



PROFESSIONAL
FELLOWS

EXCHANGE
PROGRAM

ICMA

*Environmental and Sustainability
Professional Fellowship*

*Frequently Asked Questions for International
Fellows*

Revised October 2016



This program is managed through the support of a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.



Environmental and Sustainability Professional Fellowship

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Is the Professional Fellows Program?

ICMA, with funding from the [U.S. State Department, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#), will bring professionals to the United States from ten East Asian/Pacific countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Fellowship focuses on the theme of environmental sustainability. Fellows will learn practical skills focusing on local governments’ role and responsibility on environmental sustainability challenges in their communities, specifically on climate change, sustainable energy and environmental justice engagement, promoting transparency while also fostering interaction with leaders from the federal, state, and local organizations.

Over the course of the next 18 months, thirty six (36) international Fellows, in two cohorts, will spend four weeks working with a local government in the United States in addition to a week and a half enrichment and debriefing program in Washington, DC. In return, ten (10) U.S. Fellows will travel for two weeks to deliver technical assistance and consultation in meaningful fellowships with local governments to help them engage citizens and civil society organizations in addressing community challenges to adapt quickly to create more resilient communities.

ICMA will be working with its International Affiliates and partners to implement this program:

- Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA - National) – Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – Brunei, Malaysia, and Singapore
- Association of Indonesia Municipalities (APEKSI) – Indonesia
- The League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) – Philippines
- Professional Research and Consultancy (PRC) – Burma

Program Goal

Create institutionalized long-term partnerships that support emerging leaders and their institutions in the ASEAN countries and the U.S. to inspire change in creating responsive, open, and accountable governance.

Objectives

To enhance the professionalism, leadership, and performance of the Fellows and, ultimately, the responsiveness and accountability of the institutions they represent.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Practical and transferable skills gained by Fellows to enhance their professional development and to address and implement at least one identified challenge.
- Increase knowledge and understanding by the Fellows of good and open government practices, promoting environmental sustainability practices
- Enriched cultural experiences of the Fellows.



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To facilitate a lasting global network of East Asia Pacific and U.S. Fellows as a platform for collaboration, information sharing, knowledge exchange, and a forum to discuss leading practices.

- Fellows engaged in an online conversation through ICMA's Knowledge Network and Professional Fellows Facebook page, U.S. State Department Alumni Exchange site, and social media.
- Expanded Fellow's network of global leaders working towards responsive and accountable governments.

Selection Criteria

International Fellows

Successful Fellows will be chosen based on relevant background with local government, good interpersonal skills, good command of the English language and demonstrated leadership abilities.

Applicants will also need to have a current and valid passport at the time of application and be willing to undertake the necessary visa requirements (including face to face interview with U.S. Embassy representatives) and security clearance to enter the United States for the duration of the fellowship.

Specifics regarding eligibility are below:

- Candidate must be a citizen or resident of one of the participating countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam;
- Currently living and working in his/her home country (Individuals participating in academic, training or research programs in the United States at the time of application and individuals residing or working outside their home countries at the time of application are not eligible for this program);
- Ideal candidates will be between the **ages of 25 and 35** at the time of application;
- Committed to returning to his/her home country after completion of the program;
- Able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa (Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. Government and who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application are not eligible for this program);
- Be a college graduate (equivalent of a bachelor's degree or higher);
- Have relevant experience in and commitment to a career in the public sector in his/her home country;
- Have demonstrated leadership and collaborative skills;
- Have approval from his/her current employer to take a leave of absence for 5.5 weeks;
- Able to adapt to new environment surroundings and challenges;
- Proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application.



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Program Details

Fellows from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam will travel to the United States in April 2016 and October 2016. Participants will spend:

- two day orientation at ICMA's headquarters in Washington, DC;
- four weeks in a host community;
- one week attending a Professional Fellows Congress and a wrap-up session in Washington, DC.

In return, an International Host Community will host one American fellow for two (2) weeks. *Please note:* Not all American hosts will be able to travel to your home community. American fellows will be determined through a competitive process.

This reciprocal trip by the American fellows aims at:

- promoting ongoing partnerships on citizen engagement and resilient communities at the local governance and community level; and
- developing an international network of local government practitioners.

While in the United States, Fellows will have an opportunity to connect with local government leaders, city and county managers, other local government practitioners, nonprofit organizations and state and federal agencies.

Participants will spend the first part of the exchange program in Washington, DC, on an orientation to the program where they will present on community and organizational challenges they are facing. Fellows will then travel to their host community in the United States for 4 weeks. While in your host community, you might have meetings with officials from local, state and federal government, non-profits, community groups working on issues of citizen engagement as well as working with local council staff who are designing community outreach and engagement program. At the conclusion of your fellowship, Fellows will participate in a Professional Fellows Congress, hosted by the U.S. Department of State.

Ongoing Activities

The Program will require ongoing commitment from Fellows participating in this program. It is expected that the Fellows will:

- Write at least 1 blog per week on the Knowledge Network that talks about the Fellow's experience while on the program (www.icma.org/pfp)
- Participate on the State Department's Alumni Network (<https://alumni.state.gov/>), where Fellows from all State Department programs access information



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- Meet with the U.S. Embassy to discuss your experience while on the program.

Tentative Program Dates

Programmatic Milestone	Approximate Dates
Recruitment and selection of international fellows and recruitment and selection of U.S. organizations to host 4 th cohort of international fellows	October- December, 2016
Visa process for successful international applicants for 4 th cohort	February- March, 2017
Pre-departure orientation for 4 th cohort of international Fellows (tentative)	April 3-5, 2017
4 th inbound international cohort to U.S. for fellowship (Note: Some Fellows may need to depart their home community a few days prior to the official start date of the program)	October 11, 2017- November 17, 2017
*Exact dates will vary by country	



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Costs and Logistics

Fellows

The following costs will be covered by the U.S. Department of State program:

- International and domestic flights and local transfers;
- J-1 visa;
- Health benefit Insurance (does not cover pre-existing conditions);
- Accommodation/lodging;
- Meals stipend, \$1,200 USD for entire length of program.

Visas, Insurance and Other Requirements

Visa

In addition to a current passport, Fellows will need to be in possession of a [J-1](#) visa to enter the United States to participate in a Government-to-Government exchange program. ICMA will facilitate the necessary application visa process with the relevant U.S. Embassy. To ensure visas are processed on time it is important that applicants provide accurate information during the application process. Please note: participants traveling under a J-1 visa must return to their home countries and live for a total of two years before they are eligible to receive the kind of visa that enables them to reside permanently in the United States (as an immigrant or refugee, for example) or to work in the United States. This “two-year rule” does not prevent persons from returning to the United States for business, tourism, study and other purposes that involve a temporary stay.

Who can accompany me on my program?

As part of your J-1 visa requirements, no one (friends nor family) can accompany you for the entire length of your program. You can make arrangements to meet up with friends and family after the official end date of the program.

Insurance

All participants coming to the United States must be enrolled in the U.S. Department of State’s participant health benefit program. ICMA will handle this enrollment process from Washington, DC, and will produce an individual health benefit card for each Fellow. ICMA will distribute these health benefit cards to the program participants upon arrival to the U.S. You will only have health insurance from the start date of the



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program to the end date of the program. The health benefit program does not cover pre-existing conditions.

Photos

If selected, Fellows will need to provide:

- One passport photo; and
- One good quality digital photo in jpeg format to be used in the U.S. State Department's "Fellow Pamphlet."

Contact Information

If you have additional questions, please email: **Fellows** (fellows@icma.org)