



# Welcome to Sri Lanka

Orientation Handbook  
for  
U.S. Fulbright Grantees

2025

**United States-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission (US-SLFC)**  
23 Gower Street, Colombo 5

Tel: + 94-11-256-4176 | + 94-11-256-4153

[www.fulbrightsrilanka.org](http://www.fulbrightsrilanka.org)



Dear U.S. Fulbright Grantees,

Congratulations on your Fulbright award to Sri Lanka. You are embarking on a life-changing journey. My colleagues at the United States – Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission and I look forward to welcoming you to Sri Lanka. Our mission is to build bridges of understanding and peace between the United States and Sri Lanka through exchange programs.

During your time in Sri Lanka, you will have an invaluable opportunity to live this mission. We trust you will come prepared to share information about America and to learn from the people of Sri Lanka. Through these experiences, you will help strengthen mutual understanding between the people of our two countries.

While you will be primarily be at your individual sites of activity engaged in teaching, research, and cultural activities, we hope that you will travel around the island, meet people, forge friendships, expand your networks, and engage in community service. Sri Lanka offers a wealth of opportunities and is imbued in history and cultural heritage, varied landscapes and geographies, and diverse people and places. Adjusting to a new and different culture is exciting and challenging. Our team, together with our network of Fulbright alumni, will assist you with the transition.

This Orientation Handbook provides information that will prepare you for your new adventure. It is a reference as you make preparations for departure and transition to a new environment. It will complement other orientation programs, support and advice you will receive when you arrive in Sri Lanka.

Best wishes on your preparations for a fruitful and enriching Fulbright journey in Sri Lanka. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Looking forward,

Patrick McNamara, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

## **The Fulbright Program in Sri Lanka**

The United States - Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission was established through a binational treaty agreement between the government of the United States and the government of Sri Lanka in November 1952. Initially established to administer short term exchanges, the program gained permanent status in 1964 and was one of the first group of Fulbright Commissions established globally. It is the only independent commission of its kind in the field of academic exchanges in Sri Lanka and the only such entity that functions under a bi-national Board of Directors with three appointed by the U.S. and three appointed by Sri Lanka.

Over 2,000 Sri Lankan and American nationals have participated in the Fulbright Program in Sri Lanka. The Fulbright Commission has strengthened our alumni engagement activities in recent years through highlighting the stories and work of our alumni, and many of our alumni stand ready to help you with your experiences.

### **Fulbright Commission Team:**

We are a small but mighty team of professionals including:

- **Patrick McNamara, Ph.D.,** Executive Director
- **Soraya Fajudeen,** Executive and Program Assistant
- **Shanaka Premarathna,** Program Officer
- **Sabitha George,** EducationUSA Student Advisor,
- **Nuwan Dinushka,** Finance Consultant
- **Upali Nayanananda,** Driver

**Fulbright Commission Office Address:** 23, Gower Street, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

**Office Hours:** 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday-Thursday (Public access from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm)  
8:30 am – 2:00 pm on Friday (Public access from 10:00 am-12:00 pm)

### **Contact Information:**

General: Tel: + 94-11-256-4176 | + 94-11-256-4153; Email: [inquiries@fulbrightsrilanka.org](mailto:inquiries@fulbrightsrilanka.org)

Patrick McNamara, Ph.D., Executive Director: [patrick@fulbrightsrilanka.org](mailto:patrick@fulbrightsrilanka.org)

Soraya Fajudeen, Executive and Program Assistant: [soraya@fulbrightsrilanka.org](mailto:soraya@fulbrightsrilanka.org)

Shanaka Premarathna, Program Officer: [shanaka@fulbrightsrilanka.org](mailto:shanaka@fulbrightsrilanka.org)

Sabitha George, EducationUSA Student Advisor: [advising@fulbrightsrilanka.org](mailto:advising@fulbrightsrilanka.org)

Nuwan Dinushka, Finance Consultant: [finance@fulbrightsrilanka.org](mailto:finance@fulbrightsrilanka.org)

