Guidance and Overview: Completing the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Teacher Fellowship Application

Congratulations on being nominated for a Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Teacher Fellowship. This is a prestigious accolade that is recognized throughout Wisconsin and beyond as a mark of excellence in education.

If you have decided to apply for the Teacher Fellowship, the first step will be for you to follow the link in the nomination email and build a Personal Profile.

Personal Profile Information

Most of the information included in this section will be obvious, but some might require some explanation. See notes below on each of the fields under Personal Profile. Required fields have a red asterisk in the platform.

- First Name
- Middle Name
- Last Name
- Phonetic Pronunciation of Full Name
    - Even if this seems obvious, please write out a phonetic pronunciation. Recipients will have their first and last names and biographies read at an award event held their honor next spring, and getting name pronunciations correct is important.
- Email
    - Choose an email that you will be able to monitor without access restrictions. Personal emails tend to be better than school based emails.
- Title
- Prefix
- Phone
    - Just as with your email, choose a phone number that you can access without restrictions. Personal numbers are generally better than school numbers.
- Cell Phone
- Home Address
- Address 2
- City
- Country
- State
- DPI License Number
    - This is your 5 or 6 digit File Number, which can be searched easily using this link and your name: https://elo.wieducatorlicensing.org/datamart/searchByNameWIDPI.do

- Please select the category that best represents your assignment as an educator: (Dropdown menu)
    - Elementary School (includes early childhood teachers who are licensed as WI teachers and are working as part of a public school's 3K or 4K services, even in community based locations.)
    - Middle School
    - High School
    - Special Services (can be PK-12)
    - A note on your selection for this field: There is no right answer, and we accept how you see yourself. For instance, it's equally valid for an applicant who teaches special education to 7th grade students in a middle school to select "Middle School" or "Special Services". We don't judge how you see yourself in this context. However, this choice does impact which category recipients are divided into when it comes to Teacher of the Year selection.
- What type of school are you associated with? Should read "Public School"

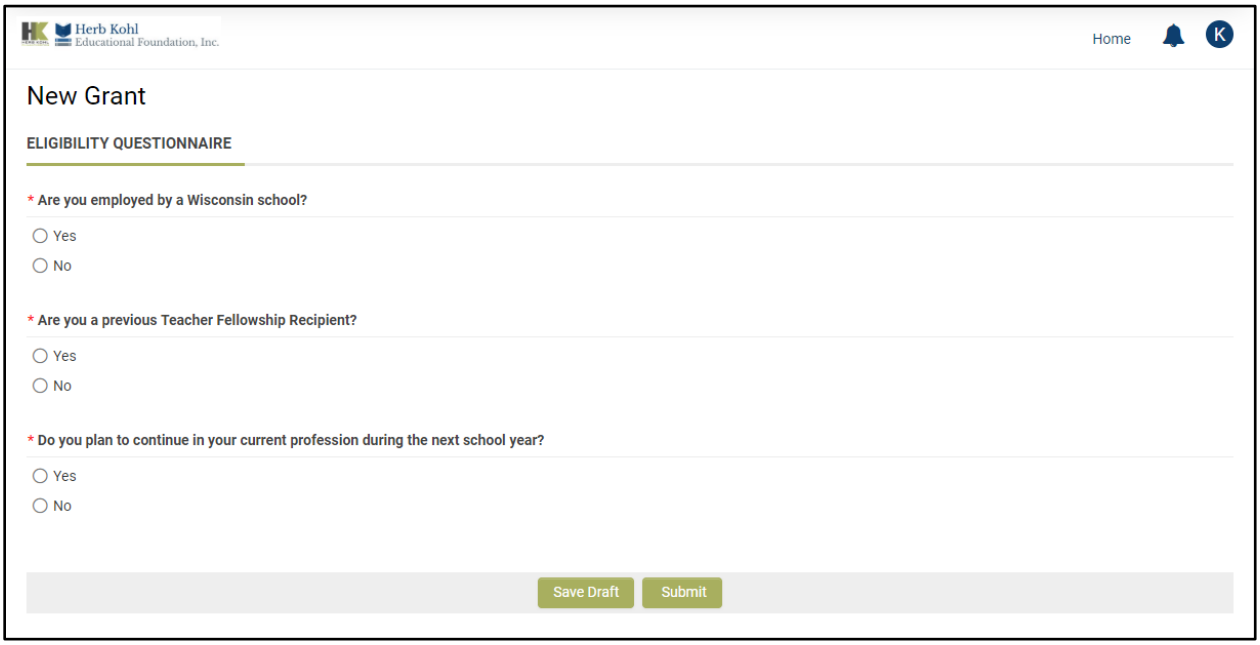
Click on the "Validate Profile" button at the bottom to complete your profile, which will allow you to view the application once you return to your home screen in SmartSimple.

