



**The Asia Foundation**  
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

# The Asia Foundation Development Fellows

## *Emerging Leaders for Climate Action*

Application Instructions and Guidelines | Fellowship Year 2025

To apply visit: [www.asiafoundation.org/developmentfellows](http://www.asiafoundation.org/developmentfellows)

**Application deadline: Monday, July 29, 2024 at 11:59pm Eastern Time USA**



We are so grateful for your interest in joining the Asia Foundation Development Fellows program. We are currently in our 11<sup>th</sup> recruiting cycle, each year of which has been highly competitive. All applications will be reviewed thoroughly, but **please follow instructions carefully to ensure that qualifications are met, and that application components are accurate, complete, and submitted on time.**

### **APPLICATION SUMMARY**

**Applications must be completed online and consist of the following components:**

1. Personal information
2. Written submission/ short essays
3. Supplementary materials: CV
4. Video submission
5. (2) Letters of reference (managed online)

In preparation for the application process, please secure the following:

- Your passport information
- An electronic version of your Resume/CV (for upload)
- A video recording device such as a cellphone, webcam, or digital/video camera

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Asia Foundation Development Fellows program provides highly qualified, young professionals from Asia and the Pacific Islands with an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen their leadership skills and gain in-depth knowledge of Asia's critical development challenges. The year-long professional advancement program is designed to be a multifaceted experience, involving intensive learning modules – short courses, conferences and study tours in Asia and the U.S. – to enhance leadership skills, Asian development knowledge, professional networks, and international exposure.



## PROGRAM FOCUS FOR 2025: CLIMATE ACTION

In recognition of the growing urgency of the global climate crisis, **the 2025 Asia Foundation Development Fellows Program will focus on *Climate Action***. Eligibility will require candidates to demonstrate a career background or vocation focused on addressing climate change and a proven commitment to working toward achieving a resilient, sustainable future. The program will remain designed to develop leadership skills, not technical enrichment, and will include a multidisciplinary cohort. Fellows may come from a variety of professional backgrounds, including but not limited to environmental science, renewable energy, environmental policy, climate or nature finance, climatology, geoscience, community organizing, environmental law, ecology, wildlife conservation, climate storytelling, sustainable agriculture, sustainable social enterprise, and environmental activism. They may also be journalists, conflict and fragility specialists or women's rights activists – or any field - whose work crosscuts with climate issues. No professional background is ineligible if a candidate can demonstrate how their work intersects with climate action.

The Asia Foundation Development Fellows program is not a full-time fellowship. Fellows will typically remain in their occupations throughout the fellowship year while participating in the program modules. The program does require participants travel for two, 2-week modules in-person. The program is fully funded at no cost to the participants.

*The 2025 program is comprised of the following components:*

### **Spring 2025: Leadership Training Program and Study Tour [Nepal, February 17-28, 2025]**

The Leadership Training Program and Study Tour presents a series of highly interactive leadership training modules with executive coaches; site visits with leading development practitioners and thinkers, recognized policy leaders, and local innovators; short assignments; and sessions focused on self-care and wellness for leaders. With the larger objective of enhancing leadership skills and potential, the leadership training modules focus on strategic thinking and decision-making, working with participants on developing critical perspectives, solving complicated problems, managing change, and introducing innovative approaches in leadership and management. Site visits will allow fellows to explore approaches that deliver positive impact and advance development knowledge. Under the climate action theme, internal leadership curriculum will address pain points specific to leaders fighting for climate change, and external meetings both in Asia and the US will focus more intently on trends in climate action and meeting with individuals and organizations doing innovative work in the climate space. In previous years, the program has taken place in the Philippines, Mongolia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, Singapore and Korea where local needs and challenges served as a contextual backdrop for exploring theories of change and practice in international development.