**Other Important Links:**

**U. S. Embassy in Sri Lanka:** 210, Galle Road, Colombo 03, <https://lk.usembassy.gov/>  
American Citizen Services Unit: <https://lk.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>  
Email: [colomboacs@state.gov](mailto:colomboacs@state.gov)  
Tel: 011-249-8500 (Press 2)

**Sri Lankan Embassy in the United States:** 3025 Whitehaven St NW, Washington, DC 20008,  
<https://slembassyusa.org/new/>  
Email: [slembassy@slembassyusa.org](mailto:slembassy@slembassyusa.org);  
Tel: (202) 483 4025 - 28

**The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs:**  
<http://exchanges.state.gov/about.html>

**Institute of International Education:** <https://www.iie.org/>

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Your Fulbright award is administered by the US-SLFC in partnership with the Institute of International Education (IIE). Fulbright's program sponsor is the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Much of the communication prior to arriving in Sri Lanka will be handled by IIE, particularly as it relates to policy matters. US-SLFC will communicate with grantees on in-country policies and procedures, finalizing affiliations at appropriate institutions in Sri Lanka and providing updates of country-conditions when necessary. Once you are in Sri Lanka, the Fulbright Commission will be your primary point of contact for all matters related to your Fulbright award.

As Fulbright grantees, you must meet the objectives in your Fulbright program proposal and in your grant document. Any changes to the original objectives, must be shared with IIE and US-SLFC. U.S. Fulbright grantees are private citizens and do not have diplomatic privileges or immunity in Sri Lanka. Grantees and accompanying dependents must abide by legal requirements in Sri Lanka including all rules and regulations governing their visa status and residence. They cannot engage in any employment or any activity that will pose risks to grantees or to the reputation of the Fulbright Program. Grantees must always be mindful that they are cultural ambassadors representing the United States and their views and behavior will be a reflection of their country and will be perceived and judged by the host country.

The health, wellbeing and safety of all our grantees is the highest priority of the US-SLFC. The Fulbright Commission will constantly assess conditions in-country and advise grantees as situations arise. This includes, but is not limited to, restrictions to travel, changes to certain activities, etc. The support and cooperation of all our U.S. grantees is expected during any emergency or during any time of enhanced security.

## **Pre-Departure Information**

### **Fulbright Grant Terms and Official Grant Documents**

Grant terms vary based on the type of award and your Fulbright grant documents which provide the details of your award, including stipends and allowances. Stipends will be based on the location where you are based. The final installment of the monthly stipend and other allowances will be prorated if grant period is less than a full month or if a grantee departs earlier than originally anticipated. The allowances and stipends are modest by U.S. standards, but more than adequate to meet living expenses in Sri Lanka. Grantees should be prepared to accommodate a different lifestyle in Sri Lanka.

Scholar research allowances are for expenses directly related to the Fulbright teaching or research activity. Student grantees will receive book and language training allowance. All allowances are reimbursements and require a statement describing the expenses and relevance to the Fulbright activity and original receipts.

Grantees with dependents are eligible for an increased monthly stipend rate or monthly housing and subsistence allowance rate. Only scholars whose dependents accompany them for at least 80% of the grant period will be eligible for round-trip tickets for up to two accompanying dependents.

Since the payment of the first installment of the stipend is not possible until you have obtained a resident visa, which is required to open a bank account, grantees are advised to be prepared with adequate funds (approximately \$2000) to meet initial expenses such as a housing deposit. The settling-in allowance will be paid to grantees in Sri Lankan Rupees during the in-country orientation program.

As per the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB) policies, Fulbright Student Awards are 9 months in duration and require a minimum of 6 months of program participation. Scholars should meet the minimum grant duration of 4 months and maximum grant duration of 9 months.

The grant document formalizes your status as a Fulbright grantee. However, your grant is contingent upon satisfactory medical clearance and acquiring resident grant status (i.e., commencing your grant in Sri Lanka).

