



Alumni Enrichment Institutes Application Instructions

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 16:00/4:00 PM GMT on Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Applications must be submitted using the online application at mwfellows.info/AElapp.
We suggest printing these instructions to use as a reference while completing the application.

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Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni Enrichment Institutes Program Overview

The [Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders](#) is the flagship program of the [Young African Leaders Initiative \(YALI\)](#). The Fellowship brings young leaders to the United States for academic coursework and leadership training and creates unique opportunities for Fellows and U.S. citizens to collaborate as they spur economic growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa and the United States. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by IREX.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and with the health, safety, and well-being of Fellows and partners as the highest priority, the U.S. Department of State conducted the 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship virtually. The Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni Enrichment Institutes (“Alumni Enrichment Institutes”) are a follow-on opportunity for which 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni (“participants”) can apply to come to the United States to supplement their Fellowship experience.

The Alumni Enrichment Institutes are an opportunity for participants to collaborate with U.S. counterparts and each other, and to be exposed to and continue building the professional and leadership skills they developed during their virtual 2021 Leadership Institutes. While Leadership Institutes were organized into the thematic tracks of Business, Civic Engagement, and Public Management, Alumni Enrichment Institutes are not track-specific and will instead use experiential and discussion-based learning to provide participants with broadly applicable knowledge about U.S. culture and society.

The Alumni Enrichment Institutes will bring up to 200 participants to the United States in the summer of 2022. Participants will begin their program in Washington, D.C. with an Orientation and Welcome Workshop and will then travel to communities across the United States. They will then be placed at U.S. institutions of higher education in cohorts of 25 for the two-week Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Orientation and Welcome Workshop in Washington, D.C.: At the onset of the program, all participants will engage in an Orientation and Welcome Workshop in Washington, D.C., which will take place in mid-July 2022.

A two-week Alumni Enrichment Institute: Participants will be placed in groups of 25 at leading educational institutions across the United States—in both urban and rural areas—that represent the diversity of U.S. higher education. The Alumni Enrichment Institutes, which will take place from mid-July to early August 2022, will support the development of participants’ understanding of the United States by building on [the programming they completed in 2021](#) through experiential learning sessions focused on U.S. society and culture. The Alumni Enrichment Institutes will also provide the competitively selected participants with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a U.S. community through community service, cultural exchange, networking, and site visits.

Alumni Enrichment Institute participants will travel to the United States from mid-July until early August and must secure a J-1 visa to participate. Each participant's U.S. embassy or consulate will assist in this process. Alumni Enrichment Institute participants will be subject to all J-1 visa rules and regulations, including the two-year home-country physical presence requirement. *For more information on the J-1 visa and the two-year home-country physical presence requirement, please visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html>.*

Financial Provisions of Alumni Enrichment Institutes

There is no fee to apply to the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. If you are selected to participate in the Alumni Enrichment Institutes, the U.S. Government will cover all program costs.

Financial provisions for participants provided by the U.S. Government will include:

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from participant's home city to the United States, and domestic U.S. travel as required by the program. Participants must fly out of their home country within Africa to the United States;
- An Orientation and Welcome Workshop in Washington, D.C.;
- A two-week Alumni Enrichment Institute;
- A limited accident and sickness benefit plan; and
- Housing and meals during the program.

Please note that the U.S. Department of State, IREX, and/or Alumni Enrichment Institute Partners will not provide funds to cover participants' salaries while they are away from work or funds for personal purchases, such as support for participants' home organizations or gifts for family.

Participants will be housed in single occupancy lodging (an individual bedroom with a door) which may include an extended stay hotel, university dorm/residence hall, or similar accommodations on or near the campus of their Alumni Enrichment Institute. Participants may share a bathroom with one or more participants of the same gender, and they will have access to a kitchen to cook some of their own meals. Participants will receive stipends to purchase meals and groceries for meals not provided by their Alumni Enrichment Institute. Please note that campus cafeterias will not offer the same types and varieties of foods that are available to participants in their home countries. Care will be taken, to the extent possible, to ensure that any special requirements regarding housing, diet, and other personal activities such as religious observance are satisfied. However, participants should understand that the environment will likely be very different from what they are used to at home and should be open to new experiences.

