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Application Writing Clinic for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar 2027-2028 Competition, Part II

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Fulbright Application Writing Clinic

Today's Webinar

- Program Overview
- Application Overview
 - FAQ's from 2027-28 application cycle
- Writing your Application
- Review Criteria
- Application Components
- Additional Resources
- Next Steps
- Question & Answer



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The Fulbright Scholar Program

Background

- Created in 1946 by U.S. Congress
- Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), as its flagship program
- Implemented by bi-national Commissions and U.S. Embassies abroad.
- Supports research, teaching, and professional projects abroad in 130 countries and locations.
- Awards are merit-based and selected through a multi-step review process, including peer review, host country review, and final approval by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB).

Our mission is to foster mutual understanding between nations, advance knowledge across communities, and improve lives around the world.





2026: A Year of Milestones



**Highlighting Fulbrighters
exemplifying American
excellence worldwide**



**Celebrating 80 years of
academic exchange
and bi-national impact**



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Qualifications for U.S. Scholar

- **U.S. citizenship**
- **Degree and experience**, as required by award:
 - Ph.D. or other terminal degree
 - Master's or professional or artistic experience
 - Teaching experience as required
- **Fulbright U.S. Scholar alumni are eligible:**

Recipients of a Fulbright Scholar grant are eligible to apply for another Fulbright Scholar grant two years after the date of completion of the previous grant
- **ONE Award per cycle / competition year**



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The Fulbright U.S. Scholar Application



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Application Overview

Requirements:

- ✓ Application Form
- ✓ Project Statement
- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- ✓ 2 Recommendations
- ✓ Language Proficiency Report *(if required)*
- ✓ Invitation Letters *(if required)*

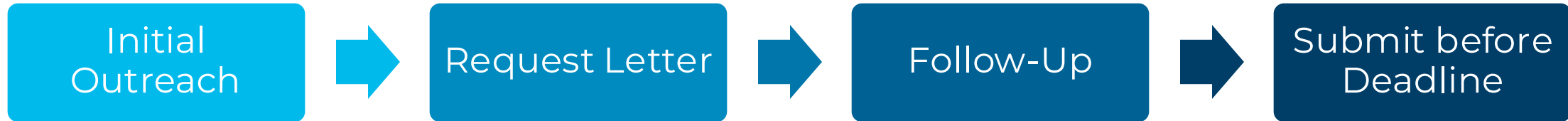
Supplemental Materials:

- ✓ Syllabi or Course Outlines *(for teaching)*
- ✓ Reference List *(for research)*
- ✓ Portfolio *(for disciplines like Arts, Architecture, and Journalism)*





Start Now: Application Letters



Recommendations

- Recommendations evaluate your professional work, the abilities and expertise you bring to your project; your ability to adapt; and the merits of the project.
- Recommendation Letter deadline:
September 15, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
- Two letters are required
 1. A colleague or supervisor at current employer*
 2. A colleague within your discipline

Invitation Letter

- The invitation is a letter provided by the proposed host institution(s) or organization(s) expressing their interest in hosting you for your proposed project.
- Invitation Letter deadline:
September 25, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
- Depending on the award, letter(s) may be:

Required

Preferred

Optional

*Should not
be sought*



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2027-28 Frequently Asked Application Questions



How to add your
Host Institution



Updating/Changing
Recommenders



Who can write
Invitation Letters?



Formatting your
Application



Reference
List/Bibliography



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Start Your Application Today

<https://apply.iie.org/apply/>

Start your application today!

- Creates a checklist of things you need to do
- Send recommendation forms
- Get support from IIE
- Submit by the deadline



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2027-28 Application Deadline

**September 15, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
Washington, DC time**

- Late applications will NOT be accepted
- Submit early to avoid last minute challenges