### **Fall 2025: Leadership Dialogue and Exchange Program [United States, October 6-17, 2025]**

The fall Leadership Dialogue and Exchange Program provides Fellows opportunity to extend personal bonds with their cohort, as well as build new international perspectives and networks of support and inspiration in the United States. Over this two-week period, the Fellows will take part in a comprehensive series of sessions, policy discussions, and unique learning and leadership development opportunities organized in and around San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and another city across the U.S.



### **Professional Development Award**

An award of up to US\$5,000 will be made available to each of the selected Fellows. This cash award will allow each Fellow the opportunity to design individualized plans to further their leadership skills and relevant professional experience in areas of particular importance to their career growth. Each Fellow will be asked to develop a personalized, year-long work plan that can involve such areas as enrollment in specialized training programs or short courses, language study, travel to attend key regional forums or workshops, or engagement in a series of other enrichment activities.

### **Executive Coaching & Mentoring**

The Asia Foundation has valuable perspectives to lend to the field of leadership development, with a proven program history and record of commitment throughout Asia. Building on the regional network and local capacity of the Foundation, the program offers mentorship matching support tailored to the

background and professional interests of each of the Fellows. Additionally, Fellows are offered a fixed number of one-on-one executive coaching sessions throughout their fellowship year.

## ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Asia Foundation Development Fellows must:

- Have a demonstrable record of high achievement, and must show evidence of outstanding potential for professional advancement and significant impact in their chosen field;
- Have a demonstrable record of experience and accomplishment related to *climate action* and a proven commitment to working toward achieving a resilient, sustainable future. No professional background is ineligible if a candidate can demonstrate how their work intersects with climate action;
- Have outstanding personal character and integrity;
- Be thoughtful, committed, respected and inspirational leaders within their professional fields and within their larger community;
- Be under 40 years of age by the time of selection: January 1, 2025 (please note there are no exceptions to this rule);
- Be conversant in English (TOEFL exam results are not required);
- Be available and able to participate in all program components on specified dates, no exceptions;
- Be able to secure a visa for travel to the United States; and
- Be resident nationals or citizens of the following countries and regions where The Asia Foundation has programs: Afghanistan; Australia\*; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Japan, Korea; Laos; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pacific Islands Nations; Pakistan; Philippines; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; and Vietnam.

*\*For applicants from Australia, this is a First Peoples Identified role only open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The filling of this position is intended to constitute a special measure under section 8(1) of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), and from: s 27 of the Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT), s 57 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT), s 105 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld), s 65 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA), ss 25 and 26 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas), s 12 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) and s 8(4) of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), s 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA). This appointment is only available to Aboriginal or Torres Strait people who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and are accepted by their community as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.*

For further information on eligibility, read our *Frequently Asked Questions* (page 8). You may also direct inquiries to the Asia Foundation Development Fellows staff.



## ONLINE APPLICATION

Applications for the Asia Foundation Development Fellows program are to be completed online through the WiseHive application system. The system will require you to set up an account so you can save and resume your progress. Letters of reference will also be handled through this online platform and can be completed after you submit your online forms. All components of the application are due at the application deadline.

It is expected that you will complete this application yourself, without any aid or assistance from others or from any technological tools (including, but not limited to, translation services, editing software, and artificial intelligence tools), that the information you will provide in this application is complete and accurate, and that you will carefully read and understand all notes and disclaimers provided therein. The Asia Foundation reserves the right to verify all the information listed in your application, and that giving false or misleading information in the application will result in exclusion from the competition or immediate dismissal from this program.

## Personal Information

You will be asked to provide personal information such as contact details and your educational and professional background. You will also be asked about your language ability (NOTE: this program does not require standardized exam scores such as TOEFL).

