
AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM



FELLOWS PROGRAM



AMERICAN
LEADERSHIP
FORUM
HOUSTON/GULF COAST

THE ALF STORY

"I discovered that people are not really afraid of dying; they're afraid of not ever having lived, nor ever having deeply considered their life's higher purpose, and not ever having stepped into that purpose, and at least tried to make a difference in this world."

JOSEPH JAWORSKI
Founder, American Leadership Forum



Changing the Face of American Leadership



American Leadership Forum (ALF) was founded in 1982 in Houston, Texas, by Joseph Jaworski, who left his successful law practice to address what he increasingly saw as a crisis of leadership throughout the country. He envisioned an organization dedicated to bringing together diverse leaders from multiple sectors in communities across the country to deeply explore their personal leadership capacity, build deep trust among the group to help each leader to get beyond the devaluing prejudices that we all hold, and to learn how diverse people can coalesce around issues and discover new possibilities.

The ALF Fellows program brings together demonstrated leaders to strengthen their capacity to address difficult and complex issues together. Graduates of the program - Senior Fellows - share a common understanding of, dedication to, and capacity for acting as networked servant leaders. ALF's impact on the community springs from this engaged, vibrant, evolving, and active network of leaders who, through the course of their life and work, inspire their colleagues to community action.





THE FELLOWS PROGRAM

"We need a language that brings us together about the deepest things we care about rather than pushing us apart."

JOSEPH JAWORSKI

Founder, American Leadership Forum

The ALF Fellows Program introduces you to senior leaders, challenging concepts, and unique experiences that deepen your life journey and connection to broader humanity. Fellows will explore themes of mindfulness, dialogue, storytelling, nature, adaptive leadership, and bridging and belonging. While ALF facilitators and curriculum provide the cornerstones, Fellows make the program.

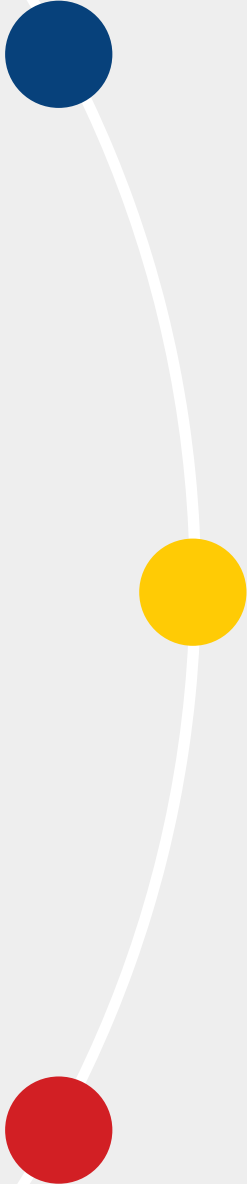
ALF strengthens a Fellow's capacity to address collective societal issues collaboratively and build a strong leadership network to work for positive change in the community.



OUR SIGNATURE FELLOWS EXPERIENCE IS BUILT UPON THESE LEADERSHIP VALUES:

- We believe in the power and importance of trusted relationships.
- We believe that for our communities, people, and planet to truly thrive, we must create spaces where everyone feels heard, respected, and has a fair opportunity to contribute and belong.
- We believe in the power of dialogue and collaborative leadership with leaders who have curiosity about people whose identity, culture, background and life experiences may be different from their own.
- We believe we have a responsibility to prioritize active civic engagement to serve for the benefit of all people in our communities.
- We prioritize and engage in practices of mindfulness, grace, acceptance, accountability and openness to personal and professional growth.

Through the arc of the Fellows program year, the class explores three distinct levels that we at ALF believe can elevate you as a citizen of the human network.



DEVELOP

The journey begins inward. Fellows explore mindfulness and meditation as practices of self-renewal. They reflect on their life journey and leadership stance, surfacing the experiences that have shaped who they are. Through new practices of dialogue, they learn to navigate difficult issues with curiosity rather than certainty. And in the trusted space of the cohort, each Fellow chooses a question, decision, or area of focus to carry with them throughout the year.

CONNECT

The class takes a shared journey to the Rocky Mountains—an experience that deepens trust and empathy in ways that cannot be replicated in a boardroom. Through challenges and exercises rooted in the natural world, Fellows explore their connection to nature and to one another. They become more comfortable being uncomfortable. They shift from a consumer mindset—what can I take?—to a citizen mindset: what can we build together? This is also a time to discern the inner work required to create meaningful outcomes, and to discover how presence and awareness can make leadership more powerful.

