



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

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 5:00 p.m. EST, Friday, March 2, 2018

### I. Overview

Launched in 2016, the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative Fellowship is the flagship program of the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI) of the U.S. Department of State, and is supported in its implementation by The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF).

YTILI empowers young European and Eurasian entrepreneurs and innovators with the tools, networks, and resources they need to grow their enterprises and contribute more fully to economic development and job creation, security, and good governance in the region. YTILI is also a vehicle for building a transatlantic network of innovators that can contribute to an ongoing policy dialogue that strengthens the transatlantic relationship.

In 2018, the YTILI Fellowship will engage up to 70 young European and Eurasian leaders in a series of professional development and leadership activities that are designed to support the growth and development of commercial and social business ventures in their home communities. The following document provides detailed information on the fellowship program elements, fellowship expectations, selection process, and timeline.

### II. Program Elements

The 2018 YTILI Fellowship year will commence in April 2018 and conclude in December 2018. The cohort of up to 70 fellows will engage in a robust program of in-person and virtual engagement during this time, including travel to the United States, which is the centerpiece of the fellowship experience. The full 2018 YTILI cohort will be connected virtually in pre-departure activities, an online platform, and at the opening summit in Portugal. Additional pre-departure and post-fellowship activities may be offered by individual U.S. embassies and consulates in the fellows' current countries of residence. The following section outlines the main elements of the YTILI fellowship administered by GMF and its partners.

- Orientation Webinar: All fellows will be required to participate in an orientation webinar to review the expectations of the program, launch the online platform, and begin the process of building a unified YTILI cohort. (Online; May 2018)
- Opening European Summit: On June 4–7, 2018, YTILI Fellows will convene in Europe for an opening summit where they will meet their U.S. mentor teams and plan for their fellowship experience. Programming will also include additional professional development, networking, and peer-to-peer learning. U.S. and European experts in entrepreneurship and innovation will participate in the summit. The summit will be an opportunity for the fellows to prepare for the U.S. immersive experience, set goals for their fellowship year, and network across the full cohort of fellows. Additional details on the agenda will be shared throughout the fellowship year. (Portugal; June 4–7, 2018)
- One-Week Immersive U.S. Experience: Fellows will be sent to selected U.S. cities with established or emerging entrepreneurial ecosystems for a one-week (7 business day) experience. During this period, fellows are expected to: (1) participate in activities outlined by the local mentor teams, which will vary by city, but

may include individual appointments and/or events set up by the fellow, business advising with mentors, and group cultural activities; (2) explore the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the U.S. city to understand the policy context, institutional and financial landscape, and local networks that support innovation; (3) complete a revised pitch presentation and reflections of U.S. experience blog post. (October 14–21, 2018)

- Washington, DC, Program: Fellows will conclude their experience in the United States with a program in Washington, DC. This concluding program will focus on three elements: (1) building the YTILI cohort and peer learning exchange; (2) networking with top U.S. government officials, as well as, global public, private, and non-profit leaders; (3) engaging in a transatlantic dialogue around issues of entrepreneurship and innovation. (Washington, DC; October 21–24, 2018)
- Online Platform: As part of the fellowship experience, GMF and U.S. Department of State will offer an online platform for internal exchange and knowledge sharing. The platform will also provide an opportunity for additional training and skills development that complement the U.S. experience. (Online; Fellowship Year)
- Additional Activities: Fellows may be eligible for Innovation Small Grants to fund start-up or scaling activities, Travel Grants to conferences, and alumni events and other regional programs. Additional information on these activities will be provided at the start of the program. (Various; Fellowship Year)

### III. Fellowship Requirements and Expectations

If selected as an YTILI fellow, it is expected that individuals will participate in all elements of the program as outlined above and complete the fellowship deliverables as outlined below. Fellowship awards cannot be deferred.