## Written Submission

The online application will include essay fields. Each candidate must address the following prompts:

- **One-paragraph Biography:** *written in the third-person\**, summarize your professional background, experience, expertise, and accomplishments. Please note that this biography may be used in publications or external announcements that provide information on our Fellows. (max 150 words)  
  
\*for examples, see: <https://asiafoundation.org/what-we-do/asia-foundation-development-fellows/#ourfellows>
- **Question #1:** Describe in greater detail your current work. Tell us further about the issues you are addressing, why you believe this work is imperative, and – importantly – how it intersects with climate action. Feel free to briefly provide some background context or basic information (as you see fit) to describe the problem this work addresses. (max 200 words)
- **Question #2:** How do you see yourself as a leader? Please describe a time where you have taken a leadership role. What is your leadership style, and what skills do you feel support your leadership? (max 200 words)
- **Question #3:** Please make your case as to why this Fellowship program is right for you. Given the stated mission of this Fellowship, selection criteria, and program offerings: what do you hope to get out of participating in the program, how are you hoping to grow as a leader, and how will this program assist you in achieving your goals toward achieving climate action? (200 words)

- **Question #4:** How is climate change affecting your local community and you personally? What are you doing to mitigate these impacts at the local level? These can be personal actions or work-related actions. Please share a bit about your local context within your response. (max 200 words)

### Supplementary Materials

You will be required to upload *an electronic version of your Resume or CV* (3 pages max). You may also upload a scanned copy as long as it fits the appropriate file formats.

### Video Submission

As the Asia Foundation Development Fellows program recognizes the importance of media and the role of technology, applicants are required to create a short, 2-3 minute video. Using a webcam, cell phone or video camera, please record yourself presenting your response to the prompt in the application.

**Video Prompt:** Please briefly introduce yourself and briefly summarize your professional background, then respond to the following: How is the climate crisis a crisis in leadership? What specific challenges are blocking leaders from achieving effective climate action at the local, national or global levels? And, in your opinion what does effective climate leadership look like?

Once you have recorded your video please choose one of the two below options:

- **Option 1:** Upload your video to the application (recommended). The application platform can only accept .mp4 files. If you have a .mov file (iPhone format), please use Option 2 or use an online converter such as Cloud Convert (<https://cloudconvert.com/mov-to-mp4>).
- **Option 2:** Upload to a separate video hosting website and submit your link below. Instead of uploading the video directly, some applicants may find it easier to use a video hosting website such as YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, or DropBox. If you elect this option, title your video with your full name and adjust your privacy settings to make sure those with the URL are able to view your video. Please make sure to use the share function on the video to get the link, rather than just copying the URL from your browser. If you wish to password protect your video, please use the following password: fellows2025

### IMPORTANT:

- Remember that your video presentation should show your communication skills: the ability to capture and hold an audience's attention, and ability to speak with clarity, brevity and structure.
- A strong video takes time and practice, so please plan to devote plenty of time into its preparation.
- *Do not waste time on aesthetics such as excessive editing, visual effects, music or other elaborate elements, as they will not factor into the evaluation. Your video should primarily feature you and your ideas.*
- Please try to keep the duration under 3 minutes.
- Make sure the size of your video file is not too large (under 1GB). When recording, check your video quality settings. Remember, higher quality video and sound does not necessarily strengthen your application.
- If you are having difficulty due to lack of reliable internet, try first uploading your submission from a different computer or try another location with stronger connection such as an internet

café. If you are continuing to experience problems or have other technical difficulties, please contact Asia Foundation staff.

