



PAYNE

<https://www.paynefellows.org/>

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Fellowships for Graduate Studies

The Payne Fellowship Program awards up to fifteen fellowships valued at up to \$52,000 annually for a two-year program. The award includes up to \$24,000 per year toward tuition and mandatory fees for completion of a two-year master's degree at a U.S. institution; a \$18,000 stipend for each academic year for room, board, books and other education-related expenses; and up to \$10,000 per year in stipend, housing, transportation, and related expenses for summer placements (see below). At the conclusion of two years of study, the Payne Fellow is expected to obtain a degree in international development or another area of relevance to the work of the USAID Foreign Service at a U.S. graduate or professional school approved by the Payne Program. Fellows who successfully complete the Payne Program and USAID Foreign Service entry requirements will receive appointments as Foreign Service Officers with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Orientation New Payne Fellows will participate in an orientation at Howard University in May, shortly after their selection. The purposes of this orientation are to familiarize the Fellows with all aspects of the fellowship and to enhance their understanding of, and skills for, international development careers.

Two Summer Placements Payne Fellows will participate in two internships. The first, an internship working on international issues in Washington, DC, will occur in the summer after being selected and before the first year of graduate study. The second will be an overseas internship in a USAID Mission that takes place during the summer between the first and second years of graduate study. The program will provide stipends, housing, and transportation.

Mentoring Each Fellow will receive mentoring throughout the duration of the fellowship as well as during his/her early employment at USAID.

Curriculum Fellows must obtain graduate degrees in international affairs or a related subject such as development, economics, history, political science, public administration, communications, public policy, business administration foreign languages, agriculture,

environmental sciences, or urban planning at a graduate or professional school approved by the Payne Program. Studies in law do not satisfy this requirement. Applicants apply to two-year graduate programs at U.S. universities simultaneously with their application to the Payne Program.

Employment/Contractual Obligations Fellows who successfully complete the Payne Program and USAID Foreign Service entry requirements will receive appointments as USAID Foreign Service Officers. Each Payne Fellow who obtains a master's degree is committed to a minimum of five years of service as a USAID Foreign Service Officer. Candidates who do not successfully complete the Payne Program and the subsequent five year service obligation may be subject to a reimbursement obligation.

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be U.S. citizens between the ages of 18-55
- Applicants must be seeking admission to enter graduate school in the fall of 2025 for a two-year program at a U.S. university.
- They can be in the senior year of their undergraduate studies, graduating by May 2025, or they can be college graduates.
- Applicants must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher on a 4.0 scale at the time of application.

HOW TO APPLY

Online Application

A completed online application includes the following:

- Background Information (e.g., name, contact information, international travel).
- A personal statement (in 600 words or less) that discusses the applicant's reasons for applying, interest in foreign affairs, commitment to pursue a USAID Foreign Service career and any relevant experience or information.
- A statement (in 400 words or less) from the applicant that discusses his/her need for financial assistance to attend graduate school, including an explanation of:
 1. The financial assistance received during undergraduate studies
 2. Overall education-related debt
 3. Ability/plans to pay for graduate school independently
- Two letters of recommendation

FOR RECOMMENDERS

- One from a faculty member who is well acquainted with the individual
- One from a community leader or other individual who can comment on the applicant's non-academic accomplishments and his/her potential to serve as a USAID Foreign Service Officer.
- Note: In the online application, applicants will identify recommenders, who will be contacted by the program and asked to submit letters electronically. Below is a copy of the recommendation letter for your reference only.

[Sample recommendation form](#) (PDF format)

Proof of U.S. citizenship with a copy of: (choose one)

- Birth certificate
 - Certificate of U.S. citizenship
 - U.S. passport
- (Note: This should be uploaded in easy to read PDF format. Applicants are required to bring originals to the interview, if selected as a finalist.)

Student Aid Report (SAR) generated from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. If an applicant received financial aid during the most recent academic year, she/he is required to submit the SAR form. If an applicant did not receive financial aid during the most recent academic year, she/he must complete the FAFSA to generate a SAR for the 2020-2021 or the 2021-2022 academic year.

- Note: Applicants will upload this into the application using PDF format.

Official Financial Aid Statement from your senior year, if you received financial aid.

- Note: Applicants will upload this into the application using PDF format. If you did not receive financial aid, you do not have to submit this.

Official Transcripts from **ALL** colleges and universities the applicant has attended for credit. Please use a school-generated transcript. An official transcript is best; a student copy is acceptable if it is in the format of an official transcript. (If selected for an interview, you will have to bring an official transcript, in a sealed envelope, to the interview.)

- Note: Applicants will upload this into the application using PDF format.