Your Fulbright award will be affiliated with the US-SLFC, but you will be hosted by a Sri Lankan university or institution. A supervisor will be identified at your host organization, with whom you will communicate regularly prior to your arrival and throughout your grant period.

US-SLFC will issue you an official grant document, which needs to be signed by you electronically and emailed to US-SLFC Fulbright Program Officer and Executive Director, and to IIE.

Before leaving for Sri Lanka please sign and return your grant document to US-SLFC and to IIE. Your grant will not to be activated until you send the signed grant document to both the US-SLFC

and to IIE. Please make sure you get confirmation that your signed grant document and your medical clearance notice has been received by the US-SLFC and IIE and you have been cleared to proceed with next steps described below.

### **Commencing Grant Program and Entering Grant Status**

Arriving in Sri Lanka on the Fulbright Commission sponsored visa, grantees enter grant status to commence the approved Fulbright program activities. The grant period will be the authorized period stipulated on the grant document.

All Fulbright Student awardees must arrive in Sri Lanka by the start-date listed on their grant document. There will be an in-country orientation program that will take place at the Fulbright Commission in Colombo. Scholars are encouraged to participate in the in-country orientation. Scholars who are unable to participate in the in-country orientation program based on the dates of their award, are required to have a one-on-one check-in and mini orientation at the Fulbright Commission soon after their arrival. Please coordinate with us on your arrival and this orientation.

All grantees must plan their Fulbright program participation period to meet the academic calendars at Sri Lankan universities/institutions. The academic year and calendar vary from the U.S. academic year and also between different institutions in Sri Lanka. Please coordinate dates carefully with the host institution.

### **Obtaining your Visa**

All Fulbright U.S. grantees to Sri Lanka have to obtain the relevant visa to undertake their Fulbright grant activity and your visa has to be under the sponsorship of the Fulbright Commission. The Fulbright Commission will provide you information and assist you, and any eligible dependents accompanying you on dependent visas, in applying for your visa/s.

Obtaining the applicable visa occurs in two steps; 1) Obtaining an Entry Visa to enter Sri Lanka, 2) Obtaining a Resident Visa once you arrive in Sri Lanka.

**Step 1: Applying for and obtaining an Entry Visa:** The Entry Visa is obtained from the Sri Lankan Embassy in Washington, D.C. However, in order to obtain the right type of entry visa (not the regular Electronic Travel Authorization – ETA) the Fulbright Commission will first obtain prior approval from the Sri Lankan Ministry of Higher Education in Sri Lanka and then the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Sri Lanka. Once approved, the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Sri Lanka will notify the Sri Lankan Embassy in Washington, D.C. to grant you an Entry Visa. Obtaining a visa from the Sri Lankan Embassy in Washington, D.C. is a time-consuming process. Therefore, you will ideally begin the process 3 months prior to the start-date of your program in Sri Lanka.

**What you need to do:**

1. **Important:** As soon as you are selected as a grantee, send a clear scanned copy of your passport and, of your eligible dependents, to US-SLFC via email to: [shanaka@fulbrightsri Lanka.org](mailto:shanaka@fulbrightsri Lanka.org) and [patrick@fulbrightsri Lanka.org](mailto:patrick@fulbrightsri Lanka.org). All passports must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the last day you will be in Sri Lanka during the time of your grant. We will get approval from the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Sri Lanka. This will be done 1-3 months prior to your date of departure to Sri Lanka.
2. Please note that you need to inform the Fulbright Commission whether you plan to have your spouse or dependents join you during your grant period, or just a portion of your grant period, in Sri Lanka.
3. Obtain Visa Application Forms for yourself (and accompanying dependents) from the Sri Lanka Immigration Department website (Entry Visa – Form B) using the link below:  
[https://www.immigration.gov.lk/content/files/visa/entry\\_visit visa.pdf](https://www.immigration.gov.lk/content/files/visa/entry_visit visa.pdf)
4. Fill the visa application forms and keep them with you until US-SLFC informs you that your visa has been approved by the Immigration and Emigration Department in Sri Lanka.
5. Fulbright grantees are not required to pay visa fees at any stage.
6. If your dependents are not planning to stay in Sri Lanka for more than 3 months, they are advised to arrive on a Tourist Visa. The visa can be obtained from this site:  
[https://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/visainfo/center.jsp?locale=en\\_US](https://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/visainfo/center.jsp?locale=en_US)
7. Once we request you to do so, send your passports, with the completed visa application forms (using either a courier mail service or certificated mail) to the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Washington, D.C. It helps to make phone contact with the consular officer and let them know that your application for an Entry Visa as a Fulbright grantee has been sent. Please send them a copy of your grant document as well. If you want the passport sent back to you by post, you will need to include postage – please speak to the consular officer about this. If you live in the Washington, D. C. metropolitan area, you may be able to schedule an appointment to apply for your visa in person.  
  
**Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**  
**Chancery:** 3025 Whitehaven Street NW, Washington DC 20008  
**Phone:** (202)483-4025 to 4028  
**Fax:** (202)232-7181  
**Email:** [slembassy@slembassyusa.org](mailto:slembassy@slembassyusa.org)  
**Hours of Operation:** 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST (Monday to Friday)  
**Website:** <https://slembassyusa.org/>
8. The Embassy will issue an Entry Visa/Approval for 30 - 90 days. The Entry Visa is valid only for entry in to Sri Lanka within 90 days. US-SLFC will issue your air ticket to meet this deadline for entry. If any travel delays are anticipated, please inform US-SLFC immediately. Your Entry

Visa is valid for 30 days from the date of arrival in Sri Lanka. The process for obtaining the Residence Visa will be initiated by the US-SLFC when you arrive in Sri Lanka. You will not need to initiate any action at the airport when you arrive in Sri Lanka.

**Step 2: Applying for obtaining a Resident Visa once you arrive in Sri Lanka:** US-SLFC will apply on your behalf for your Resident Visa (and Resident Visas for accompanying dependents) once you arrive in Sri Lanka. Please note that an application must be submitted within 7 days of arrival to allow for processing time to ensure you obtain a resident visa within 30 days of arrival (before your entry visa expires).

1. Either bring 2 passport size photographs with you for your residence visa or get them here. Many grantees have informed us that getting passport photos in Sri Lanka is more economical. Check out photo requirements for a Sri Lankan visa here: <https://mybiometricphotos.com/visa-photo/sri-lanka/>
2. No travel outside Sri Lanka is permitted until you have obtained a Resident Visa.

### **Register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**

All Fulbright U.S. grantees to Sri Lanka must register with the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) using the following link prior to departure from the U.S.: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

The STEP program is a free service provided by the State Department to U.S. citizens traveling, living or working in a foreign country. A traveler can provide information on the locations and duration of travel to a foreign country (including transit points on route) and the State Department will provide information about country conditions and will alert you of any potential emergency, including health and security alerts.

### **Air Ticket and Travel**

**Air Ticket:** Once you have obtained your entry visa and medical clearance from IIE, US-SLFC will work with you to issue an air ticket. Please send a copy of your entry visa to the US-SLFC Fulbright Program Officer and you will begin communication with US-SLFC on your proposed travel dates. US-SLFC will provide an application to collect information required to issue the ticket. Travel should be planned so that you avoid arriving over the weekend or during US-SLFC holidays (please see US-SLFC website for list of office closures/holidays), so that US-SLFC staff will be available to assist you if required.

All grantees are issued a round-trip air ticket. Fulbright award travel regulations require travel via the most direct route and most competitive air fare, from home of record to Colombo, and return, and on U.S. flag carriers meeting the U.S. Fly American Act (FAA). The air tickets are non-refundable tickets and any additional cost associated with a grantee's request to change/cancel an already issued ticket will have to be met by the grantee.