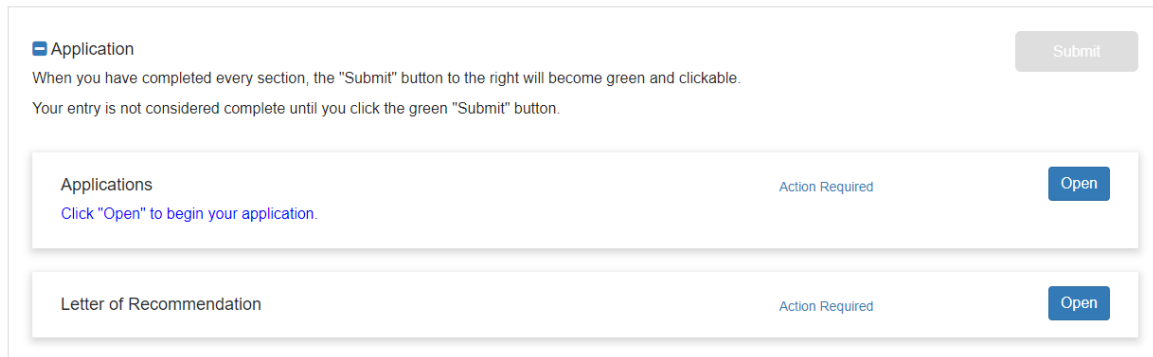
## LETTERS OF REFERENCE

The Asia Foundation Development Fellows program requires two (2) letters of recommendation from each applicant. **Please use the online application system to manage and check the status of your recommendations.** References will be contacted directly via the application system and will receive instructions on how to submit your recommendation through a submission portal. Do not have them submit letters as email attachments.

The “Letter of Recommendation” function will appear on the main menu of the application form once you have filled out your profile and proceeded to the main application page.

When you have completed every section of the submission, the “Submit” button will turn green. This indicates that you can now fully submit your application. Once you click “Submit” the application will no longer be editable.

If additional forms become available to view or fill out, they will appear at the top of this page. Previously submitted information will be viewable for your reference.



The screenshot shows a user interface for an application system. At the top right, there is a grey 'Submit' button. Below it, a message states: 'When you have completed every section, the "Submit" button to the right will become green and clickable. Your entry is not considered complete until you click the green "Submit" button.' Below this message is a table with two rows:

Applications	Action Required	Open
Letter of Recommendation	Action Required	Open

References should be able to comment on your professional abilities, thematic knowledge, and leadership qualities either within your field or your larger community. We reserve the right to contact your listed references for further information on your candidacy.

The recommendation system is *applicant led*, meaning it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that recommendation notifications reach their references, and are completed by the letter of recommendation deadline of July 29, 2024, 11:59 Eastern time (UTC-4). We encourage you to request the letters of recommendation as early as possible, even if you haven’t completed your main application. If your references do not receive their recommendation notifications, please have them contact Asia Foundation staff.

### Guidelines for References

References are not required to follow a specific format when drafting their recommendations, however, they must attest to any skills, experience, and professional potential relevant to this program. **You may find it useful to forward the below information directly to your references.**

References should include in their letter:

- The length of time and context in which they have known the applicant.
- Their opinion of the applicant’s background, qualifications, accomplishments, and experiences.

- An assessment of the applicant’s leadership abilities and potential.
- How the applicant’s work is relevant to the themes of the Asia Foundation Development Fellows program.

It is strongly recommended that References:

- Draft their letter in the appropriate file format: MS Word Document (.doc, .docx) or Adobe PDF (.pdf).
- Draft their letter on official organizational letterhead, if possible.
- Sign their name, official position, and contact information.
- Refrain from replying to email notification with an attachment. They must follow the web link provided in the email.

## SELECTION TIMELINE

**June 10 – July 29, 2024** – Application portal open.

**August – November 2024** – Internal Asia Foundation review.

**November 2024** – Selection committee convenes, makes selection among pool of finalists.

**December 2024** – Final selection announced.

**January 2025** – Fellowship year commences.

## APPLY

Access the online application at: <http://www.asiafoundation.org/developmentfellows/apply>

## CONTACT

For questions or clarifications on the application process, please contact:

### Asia Foundation Leadership & Exchange Programs Staff:

Amanda Bensel  
Senior Program Officer  
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**Main Telephone:** 415-982-4640

**[www.asiafoundation.org](http://www.asiafoundation.org)**



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### PROGRAM AND ELIGIBILITY

#### **How many Fellows are selected each year?**

The next cohort of Asia Foundation Development Fellows will consist of 13 individuals.