Technical Eligibility Requirements

The Mandela Washington Fellowship does not discriminate against applicants because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socioeconomic status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic as established by U.S. law. The Fellowship is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusion.

Alumni Enrichment Institutes are open to Fellowship Alumni who meet the following criteria:¹

- Are 2021 Fellowship Alumni in good standing;
- Are not employees or immediate family members of employees of the U.S. Government (including a U.S. embassy or consulate, USAID, or other U.S. Government entity);
- Are **current** residents of one of the following countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, or Zimbabwe; and
- Submit complete applications by the specified deadline.

Please note that participants are not allowed to have dependents, including spouses and children, accompany them during the Alumni Enrichment Institute.

The U.S. Department of State and IREX reserve the right to verify all information included in your application. You may be required to provide documentation verifying details within your application. In the event of a discrepancy, or if information is found to be false, the application will immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible.

Please note that if you do not meet all technical eligibility requirements in this section currently or at the start of the program, you will not be able to participate in the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. If your technical eligibility changes at any point, please email MWFAumni@irex.org.

Applicants who do not meet the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee. If you do not meet the technical eligibility requirements for this program, we encourage you to explore other [opportunities for Fellowship Alumni](#), other exchange program opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State's [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#), or other resources available through the [YALI Network](#).

Application Timeline

Date	
November 17, 2021	Application opens
December 8, 2021	Application deadline
December 2021 – February 2022	Application review and selection
March 2022	Applicants notified of their status
May 2022	Visa processing
Mid-July 2022	Participants arrive in the United States
Early August 2022	Participants depart the United States

¹ Current IREX employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX-implemented grant programs, either as individuals or as the responsible party representing an institutional applicant.

Selection Process and Criteria

The deadline for applications for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes is 16:00/4:00 PM GMT on Wednesday, December 8, 2021. Applications must be submitted using the online application at mwfellows.info/AEIapp.

The Alumni Enrichment Institutes selection process is a merit-based open competition for the 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship cohort. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed using the following criteria (not listed in order of importance):

- Participation and engagement in 2021 Fellowship activities, including Institute Cohort Activities and completion of asynchronous Fellowship requirements;
- Demonstrated commitment to serving their community and applying skills gained through the Fellowship and Alumni Activities to their professional and personal lives;
- Ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and to respect the opinions of others;
- Demonstrated motivation to learn about the United States and share lessons in their home communities;
- A positive, inclusive attitude; and
- A commitment to return to Sub-Saharan Africa and contribute skills and talents to build and serve their communities.

Taking these criteria into account, **the selection committee will also strive for balance and diversity across countries, genders, tracks, and location type (rural and urban) within the selected participants to the extent possible.** Applicants not already selected for or participating in the [unique opportunities exclusively available to 2021 Fellowship Alumni](#) may also be prioritized.

General Application Instructions and Tips

- The Alumni Enrichment Institutes application is an [online application](#). You will need access to a computer, tablet, or mobile device and an internet browser to apply.
- You do not have to finish your application in one session. You may save your work and return to complete your application as many times as necessary. Once you have submitted your application, however, you can no longer add any additional information or make any changes. All information must be included prior to your final submission. Be sure to carefully check your entire application. You must submit your completed application through the [online application platform](#) by the deadline.
- All application questions must be answered in English.
- All fields marked with an asterisk (*) must be completed.
- All answers in the application, including written responses to essays, must be your own original work. Using language copied from Fellowship applications (including those of other applicants, your own submissions from previous years, or those of Fellowship Alumni) or from other sources (including websites) is considered plagiarism and will result in your application being disqualified.
- You may wish to review the application sections and essay questions (noted below) before completing any responses. Some applicants find it helpful to draft their responses offline (for example, in a separate Word document) and then paste their responses into the appropriate sections of the application.

