



G | M | F The German Marshall Fund
of the United States
STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

**YOUNG TRANSATLANTIC INNOVATION LEADERS INITIATIVE FELLOWSHIP (YTILI)
APPLICATION DEADLINE: 5pm EST, Friday, January 4, 2019**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

- *Who is eligible to apply?* Entrepreneurs and innovators **between the ages of 24-35 as of November 15, 2018 with citizenship and legal permanent residence in any of the 45 participating countries** are eligible to apply for the fellowship. Applicants should currently be involved in founding or scaling a commercial or social venture. The participating countries include: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom.
- *I am currently 35 years old. Am I eligible?* If you were 35 years old on November 15, 2018, which was the opening date of the application, then yes, you are eligible to apply. **Only applicants between the ages of 24-35 by November 15, 2018 are eligible to participate in the fellowship program.**
- *Do I have to be a founder or can I work at a start-up?* Founders will get the most out of the YTILI experience and the fellowship deliverables are oriented towards supporting ventures already founded and currently scaling. Applicants who are working at a start-up can apply, but they should provide thoughtful responses to the application questions about how the YTILI experience will benefit their work.
- *Do you require that the two years of professional experience be at the same company?* No, your experience can be with multiple organizations and spread over the course of your career. It is important that you have at least two years of total experience in working at a start-up, including founding a venture.
- *What do I need to know about the visa process for the program?* The YTILI program is an exchange visitor program sponsored by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and is funded by the U.S. Department of State. In order to arrive in the U.S. for the YTILI program you will need a J-1 Visa. This J-1 Visa will only be valid for the duration of the YTILI 2019 program. As the YTILI program is funded by the government of U.S., you will be subject to the two-year home-country foreign residency requirement. You must return to your country of last permanent residence for at least two years, cumulatively, at the end of your exchange visitor program. You are not prohibited from traveling to the United States or conducting business in the United States but may not benefit from certain employment-based or family-based visas until the foreign residency requirement is satisfied. If you are unable to return to your country of last permanent residence to fulfill the two-year requirement, you must obtain a waiver approved by the Department of Homeland Security prior to changing status in the United States or being issued a visa in certain categories for travel to the United States. Please read through the U.S. Department of State's J-1 Visa Common Questions here: <https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/common-questions/>.

- *I have participated in a previous exchange program sponsored by an organization in the U.S. Am I eligible to participate as a YTILI Fellow?* When you agree to participate in the YTILI program you will be issued a J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Visa that will cover the duration of your U.S. experience. **If you already have a valid J-1 Visa for another program, you will not be able to participate in the YTILI program as you cannot have two valid J-1 Visas at the same time.** Having another class of visa for the U.S. such as a B1 or B2 Tourist visa does not conflict with obtaining a J-1 Visa for the YTILI program.
- *If I applied last year and was not selected, can I apply again?* Yes, previous applicants are able to apply again so long as they meet the eligibility requirements for the 2019 program.