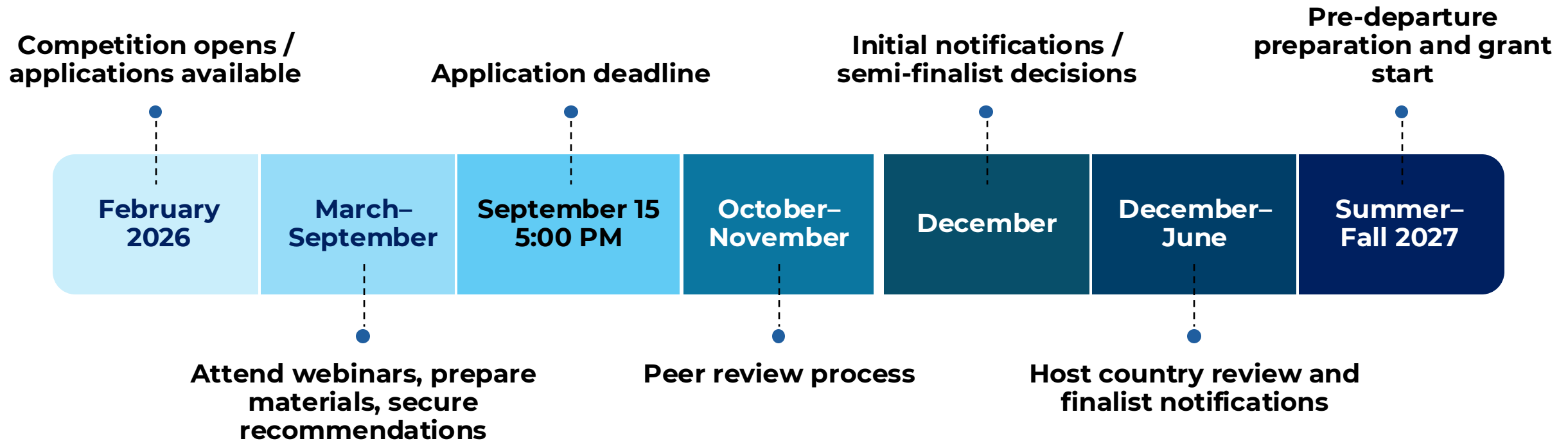
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Application Timeline



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Writing your Application & Review Criteria



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Proposals are Pitches

Convince readers that you and your project are the perfect match for Fulbright's goals

- Fulbright is a person-to-person diplomacy program sponsored by the State Department
- Created by Congress to build bilateral relationships
- Seeks to benefit participants, institutions, and communities by fostering long-lasting connections

Our mission is to foster mutual understanding between nations, advance knowledge across communities, and improve lives around the world.



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Proposals are Pitches, cont.

Know your audience

- Peers from your discipline
- Host country reviewers
- Host and home country representatives
- Alumni

Show that you are likely to be successful

- Think about what success looks like
- Have you done your homework? (e.g. checked on approvals, or, contacted those whose assistance you may need)



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Write Concisely

Fulbright reviewers read every application.

- Make it easy for reviewers to find the information they're looking for quickly.
- In your opening, clearly state how your project aligns with and advances the Fulbright mission

Clarity is key

- Use clear topic sentences and logical transitions to guide the reader through your narrative.
- Ensure that your goals, methods, and expected outcomes are easy to locate and understand.
- Avoid jargon: It doesn't make your work sound smarter; it often makes it less clear;
- If there's a precise term for something, use it consistently throughout your application.

Have a novice read your application.



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Application Review Criteria

<https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards#review-process>

**Training,
Background, &
Experience**

**Quality of
Project/Proposed
Activities**

**Project's Potential
Impact,
Outcomes, &
Benefits**

**Cultural
Preparation**

*Previous Fulbright
Scholar Awards*

Veteran Status



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Common Mistakes... & How to Fix Them

**Project is vague or generic;
methodology lacks specifics**

**Defines clear research/project goals,
methods, and expected outcomes**

**Project is not contextualized
in existing work**

**Shows awareness of current scholarship,
local context, and prior work**

**Feasibility, timeline or scope is
not well defined or unrealistic**

**Presents a focused, feasible project plan
with achievable objectives**

**Impact and outcomes are
unclear**

**Specifies concrete outcomes, audiences,
and long-term benefits/impact**



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Common Mistakes... & How to Fix Them, part II

Does not explain why in-country presence matters

Articulates why project requires being physically in the host country

Does not explain “Why Fulbright?” or “Why now?”

Connects project goals to Fulbright’s mission and explains timing/urgency

Applicant expertise does not clearly match project

Demonstrates relevant background, skills, and expertise to complete project

Writing/materials are confusing or not proofread

Submit clear, concise, well-organized application materials



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Overview of Application Components



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Application Components Step-by-Step

Requirements:

- ✓ Application Form
- ✓ Project Statement
- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- ✓ 2 Recommendations
- ✓ Language Proficiency Report *(if required)*
- ✓ Invitation Letters *(if required)*

Supplemental Materials:

- ✓ Syllabi or Course Outlines *(for teaching)*
- ✓ Reference List *(for research)*
- ✓ Portfolio *(for disciplines like Arts, Architecture, and Journalism)*





Essays

Topic	Character Limit*	Required?
Country Selection	2,000	Yes
Why Fulbright?	1,500	Yes
Cultural Preparation	2,000	Yes
Teaching Preparation	1,500	For Teaching & Teaching/Research
*Including spaces, punctuation, and paragraph breaks		

Application Steps



<https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards#steps>



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CV/Resume

- CV/Resume should be clearly organized and tailored to the award to which you are applying and the proposed project.
- Use headers and/or bullets to organize and convey key elements; use page numbers.