- This is the official application for the Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Only applicants who complete this application using the [online application platform](#) will be considered. Applications and information submitted via email or other means will not be considered.

Application Sections

Confirmation of Personal and Contact Information

In these sections, you will confirm and/or update your personal and contact information based on the information the Mandela Washington Fellowship has on record.

The contact information you provide will be used to reach you during the application and selection process. Please provide accurate addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses that you use and check on a regular basis.

General Information

In this section, you will provide required general information about yourself, including where you are currently residing, passport status, past travel to the United States, etc.

- Indicate if you live in a national capital city.
 - A national capital city is the seat of your federal or national government (e.g., Abuja, Nigeria or Dakar, Senegal).
- Indicate what location type best describes where you currently live.
 - A major city is defined an urban area with a large population of about 100,000+ people (e.g., Cape Town, South Africa).
 - Another city or town is roughly defined as a semi-urban area with a population between 2,500 and 100,000 people (e.g., Lamu, Kenya).
 - A rural area is defined as any area with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants that is distinctively not in an urban area (e.g., Chachani, Tanzania).
- Indicate if you currently have a valid passport and, if so, provide the expiration date. If you do not have a passport, you will be required to obtain one if you are selected as a Finalist.
- Provide information regarding your travel to the United States within the **past two years** (October 2019 to present). As a reminder, the Fellowship Team already has information about your experiences prior to October 2019 from your Fellowship application.
 - Include all past experience in the United States such as work, trainings, degree programs, study abroad experience, personal travel and tourism, or extended stays or residencies. Previous experience in the United States does not disqualify you from the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Optional Demographic Information

In this section, you will have the opportunity to answer optional questions about how you identify yourself. These questions will help us understand how people from diverse backgrounds seek out and experience opportunities through the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

The questions in the “Optional Demographic Information” section are optional and for statistical purposes only. All responses will remain confidential and will not be considered during the selection process. The Mandela Washington Fellowship strongly encourages all eligible applicants to apply.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship does not discriminate against applicants because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socioeconomic status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic as established by U.S. law. Please see the definitions of protected characteristics below. The Fellowship is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusion.

- Indicate if you identify as a person with a disability. Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to apply and provide information regarding their disability and any accommodations they may need while in the United States.² Your application will not be affected in any way if you disclose a disability. Please review the [information for applicants with disabilities](#) for more information.
 - **Hearing** (e.g., deaf, hard of hearing)
 - **Medical** (e.g., asthma, arthritis, etc.)
 - **Physical/Mobility** (e.g., wheelchair users, amputees)
 - **Speech** (e.g., speech impediments)
 - **Vision** (e.g., blind, low vision)
- Indicate what option best describes your **gender identity**. Gender identity is an individual’s internal, deeply-felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither, or in-between. This may or may not match the individual’s biological or legal sex.³
- Indicate if you identify as **LGBTQI**. If you identify as LGBTQI, you may identify with one of the following categories:
 - **Lesbian**: A woman who is sexually and romantically attracted to other women.
 - **Gay**: A man who is sexually and romantically attracted to other men. Also often used as a generic term used to describe people of any gender who are sexually and romantically attracted to people of the same gender.
 - **Bisexual**: A person who is sexually and romantically attracted to both women and men.
 - **Transgender**: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.
 - **Queer**: Historically a negative term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. More recently reclaimed by some LGBT people to refer to themselves. Often used to reference a more flexible view of gender and/or sexuality. Some people still find the term offensive, while others use it as a more inclusive term that allows for more freedom of expression.
 - **Intersex**: A variety of conditions in which a person is born with or develops a reproductive or sexual anatomy or physiology that may not seem to fit typical ideas of female or male or typical development of physical sex traits.

