



LINC Grant Application Guidelines

About LINC Grants

The purpose of the Leveraging Innovations in New Communities (LINC) Grant program is to facilitate deeper collaborative engagement between Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni across countries and cohorts. LINC Grants provide Alumni of all cohort years funds to pursue professional collaborations within the Fellowship's Alumni Network. Funds will allow Alumni to travel to each other's organizations or communities or collaborate in a hybrid format to learn from each other's best practices and expertise. Examples of LINC collaborations include joint service projects or trainings, job shadowing or mentorship arrangements, and joint research or teaching. By providing for the travel and program costs of joint projects and learning opportunities, LINC Grants remove some of the most daunting obstacles to cross-cohort, cross-regional collaboration among Fellowship Alumni.

LINC Grant Timeline

- Application Period February 12, 2024 – March 8, 2024
- Notification of Award April - May 2024
- Grant Period June 1, 2024 – November 30, 2024

Definitions

- **Team Lead:** The principal point of contact for the LINC collaboration. LINC Team Leads are responsible for logistical and programmatic coordination with IREX.
- **Collaborator:** The secondary point of contact for the LINC collaboration. *Please note:* Collaborators must complete a separate application.
- **Project:** A LINC collaboration with an event or program component requiring budgeting for venue rental, catering, marketing, etc. Please note, not all collaborations will include a project that requires funding (e.g., a job shadowing or a joint research arrangement).
- **In-Person Collaboration:** A LINC collaboration in which one member of the LINC Team (either the Team Lead or the Collaborator) travels to the other's country or community.
- **Hybrid Collaboration:** A LINC collaboration with a mix of virtual and in-person components. The Team Lead and Collaborator work together virtually. They do not travel to each other's countries or communities but may have limited in-person activities and events in their own community.

Collaboration Formats

LINC Teams have the option to conduct their collaborations in one of two formats: in-person or hybrid.



In-person collaborations, where the Team Lead or Collaborator travels to their partner’s country or community, are subject to U.S. Department of State confirmation that travel is safe.

LINC Teams that propose in-person collaborations will also be asked to describe if and how their collaborations could be converted to virtual or hybrid formats if travel is not permitted.

Hybrid collaborations, which incorporate in-person activities into a virtual collaboration, may include in-person activities in the Team Lead’s country, the Collaborator’s country, or both. The Team Lead, for example, could organize a live, in-person training in their community, which the Collaborator co-facilitates virtually. In-person activities will also be subject to U.S. Embassy/Consulate approval.

Financial Provisions

Maximum Grant Amount for In-Person Collaborations	\$4,000
Maximum Grant Amount for Hybrid Collaborations	\$2,700

LINC Grants provide small grants for collaborative engagement between Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni in Sub-Saharan Africa. Grants of up to \$4,000 will be available for travel and project expenses for in-person LINC collaborations. Since hybrid collaborations remove travel costs, including flights, meals, lodging, and similar expenses, budgets for these projects may not exceed \$2,700. Application budgets and work plans must clearly justify expenses and outline how grant funds will be distributed between the Team Lead and Collaborator. LINC Grants will be disbursed in installments, contingent upon receipt of required deliverables from both the Team Lead and the Collaborator. Upon submission of signed Terms and Conditions and other required documents, the first installment will be disbursed to the Team Lead and Collaborator as designated in the application. The final installment will be remitted upon receipt of a final report. Proposals may be offered partial funding at the discretion of the selection committee.

Costs in excess of \$4,000 for in-person collaborations and \$2,700 for hybrid collaborations will not be covered.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications meeting the following criteria will be eligible for LINC Grants:

- Alumni (Team Leads and Collaborators) are from any Mandela Washington Fellowship year (2014-2023)
- Alumni and LINC collaboration activities are based in Sub-Saharan Africa. Same-country collaborations (i.e., where the Team Lead and Collaborator live anywhere within the same country) are permitted, though collaborations between Alumni residing in different countries are strongly encouraged.
- Alumni are not employees or immediate family members of employees of the U.S. Government (including U.S. Embassies, USAID, and other U.S. Government entities)
- LINC collaboration does not exceed four weeks