Page limit:

- **6 pages** for Scholar Awards
- **8 pages** for Distinguished Scholar Awards

Application Steps



<https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards#steps>



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Recommendations

- Two recommendations are required
 - Home institution
 - Home institution or elsewhere

Application Steps



<https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards#steps>



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Invitation Letter, *if applicable*

Requirement varies by award

- The host institution abroad must:
 - Confirm they know who you are
 - Agree to host you
 - Describe the activity you plan to carry out
 - Outline intellectual and logistical support

Application Steps



<https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards#steps>



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Supplemental & Additional Materials

Requirements vary by award/activity:

- Language Proficiency Report (*if required*)
- Syllabi or Course Outlines (*for teaching*)
- Reference List/Bibliography (*for research and teaching/research*)
- Portfolio (*for disciplines like Arts, Architecture, and Journalism*)
 - Up to 10 artifacts may be uploaded

Application Steps



<https://fulbrightscholars.org/us-scholar-awards#steps>



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Additional Resources



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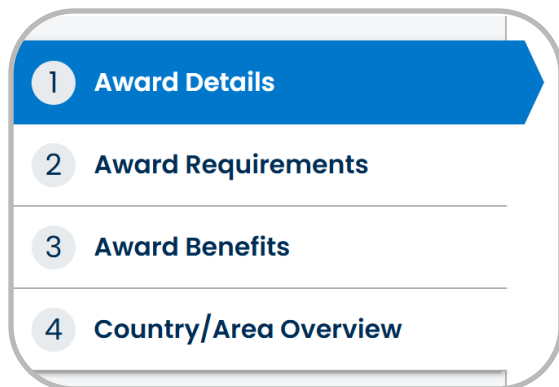
Fulbright Scholar Resources

- **Fulbright Scholar Liaisons**
— fulbrightscholars.org/liaisons
- **Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors**
— fulbrightscholars.org/alumni-ambassadors
- **Fulbright Scholar Directory**
— fulbrightscholars.org/fulbright-scholar-directory
- **Connect with Fulbright**
— fulbrightscholars.org/connect



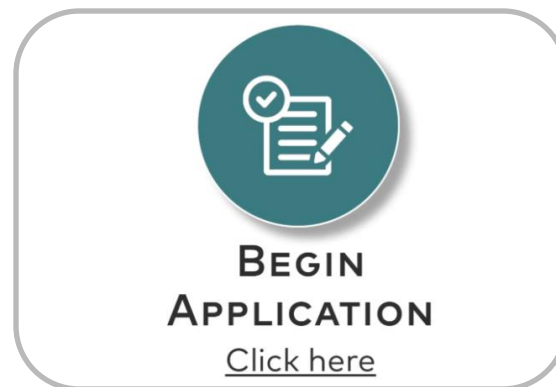


Tips for a strong application:



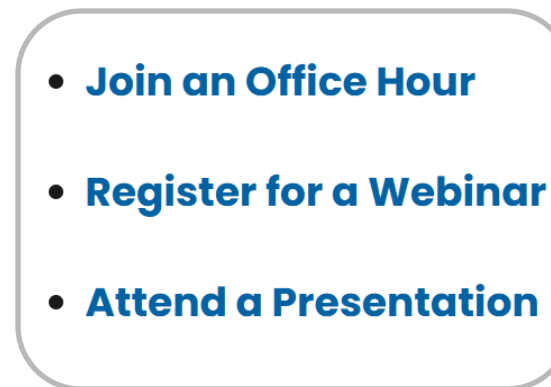
Review all Four Tabs

Read all four tabs of an award to find the best fit



Start Online

Start an online application as soon as possible



Attend Virtual Events

Attend webinars and office hours



Follow Instructions

Read guides & resources on our website



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Application Suggestions from IIE Team

Glorimar

- Follow Instructions

Jemina

- Ambitious, but realistic

Aferdita

- Contact Scholar Liaison

Jen

- Build in a grace period

Catherine

- Proofread & Preview

Amy

- Highlight for Review Criteria



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Question & Answer



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