Once you verify your profile information, you'll be able to apply for a Teacher Fellowship. You will need to select "Teacher Fellowship" in the Funding Opportunities window, upper left side of home screen. That will open an application for you. Once opened and saved, you'll be able to return to the same application until the deadline for submission, or until you hit "Submit".

Eligibility

Please answer the three eligibility questions in order to move forward. Previous recipients are not eligible to receive a second Fellowship, but if you've been nominated in the past and NOT received a Fellowship, you remain eligible.

Note: If you received a Student Excellence or Student Initiative award in the past, but not a Teacher Fellowship, you are still eligible for a Fellowship.



Tabs

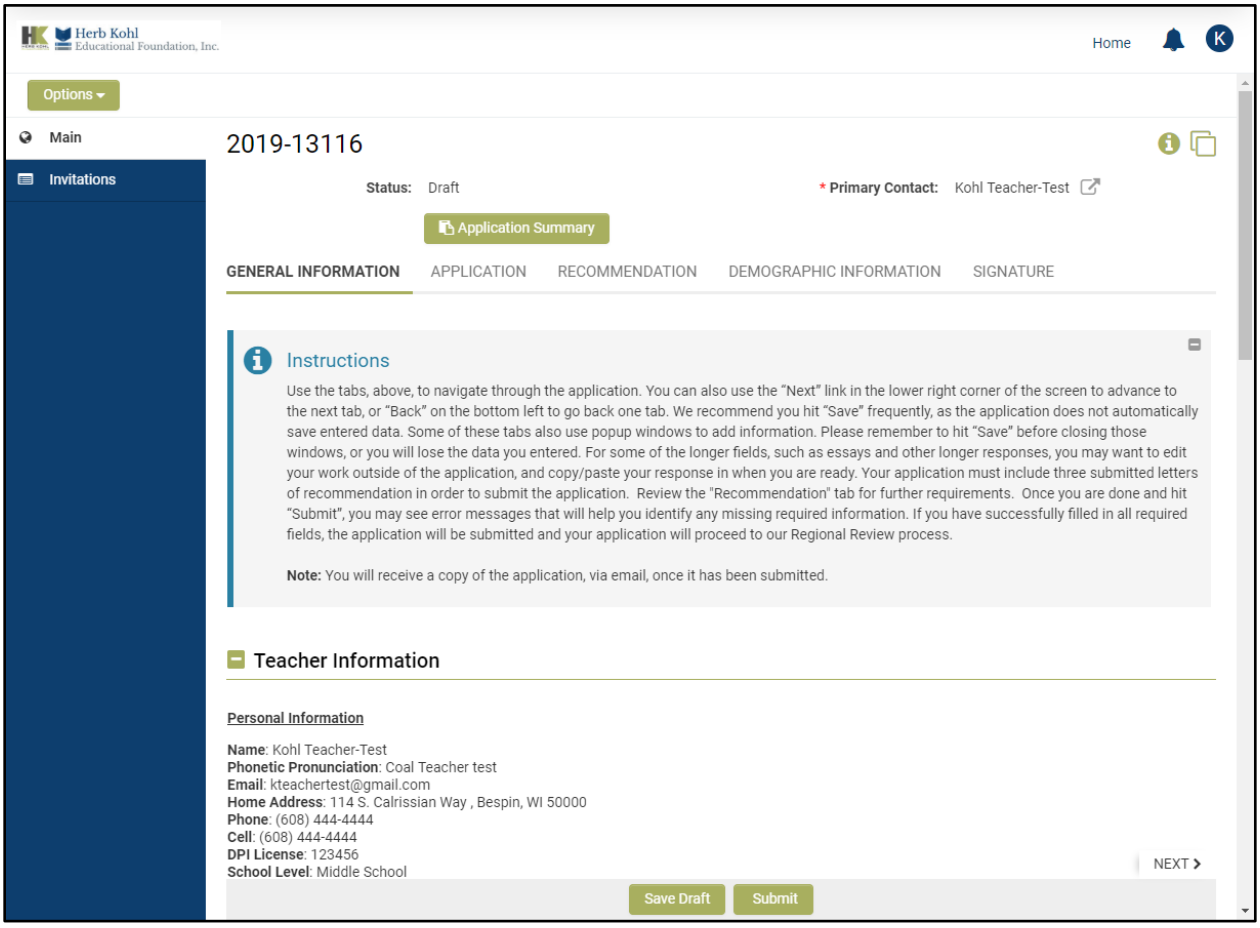
The Teacher Fellowship application asks you to work your way through using a series of five (5) tabs, which you can follow in sequential order, or click through to jump from section to section.