#### **Are there specific age requirements?**

You must be under 40 years of age by January 1 of the designated Fellowship year. For example, for the 2025 Fellowship year, you must have been born after January 1, 1985.

#### **I am just above the age cutoff. Could you relax the age limit?**

Unfortunately, no exceptions can be made with respect to the age requirements.

#### **Is there a degree requirement?**

While most qualified candidates will have strong academic backgrounds – bachelors, masters and even PhDs in relevant areas – the program acknowledges that strong leadership potential, relevant professional experience, and thematic knowledge can be demonstrated without the presence of a formal degree. Therefore, at this time, there is no degree requirement for this program. Those who have completed an academic degree program are required to submit an unofficial copy of their transcripts verifying completion of their degree program.

#### **How does the climate action theme impact eligibility?**

Under the *climate action* theme, we will be seeking leaders who clearly demonstrate a commitment to climate action through their work and experience. Eligibility requirements otherwise fundamentally remains the same.

#### **I don't work as a climate scientist – do I still qualify?**

No professional background is ineligible if a candidate can demonstrate how their work intersects with climate action. There is no single profession that we are screening for, and no single climate issue we are focusing on or prioritizing over others.

#### **Is there a minimum work experience requirement?**

There is no minimum work experience requirement. However, successful candidates will show excellent track records of at least several years of professional experience and accomplishment in their own disciplines. We seek candidates who can demonstrate outstanding leadership potential and professional competencies, and much of this typically derives from experience in dynamic working environments.

**How do I verify my eligibility with respect to the citizenship/nationality requirements?**

In general, the program seeks Asian and Pacific Islander professionals who have a deep familiarity with their respective country or region. For this reason, only citizens or resident nationals of the listed countries and regions, where The Asia Foundation has programs, are eligible to apply. Applicants must be able to provide official documentation proving their citizenship or nationality, ideally in the form of a passport. While we do not require copies of these documents to be submitted during the online application, applicants should be prepared to provide such documentation upon being designated as a finalist during the selection process.

**How do you define “resident national?”**

A resident national is the equivalent in each Asian and Pacific Islands country of a "Permanent Resident" in the U.S. (or "Landed Resident" in some countries with a strong British influence). That is, the person is allowed to reside indefinitely within a country of which he or she is not a citizen. We do not have an exhaustive list of the types of documents needed to prove resident national status. Potential applicants therefore have a small amount of discretion as to whether or not documents in their possession will meet the abovementioned criteria. However, Asia Foundation staff will ultimately determine if the submitted documents are acceptable. Applicants should also note that simply meeting the nationality requirements does not necessarily constitute a strong application. Desirable candidates will have extensive histories in the listed countries and will be able to demonstrate a long-term commitment to working within their regional or country contexts.

**Am I able to apply if I am currently living, working or studying outside my home country in Asia-Pacific?**

Yes. It is expected that some highly qualified candidates will be pursuing opportunities outside their home countries. Applicants currently living outside of the Asia-Pacific region who hold citizenship or resident nationality from the accepted countries of this program are still eligible to apply.

**Should I still apply even if I do not have a formal background in development?**

Yes. The program welcomes candidates from diverse professional disciplines with demonstrable experience in issues involving Asia-Pacific development and policy. While Fellows will typically be NGO and civil society leaders, government officials and policymakers, social entrepreneurs, journalists, environmentalists, and academics, we still encourage highly talented and dedicated individuals from other disciplines to apply.

**How well do I have to know English for this program?**

While the program does not have a formal English proficiency requirement (for example, TOEFL exam results), selected Fellows must have strong enough English language skills to participate in all program components. Much of the program and its content are highly interactive and international in nature. Exceptional language skills are highly desirable, but they are not a prerequisite for this program.

