



Reciprocal Exchanges

Application Frequently Asked Questions

General

Q: Does the Reciprocal Exchange support Fellowship Alumni to travel to the United States?

A: No, the award supports the travel of U.S. professionals to African countries to collaborate with Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni on the continent.

Eligibility

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for the Fellowship Alumni Collaborator?

A: Fellowship Alumni Collaborators must be considered Alumni in good standing of the Fellowship by the U.S. Department of State. Fellowship Alumni may not be employees or immediate family members of employees of the U.S. Government. Fellowship Alumni must reside in the host country and be present for the duration of the Reciprocal Exchange.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for the U.S. professional?

A: U.S. professionals must be U.S. citizens currently living in the United States. U.S. professionals may not be employees of the U.S. Government (including a U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government entity).

Q: Can a U.S. professional who previously received a Reciprocal Exchange apply for a new Reciprocal Exchange with a different Fellowship Alumni in a different country?

A: Yes. You are not required to collaborate with the same Fellowship Alumni or work in the same project country for subsequent Reciprocal Exchanges. Please view the graphic below for a more detailed overview of our eligibility criteria. Preference will be given to U.S. professionals and Fellowship Alumni who have not previously participated in a Reciprocal Exchange.

Am I eligible to apply for a Reciprocal Exchange? I have done...

- 2 in-person projects: *Yes!* You are eligible to apply for a hybrid Reciprocal Exchange.
- 1 in-person, 1 hybrid/virtual project: *Yes!* You are eligible to apply for an in-person or hybrid Reciprocal Exchange.
- 2 virtual or hybrid projects: *Yes!* You are eligible to apply for an in-person or hybrid Reciprocal Exchange.



Q: Are there any priority topic areas that the U.S. Department of State and IREX would like to fund this year?

A: Please refer to the selection criteria included in the announcement. Rather than indicating priority areas, the application should demonstrate the impact of the project both in the Fellowship Alumni's country and the U.S. professional's community in the United States. Projects should also align with [Executive Orders](#) and [Department of State policy priorities](#).

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. Please remember to submit all required attachments with your application.

Q: I am unable to move past the application guidelines section. How do I apply?

A: Please review the eligibility requirements. The application will not let you proceed unless you meet the general requirements and have fully completed the section. Any question with a red asterisk is required and must be completed before you can progress with the application.

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

A: No, once you have submitted your application, you can no longer add any additional information or make any changes. All information and documents should be uploaded prior to final submission.

Q: Can multiple U.S. professionals apply for the same project?

A: Yes! Up to four U.S. professionals may apply for the same project. For in-person projects, the grant ceiling is \$5,000 per traveling U.S. professionals (e.g., the grant ceiling for a project with four U.S. professionals is \$20,000). Please refer to the budget template for further guidance.

Q: Can I add someone another U.S. professional to my project after selection?

A: No. All official project participants must be included in your initial application.

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

A: Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply for the Reciprocal Exchange component. Applicants with physical disabilities or special needs who require another person's assistance to complete an application may do so. However, the thoughts, ideas, and content of your application must be your own. While you should work together with the U.S. professional or Fellowship Alumni Collaborator on your application, you may not collaborate with the person assisting you in completing your application.

Q: Can I submit a paper copy of the Reciprocal Exchange application?

A: No, you must submit your application through the online application system. Paper applications or applications sent via email will not be accepted.

Q: When can applicants expect to receive notification on the status of their application?

A: Applicants will be notified of their selection status approximately 8 weeks after the deadline.

Budget

Q: Can multiple U.S. professionals apply for a single project?

A: Yes, multiple U.S. professionals can apply together for a Reciprocal Exchange. The maximum award for hybrid Reciprocal Exchange projects is \$3,000 regardless of the number of Participants. Each U.S. applicant for an in-person Reciprocal Exchange is eligible for up to \$5,000 of grant funding. Up to 4 U.S. Professionals may apply for a single project. Proposals with multiple applicants should consider this when formulating their budget. Please keep in mind that all intended Participants must be identified at the time of applying; official Participants cannot be added to your project after selection.

Q: Can multiple Fellowship Alumni apply for a single project?

A: Yes, multiple Alumni can apply for a single project. However, the maximum award amount will remain the same regardless of how many Alumni join the project: \$3,000 for hybrid projects, and \$5,000 per U.S. Participant for in-person projects.