² For more information on these disability categories, please refer to the [Office of Equal Employment Opportunity’s definition](#).

³ For more information on sexual orientation and gender identity, please refer to the U.S. State Department’s [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\) Terms and Definitions Document](#).

- Indicate the **pronouns** that you use. A pronoun is a term used to substitute a person's name when they are being referred to in the third person.⁴ A person's gender should not be assumed based on their pronouns. Gender pronouns can include, but are not limited to:
 - **He/him/his:** Masculine pronouns
 - **She/her/hers:** Feminine pronouns
 - **They/them/theirs:** Neutral pronouns
- Indicate if you identify with a **historically marginalized group** that faces discrimination based on one of the following categories:
 - **Racial or ethnic group:** Race discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably due to their race or personal characteristics associated with race such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features.⁵
 - **Indigenous group:** Indigenous discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because they are a member of an indigenous group.
 - **Religious group:** Religious discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because they are of a certain religion.⁶
 - **Linguistic group:** Linguistic discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because of their language abilities, native language, or accent.⁷
 - **Socioeconomic class or status:** Social class discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably on the basis of social class or economic status and the grouping of individuals based on wealth, income, education, occupation, and social network.
 - **Gender:** Gender discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably based on their gender.⁸

Professional Experience

In this section, provide information about your professional experience from the **past two years** (October 2019 to present). As a reminder, the Fellowship Team already has information about your experiences prior to October 2019 from your Fellowship application.

- Select up to five sectors in which you have expertise and/or interest to help us better understand your professional areas of focus. Please note that this information will not factor into your selection, but may be used to help place Finalists at Alumni Enrichment Institutes.
- Indicate the level of your current or most recent professional position:
 - **Entry-level:** Beginner-level employees who have a basic understanding of the occupation. Employees work under close supervision and receive specific instructions on required tasks and expected results.
 - **Mid-level, non-supervisory:** Employees have a sound understanding of the occupation and have attained special skills or knowledge through education or experience. They perform tasks that require exercising judgement. They do not directly supervise anyone, but they may coordinate the activities of other staff.

⁴ For more information on gender pronouns, please refer to the U.S. Department of Labor's [Policies on Gender Identity](#).

⁵ For more information on race and color discrimination, please refer to the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's definitions](#).

⁶ For more about religious discrimination, refer to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's definitions.

⁷ For more about linguistic discrimination, refer to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's [definitions of national origin discrimination](#).

⁸ For more information on sexual orientation and gender identity, please refer to the U.S. State Department's [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\) Terms and Definitions Document](#).

- **Mid-level, supervisory:** Employees have a sound understanding of the occupation and have attained special skills or knowledge through education or experience. They perform tasks that require exercising judgement. They may coordinate the activities of other staff and have supervisory authority over those staff.
- **Executive:** Employees have sufficient experience in the occupation to plan and conduct work requiring judgement and the independent evaluation, selection, modification, and application of procedures and techniques. Employees use advanced skills and diversified knowledge to solve unusual and complex problems. They have management and/or supervisory responsibilities.
- **Employment:** List your current employer and up to three professional positions that have been your primary occupation, whether paid or unpaid, **since October 2019**.
 - For example, you could list your role as program officer or head of sales.

Educational Experience

In this section, provide information about your education from the **past two years** (October 2019 to present). As a reminder, the Fellowship Team already has information about your experiences prior to October 2019 from your Fellowship application.

- **Educational Experiences:** Indicate whether you are a current student and list up to three educational institutions (including your current institution, if applicable) that you have attended and the degree you received at each one **since October 2019**.
 - For example, you could list your secondary school or university degree.

Community & Volunteer Experience

In this section, provide information about your volunteer experience from the **past two years** (October 2019 to present). As a reminder, the Fellowship Team already has information about your experiences prior to October 2019 from your Fellowship application.