## **Health & Medical Information**

**Immunization requirements for Sri Lanka:** According to the Health Officer of the U. S. Embassy in Sri Lanka, there are no mandatory vaccinations when visiting Sri Lanka, other than the Yellow Fever vaccination if you are traveling or even in transit from a country with a risk of the virus. However, the CDC website lists some recommended vaccinations.

Please consult your physician or a travel clinic (such as Passport Health) and also the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Sri Lanka page:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/sri-lanka>

**Medicine and Medical Supplies:** Please be aware that while medical care is available and expanding greatly in Colombo and elsewhere in Sri Lanka, some medications commonly used in the U.S. are not available here. This includes some over-the-counter medication and certain brand names. You should bring all medications that you use regularly (especially prescription medication – with a prescription if you are bringing large quantities) for your entire stay. Please consider carefully your over-the-counter medication needs and bring adequate supplies, although you can get them from here. Medical care and medication are sometimes provided on a cash only-basis. You should keep receipts for care obtained locally for reimbursement by your health insurance company and Fulbright program health benefits program (if eligible expenses).

The facilities of the U.S. Embassy Health Unit are not available to Fulbright Grantees.

**Fulbright Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) Health Benefit:** All Fulbright grantees are provided a supplemental Accident and Sickness benefit coverage, for the duration of their grants. This benefit is not a health insurance plan and has limitations in terms of what is covered and only supplements other personal insurance plans that grantees are covered with. It is, therefore, important that grantees continue to maintain their personal health insurance plans during their Fulbright award. ASPE is provided by the U.S. Department of State and is administered by the provider Seven Corners. The ASPE coverage will only apply while grantees are physically in Sri Lanka. Hence, if you leave Sri Lanka during your grant period for personal reasons/vacation, you will not have coverage through ASPE. More information about the ASPE benefit can be found here:

<https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>

ASPE Health Benefits  
P.O. Box 21185  
Eagan, MN 55121

### Customer Service

Toll free: 1-800-461-0430

Worldwide: 317-818-2867

Collect: 317-818-2809 (collect call number for grantees while in Sri Lanka)

### Claims

Fax: 317-575-6467

Email: [usdos.claims@sevencorners.com](mailto:usdos.claims@sevencorners.com)

**Fulbright ASPE Assist 24/7 Support Service:** ASPE Assist is a counselling, psychological support and mental health consultant and referral service hotline provided to all Fulbright grantees while they are in Sri Lanka. This service is administered by the provider The ANVIL Group, in partnership with Seven Corners. It provides virtual/phone counselling by qualified counselors who are trained to handle emergency and other situations when support and counselling is required. Services include mental health support, sexual assault, depression, cultural adjustment, personal safety guidance, etc.

ASPE Assist Contact Information:

**Phone:** +1-833-963-1269

**Worldwide:** +44-20-3859-4463

**Email:** [ASPEsupport@anvilgroup.com](mailto:ASPEsupport@anvilgroup.com)

**Things to Bring<sup>1</sup>**

Suggestions for clothing and packing list

Garments are Sri Lanka's most important export in terms of revenue. This is good news! The products of many European and American stores can often be bought in Colombo for a fraction of the cost that they will retail for in the West. You can also have clothes tailor-made here in Sri Lanka if you choose. It will be necessary that you develop your own idea of what is and feels appropriate in your place of work or home environment.

Formal wear

Cotton or linen clothes and leather footwear are the best option for anyone living in a tropical country such as Sri Lanka. Although a wide variety of clothes are available in stores in Colombo, you might find it hard to get larger or extra-large sizes particularly in trousers and shoes.

Women

Dresses, skirts, blouses/shirts, pants, kurtas and salwar suits are expected and appropriate for work. Try to ensure clothes are of a "modest" design - not too short, revealing or see through (unless you want to wear an under slip). It is easy to feel uncomfortable in the "wrong" clothes. Most women seem to prefer loose dresses, as these are more comfortable in the heat. But you will decide what is most appropriate for you in your work and living environment.

