

Sponsor/Title: Department of State (DOS) - FY 2026 Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Academic Fellows Program

External Link: <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/361492>

Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017934

Submission Limitation per Institution: One (1)

Notre Dame Limited Submissions Listing:

<https://research.nd.edu/our-services/funding-opportunities/faculty/limited-submissions-program/>

Internal Expression of Interest Deadline: 2026-04-01

Sponsor Application Deadline: 2026-05-11

Purpose: The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Academic Fellows Program (YSEALI AFP) is the premier public diplomacy program for rising leaders in Southeast Asia. The program supports U.S. foreign policy goals through academic exchanges that advance U.S. partnerships in the region and highlight American excellence. YSEALI AFP is targeted at undergraduate students and recent graduates in Southeast Asia and includes an intensive academic residency and an integrated academic field experience.

Program Goals and Objectives:

All YSEALI AFP institutes should be held in the United States for approximately five weeks. U.S. public and private academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons, and other not-for-profit organizations meeting the provisions of a 501(c)3 are eligible to apply as a sub-award recipient; however, the institutes should take place on a U.S. college or university campus. Applicants should provide a tentative list of six subaward partners.

The academic residency should give Fellows both theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to the themes through lectures, panels, seminar discussions, readings, debates, site visits, and regional travel into a substantive, cohesive, and coherent institute. Institutes should explore both an historical and contemporary examination of their theme.

Institutes should include academic coursework and classroom-based learning as well as practical, hands-on experiences. Off-campus site visits should provide opportunities to observe and participate in varied aspects of American life as they relate to the institute theme. All institutes should provide Fellows with a deeper understanding of the United States, including a robust cultural activities calendar and opportunities to engage with Americans during all components of the program.

Each institute should be approximately five weeks in length. Fellows should spend approximately four weeks at a U.S. academic institution and approximately seven days on an academic field experience that concludes in Washington, DC. YSEALI AFP will conclude with a YSEALI Fellows Forum in Washington, DC, for all Fellows across all themes in the spring and fall. The Forum should provide an opportunity for Fellows to share program experiences, network across institutes, and meet with Department of State officials. The Forum will be planned by the award recipient in close consultation with ECA.

Institute Themes:

- The YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Liberty and Freedom should provide Fellows with an overview of America's founding principles of freedom of speech, liberty, and self-governance. Fellows will study how these principles drive American innovation, prosperity, and civic engagement. Fellows will explore the power of open debate and the individual right to organize public advocacy campaigns. Institutes should also explore how these rights fuel economic stability and societal freedom. Similarly, institutes may explore how to combat censorship, promote freedom of religion, and build institutions that promote transparency. Fellows will examine how citizens, both as individuals and in groups, have shaped U.S. history, government, and society. Academic sessions should be complemented with hands-on sessions or workshops designed to build skills in the topics mentioned above. The institutes should encourage fellows to develop innovative and practical in-country plans to expand and safeguard individual freedoms.
- The YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Natural Resources should explore American excellence in agriculture, fisheries, energy, and critical minerals management. Fellows will examine energy security and supply chain resilience by engaging with American experts. Fellows may also learn about American innovations in natural disaster preparedness, mining, rare earth minerals, water and waste management, and farming. The institute should also explore the nexus of natural resources and economic prosperity. The institutes should encourage Fellows to develop potential initiatives to collaborate with the United States and other ASEAN partners to ensure ongoing secure and reliable access to natural resources.
- The YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Economic Prosperity should provide Fellows with an overview of U.S. business models, technological innovation, labor market practices, and monetary policies that contribute to economic growth. Activities will focus on American's leadership in business and innovation, utilizing historic periods of economic growth and technological advancement as critical moments that catapulted the United States to be a global economic powerhouse. Topics may also include U.S. tech and AI frameworks; U.S. approaches to regulations; supply chain management; strategic trade policies; investment and fundraising; financial literacy; organizational development and management; strategic business planning; corporate governance structures; and monetary policy. Fellows should visit American businesses and meet with corporate leaders, board members, and small business owners, among others. The institutes should encourage Fellows to develop new U.S.-ASEAN member state business connections that contribute to American economic prosperity.
- The YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Peace and Security should provide Fellows with an overview of U.S. policies, practices, and institutions that support local, regional, and international peace and security. Institutes will explore public policy and peacemaking processes through interactive trainings and simulations. Topics may include countering human and drug trafficking; disaster preparedness and response; cyber security; public health security; combatting transnational crime including online scams; and border security. YSEALI AFP should emphasize practical skills such as leadership, dialogue, and cooperation through interactive workshops that allow Fellows to outline policy solutions to promote good governance, rule of law, and security in their own communities.

Internal Application Requirements: Upload the following information to the Google Form at <https://forms.gle/gYqArRkZfnVodtk8> by the internal deadline:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Project Title
- All ND Collaborators:

- For each ND Collaborator listed, include name, department or unit, and specific role for this project in three sentences (maximum).
- Project Summary: Three (3) pages (maximum) addressing the following Merit Review Criteria as outlined on page 26, in the NOFO.
 - Quality of the program idea and ability to achieve program objectives
 - Institution's record/ability
 - Follow-on Activities and multiplier effect
 - Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Questions: Contact Notre Dame Research Limited Submissions at limited@nd.edu.

Unless otherwise noted, all internal applications are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the internal expression of interest deadline.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.