APPLICATION & PROGRAM QUESTIONS

- *What is the application process and selection timeline?* Applicants are asked to complete an eligibility quiz before starting the application. This will determine if you meet the eligibility criteria of the program. Eligible applicants will be given access to the complete fellowship application. You may start the application and complete it at a later time; however, we encourage you to complete the application in one sitting. Semi-finalists will be asked to interview with U.S. embassy staff at the U.S. embassy or consulate in their current resident countries between the dates of February 4 and February 15, 2019. Finalists will be selected in early March 2019.
- *When will I be notified of my application status?* Applicants who have submitted a complete application will be notified of their application status in late February 2019.
- *What is covered as part of my fellowship experience?* If selected as a fellow, the program will cover J-1 Visa support, round-trip air travel from fellow's current city of residence to The Netherlands for the Opening Summit from June 1-6, 2019; round trip air travel from the fellow's current city of residence to the United States for activities during September 7-14, 2019 for the one-week professional placement in a U.S. city, as well as the Washington, DC closing conference from September 15-18, 2019; online platform and related trainings; accommodations, meals, and local transportation for events in The Netherlands and the U.S. related to the program, and accident and sickness insurance.
- *Does the application have to be completed in English?* Yes, all application questions must be completed in English. All required attachments, including reference letters, must also be completed in English. Applicants must be proficient in the English language, as all fellowship experience activities will be conducted in English.
- *I traveled to the U.S. a long time ago and can't remember the specific dates. Can I still apply?* Yes, you can still complete the initial application. If you advance to a semi-finalist, then you may be asked to provide more specific details on your past travel to the U.S.
- *What is the time commitment of the fellowship?* Fellows will be required to be available for travel to the Opening Summit in The Netherlands from June 1-6, 2019, as well as to the U.S. for the immersion experience from September 7-14, 2019. Fellows will also be required to participate in activities such as webinars and submitting blog postings from April-October 2019.
- *If I am selected as a YTILI Fellow can I defer my award?* If you are selected as an YTILI Fellow you are not able to defer your participation to another fellowship year. All selected fellows must be available to travel and participate in all fellowship activities, including the European opening summit, the week-long U.S. experience, and the closing conference in Washington, DC, as outlined in the Fellowship Activity Timeline.
- *Do I get to choose what city I would be based in for the U.S. immersive experience?* Fellows are not able to select their U.S. experience city, but GMF will work to best align fellows' need with available opportunities. All fellows will be placed in a U.S. emerging economy and assigned a team of expert mentors during their U.S. experience to facilitate the fellowship program. Fellows can view past U.S. experience locations on the YTILI website: <http://www.gmfus.org/ytili-fellowship>
- *What types of cities participate in the program?* U.S. cities with either established or emerging entrepreneurial ecosystems are targeted for the program. GMF has a deep network of cities engaged in transatlantic activities in urban policy and fellowship programming, including: Austin, Boston, Charlotte,

Denver, Detroit, New Orleans, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Seattle, and Washington, DC. Selected fellows will be provided information on the final list of participating cities.

- *Is my family or partner able to travel with me?* No, the fellowship program is designed for individuals only.
- *If I am employed with a company, do I need their permission to apply?* GMF and the U.S. Department of State do not require written permission from employers to apply for the program; however, it is expected that selected fellows proactively communicate with employers, complete any due diligence, and meet any obligations that may require employer notification.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS – CV, Pitch Deck/Video

- *Am I required to use the EuroPass CV format?* We request that you use the EuroPass CV format so that applicants are providing consistent information about their education, work experience and skills. You are not required to use the EuroPass template, but we do ask that you include the same categories of information in your CV.
- *The EuroPass CV format suggests that I provide PDF copies of my degrees and awards as evidence. Is this necessary?* No, it is not necessary to provide backup documentation or evidence of your degrees or awards received.
- *I have made many presentations and authored many papers in my career. Am I required to list all of them in the EuroPass CV format?* You are not required to list all of them, but we encourage you to select the presentations and publications that you feel will most help the review committee assess your application based on the review criteria.
- *Why am I required to prepare a video of me delivering my pitch?* Based on past applications processes, we have found that it is helpful for reviewers to get a first-hand impression of candidates and their ventures via a video instead of a static pitch deck. Applicants will not be assessed on the production value of the video. We expect that applicants stay to the strict three-minute time limit. Every pitch should have a clear “ask” and in this case your “ask” should be to be selected as a fellow and why you should be selected.
- *Do you have any tips about how to prepare the pitch?* Please follow the guidance in the pitch template. We encourage you to be creative, concise. Provide key details on your venture and have a clear “ask” - in this case your “ask” should be to be selected as a fellow and why you should be selected.
- *What happens if I can't prepare a video?* Please email ytili@gmfus.org regarding this request. You will be required to upload a pitch deck at a minimum.
- *My pitch video is only in my native language; can I still submit it?* All pitch decks and pitch videos are required to be in the English language. If your video is in your native language, then we suggest you upload pitch deck instead or consider how to add subtitles to your video.
- *Should the pitch be on an existing business or a new business that I want to start?* Your pitch should relate to whatever venture will be your focus for the learning during the YTILI program. All successful applicants must be engaged in some stage of starting or growing/scaling a venture to maximize the opportunity of the YTILI experience. If you intend to make your existing venture the focus of your application and learning objectives for the fellowship, then you should focus certain application responses and the pitch on this venture. If you choose to start a new venture, then you should focus certain application responses and the pitch on this new idea.