**What is the time commitment? Is this a full-time fellowship?**

Participation in the program is not a full-time commitment. The main program components are 1-2 week learning modules which grants Fellows the flexibility to remain in their current occupations throughout their fellowship year. The program's Professional Development Award also offers greater flexibility for Fellows to design their own custom educational component or project that fits in with their existing commitments.

**What if I am accepted to the program but not able to attend?**

We ask that you do not apply to this program unless you are absolutely certain you are able to attend the Asia and U.S. training modules and follow through on your Professional Development Award plan during the fellowship year. In the case of an emergency or unforeseeable circumstances that preclude your participation, you must notify staff as soon as possible.

**If I applied previously and was not selected, can I apply again?**

Yes, we encourage you to apply again.

**Are current employees of The Asia Foundation eligible to apply?**

The program is not open to current Foundation staff.

**My passport is expired and currently being renewed, but it won't be ready until after the deadline. May I still apply?**

Applicants may still apply if your passport is expired, but you must have a current valid passport by the start of the program, if selected.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION****Am I provided funding to participate in this program?**

All program expenses are covered, including costs for coursework and programming, airfares and local transportation, lodging and meals, visa fees, and health and accident insurance. Fellows also receive a Professional Development Award of up to US\$5,000 for their own personalized professional development plan.

**Must I provide any proof or documentation of financial means?**

Because all program expenses are covered, we do not require any proof of financial means.

**Can this fellowship program help fund my current or future studies?**

No. The Asia Foundation Development Fellows program is not a flexible scholarship fund for degree programs or participation in other major academic programs.

**Does the fellowship provide income replacement?**

The Asia Foundation does not provide any income replacement as Fellows are expected to stay in their current positions throughout their fellowship year.

**Does this program support family members?**

The program does not provide support for family members and family members may not accompany the Fellows during the Asia and U.S. components.

**APPLICATION PROCESS****When do I apply?**

The application period takes place each year around July, August, or September.

**May I send my application via global mail or fax?**

We do not accept applications or letters of recommendation by global mail or fax. All application components must be submitted electronically.

**Will I have to submit documentation of citizenship or nationality?**

We do not require these documents during the application process itself, however you will be required to send copies of these documents to verify that you meet the nationality requirements should your application advance further in the selection process.

**What are the selection procedures?**

All applications are evaluated by Asia Foundation staff at the initial reviewing stages and will be narrowed down to a final selection pool. Thereafter, a selection committee of highly qualified and experienced experts will be charged with evaluating finalists and determining the Asia Foundation Development Fellows.

**When are we notified of the final selection?**

The final selection will be announced by the end of each year.

**Do I have any responsibilities after the fellowship year?**

All Development Fellows will become part of an active and engaged alumni network – through web and social media platforms, as well as substantive program intersections – that will encourage ongoing collaboration and the sharing of ideas, resources, and support throughout their professional careers.

**My online application session has been disrupted. Did I lose all of my progress?**

We encourage you to regularly save your progress in your application. Please contact the Asia Foundation Development Fellows staff and they will be able to assist you in recovering your application information.

**How are letters of recommendation submitted?**

Under the WizeHive application system, you will designate your references when filling out your application. The program will contact your references automatically and guide them through procedures. DO NOT have referees email references to our Development Fellows email address.

**How many references do I need and whom should I ask to write for me?**

The application process requires two (2) letters of recommendation for each applicant. References should be able to comment on your abilities as a thoughtful, committed, respected, and inspirational young leader within your professional field and within your larger community.

**I cannot find the Letters of Recommendation form on the online application.**

Once you fill in your name and email address on your application form and click save, the "Letter of Recommendation" function will appear on the main menu of the online application form. This is to make sure that your references receive notifications with your name and contact information.

**Have my letters of reference been received?**

Please use the "Letter of Recommendation" function to manage and check the status of your recommendations. The recommendation system is applicant led, and therefore it is your responsibility to ensure that recommendations are completed before the application deadline.

06/2024