



FAQs

What does it mean to be a Fellow?

- The designation as a Fellow recognizes nurse leaders who have made substantive and sustained contributions to the health of women and newborns beyond expectations of their role.
- Fellows demonstrate outstanding impact in one or more areas such as clinical practice, research, education, advocacy, or policy, at the regional, national, or global level in alignment with AWHONN's mission.
- Being named a Fellow reflects recognized leadership and excellence in women's health, obstetric, or neonatal nursing, along with a strong commitment to advancing the profession and improving care outcomes.

What are the benefits of being a Fellow?

- List the AWHONN Fellowship (FAWHONN) designation in recognition of your significant and sustained contributions to your specialty practice and your professional organization so your colleagues know that you are dedicated to the profession and AWHONN's mission and vision.
- Fellows are invited to exclusive AWHONN fellowship events held in conjunction with existing programs, such as a Fellows-only networking hour at the AWHONN Convention.
- Fellows may also have access to exclusive volunteer opportunities, such as a Fellow Liaison position on select national volunteer committees.
- Fellows have access to a closed online community within the AWHONN Online Member Community, where they can network and receive program updates.
- Quarterly virtual Fellows meetings provide opportunities to hear updates from AWHONN leaders on strategic goals, collaborate on Fellows committee priorities, and connect with fellow members through networking.
- As the number of AWHONN Fellows expands, benefits and ways to participate and connect with other Fellows will increase.

What are the commitments for active Fellows?

- Continued engagement in advancing the health of women and newborns in alignment with AWHONN's mission
- Ongoing contributions to the profession through clinical practice, research, education, advocacy, or policy
- Sustained leadership that supports improvements in maternal and neonatal health outcomes
- Active participation in the AWHONN community, including sharing expertise and supporting professional engagement
- Commitment to mentoring others and promoting the advancement of evidence-based practice and standards in women's health, obstetric, and neonatal nursing



What are the criteria for becoming a Fellow?

- Applicants must hold full or lifetime membership status for at least five (5) consecutive years and be a current full or lifetime member at the time of application. Limited gaps in membership (not exceeding a total of three months) may be permitted.
- Have a Diploma in Nursing or at least one degree in nursing which may include the following: AA, BSN, MSN, PhD, DNP, or other degree.
- Have an advanced degree or certification in your current area of specialty or in leadership. An advanced degree is one beyond the bachelor's level of education.
- Demonstrate active involvement in AWHONN beyond holding membership (for example, serving on committees, task forces, abstract reviewer, writing team member, involvement in section leadership, etc.)
- Meet the selection criteria of demonstrated outstanding contributions that have had a significant impact on nursing care for women and newborns at the regional, national, or international level in the areas of clinical practice, research, education, advocacy, or policy. This is communicated via the Fellowship application that must be completed.
- Members of the AWHONN Board of Directors and AWHONN staff are not eligible to apply for AWHONN Fellow status during their tenure and for the two (2) cohorts immediately following the end of their service. They may apply to be part of the third cohort after their term concludes (e.g., an individual whose service ends in December 2026 may submit an application in 2028 for the 2029 cohort). Individuals may hold Fellow status prior to and during their Board service.
- AWHONN Emerging Leaders may not apply to be an AWHONN Fellow for three (3) years after completing the Emerging Leaders program.

What is a sponsor? Who qualifies as a sponsor?

- A sponsor is a professional reference who has direct knowledge of the applicant's clinical practice, professional performance, and accomplishments, and who can provide an informed endorsement of the applicant's suitability for the fellowship program.
- At least one sponsor must be a current AWHONN member, and at least one sponsor must hold a professional credential in their field of expertise.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact mentors or AWHONN members who have influenced their career, including Section Chairs, Committee Chairs, colleagues, supervisors, or others they have previously worked with.
- Sponsors should be familiar with the applicant's professional work and able to speak to their accomplishments, contributions, and sustained involvement with AWHONN.
- Sponsors should also be able to comment on the applicant's potential for future engagement with AWHONN at the local, state, national, and global levels.
- Members of the AWHONN Board of Directors may not serve as sponsors during their tenure on the Board.



- Current fellows may serve as sponsors for a maximum of two applicants per application cycle.
- AWHONN Fellows serving on the Evaluation Subcommittee may not act as sponsors during their tenure and for the three (3) cohorts immediately following the end of their service. They may resume serving as sponsors for the fourth cohort after their term concludes.

What is the application process?

- The application will include questions pertaining to the applicant's contributions to neonatal, obstetric, and women's health at the local, state, national, and international levels, commitment to values in line with AWHONN's ABC statements, and contributions to AWHONN.
- Applicants will be asked to provide a curriculum vitae that highlights their contributions and outcomes and supports or expands any narrative statements.
- Applicants will submit information for two sponsors in the application. Sponsors will then receive the sponsorship portion directly and will be asked to answer specific questions rather than provide a general letter of support.
 - Candidates are encouraged to work closely with their sponsors to submit the strongest application possible.
- Applicants must submit a non-refundable \$75 application fee.

What are some tips for a strong application?

- *Substantial and Significant Contributions:* Strong applications clearly show meaningful contributions that have improved care for women and newborns. Applicants should highlight specific examples of impact in clinical practice, education, research, advocacy, or policy, and show how those contributions made a lasting difference.
- *Above and Beyond:* Strong applications highlight contributions that go beyond day-to-day job responsibilities. Applicants should explain what they did, why it mattered, and how it improved care for women and newborns.
- *Wide-Reaching AWHONN Involvement:* Strong applicants usually show involvement beyond the local chapter level or attendance at the annual national convention. Competitive applications demonstrate meaningful contributions at the regional, national, and/or international level.
- *Additional professional contributions:* Strong application demonstrates engagement beyond primary employment responsibilities. Such activities may include journal publications, speaking engagements and conference presentations, scholarly work, advocacy at the state or national level, educational initiatives, and other meaningful professional contributions that reflect leadership, initiative, and commitment to advancing the field.
- *Sponsor Support:* Sponsor responses should explain how long the sponsor has known the applicant, in what capacity, and fully answer the question(s) asked of them.



Applicants should choose sponsors who know their professional work well and can speak to their accomplishments, contributions, and ongoing involvement with AWHONN.

What does it cost to become a Fellow?

- When applying, there is a non-refundable \$75 application fee.
- Upon acceptance, a \$100 acceptance fee is required.
- Following the year of induction, a \$150 annual fee is required.
- A full (voting) membership level must be maintained. E-members and student members are not eligible for Fellowship.
- Please note that fees may change in future years.

If someone is not accepted the first time they apply to be a Fellow, can they apply again?

- Yes! If not accepted, applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their identified sponsors in the upcoming year(s) to strengthen their application or work on initiatives and activities to make them more competitive.
- There is no limit as to how many times someone can apply.
- individual feedback will not be provided to applicants who are not accepted.

When do applications open and where can I find more information?

- *Applications will open in mid to late July and will close one month thereafter.*
- The Fellows will be hosting an information session in early July prior to the application opening.
- Information will be available on the AWHONN website. Please visit the Fellows page for more information. It will also be posted on the AWHONN Online Member Community (AMC) and in the AWHONN Express.
- If anyone has specific questions, they can contact the staff liaison at Fellows@awhonn.org.

How will an applicant know if they have been selected?

- All applicants will be notified of their acceptance status following a thorough review process conducted by the Evaluation Subcommittee.
- Notifications will be sent in early December.
- Applicants will either be selected for the fellowship or encouraged to reapply in a future cycle.
- Please note that individualized feedback on applications will not be provided to applicants who are not selected.
- Application fees are non-refundable.