Men

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the VSO Sri Lanka Postings Pack

Shirts, trousers, shoes and socks are good enough for most formal occasions - even weddings. You may want to bring a jacket just in case but this is not essential (especially since it can often be uncomfortably hot), but many scholars have their jackets and suits tailored in Sri Lanka for a fraction of the cost that would have been spent in the U.S. Loose cotton or linen shirts and trousers are the most comfortable and are very easy to buy here. Ties are not usually required at work but it is worth having a selection for important functions. Most Sri Lankans wear shoes and socks to work but sandals are more comfortable and may be acceptable depending on the context.

## **Casual wear**

### What is inappropriate?

Usually very tight T-shirts and trousers (although leggings are worn here if covered by a long, loose T-shirt); transparent clothes; shorts (especially for women) although Bermuda shorts are acceptable for men; very short dresses. However, on some beaches, city centers and at tourist resorts the same restrictions do not apply.

It is important that a bra is worn. Being braless is not acceptable in Sri Lankan culture and, while harassment seems unrelated to the time of day or location, appropriate dress gives confidence in dealing with the situation.

### Other than these guidelines, most casual wear is acceptable.

Jeans are hot but can be useful. They are essential for motorbike riders (or passengers). Jumpers/sweatshirts are necessary for visits to the hill country, where it can be surprisingly cold, but a large selection of winter wear is manufactured and on sale here (i.e., fleeces and jackets).

Most Sri Lankan men, and many women, wear a sarong (cheap and freely available) around the house. For women, a sarong is also worn for a well/river bath.

Sri Lankans also wear flip-flops or simple sandals for casual wear. Both are cheap if often low quality here. A pair of trainers or strong shoes are useful for bike-riding, up-country visits, hill-climbing etc. and regular motor bike riders should have at least two pairs of strong shoes with sturdy heels that cover the foot.

For females, buying good quality underwear that lasts frequent washing can be difficult out of Colombo. However, international brand-named underwear (e.g., Triumph, Victoria's Secret) are sold in shops in Colombo and through retail agents around the island.

For men, underwear is available locally but there is not a wide selection of styles, sizes, or quality.

### Sports/swimwear

Swimsuits/bikinis are only appropriate at tourist hotels, hotel beaches or a number of tourists 'resorts' (i.e., Unawatuna). Elsewhere it is more appropriate to wear a sarong to cover up.

### The Hill Country (or Up-Country)

In Nuwara Eliya, and the surrounding areas in the Central Hill Country, it is wet and cold for six to eight months of the year, the nights being particularly chilly, sometimes frosty. So, if you are planning to travel, you may need to buy warmer clothing (i.e., jumpers, trousers, socks, tights, underwear). Waterproof, strong shoes/trainers are also essential. Waterproof jackets and pants are easy to find, usually excellent quality and are cheap here if you do not wish to use your baggage allowance for these. Factory seconds of such famous brands like Columbia can be found.

### **Other Things to Pack**

#### Toiletries

Most types of toiletries are available although imported brands can be expensive. Local brands are cheap and readily available.

The following is worth bringing since you may not have the time or inclination to brave the shops at first. However, except where specified, all these items are readily available around the island.

Insect repellent	Difficult to buy here (especially those not containing DEET), although the herbal citronella oil is readily available.
After-bite care	You will get bitten! So, this is essential.
Shaving equipment	Better to bring battery operated than mains operated if you use electric razors.
Sanitary Napkins/Tampons	Sanitary pads are readily available in most of the grocery stores and supermarkets around the country. However, tampons are only available in some shops in Colombo but comparatively expensive and offers no choice, so worth bringing plenty.
Contact lens fluid	Expensive and only available in a few places, so bring plenty (a spare pair of contacts is a good idea as well).
Contraceptive pills	Available over-the-counter but different brands to those available in Europe/Canada/USA.
Cosmetics and Skin care products	Both local and imported products are available but are expensive if you are looking to buy branded ones.