ACTIVATE

In the final stage, Fellows turn toward impact. Working with ALF facilitators, they explore the keys to achieving their highest outcomes. Dialogue circles offer space to work through barriers and begin charting a course forward. Fellows connect to the broader ALF network, seeing how principles come to life across the community. The journey culminates at Commencement, where each Fellow commits to their next steps—followed by an intimate graduation celebration with those who have walked the path alongside them.

The ALF Fellows experience is built on trust, presence, and dialogue. These are not just program features—they are the commitments Fellows make to one another.

PRESENCE

The simple act of showing up and participating fully may be the most powerful contribution you can make to your class. Our selection process is intentional, bringing together twenty-five leaders who will learn and grow as a cohort. Significant development happens in the moments between agenda items—in conversation, in reflection, in unexpected connection.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Fellows Program offers a rare opportunity: a space where leaders can learn from one another without artifice. From day one, all Fellows agree that what is shared in sessions stays in sessions. This confidence allows each person to explore important questions, challenges, and opportunities in a community of supportive peers. Trust is the foundation of everything the cohort builds together.

DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENCE

ALF is a nonpartisan organization that brings together leaders across a wide diversity of political ideologies and religious beliefs. Dialogue across different perspectives is not just part of our curriculum - it is a practice we commit to for life. The ability to both engage in and convene dialogue for the common good is a distinguishing characteristic of an ALF Fellow and Senior Fellow.

APPLIED LEARNING

Throughout the year, each Fellow is asked to apply ALF principles and practices within their own scope of influence. What this looks like varies widely. One Fellow might restructure a recurring meeting to invite deeper dialogue. Another might convene conversation after a significant community event. The form is theirs to shape; the commitment is to bring the work home.

SESSION HOST

At the orientation retreat, Fellows have the opportunity to sign up to host one of their class sessions throughout the year. This is a chance to bring classmates into a Fellow's world and the context in which they lead.

COMMITMENT & INVESTMENT

EACH YEAR, THE ALF SELECTION COMMITTEE CHOOSES TWENTY-FIVE LEADERS FROM A POOL OF NOMINEES PUT FORWARD BY OUR NETWORK OF SENIOR FELLOWS.

These twenty-five individuals form a trusted community that will learn, reflect, and grow together throughout the Fellows year. The power of the program lies in what Fellows give to one another—your presence and commitment are essential to the experience for all.

We ask for full participation throughout the Fellows year. We understand unforeseen circumstances arise, but the cohort model depends on each person's presence. If more than one session is missed, ALF may need to exit a Fellow from the program.

TUITION

The total investment for the ALF Fellows Experience is \$14,080, which includes:

- **Program Tuition: \$12,580**
- **Personal Commitment Fee: \$1,500**

Payment plans are available.

Sponsorship: Many Fellows are sponsored by their employers, who fund tuition through professional development or travel budgets. Others cover tuition personally. We encourage you to have a conversation with your organization about potential support.

Personal Commitment Fee: This portion of the investment should be paid by the Fellow personally, as a symbol of your individual commitment to the journey ahead.

Financial Aid: Need-based financial aid is available.

WILDERNESS RETREAT

A signature element of the experience is a **seven-day wilderness trip in the Rocky Mountains**—time away from daily distractions to deepen trust and create space for reflection.

What to expect:

- **Accommodations are shared.**
- **Physical activities may include hiking on uneven terrain with a light pack (10–25 lbs.) at altitudes up to 9,000 feet, as well as rock climbing and rappelling.**

These activities are not required but are part of the shared group experience.

Health & accommodations:

All Fellows must obtain a medical release from their doctor prior to the trip.

ALF has accommodated a wide variety of physical needs.



BECOMING A SENIOR FELLOW

During your final retreat, you will complete the first part of your ALF journey and begin another.

Senior Fellows are graduates of the ALF experience and join a network unlike any other. We are 1,700 strong in Greater Houston, with influential cross-sector leaders from across the region, and more than 5,000 Senior Fellows nationally.

Being a Senior Fellow brings incredible opportunity - and responsibility. These are not obligations, but invitations: ways of showing up for one another and for the communities we serve. We ask all who carry this distinction to embody these practices:



- **We show up. We take the call, and we make the call. We remain active citizens of this network, knowing that our presence matters.**
- **We lead with curiosity. We suspend judgment, listen deeply, and choose dialogue first—especially across difference.**
- **We give back. Whether by educating, innovating, or donating, we contribute what we can to strengthen the whole.**
- **We think systemically. We work toward change that lasts, understanding that our leadership is in service of something larger than ourselves.**
- **We stay connected. This is not a one-time experience, but a lifelong community. We use the network, and we help sustain it for those who follow.**



1801 Main Street, Suite 910 | Houston, TX 77002 | ALFHouston.org