

# Seattle Federal Executive Board Associates Program



## Overview

The Seattle Federal Executive Board's (SFEB) Associates Program is a longstanding, dynamic, and unique leadership development program for high performing federal employees. This program has been in existence for more than 20 years, and the SFEB Associate alumni network continues to be active.

SFEB Associates serve a two-year term during which they partner collectively and individually, with fellow associates and participating senior executive service Advisors from within the SFEB Leadership Council. Each Associate is mentored by a senior executive in addition to working with the senior executive assigned to their committees/working groups. Among other projects, the Associates develop, implement, and execute a significant annual project focused on ambitious goals benefiting the federal workforce, the larger community, and the Associates' leadership goals.

The program is geared towards GS-9 through GS-12 or equivalent federal employees within the Seattle Federal Executive Board member agencies. Each Associate is enrolled for two consecutive years, with staggered cohorts allowing for additional learning and exposure and replicate real world staff changes and turnover.

## Program Components

- Two-day orientation and initial training meeting
- Year-long group project
- Monthly meetings
- Regular mentor meetings with program Advisor
- Participation in various group activities including training, outreach, and service projects
- Study of federal-relevant leadership materials
- Reflection on professional progress & personal growth
- Job shadows
- Service activities
- Attendance at SFEB Executive Leadership Council meetings

## Competency Building

The program seeks to build deep and lasting competencies in future federal leaders. Throughout the program, Associates will further their:

- leadership skills
- expanded competencies in project management
- group facilitation skills and methods
- consensus building decision-making skills
- communication skills
- personal development and self-assessment

## Selection Process

Associates are chosen in a competitive process emphasizing the following factors:

- Nominee's learning goals for participating in the program
- Commitment of the nominee and their immediate supervisor to dedicate ten to twenty percent of the Associate's work time to the program
- Current capabilities the nominee would bring to the program
- Nominee's potential for professional growth and leadership
- Written recommendation from the nominee's immediate supervisor or agency official

# How to Apply for the 2023-2025 cohort

**Applicants:** No later than close of business Friday, October 7, 2022, please email:

- 1) a completed Application Form (which includes your personal statement),
- 2) a current resume, and
- 3) your agency official's or supervisor's Letter of Recommendation on letterhead or with an electronic signature

to [training.at.sfeb@gsa.gov](mailto:training.at.sfeb@gsa.gov). (also cc: [diana.deforest@gsa.gov](mailto:diana.deforest@gsa.gov)).

Please contact the Executive Director with any questions: [diana.deforest@gsa.gov](mailto:diana.deforest@gsa.gov) or 206-384-2689.

## ***Note to Agency officials:***

From your Agency, please nominate no more than 3 applicants for the 2023-2025 Associate cohort. The SFEB will attempt to bring in the widest possible range of agencies represented. Please reach out to the Executive Director if you have questions, especially for agencies who have not sent Associate applicants recently!

All forms and more information will be available on our website: <https://seattle.feb.gov/associates-program/>.

# SFEB Associates Program Requirements

## For Associates

Each Associate must:

- attend all monthly meetings for their entirety (usually the third Thursday of each month). **Attendance is critical.** If an Associate cannot attend a meeting, they must immediately inform the Executive Director and their Advisor. Repeated unexcused missed meetings may be grounds for dismissal from the program;
- connect regularly with their Advisor;
- fully participate in
  - the group project, including presenting on it at the Annual Meeting,
  - Quarter Group, and
  - Committee planning and projects;
- complete a written self-evaluation and meet with the Advisors each December.

Also, each Associate agrees to:

- attend all Executive Leadership Council meetings (currently occurring quarterly) and the Annual SFEB Executives' Meeting;
- keep their supervisor apprised of their progress in the program, and
- remain in contact with the Executive Director if they have any concerns or conflicts.

**Time commitment:** Associates usually spend between ten and twenty percent of their total work time on Associate efforts. The group project, which takes the most time, is always focused on a project that

1. Contributes to Associate leadership and learning
2. Adds value to the federal community
3. Adds value to the wider community
4. Is feasible within the Program's resources

## For Agencies

**Tuition:** Each Associate's home agency will be charged \$1,000 per year. Contact the SFEB at [diana.deforest@gsa.gov](mailto:diana.deforest@gsa.gov) for more information. We anticipate processing payments between March 1 and March 30, 2023.

**Agencies** agree to the program parameters as written above, including the Associates' time commitment. Agencies are encouraged to offer meeting space and expert resources where applicable.

**Supervisors** are invited to check in with the Executive Director if they have any questions or concerns about the Associates' participation.

**Executives** are invited to join the group for discussions or particular efforts, depending on their availability. Having an Associate in the program is a great way for senior leadership to get more involved with the Federal Executive Board.

