



The Asia Foundation

Call for Applications LeadNext 2026



“I’ve been part of international exchange programs in the past, but nothing holds a candle to the true international bridge-building we did that week.”

About the Program

LeadNext is focused on building transformative leaders who will shape the future by supporting them in the nascent stages of their careers. The program takes a bold new approach to leadership development, recognizing that change in the 21st century requires people-centered leaders with the capacity to work across disciplines, navigate complexity, and operate cross-culturally. The program provides a global citizen’s lens, supports fellows to better understand the complexity of our global times, and teaches that effective changemakers must work across differences and lead from their authentic selves.

Building mutual understanding through exchange between the U.S. and Asia is critical to the program model. Through a highly collaborative curriculum, fellows build lifelong professional and personal bonds and gain from exposure to varied sectoral and cultural perspectives.

An investment in:

12

Emerging leaders
aged 18-25



International exchange--
fellows are
½ from Asia and the Pacific
½ from the United States



Transformational
leadership

Program Model:

Leadership Training Intensive

- Fellows explore frameworks for authentic leadership and gain skills, networks, and perspectives to work across disciplines, navigate complexity, and lead effectively in diverse cultural contexts.
- 10 virtual sessions for 2.5 hours each
- Dates: June-29, July-2, 6, 9, 13, 16, 20, 23, 27, 30

Mentorship

- Fellows are paired with one-on-one mentors based on their professional and leadership goals

Masterclasses

- Global experts take fellows through seminars that provide examples of change in action
- 3 virtual sessions for 2.5 hours each
- Dates: August-20, 27, September-3

Global Leaders Summit

- At a culminating in-person convening, fellows engage with partner organizations and participate in an in-depth leadership retreat.
- Dates: September 19-27



Eligibility

- Age: 18-25 years old at program start
- Language: Fully conversant in English
- Availability: Able to fully commit to ALL 13 virtual sessions and the week-long in-person Summit (see dates above). Must have flexibility and understanding that we are working across many time zones. Virtual sessions will take place in the mornings in Asia and evenings in the U.S. for approximately 2.5 hours per session.
- U.S. applicants: open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents.
- Asia-Pacific applicants: open to candidates from one of the countries in which TAF has had a presence. Candidates must be able to secure a visa to travel to the U.S. (candidates from Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Laos must be currently based in the U.S.)
- Qualities: Strong candidates are excellent listeners who demonstrate humility, and the ability to collaborate sensitively across cultures.

The program is fully-funded and includes all travel, accommodation, and meals.

Background


The structural changes and development challenges facing Asia and the Pacific, and the U.S., call for a new generation of leaders who can think globally and communicate cross-culturally. LeadNext provides a rigorous curriculum and an in-depth, shared experience that give the fellows a global citizen's lens and a framework for leadership that is grounded in empathy, self-awareness, and appreciation for multiple perspectives. The program builds a vibrant network of future leaders aged 18–25 from across Asia and the United States and supports their growth, impact, and capacity to address global challenges.

Apply by May 5

Link: [2026 Application](#)

Please direct program inquiries to:

 leadnextfellows@asiafoundation.org

 asiafoundation.org/leadnext