- **Community and Volunteer Work:** List up to five volunteer roles or other unpaid work outside of your primary occupation **since October 2019**.
 - For example, you could list the time you spend mentoring young entrepreneurs.

Personal Statements

In this section you will answer short essay questions.

- Each response has a space limitation and a designated word limit. Please use specific, concrete examples that support your statements. It is important that you provide some background information, since your application reviewer may not be familiar with the situation in your community/country, but you should focus primarily on your experience and examples.

Long Essays

You will have 250 words to answer each of the long essay questions.

- How have you already applied the skills gained during the 2021 Fellowship to your home country and/or community? How will participating in an Alumni Enrichment Institute enable you to contribute further to your community and expand your network?
- The Alumni Enrichment Institutes will allow participants to better understand U.S. society, culture, values, and institutions. What are you most interested in learning about while in the United States, and how will this learning impact your personal and/or professional life?

Short Essays

You will have 150 words to answer each of the short essay questions.

- The Mandela Washington Fellowship values diversity, equity, and inclusion and strives to reach diverse audiences through all programming. Provide an example of how you have committed yourself to these values and included diverse audiences in your work.
- How have you already contributed to the Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni experience? Why should you be selected to participate in an Alumni Enrichment Institute?

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Alumni Enrichment Institutes

Q: How long are Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: Participants will be at their Alumni Enrichment Institute for two weeks. There is also a week-long Orientation and Welcome Workshop in Washington, D.C. prior to the start of the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Q: How will the Alumni Enrichment Institutes be different from my Fellowship experience?

A: The Alumni Enrichment Institutes will build on the virtual Fellowship you completed in 2021 and will focus on U.S. culture and society. Participants will also have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a U.S. community through a variety of activities with their Alumni Enrichment Institute.

Q: Will my Alumni Enrichment Institute be within my same track of study?

A: No, there are not set tracks of study for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Q: Will my Alumni Enrichment Institute be hosted by the same educational institution as my Leadership Institute?

A: Selected participants will be notified of their Alumni Enrichment Institute placement in the spring of 2022. Placements are final and cannot be changed. While it is possible that you could be placed at the same educational institution, it is neither likely nor guaranteed.

Q: Will my Alumni Enrichment Institute be focused on my specific sector of work?

A: No, Alumni Enrichment Institutes are not track- or sector-specific. Alumni Enrichment Institutes will use experiential and discussion-based learning to provide participants with broadly applicable knowledge about U.S. culture and society.

Q: What types of activities are included in the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: We have planned many different types of activities for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Examples include experiential learning sessions, site visits, community service projects, leadership sessions, and cultural and civic activities.

Q: How will the Alumni Enrichment Institutes add to my Fellowship experience?

A: The Alumni Enrichment Institute will provide you the opportunity to participate in experiential learning activities in-person in the United States. You will have the opportunity to engage with an American community, network with peers, and learn about U.S. culture and society.

Q: Can I choose which educational institution I want to go to for my Alumni Enrichment Institute?

A: No. Selected participants will be notified of their Alumni Enrichment Institute placement in the spring of 2022. Placements are final and cannot be changed.

Q: How many applicants will be selected to participate in the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: Up to 200 participants will be selected to participate in the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Q: I cannot apply/participate this year. Will the Alumni Enrichment Institutes be offered again next year?

A: No, Alumni Enrichment Institutes are a one-time opportunity available exclusively for 2021 Fellowship Alumni in the summer of 2022. We encourage you to explore other [opportunities for Fellowship Alumni](#).

Application

Q: Can I access the application from my phone or tablet?

A: Yes, you can access the application from any device that is connected to the internet. The application is mobile-friendly, so it is easy to apply from your phone or tablet.

Q: I don't have reliable access to high-speed internet. Can I still complete an application?

