

# **Conversations with your Employer**

**Interested in applying for the GWV Fellowship?**

Use this guide to help open a conversation to gain support from your employer.

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## Do your Research

Before you discuss this opportunity with your supervisor, be sure to look into your organization's policies and professional development funding. Take advantage of your resources! You can:

- Ask your colleagues if your organization has supported professional development in the past
- Reach out to your HR personnel
- Review your employee handbook

Be prepared to discuss the details of GWV Fellowship. It is important to show your employer that you have done the research and can discuss, in detail, why this program is different and why it interests you. Along with this, it is important to have an outline on how you plan to complete your projects at work outside of this time committed to GWV Fellowship.

If your organization has not supported professional development in the past, it doesn't mean it's out of the question. Enter the conversation prepared by having suggestions for additional sources for funding and be ready to provide a clear explanation on how this program will benefit your performance and growth.

## Develop your Sales Pitch

Approach this conversation with your supervisor as you would any serious negotiation - we would suggest setting up a formal meeting during a convenient day and time. Having a dedicated time blocked off for the discussion will allow your boss to be focused on the conversation and give you time to present your thoughts.

Be sure to identify and discuss the key points of GWV Fellowship (see key points below). With your research in hand, you should be confident in making a strong case for having your employer support this opportunity.

### Key points:

- GWV Fellowship is a unique program that not only provides you with small group style professional development opportunities, but also guides you through different parts of West Virginia to help you learn more about the state,

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the challenges it's faced, and what that means for West Virginia as we move forward.

- Companies that sponsor or support professional development opportunities have a higher retention rate.
- GWV Fellowship connects you with a strong Network of alumni Fellows and professional leaders across the state. This not only helps you to grow your own network, but can be a benefit to your organization as well.
- The cost of the program is \$2500 - this includes all lodging, food, and activities for all sessions.
- There are 5 in person sessions and 4 virtual sessions. While you will be out of the office for a day or day and a half (depending on location), or on a 2-3 hour zoom conference, you will still be working to better yourself as an employee and young professional.

## Get the 'Yes'

Your boss has agreed to sponsor your participation in GWV Fellowship, what's next? Once you get the approval, be prepared to answer any follow up questions like,

- When is payment due?
- When will you be out of office?
- What will your schedule look like to ensure you are still able to meet your project goals/ work responsibilities?

To help answer some of these questions, see our FAQ page.

Remember to say thank you! Showing gratitude goes a long way. Here is a potential script to help you get started:

"Hi Jennifer, thanks for taking the time to talk with me. I would like to be a part of the GWV Fellowship, which will help with my knowledge on WV, Networking, and professional development growth. I've already applied and been accepted, and I am asking you to consider sponsoring me. The investment is \$2,500 for the entire program, which includes activities, lodging, and food. Being involved in this program will benefit my department and this organization in X ways. I would be happy to answer any follow up questions you may have. Applicants are expected to respond by March 31st."