The five tabs are: **General Information, Application, Recommendation, Demographic Information,** and **Signature.** On each tab are fields to fill out. Just as in the Personal Profile, fields marked with a red asterisk are required.

Each tab, and the information required for each tab, is explained in detail, below.

General Information Tab

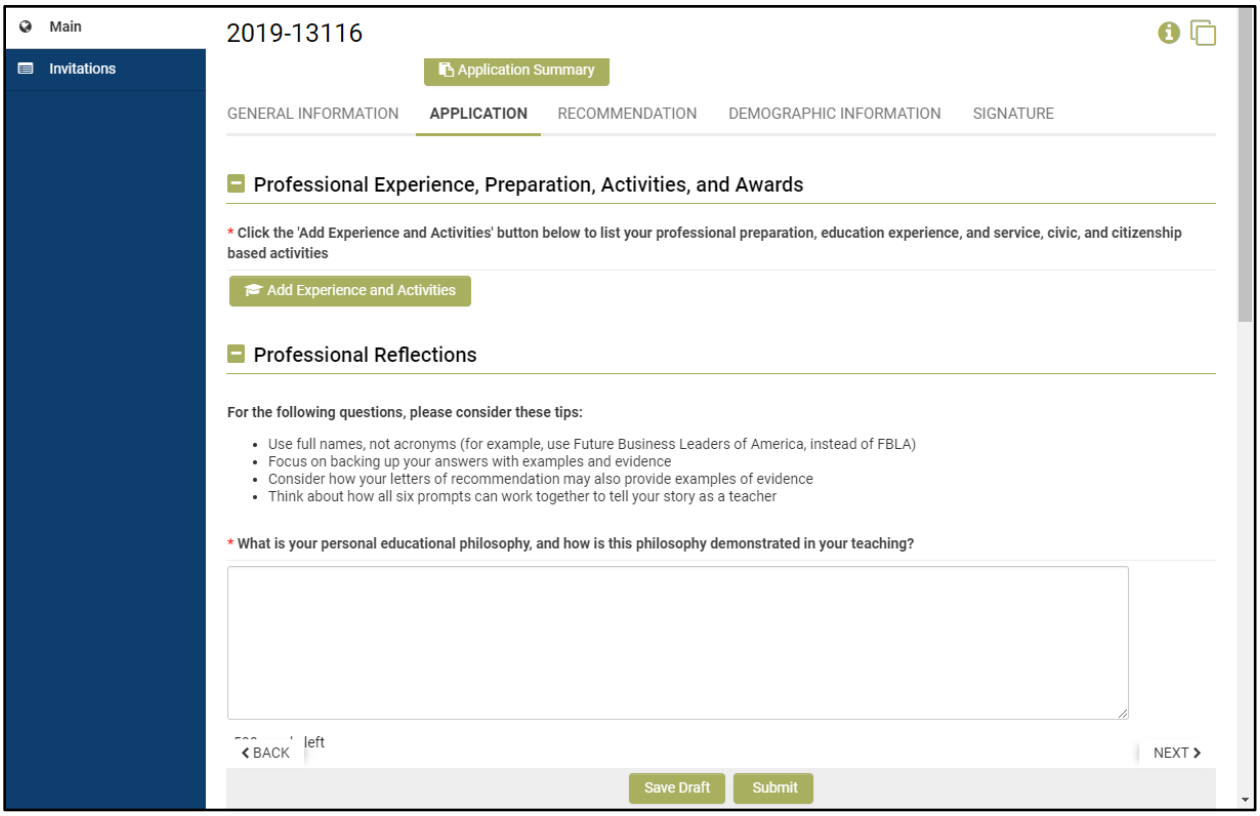
The information you entered into your profile, along with some of the information from your nomination, will automatically populate most of the fields on this tab. However, there are some additional fields you must complete to move forward.



- In what type of school are you teaching?: (this should read “Public”)
- Describe your current teaching assignment
- Certificate of Indian Blood Status: Y/N
- Tribal Nation Affiliation
    - This need not be one of the 11 federally recognized tribal nations of Wisconsin, but applicants must upload and provide supporting documentation of affiliation or eligibility for membership for any tribal nation.
- School Information
- School (lookup)
    - Please do not choose the District Office option, unless that is where you are housed. If you work in more than one school, pick one (unless you happen to work in two different school districts. If that is the case, please reach out to Mark Mueller at DPI. His contact information is located at the end of this document.)
- School main office telephone
- Number grades served in this school (Check all that apply)
- Enrollment
    - Number of students served in the building, based on 3rd Friday count from this year.
- Principal’s Name
- Principal’s Email address
- Principal’s School Phone
- Superintendent’s Name
- Superintendent’s Email address
- Superintendent’s Phone
- School Social Media Presence (Check all that apply; list account names)
- District Social Media Presence (Check all that apply; list account names)