- LINC collaboration is consistent with one or more of the following strategic priority areas:
 - Cultivating Economic Prosperity through Women’s Entrepreneurship
 - Fostering International Trade through Business Partnerships
 - Advancing Peace through Conflict Prevention and Reconciliation
 - Promoting Access to Quality Education with workforce preparation/job training
 - Innovating in Science & Technology
 - Promoting Inclusion through Disability Rights Advocacy
 - Addressing the Impact of Climate Change
 - Promoting Good Governance
 - Fostering the Development of the Creative Economy
 - Public Health (*Public Health projects may not include direct patient care*)

Note: priorities may change for future application rounds

Selection Criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Clarity and feasibility of goals and planned activities
- Relevance to designated strategic priority areas
- Benefit to Team Lead and Collaborator's communities, organizations, service initiatives, professional or leadership development, or to the broader Mandela Washington Fellowship Community.
- Continued impact of collaboration after the grant period
- Relevance of Team Lead and Collaborator's experience to proposed activity
- Persuasiveness of justification for need to travel (for in-person collaborations)

Preference will be given to applications that also demonstrate or reflect:

- Previous collaboration or engagement between members of the LINC Team.
- Collaborations across different cohort years
- Collaborations across different countries/regions
- Budget cost-share
- Team Lead, Collaborator, and/or project participants who represent traditionally underrepresented groups or communities
- Team Lead and Collaborator who have not benefited from Reciprocal Exchange Awards in the same year as application

Restrictions

- Alumni may only submit one LINC application per application cycle.
- Alumni may submit as either Team Leads OR Collaborators (not both).
- Alumni may apply for both Reciprocal Exchange and LINC Grants but may only receive one type of award per calendar year.

All completed applications received by **11:59 PM EST on Friday March 8, 2024**, will be evaluated competitively against the eligibility requirements and selection criteria.

IRES and ECA reserve the right to verify all the information included in the application. In the event of a discrepancy, or if the information is found to be false, the application will be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Reporting Requirements

LINC Team Leads and Collaborators will be required to submit a final report to IREX within 30 days of the completion of their collaboration. Team Leads and Collaborators may be asked to share their experience with the wider Fellowship Alumni community via a knowledge-sharing activity accessible through the Mandela Washington Fellowship Portal. Those who do not complete the final report will not be eligible to receive the final installment of their LINC Grant. More information about reporting requirements will be included in the Terms and Conditions documents signed by Team Leads and Collaborators.

Identifying Partners

LINC Grant applicants are encouraged to take advantage of the Fellowship's online platforms to identify prospective collaboration partners. Using the [Fellowship Portal](#) to make collaboration requests within the full Alumni Network. To review Alumni biographies or search for potential partners by name, cohort, country, or area of expertise, visit the [Fellowship Directory](#). [The Fellowship Alumni Facebook Group](#), local Alumni Associations, Institute WhatsApp groups, and personal Fellowship networks are also good resources to identify potential LINC partners.

Application Instructions

LINC Grant applications must include the following components, submitted by both the Team Lead and Collaborator. Applications missing any component will be considered incomplete and therefore ineligible.

- ✓ **Complete LINC Grant Eligibility Quiz:** Confirm that your collaboration qualifies for a LINC Grant. *The quiz is included at the beginning of the application form.*
- ✓ **Complete Application Form:** All responses must be in English.
 - Include your full, legal name as it is spelled in your international passport.
 - Provide complete contact information, including country codes for telephone numbers.
 - Designate the Team Lead and Collaborator for your LINC collaboration
 - Determine your collaboration format (in-person or hybrid). For in-person collaborations, determine who will travel (the Team Lead or Collaborator).
 - Answers to essay questions should not exceed 300 words per question.
- ✓ **Complete Work Plan:** Team Leads and Collaborators must each submit a joint work plan. Please include as much detail as possible.

- Eligible work plans must use the provided template and comply with the requirements outlined in the template's Guidelines tab.
- ✓ **Complete Budget Form:** All costs should be in U.S. dollars.
 - Budget should reflect total estimated costs for in-person or hybrid collaborations inclusive of expenses that will be provided in-kind and/or through cost-share.
 - Eligible budgets must use the provided template and comply with the requirements outlined in the template's Guidelines tab.
- ✓ **Professional Resume:** Resumes should be submitted in English and illustrate qualifications relevant to the proposed collaboration activities.

Please note the following:

- Applications must be received on or before the due date. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.
- Team Leads and Collaborators must work jointly on a work plan and budget but must submit individual applications. Questions in the Team Lead and Collaborator applications are similar but require individual answers from each party. Essay responses should not be identical.
- Please do not leave any spaces blank. If a question does not apply, write N/A (not applicable).