A: Yes, the application system functions in low-bandwidth environments and can be saved. As such, you can complete the application over multiple sittings, which may be useful if you do not have constant access to the internet or are traveling to internet cafés or co-working spaces to complete your application. Please save your application often to avoid losing your responses due to potential internet disruptions.

Q: What if I am not eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: If you are not eligible to apply, we encourage you to explore other [opportunities for Fellowship Alumni](#), other exchange program opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State's [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#), or other resources available through the [YALI Network](#).

Q: Can I submit a paper copy of the Alumni Enrichment Institutes application?

A: No, you must submit your application through the [program's online application platform](#). Paper applications or applications sent via email attachment will not be accepted.

Q: Can I submit more than one application for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: No, you may submit only one application. Submitting additional applications will disqualify you.

Q: I have multiple email addresses, including some for personal use and some for my work. Which one should I use for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes application?

A: You should use the email address that you have on record with the Mandela Washington Fellowship. If you are unsure what this email address is or need to update it, please email MWFAumni@irex.org.

Q: I cannot afford to pay an application fee. How should I apply?

A: There is no fee to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Q: The application instructions say all answers must be my "own, original work." What does that mean?

A: All answers must be your own ideas and in your own words. Be certain not to plagiarize, which is taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as your own. If you use another person's writing, ideas, words, or materials, you must credit the source. Do not cut and paste ideas from the internet or other sources. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden at many organizations and academic institutions in the United States, and applicants who plagiarize their application materials will be disqualified. This includes using wording from another applicant or Fellowship Alumni in your application. The U.S. Department of State and IREX will be checking all applications for plagiarism. For more information, please visit the [Plagiarism.org website](http://Plagiarism.org).

Q: After I complete and submit my application, can I make changes at a later date?

A: No, all submitted applications are final. Once you have submitted your application, you can no longer add any additional information or make any changes either through the online platform or via email. All information must be included prior to your final submission, so be sure to check everything carefully before you submit. If you have any questions about or problems with your application, please contact MWFAumni@irex.org before you submit. If your technical eligibility for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes changes at any point, please email MWFAumni@irex.org.

Disability and Other Accommodations

Q: I have a physical disability or other special need and I need another person's assistance to complete my application. Is this considered plagiarism?

A: Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Applicants with physical disabilities or special needs who require another person's assistance to complete an application may use such assistance. However, the thoughts, ideas, and content of your application must be your own; you cannot collaborate with the person assisting you on the content of your application.

Q: Can applicants with disabilities apply? Why does the application ask if I have a disability?

A: Yes, applicants with disabilities are encouraged to apply. The Mandela Washington Fellowship does not discriminate against applicants because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socioeconomic status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic as established by U.S. law. The Fellowship is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusion. The application includes a question about disability so that we are aware of what kinds of accommodations might be needed if you are selected. Your answer to the question regarding disabilities is voluntary and will not impact your chances of acceptance.

Q: How are participants with disabilities supported during the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: Each participant's needs are evaluated individually so that the Alumni Enrichment Institute Partner and IREX can determine reasonable accommodations to ensure the participant's full participation in program activities. Please [review the information for applicants with disabilities](#) for more on what types of reasonable accommodations may be available during the program.

Q: How are pregnant participants supported during the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: Applicants who are pregnant are encouraged to apply. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to supporting a positive learning and networking environment for all participants. The Alumni Enrichment Institutes will include long days and extended periods of time sitting in a classroom or walking on excursions and site visits. Airlines also have different policies for flying while pregnant and may restrict travel for individuals who are pregnant after a certain period in their pregnancy. If you are pregnant and are at less than 23 weeks by the start of the program in mid-July, you should be able to fully participate in the program. Please [review the information for participants who are pregnant](#) for more on the support and resources available to pregnant participants during the program.

J-1 Visa Information

Q: What type of U.S. visa will Alumni Enrichment Institute participants need to secure in order to participate?