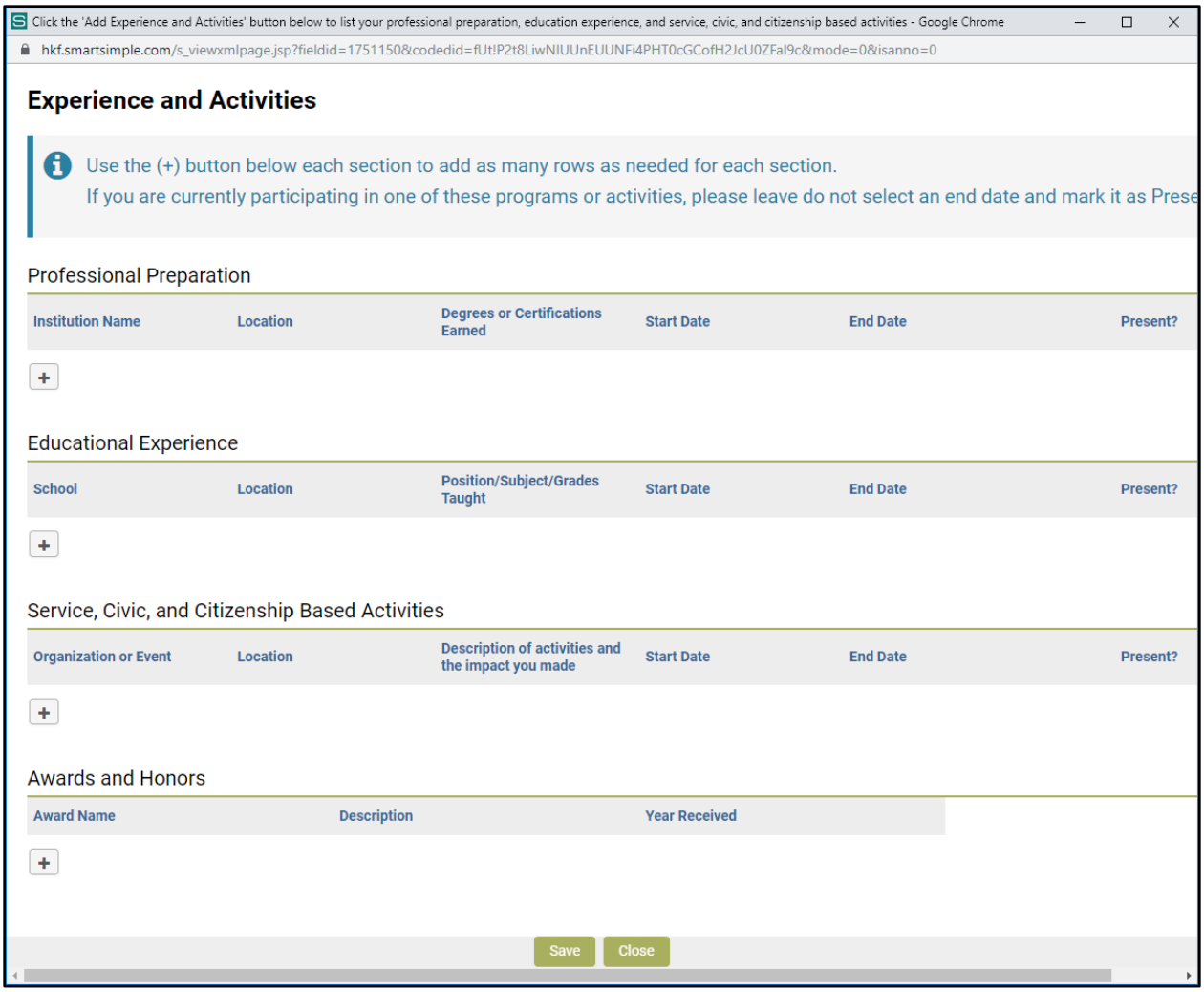
Application Tab

There are two sections to this tab: Professional Experience, Preparation, Activities and Awards; and Professional Reflections.



Professional Experience, Preparation, Activities and Awards Section:

- Click the “Add Experience and Activities” button to expand this section.



You will see four different sub sections: Professional Preparation; Educational Experience; Service, Civic and Citizenship Based Activities; and Awards and Honors.

