
16. What has changed in your approach to your career as an outcome of your participation?
17. What changes would have improved the program most for you?
18. If there is any other feedback you would like to give us, please do so in the space provided below.

Additional questions for the 2023-2024 evaluation that would directly identify outputs specified in the accompanying logic model are included below.

19. Did your participation in the program enable you to advance to greater leadership positions? (Y/N/Not Certain)
20. Did your participation in the program impact your understanding of diversity issues, or give you confidence to champion such issues in your local workplace? (Y/N/Not Certain – have a text box for open comments)
21. Did you benefit from the exposure the program gave you to experts at NLM, AAHSL, AAMC, SPARC or ARL, or did these contacts help you as you advanced in your career? (Y/N/ Not certain)
22. Did you benefit from or put into practice what the program prepared you for regarding hiring or negotiating for a library director role? (Y/N/Not Certain)
23. Did the program’s mock interview prepare you for interviewing for a library director or other higher-level position? (Y/N/Not certain)
24. If you are willing, please disclose your ethnicity to help us know if this program has made progress towards its goal of preparing more under-represented minorities for leadership roles in academic health sciences libraries. (Choices: African American, Asian, Hispanic, Latina/o, Native American, Pacific Islander, White, Other, prefer not to Specify)

In 2013, this survey was followed up with a telephone interview that posed the following open-ended questions that provided qualitative data on the program:
1. What was the impact of the Leadership Fellows Program on your career?
2. How did it affect your career path and choices?
3. What job opportunities did it give you?
4. How did you draw on it during the hiring, selection and negotiation process?
5. How could the program be made more helpful to prepare you for the hiring, selection, and negotiation process?
6. What was most important for you to know or be able to do as a new director?
7. How well was this addressed in the LFP?
8. What have been your biggest challenges?
9. Did the program help you meet these challenges? If so, how did the program help you with those?
10. What aspects of the program have you used as a new director, or in your job now?
11. What aspects of the program have not been useful to you?
12. If you communicated with your mentor during the hiring process or as a director, what assistance were you seeking?
13. How have relationships with other fellows and mentors been important to you since you completed the program?
14. What specific parts of the program curriculum have you benefitted from since completing the program?
15. How could the curriculum be changed to make it more relevant to fellows when they assume director positions?
16. What other feedback, that we have not already addressed do you think it would be important for us to address going forward with the program?

Our ideal vendor will seriously consider including these questions or modifying them such that the responses gathered from these nine cohorts can be meaningfully compared with responses by cohorts who participated in the 2013 evaluation.

Judy Cohn, Program Director (Judith.s.cohn@gmail.com), will be able to provide the vendor/evaluator with contact information for the fellows in the nine cohorts to be surveyed and interviewed.

The following deliverables will be expected as part of this project:

- Survey instrument with questions and responses
- Coded and summarized results of the survey instrument
- Standardized web conferencing interview questions and responses
- Coded and summarized results of phone interviews
- Full report with executive summary
- Logic Model (optional if Logic Model provided is used)
- Infrastructure for future evaluations (optional)
- Visual representation of findings for marketing purposes (optional)

**Challenges or Barriers to Success**

The primary challenge we anticipate is the limited funds available, and the desire for a full mixed methods approach. We can consider supplementing the vendor by having selected members of the Future Leadership Committee conduct some of the web conferencing questions using a standard interview format provided by the vendor. Other possible barriers to success may include non-response by some cohort members, or the inability to draw final conclusions based on data collected with the proposed mixed methods approach.

To identify costs by specific work requested, please provide individual bids on the following:

- Cost to develop the survey instrument with questions and responses
- Cost to administer the survey instrument
- Cost to code and summarize results of the survey instrument
- Cost to develop the standard phone interview questions and responses
• Cost to administer the phone interviews
• Cost to code and summarize results of the phone interviews
• Cost to prepare a full report of the evaluation with executive summary
• Cost to develop a logic model for the program based on evaluation results to be used in future evaluations
• Cost to develop infrastructure for future evaluations

This will help us mitigate cost overages and enable the AAHSL and the FLC to identify internal resources if needed to keep costs within the allocated budget.

**Selection Criteria**
Our selection criteria will be based on the following rubric: Please be sure to address each of the areas below in your written response to this RFP. If available, please submit a sample of your work which demonstrates your capability in each of the respective areas.

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<td>Experience/Qualifications/Staff Expertise</td>
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<td>Complete within Budget; provide requested cost estimates</td>
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<td>Proposed Methodology and Deliverables</td>
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<td>Compatibility with prior evaluations</td>
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<td>Ability to complete project by August 2024</td>
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