



PROFESSIONAL
FELLOWS

EXCHANGE
PROGRAM

ICMA

*Environmental Sustainability
Professional Fellowship*

*Frequently Asked Questions for International
Fellows*

Revised March 2018



This program is managed through the support of a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.



Environmental Sustainability Professional Fellowship

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Is the Professional Fellows Program?

ICMA, with funding from the [U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#), will bring professionals to the United States from AESAN countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Fellowship focuses on the theme of environmental sustainability. Fellows will learn practical skills focusing on communities' role and responsibility on environmental sustainability challenges, specifically on climate change, sustainable energy and environmental justice, and promoting transparency while also fostering interaction with leaders in the field.

What Are the Selection Criteria?

Successful Fellows will be chosen based on relevant professional background, good interpersonal skills, good command of the English language, and demonstrated leadership abilities.

Applicants will also need to have a current and valid passport at the time of application and be willing to undertake the necessary steps to obtain a visa (including a face-to-face interview with U.S. Embassy representatives) and security clearance to enter the United States for the duration of the Fellowship.

Specifically, the candidate must:

- Be a citizen and current resident of one of the participating countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Currently live and work in his/her home country (individuals participating in academic, training, or research programs in the United States at the time of application and individuals residing or working outside their home countries at the time of application are not eligible).
- Be between the **ages of 25 and 35** at the time of application.
- Be committed to returning to his/her home country after completion of the program.
- Be able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa (individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. Government and who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application are not eligible).
- Hold a college degree (equivalent of a bachelor's degree or higher).
- Have relevant professional experience in and commitment to their career in their home country.
- Have demonstrated leadership and collaborative skills.
- Have approval from his/her current employer to take a leave of absence for 5.5 weeks.
- Be able to adapt to new environmental surroundings and challenges.



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- Be proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application.

What Happens During the Program?

Fellows will be in the United States for approximately five and a half (5 ½) weeks. Participants will spend:

- Two to three days in Washington, DC, for an orientation with ICMA and the Department of State
- Four weeks in a host community
- One week attending a Professional Fellows Congress and a wrap-up session in Washington, DC.

During the orientation in Washington, participants will present on community and organizational challenges they are facing. Fellows will then travel to their host community in the US for four weeks. While in host communities, Fellows may have meetings with officials from local, state, and federal government, or nonprofits working on environmental sustainability issues like waste management or attend meetings to discuss best ways to design community outreach and engagement programs. Program itineraries will vary depending on the background and interests of each fellow.

What Will I Be Expected to Do During and After the Fellowship?

The program will require ongoing commitment from participants. Fellows are expected to:

- Write at least one blog post per week during the Fellowship:
<https://wordpress.com/view/icmaysealifellows.wordpress.com>
- Participate on the State Department's Alumni Network (<https://alumni.state.gov/>), where Fellows from all State Department programs access information
- Meet with the U.S. Embassy to discuss the experience.

What Are the Program Dates?

For the fall 2018 program, dates will be from **October 11 to November 17, 2018** (not including travel days). Future program dates will be announced later.

Who Covers Travel and Other Costs?

The following costs will be covered by the U.S. Department of State program:

- International and domestic flights and local transfers
- J-1 visa
- Health benefit Insurance (does not cover preexisting conditions)
- Accommodation/lodging
- A stipend of \$1,250 USD for meals and incidentals for the length of program.



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What About Visas, Insurance, and Other Requirements?

What Kind of Visa Will I need?

In addition to a current passport, Fellows will need to be in possession of a [J-1](#) visa to enter the United States to participate in a Government-to-Government exchange program. ICMA will facilitate the necessary application visa process with the relevant U.S. Embassy. To ensure visas are processed on time it is important that applicants provide accurate information on the application. Please note that participants traveling under a J-1 visa must return to their home countries and live for a total of two years before they are eligible to receive the kind of visa that enables them to reside permanently in the United States (as an immigrant or refugee, for example) or to work in the United States. This “two-year rule” does not prevent persons from returning to the United States for business, tourism, study, or other purposes that involve a temporary stay.

Who Can Accompany Me on My Program?

Under a J-1 visa, friends or family cannot accompany the Fellow during the Fellowship.

Will I Be Covered by Any Insurance?

All participants coming to the United States must be enrolled in the U.S. Department of State’s participant health benefit program. ICMA will handle this enrollment process from Washington, DC, and will produce an individual health benefit card for each Fellow. ICMA will distribute these health benefit cards to program participants upon arrival to the U.S. Health insurance is in effect only from the start date of the program to the end date of the program. As noted, it does not cover preexisting conditions.