- **Professional Preparation** addresses any education, certifications, professional development or other learning you have completed to support your role as an educator.
- **Educational Experience** addresses the places you have worked as an educator, including non-traditional employment that is also relevant to your role as an educator.
- **Service, Civic and Citizenship Based Activities** is your personal volunteerism, service, and citizenship activities that you have engaged in that inform your role as a teacher leader. Consider highlighting the activities that most thoroughly demonstrate the leadership you've shown or the impact you have made, rather than just the things you participated in.
- **Awards and Honors** addresses any other awards or recognitions you have received related to your role as an educator leader.

Each section has character limitations, so please keep your descriptions brief and concise. Don't forget to hit "Save" before you hit "Close", or you may lose your work!

Professional Reflections Section:

Please respond as fully as possible to the six writing prompts, without exceeding 500 words for each essay. The prompts are:

1. What is your personal educational philosophy, and how is this philosophy demonstrated in your teaching?
2. Describe how you work to raise achievement for all students. Additionally, if applicable to your teaching experience, describe any work you do to close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and their peers? *(*See note, below)*
3. How do you inspire your students' love of learning and engage parents in the educational process?
4. What innovative projects/programs have you developed for and with students that are models to emulate?
5. What unrealized goals do you have for your classroom and/or professional development?
6. What are the positive aspects you see in education today? What changes would you like to see made to strengthen and improve teaching?

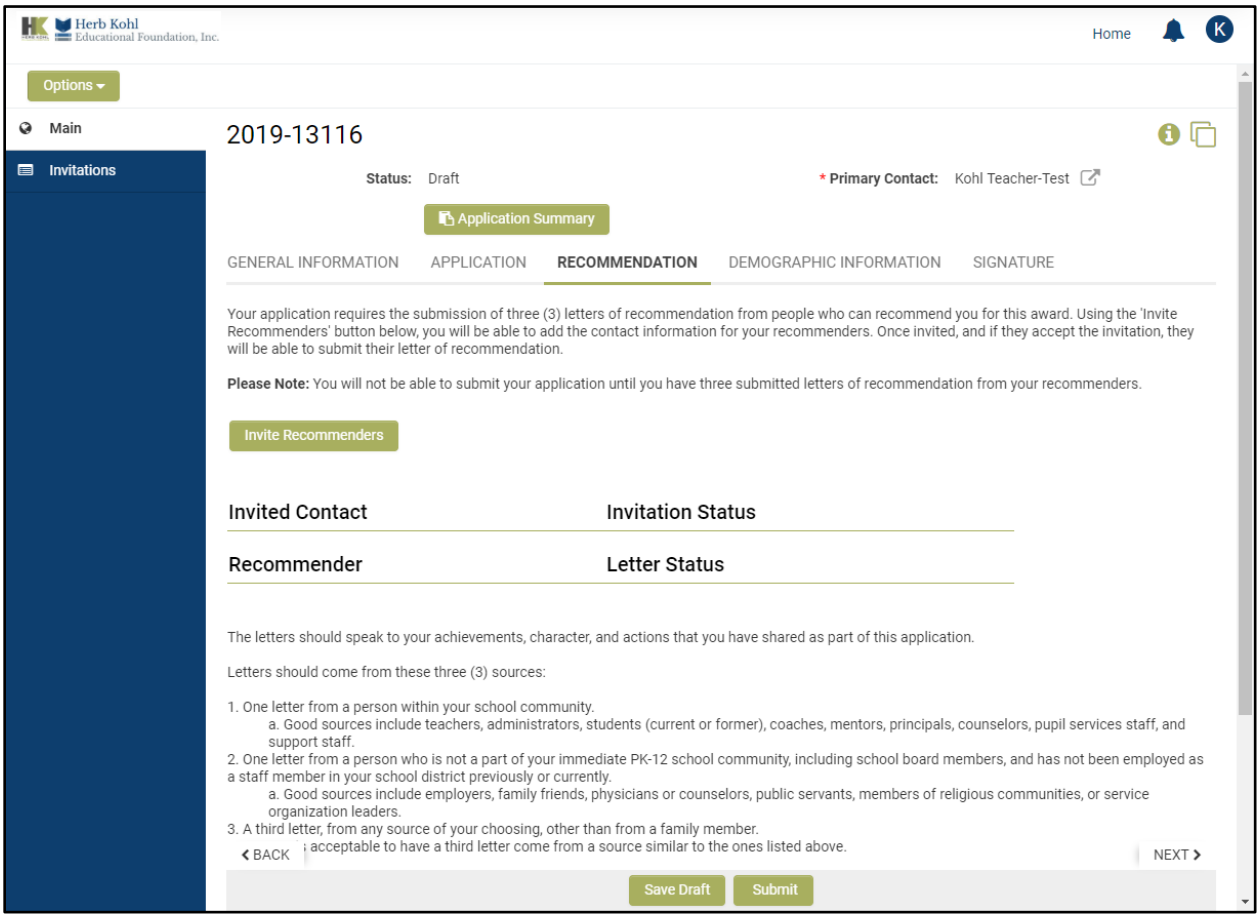
Advice for this section:

