

Health Policy Leadership for Our Time

Leadership in health policy requires a different and increasingly adaptive skillset and network. The **Milbank Fellows Program (MFP)** is a 10-month leadership program for senior executive branch and legislative state leaders who are committed to improving the health of all people in their communities.

Through this program, fellows will:

- Gain new knowledge about specific population health issues, interdisciplinary health and human services systems, and evidence-based approaches to improving population health
- Expand their personal insight and adaptive leadership capacities to better define and advance a population health vision and agenda
- Create meaningful connections with a network of colleagues from across the country to generate and refine policy and program interventions

Featuring guest faculty who bring both expertise and applied experience in state policymaking, this program will support up to 24 participants as they address challenges and opportunities in today's complex health policy environment. **The Fund will cover all costs of sessions and materials, including three in-person meetings.**

Chimene Liburd, Chief Medical Officer,
Department of Health Care Finance, District of Columbia



“Having conversations with both sides of the aisle puts human faces on issues of health care access. I am learning how to gain allies in the legislature and across the aisle. For me, that approach has been most beneficial.”

Program Format and Key Dates

Throughout the program, Fellows will participate in three highly interactive in-person meetings and a series of virtual learning events where they will learn from one another and other senior state leaders and health policy experts. Fellows will also have access to Milbank's population health and public sector leadership resources, as well as individualized state-to-state technical assistance. Watch this [video](#) to hear from past Milbank Fellows on their experiences in the program. Participants will join a learning cycle that will include:

- Fall in-person meeting, **September 23–25, 2026 in Nashville, TN**
- Winter in-person meeting, **December 1–3, 2026 in Miami, FL**
- Final in-person meeting in **June 2027** (Location and Date TBD)
- Virtual Fellowship Seminars, a series of one-hour Zoom meetings between **November 2026 and May 2027**

Our participants have found that the opportunity to interact with extraordinary leaders who they would not have otherwise known has challenged them to think differently and to learn from different approaches.

The Milbank Fellows Program seeks state leaders who have:

- **Commitment to improving the health** of everyone in their community and addressing health disparities
- **Curiosity** and enthusiasm about engaging with others, including those with different demographic backgrounds, and political affiliations
- **Interest in acquiring new knowledge** and sharing their own subject matter expertise on key areas of population health policy and administration
- **Interest in self-reflection** and development of new insights
- **Capacity to be present** during the program's in-person and virtual meetings

• **Participants will come from both legislative and executive branches of government:**

- Senior executives who are part of a governor's cabinet, lead state departments, or oversee entire divisions within a state department (e.g., state health and human services secretary, Medicaid director, public health officer)
- Legislators who hold formal leadership positions in key committees in the House and Senate (e.g., Chair or Co-Chair of Health and Human Services Committee, Chair or Co-Chair of Ways and Means Committee)

Brach Myers, State Senator, Louisiana



"I appreciate that the Milbank Fellows Program doesn't shy away from real differences in perspective, and in fact, leans into them. I've found myself pushed in ways I didn't expect. It's helpful to be uncomfortable in some conversations and gather great policy ideas and encouragement in others, and this program creates the right conditions for that."

Application and Selection Process

The Fund will select up to 24 participants for the 2026-2027 Milbank Fellows Program cohort. Candidates can apply for the program by completing this brief [online form](#) and submitting their resume by **Friday, June 19, 2026**.

Selection Criteria

When selecting participants for the Milbank Fellows Program, the Fund will prioritize nominees who demonstrate:

- A focus on impact, with experience in developing and implementing innovative, practical solutions that will demonstrably improve health and health care systems
- A commitment to using evidence, best practices, and experience as a means of improving population health, reducing racial, geographic, and other health disparities, and creating equal opportunity for all populations
- Inquisitiveness, as evidenced by interest in continuous learning and development of insight and commitment to bipartisanship in approach and policies
- Collegiality and receptivity, as exemplified by eagerness around exchange of ideas and interest in building lasting relationships with colleagues
- The position and authority to implement or change state policy, public program design, or financing to advance population health

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

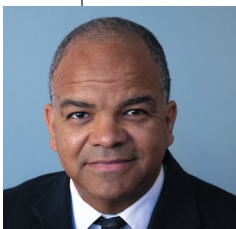
The Milbank Memorial Fund has engaged the Colorado Health Institute to support the Milbank Fellows Program. If you are interested in participating in the Milbank Fellows Program and would like to learn more, please contact MilbankFellows@coloradohealthinstitute.org.

Cynthia Roe, State Representative, Oklahoma



"It's been so helpful to connect with people across the aisle and realize we all have the same problems. Whether you're an R or a D, you're navigating the same pressures, the same tradeoffs, and the same questions about how to actually move the needle on health. Party affiliation matters a lot less than you'd think when you're in the room together talking about how to actually solve things."

Kiame Mahaniah, Secretary for Health and Human Services, Massachusetts



"It's amazing to realize you are part of this national cohort that believes in using government to make the world a better place, and that you can tap the network for support, advice, and knowledge."



Katie Marks, Commissioner, Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

“In a year of unprecedented financial and policy challenges, having this cohort of Fellows has been deeply beneficial. You’re navigating consequential decisions quickly, often without a clear roadmap. Being able to openly dialogue with colleagues who are facing similar challenges, some who’ve already navigated what’s in front of you, helps make those decisions. There has been a tangible takeaway in every conversation.”



Ryan Yamane, Director, Hawaii Department of Human Services

“The mix of elected officials and executive leaders, and the chance to hear different lenses on the same challenges, has been incredibly impactful. It has given me a trusted sounding board, practical insights I can bring back to my own team, and skills that will last well beyond the program. This program provides leaders both leadership tools and personal insights that I use daily.”

About the Milbank Fellows Program

This program is designed and run by the Milbank Memorial Fund National Director for Population Health Morgan McDonald and Program Associate Sofia Espinosa in collaboration with the Colorado Health Institute and consultant Michele Lueck. The Fund believes that state leaders are the drivers of innovation and improvement in population health. We are committed to equipping and supporting leaders in the executive and legislative branches of state government with the knowledge, leadership capacities, and connections to navigate the complexities of systems and health policy to advance population health.

The Milbank Memorial Fund is a nonpartisan, trusted foundation whose mission is to improve population health and health equity by connecting leaders with evidence and sound experience. For more than 100 years, the Fund has connected leaders with the expertise of policymakers and the evidence that they need to advance policies and practices that improve health. Our work is guided by core values of collaboration and community; diversity, equity, and inclusion; humility and optimism; objectivity and non-partisanship; and stewardship and leadership. Our organization has had a unique journey that has shaped our values; we invite you to learn more at www.milbank.org.

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Using evidence to improve population health