Q: Can a U.S. professional who wishes to partner with multiple Fellowship Alumni in different countries for the same or similar projects apply for more than one award, so as to establish a support network?

A: The U.S. applicant can propose partnering with Fellowship Alumni in different countries on the same project but will only be eligible for one award at the standard maximum funding level of up to \$3,000 for hybrid projects, or up to \$5,000 per U.S. professional for in-person projects. If one U.S. professional submits multiple applications with multiple Fellowship Alumni, only one project will be selected, provided it meets all requirements.

Q: My proposal has extra costs. Will IREX/the U.S. Department of State be able to provide additional funding for these costs?

A: No – up to \$3,000 for hybrid projects and up to \$5,000 per U.S. professional for in-person projects may be awarded to cover approved program-related costs. Fellowship Alumni and U.S. professionals will be responsible for covering additional costs. We highly encourage exploring cost-share options as early as possible in the project design process, which may include financial or in-kind contributions from partnering organizations, local stakeholders, etc. Be sure to indicate all cost-share in the appropriate column in your budget.

Q: How are funds disbursed?

A: Funds will be disbursed to the Fellowship Alumni Collaborator for hybrid projects, and to the U.S. professional for in-person projects. Projects with multiple U.S. Participants must select one Participant to receive the funds. Eighty (80) percent of the award will be disbursed prior to implementation, upon approval of required deliverables. The remaining twenty (20) percent of the award will be disbursed upon completion of the exchange and the submission of additional required documents within 30 days of the project's completion. All other costs associated with the exchange must be funded by the Fellowship Alumni Collaborator(s) and/or U.S. professional(s).

Q: Are there any restrictions on how funds can be used for this program?

A: Yes. All air travel paid for with Reciprocal Exchange Award funds must be [Fly America Act compliant](#), and should be the most cost effective, economy-class airfare. Costs for participant meals, lodging, and incidental expenses may not exceed [rates established by the U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\)](#). Funds may not be used to pay administrative or indirect costs, such as the U.S. professional or Fellowship Alumni Collaborator's salary. U.S. Government funding also may not pay for alcohol and other entertainment expenses such as tourism. Please see the guidelines in the budget template for additional information about restricted costs.

Q: Do travel costs include visa-related expenses?

A: If required by their project country, Participants must procure their visa prior to travel, unless it is impossible to do so. Participants may use IREX's preferred visa provider, in which case IREX will cover the cost of this service as well as the visa fee itself. Visa costs do not need to be included as a line item in the budget. *Please note that travelers to Nigeria are not able to use IREX's preferred vendor for their visa procurement. Please see the budget template and the [Nigerian Embassy's website](#) for more information.*

Work Plan

Q: What must the work plan include?

A: U.S. professionals and Fellowship Alumni must collaborate on the submitted work plan. While your initial work plan may be broad, please provide at minimum your anticipated schedule and a general idea of content for each specific activity. Be sure to include at least one line per day in country in your work plan. Work plans should also include information about what activities Participants and Fellowship Alumni will undertake before and after Reciprocal Exchange implementation to ensure the project's success and impact within both collaborators' communities in the United States and Africa. Add rows if necessary so that every individual activity is included in the work plan. Please see the guidelines in the work plan template for more information.

Q: How should I demonstrate the U.S. impact of my project in my work plan?

A: All applicants should speak to the intended U.S. impact of their projects in the post-implementation section of the workplan. You should include at least one line item to reflect your plans for follow-on to the United States. Examples of follow-on U.S. impact for Reciprocal Exchanges includes the establishment of memoranda of understanding (MOUs), the identification of new business markets, presentations of work/findings to U.S. audiences including students, and more. U.S. follow-on impact is a required component of all Reciprocal Exchanges.

Q: How detailed does the work plan need to be?

A: Application work plans are expected to be broad, but please try to be as specific as possible regarding the following items:

- Activity locations
 - During application evaluation, the U.S. Embassy in country will confirm that all proposed locations are safe for in-person activities.
- Activity types (meetings, lectures, trainings, film screenings, etc.)

- Participant types (university undergraduates, elementary school teachers, local filmmakers, conference attendees, rural hospital staff, etc.) and anticipated number of attendees for each activity
- Activity outcomes (*for the implementation period only*)
 - Describe what participants will take away from each activity (increased knowledge about a topic, a new skill, etc.)

Q: Is there a required duration for the exchange?

A: Reciprocal Exchange implementation periods must be less than four weeks.