- Compose, revise and edit your responses in a word processing program (ex. Google Docs, Microsoft Word) and then copy/paste the final version into your application.
- Proofread your work! Reading it out loud to yourself will help you locate errors.
- Write truthfully and tell your story with humility, but take credit for your actions and the impact of your decisions as an educator.
- If you are going to describe an activity that several people collaborated on, specifically address your role in that work, and how your work impacted the outcomes of the group's work together.
- Consider how each of the six responses, when read together, can form a larger, more cohesive body of work that describes your leadership and impact (like chapters in a book).
- Give real-life examples when you can.
- Consider protecting any specifically identifiable information about others when possible.
- Consider addressing how your context affects your decisions and impacts your words and actions (including things like geographic location, student populations, role and duties, relative affluence of the school and community, and proximity/availability of resources).
    - Consider describing the challenges you have faced, or the barriers you've overcome, in becoming the educational leader you are today.
- Focus on speaking to things like innovation, leadership, impact/results, and equity through your words and actions.
- Consider how the letters of recommendation you request will support and deepen the evidence for the things that you share in your professional reflections.
- The 86 public school Kohl Teacher Fellows will go on to be considered as candidates in the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year process.

*Note: With regard to question 2, please consider focusing your answer on how you are addressing racial differences and gaps through your work with your students, including how you are leveraging equity-based strategies in closing achievement and opportunity gaps for students of color. There are only 8 school districts in the state of WI whose student population is 100% white/Caucasian, so readers will expect you to speak to how you address the gaps between students of color and other students within your context.

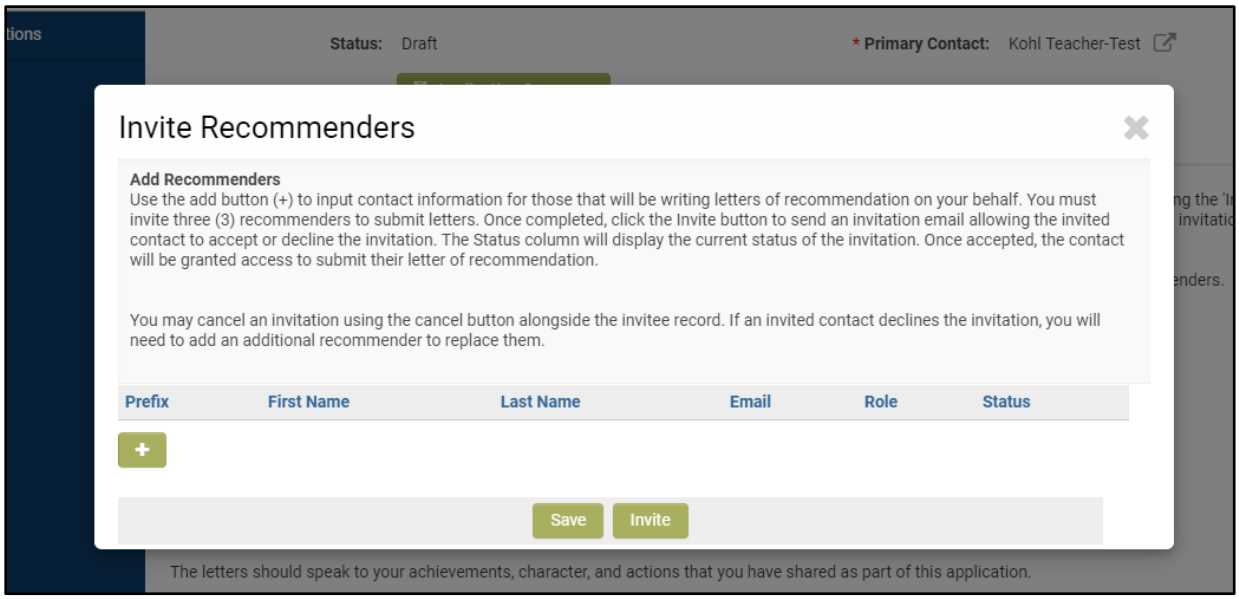
Recommendation Tab

You will need to secure three (3) letters of recommendation before you can submit your application as complete. You will use the application to invite your recommenders to complete a letter of recommendation form on your behalf. You will be able to see if they have been invited, have accepted and are drafting a letter, have completed their letter, or declined the invitation from within this tab. You will NOT be able to see what they have written or shared about you.



