

Chicago Women in Philanthropy (CWIP)

Women's Leadership Mentoring Program (WLMP) — Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Welcome to the Frequently Asked Questions guide for the Chicago Women in Philanthropy (CWIP) Women's Leadership Mentoring Program (WLMP). This document addresses common inquiries from prospective applicants, mentors, and mentees regarding cohort tracks, eligibility, program expectations, fees, and key dates.

1. Program Overview & Tracks

What is the Women's Leadership Mentoring Program (WLMP)?

The WLMP is a robust, one-year cohort-based mentoring program hosted by Chicago Women in Philanthropy. It connects women and identifies professionals across Chicagoland's philanthropic, non-profit, social impact, and public sectors to foster professional development, build peer networks, and enhance leadership capabilities.

What tracks are offered in the program?

The WLMP features two tailored tracks per cohort:

- **Emerging Leaders Track:** Designed for early-career professionals seeking to establish foundational networks, develop core leadership skills, and receive guidance on navigating early career trajectory in the social sector.
- **Mid-Career Leaders Track:** Tailored for mid-level professionals (typically with 7+ years of experience) who are focused on advancing their growth. Topics explored include salary and role negotiation, managing within organizational hierarchies, driving equity and inclusion, and building sector influence.

How long is the program commitment?

The program runs for one full cohort year from October through July.

2. Eligibility, Membership & Program Fees

Who is eligible to participate?

The program welcomes professionals from diverse nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sector disciplines across the greater Chicagoland area. WLMP intentionally strives to engage a racially and ethnically diverse group of participants representing varied job responsibilities, organizations, and professional backgrounds.

Do I need to be a CWIP member to participate?

Mentors are required to be active CWIP members.

Is there a cost to participate in the program?

Mentors participate as volunteer leaders without a program fee. For mentees who are not members of Chicago Women In Philanthropy, a modest financial program fee (\$25) is required upon selection to help offset program and event costs. Financial hardship fee waivers are available upon request to ensure equitable access for all selected candidates.

3. Time Commitment & Key Dates (2026–2027 Cohort)

What is the monthly time commitment?

Participants should expect to dedicate **2 to 4 hours per month**. This includes:

- Monthly 1:1 meetings between mentor and mentee (held virtually or in person).
- Attending all mandatory cohort-wide professional development and networking events.
- Goal-setting and periodic program evaluations/check-ins.

What are the required event dates for the 2026–2027 cohort?

Attendance at official cohort events is mandatory. Please review the scheduled dates prior to applying:

Event	Format	Date & Time
Welcome Dinner	In-Person	October 13/14, 2026 (5:30 PM – 7:00 PM)
Professional Development Session 1	Virtual	November 18, 2026 (5:30 PM – 7:00 PM)
Professional Development Session 2	In-Person	January 27, 2027 (5:30 PM – 7:00 PM)
Professional Development Session 3	Virtual	April 7, 2027 (5:30 PM – 7:00 PM)
Closing Reception	In-Person	July 14, 2027 (5:30 PM – 7:00 PM)

4. Application & Matching Process

When is the deadline to apply?

Applications for the 2026–2027 cohort close on **August 28, 2026**.

How are mentor and mentee pairs matched?

The WLMP Committee carefully reviews all application responses, resumes, stated goals, working styles, and skill interests to curate intentional, highly compatible pairs across both Emerging and Mid-Career tracks.

What if I cannot attend all mandatory dates?

Because attendance directly affects pair experience and cohort cohesion, applicants who cannot commit to the required event schedule are asked to wait and apply for a future cohort when their availability aligns.

5. Contact & Support

Who can I contact with additional questions?

If you have any further questions or require assistance during the application process, please reach out to the WLMP Co-Chairs and Committee at wtmp@cwiponline.org.