A: Alumni Enrichment Institute participants will need to secure a J-1 visa in order to participate. Each participant's U.S. embassy or consulate will assist in this process. For more information about J-1 visas, please visit <https://j1visa.state.gov/>.

Q: Are Alumni Enrichment Institute participants subject to the J-1 visa two-year home-country residency requirement?

A: Alumni Enrichment Institute participants will be subject to all J-1 visa rules and regulations, including the two-year home-country physical presence requirement. For more information on the J-1 visa and the two-year home-country physical presence requirement, please visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html>.

Q: What is the J-1 visa two-year home-country physical presence (foreign residence) requirement?

A: Under the J-1 visa two-year home-country physical presence requirement, you must return to your home country for a cumulative total of two years at the end of your exchange visitor program. You are not prohibited from traveling to the United States within those two years, but you may not benefit

from certain employment-based or family-based visas until the foreign residency requirement is satisfied. This requirement under U.S. immigration law is based on Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Technical Eligibility Requirements

Q: Is there an age requirement to apply?

A: No, there is no age requirement to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Q: How do I know if I am an eligible Fellowship Alumni?

A: All 2021 Fellowship Alumni in good standing are eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements noted in the Technical Eligibility Requirements section above. Eligible 2021 Fellowship Alumni received an email from IREX following the 2021 Fellowship confirming their Alumni status. If you are unsure of your Fellowship Alumni status, please email MWFAumni@irex.org.

Q: I am an employee of the U.S. Government but am a citizen and resident of an eligible country. Am I eligible to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: No, you are not eligible to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Employees and immediate family members of employees of the U.S. Government are not eligible to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes.

Q: What do you mean by country of residence?

A: Your country of residence is the country in which you currently live and have a physical address. You must live in one of the countries eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes to apply.

Q: I am a citizen of Ghana currently living in South Africa. Am I eligible to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: Yes, you are eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Applicants living outside their country of citizenship but in another eligible country may apply.

Q: I am a resident of the United States, but I am originally from an African country. Am I eligible to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: No, you are not eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Residents of the United States, or of any non-eligible country, are not eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes under any circumstances, even those with temporary residency such as students.

Q: I am an African student studying in France (or another non-eligible country). Am I eligible to apply for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes?

A: No, you are not eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes. Residents of non-eligible countries are not eligible for the Alumni Enrichment Institutes under any circumstances, even those with temporary residency such as students.

Q: I previously resided in the United States for school or work but have returned and am now a resident in an eligible African country. Am I eligible to apply?

A: Yes, if you are currently both a citizen and a resident of an eligible African country, you are eligible

to apply, provided you meet the other eligibility requirements noted in the Technical Eligibility Requirements section above.

Miscellaneous

Q: Will I be able to apply for a visa to another country while in the United States?

A: If you are selected as a participant and are planning to pursue business, education, or other opportunities in a foreign country after the Alumni Enrichment Institutes, we encourage you to secure required visas prior to your travel to the United States. In most instances, it is impossible to apply for visas to travel to other countries while you are away from your home country.

Q: Will I be able to take time off during the Alumni Enrichment Institutes to attend to other matters?

A: No, participants are expected to be fully engaged during the Alumni Enrichment Institute. This includes full attendance at and participation in all required activities, events, and sessions during the Orientation and Welcome Workshop and the Alumni Enrichment Institute.

Q: I have a family and would like to bring them with me to the United States if I am selected as a participant. Is this allowed?

A: No, you may not bring any members of your family with you to the United States. Program rules prohibit participants from bringing their dependents or other family members, and no dependent visas will be issued.

About the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State. ECA fosters mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations. ECA accomplishes this mission through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges that engage youth, students, educators, artists, athletes, and rising leaders in the United States and more than 160 countries. For further information, please visit the [ECA website](#).

About IREX

IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board) is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. We work with partners in more than 100 countries in four areas essential to progress: cultivating leaders, empowering youth, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to quality education and information. For further information, please visit the [IREX website](#).