Letters must come from different sources:

- One from a person within your school community
    - Other teachers, administrators, students and parents (current or former), coaches, mentors, principals, counselors, pupil services staff, and support staff. Retired faculty would be included in this category.
- One from a person outside of your immediate school community
    - Non-school employers, family friends, physicians or counselors, public servants, members of religious communities, or service organization leaders.
- One from anyone of your choosing, including but not limited to the above two categories, other than from an immediate family member.



Recommender statuses:

Once you invite a person to recommend you, their status will change to “Invited”. They will receive an email with an invitation to “Accept” or “Decline” the invitation to submit a letter. Once they respond, their status will update to whichever option they chose (“Accepted” or “Declined”).

Once their letter has been submitted, their recommender status will change to “Submitted” in your application.

If someone declines, or is generally unresponsive, you can also “Cancel Invite” using the green button with an “X” on it in the Invite Recommender submenu, and then you can add another recommender. **You must have all 3 recommendations submitted before you can submit your application.**

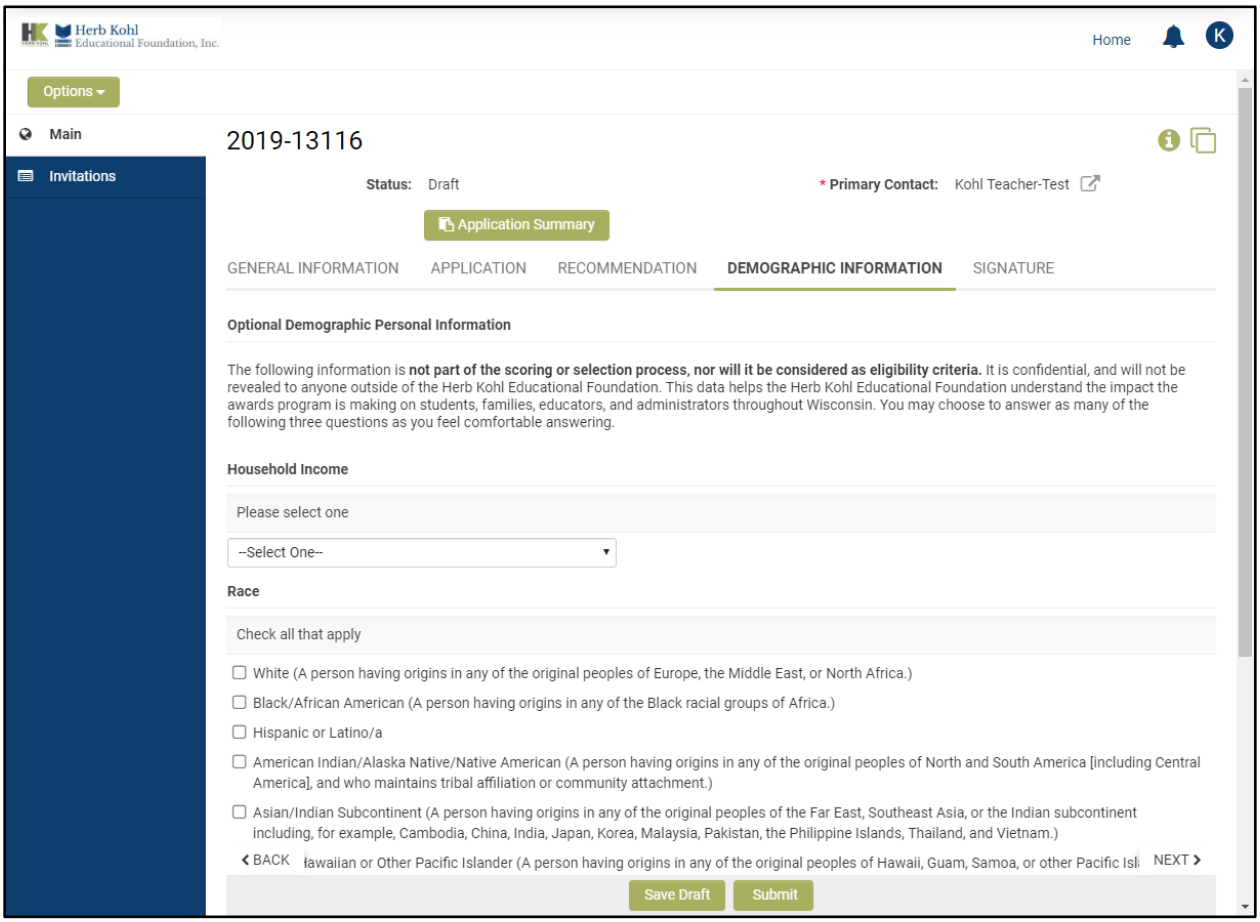
Advice for this section:

- Actively manage your invitations and completion of letters of recommendation!
  - A packet will not be considered if it has fewer than the three required letters of recommendation.
  - Check in with the people you have asked to write you letters often. If they did not receive the invitation, don’t wait until the end of the application period to try to solve that problem.
  - No extensions of time will be granted to applicants or recommenders. Please plan accordingly.
- Consider being strategic in your invitations, and clear in what you hope a recommender can speak to about your leadership and the impact of your words and actions.
- Reach out to recommenders personally before you invite them using the SmartSimple platform, so they know to look out for the request. This also allows you to decide whether or not they might be a good reference for you.
- Encourage recommenders to give evidence and examples in their recommendations.
- Letters written in a language other than English will be shown to reviewers in the language in which they were written, to preserve as much of the authentic word selection and intent of the writing. However, English translations will also be made available to reviewers. We will use commonly available services (ex. Google Translate) unless a recommender is able to provide a translation. Please contact Mark Mueller at DPI at 608-266-3945 with any questions on this provision.

Demographic Information Tab

The following information is not part of the scoring or selection process, nor will it be considered as eligibility criteria. It is confidential, and will not be revealed to anyone outside of the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation. This data helps the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation understand the impact the awards program is making on students, families, educators, and administrators throughout Wisconsin. You may choose to answer as many of the following three questions as you feel comfortable answering.

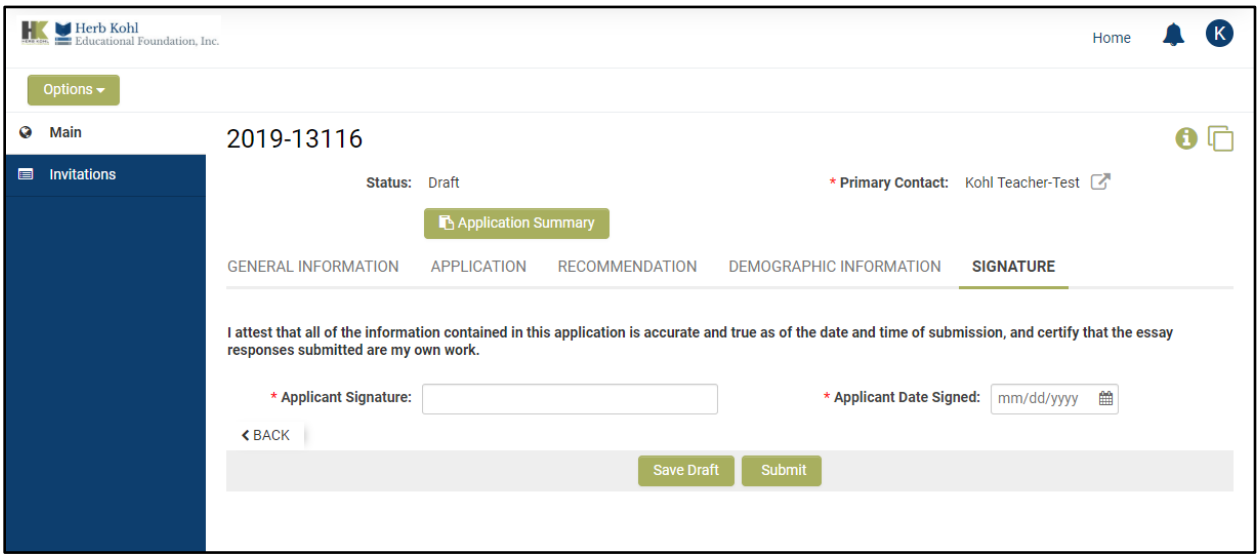
- Household Income (dropdown menu of choices)
- Race (Check all that apply)
- School Context (Check all that apply)



Signature Tab

Once you have completed the application, have filled in content for all required fields, and received back three letters of recommendation, you will be able to submit your application for consideration at the Regional level.

- Applicant Signature (You must type your full name in the field)
- Application Date Signed



Submitting your Application

Click "Submit" at the bottom of the Signature tab to send it in for consideration. If there are any required fields left empty or letters of recommendation missing, you will receive error messages with links to click that will take you directly to the error.

Once you submit, you cannot re-open your application for editing.

The deadline for Teacher Fellowship Applications to be submitted is listed on the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation website. Late applications will not be considered, even if the reason that it is late is not the applicant's fault.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact either of the following people to help you:

Mark Mueller, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, (608) 266-3945, mark.mueller@dpi.wi.gov

Kim Marggraf, Herb Kohl Educational Foundation, (920) 457-1727, marggraf@excel.net

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