Small battery-operated hand fan	Ideal for when you are sweltering in the heat. Hard to find in regular shops in Sri Lanka.
Sunblock	The sun is fierce here and using sun block is a must to protect your skin. Readily available in Pharmacies.
<b>Other</b>	
Swiss Army Penknife	Good to carry one around in case of emergencies.
Small hold-all/frameless rucksack	Essential but can be bought here.
Sunglasses	Available but maybe expensive or low quality depending on where you shop.
Camera	Sealable plastic bags are good for cameras and keeping damp out. Silica gel is essential for cameras to keep the moisture away. Camera.lk in Colombo is a one-stop shop for all your camera needs.
Photographs of family friends, Home, etc.	Good to show Sri Lankan friends.
Sports equipment/games/books	Can easily find here in shopping malls (One Galle Face Mall, Colombo City Centre, and Havelock City Mall).
At least 2 passport type photographs for visas etc.	There are a many instant photo booths or shops in Colombo if you want to get this done in Sri Lanka.
Books	Consider bringing essential research books which may be difficult to find and expensive.
Basic first-aid kit	Most medicines are very cheap and widely available. If you prefer a particular pain killer bring it with you. <i>See the section on health for more details.</i>

Those travelling with children will have a different set of needs. Good quality children's leather shoes are hard to find, while branded footwear such as Nike, Puma, ALDO and Addidas are readily available. The bookshops stock collections of children's books, but the choice of age-appropriate books is limited as are specific educational material.

### Computers and electronic items:

Electricity in Sri Lanka is 220-240 volts at 50 cycles, so transformers must be used for any 110-volts electrical equipment. Electrical fluctuations are common in Sri Lanka and therefore the use of surge suppressants and current regulators are advisable.

Laptops, digital cameras, and headphones brought in for personal use do not need customs clearance as long as they are within your allowance. If you are bringing these items with you, please carry them in your hand luggage. We urge you to contact the US-SLFC before entering into any transactions with local firms regarding items you as a Fulbrighter are entitled to bring in duty free. In the past, Fulbright scholars who neglected to do so have had to endure a great deal of inconvenience and aggravation arising out of arcane bureaucratic procedures.

## **Money Matters**

### Grantee allowance and the cost of living in Sri Lanka

The airport arrival lounge has several bank outlets where you will be able to convert US\$ (cash or traveler's cheques) into Sri Lankan Rupees. Once you are in Colombo you will also be able to convert your money at most banks between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm on weekdays, and from licensed money exchangers such as Prasanna or Roya located in Wellawatte (Colombo 06). ATMs are readily available throughout Sri Lanka.

You will be provided your allowance by the US-SLFC by cheque at the orientation for the first month and thereafter via bank transfer. Please discuss any queries you may have about your allowances and methods of payment.

Grantees should open bank accounts in Sri Lanka and funds will be transferred to your local bank account once you pass on the account information to our Finance Manager.

All Fulbright grantees receive the following allowances:

- A monthly maintenance allowances
- A books and incidental allowance
- Roundtrip airfare
- Excess baggage allowance upon return to U.S.

And

- Other allowances depending on the nature of the grant and/or the number of dependents accompanying the grantee. Dependents of student researchers are not eligible for an allowance.

\*The US-SLFC uses the exchange rate set by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

### **Other Pre-Arrival Information**

Some useful resources that will help you get a better understanding of Sri Lanka as well as the U.S.-Sri Lanka relationships include:

- State Department Fact Sheet on Sri Lanka: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-sri-lanka/>
- State Department Sri Lanka Country Information for Sri Lanka: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/SriLanka.html> . This site provides travel alerts, passport validity requirements for Sri Lanka, vaccination requirements for Sri Lanka, currency restrictions (for both entry and exit from Sri Lanka).
- Travel Health Notices: [Centre for Disease control and Prevention Sri Lanka](#)