# What to Expect each Year in the SFEB Associates Program

## In January...

**Graduation:** Associates who completed their program are celebrated at the Class of 2022 Associates Graduation. This coming year the graduation will be held on **January 11, 2023, at 1:00pm-3:00pm** in the Jackson Federal Building, 915 Second Avenue, Seattle 98174, in the South Auditorium. Graduating and continuing Associates, supervisors and family are all welcome. Former Associates are welcome to join us as well.

**Foundations Week:** The new cohort of Associates and Advisors convene to meet each other, to learn how to pitch a project, get assigned into Quarter groups, Committees and project teams, and to develop a group consensus on the Group Project. The 2023 Foundations Week will occur on January 17-18, 2023. Logistical details are to be determined. **Attendance at Foundations Week is critical for all Associates and inability to attend will exclude Associates from joining the Class of 2024 cohort.**

## In April and May...

Associates will be asked to help the SFEB implement the Public Service Recognition ceremony.

## In October and November...

Associates execute the Annual Project. Details on previous projects may be found [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Applications are accepted for the next year's cohort of SFEB Associates.

Top SFEB Associate Applicants are interviewed.

## In December...

Associates report on their Annual Project to the Executive Leadership Council

Associates write self-evaluations and meet with the Advisors' group for individual year-end check-ins

## Each month...

Associates will meet with their individual Advisors in a cadence that works for both.

The entire Associates and Advisors group meets once per month in a full-day meeting that is planned by the Quarter Groups. A typical meeting agenda will be in the syllabus. The day will involve formal training; group progress on the annual project; reading/podcast discussions; SFEB updates; and updates from the different Associate Committees.

## Each year...

January through October, the Associates complete an annual project;

Associates plan ad hoc events such as networking to diverse educational organizations;

## After graduation...

Associates are encouraged to remain connected with the SFEB through standing committees, Associate alumni opportunities or bringing new ideas for the SFEB to consider.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://seattle.feb.gov/2021-sfeb-associate-project-building-a-stronger-federal-workforce-through-dei/>

# **General Policies of the SFEB Associates Program**

## **Equal Opportunity Policy**

It is the policy of the United States Government to provide equal opportunity for all employees and applicants in every aspect of their employment and working conditions. The United States Government supports the concept of affirmative employment to ensure that personnel policies and practices provide equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information or retaliation/reprisal.

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

It is the policy of the United States Government to fully comply with the Reasonable Accommodation requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under the law, Federal agencies must provide Reasonable Accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, except in cases where this would cause undue hardship, which is always made on a case-by-case basis, considering factors that include the nature and cost of the Reasonable Accommodation and the impact of the Reasonable Accommodation on the operations of the Agency, including the impact on the ability of others to perform their duties. The United States Government is committed to providing Reasonable Accommodations in a timely and efficient manner to all who qualify. Please notify Diana de Forest, Seattle FEB Executive Director, 206-384-2689 or [diana.deforest@gsa.gov](mailto:diana.deforest@gsa.gov) if you need any assistance.

## **Travel Policy**

If more than local travel is planned, each agency should allow their participating Associates to travel to the meeting on official time. The Associates' status during the meeting will be at work/on travel. The SFEB will reimburse agencies for any Associates' travel and per diem costs. To date, the only multi-day travel planned would be for the Foundations Week/Orientation meeting.

## **Decisions on Acceptance**

The Executive Director and the Associate Advisors will make all decisions on program acceptances.

## **More about Consensus Decision Making**<sup>2</sup>

Consensus decision making is a process used by groups seeking to generate widespread levels of participation and agreement. There are variations among different groups regarding the degree of agreement necessary to finalize a group decision. The process of group deliberation, however, has many common elements that are definitive of consensus decision making. These include:

- **Inclusive:** As many stakeholders as possible are involved in group discussions.
- **Participatory:** All participants are allowed a chance to contribute to the discussion.
- **Collaborative:** The group constructs proposals with input from all interested group members. Any individual authorship of a proposal is subsumed as the group modifies it to include the concerns of all group members.
- **Agreement Seeking:** The goal is to generate as much agreement as possible. Regardless of how much agreement is required to finalize a decision, a group using a consensus process makes a concerted attempt to reach full agreement.
- **Cooperative:** Participants are encouraged to keep the good of the whole group in mind. Each individual's preferences should be voiced so that the group can incorporate all concerns into an emerging proposal. Individual preferences should not, however, obstructively impede the progress of the group.

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<sup>2</sup> The Basics of Consensus Decision-Making by Tim Hartnett, PhD, <http://www.GroupFacilitation.net>