Expectations and Fellowship Deliverables:

- Respond in a timely manner to inquiries and requests from GMF, the U.S. Department of State, and/or identified partners in the U.S. cities;
- Fellows must be eligible to receive a J1 Visa issued by the U.S. Government as a requirement for participation in the program. Selected fellows agree to certain terms and conditions of obtaining a J1 Visa, which are outlined in greater detail on this website: <https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/common-questions/>
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner and abide by the GMF code of conduct for professional exchanges, which will be provided to fellows at the time of award;
- Review pre-departure fellowship orientation materials, including the U.S. city entrepreneurial ecosystem, communicate with mentor team, and participate in the orientation webinar;
- Research and identify four to six individuals in the U.S. city entrepreneurial ecosystem that would be most beneficial to advancing the fellow's goals for the YTILI experience. (Deliverable: List of individuals to be shared at the opening summit in Portugal and used for planning with mentor team);
- Complete at least three professional appointments or interviews with identified individuals during the U.S. experience. (Write at least one blog post on the overall YTILI experience suitable for publication on the YTILI Medium page. All blog posts regardless of publication status will be posted on the YTILI online platform for sharing with the YTILI cohort. (Deliverable: Due to GMF by November 30, 2018);
- Participate in all required appointments during the opening summit, U.S. experience period, and the Washington, DC concluding convening;
- Develop a new or refined pitch presentation or video for your venture (Deliverable: Drafts due for peer sharing at the Washington, DC concluding program, October 2018; final pitches will be shared at the conclusion of the fellowship period);
- Develop an Action Plan outlining pre-departure fellowship goals in collaboration with your mentor team during planning at the opening summit in Portugal (Deliverable: Due to GMF staff prior to departure for U.S. experience)
- Develop Post-Fellowship next steps (Deliverable: Due for peer sharing at the concluding summit in Washington, DC); and
- Participate in all fellowship evaluation activities (including electronic surveys) throughout the fellowship year and for up to 18 months following the immersive experience in the United States.

Please note: Fellows are not allowed to have dependents (including spouses and children) accompany them during the fellowship, including the U.S. experience and the European Summit.

### Sample schedule of U.S. portion of the YTILI Fellowship program

Sunday (Day 1)	Arrival to U.S. city
Monday- Saturday (Day 2–6)	Immersive experience in U.S. city
Sunday (Day 7)	Departure for Washington, DC
Monday-Tuesday (Day 8–9)	Closing convening in Washington, DC
Wednesday (Day 10)	½ programming and conclusion of U.S. experience
Wednesday afternoon (Day 10)	Departure for city of residence

## IV. Financial Provisions of the Fellowship

There is no fee to apply to the YTILI Fellowship. The Fellowship does not cover salary while fellows are participating in the program. If selected as an YTILI fellow, the U.S. government will cover the following costs:

- J-1 visa support.
- Round-trip air travel from participant’s current city of residence to the United States and all required program travel.\*
- All activities related to the fellowship program for the European opening summit, one-week immersive experience in a U.S. city, and Washington, DC closing convening.
- Online platform and related trainings.
- Housing throughout the program (opening summit, one-week U.S. city experience, closing convening). \*
- Meals and local transportation throughout European opening summit and Washington, DC program; meals and transportation stipend during U.S. immersive experience. \*
- Accident and sickness benefit plan.

*\*Finalists will be provided more information prior to the start of the program.*

The following items are not paid for by the Fellowship program:

- Airport transfers in country of residence.
- Changes made to airfare already booked by GMF, including any airline fees associated with flight changes.
- Additional food and beverages outside of planned meals of the European Summit and Washington, DC closing convening.
- Additional food and beverages outside of the meals and transportation stipend provided during the travel days of the U.S. immersive experience period; stipend will be based on U.S. government guidelines for meals and incidental expenses by U.S. city.
- Leisure activities not offered by the program.
- Personal purchases and gifts.

Please note the following parameters on the transportation, housing, and meals paid for by the program:

- When possible, fellows will be accommodated with a private room. Fellows may be housed in double occupancy hotel rooms, shared houses/dormitories, or similar accommodations. Fellows may be expected to share a bedroom and bathroom with another fellow of the same gender.
- During the European Summit and Washington, DC closing convening, there will be group meals offered at the hotel, catered at meeting locations, or in restaurants. During the week-long immersive experience in a U.S. city, participants will receive a stipend to cover meals that are arranged on their own. Participants may have access to a kitchen to cook some meals, depending on availability at U.S. accommodation. Please note that the same types and varieties of foods that applicants may have access to in their country of residence may not be available in the U.S. city. GMF and its partners will make reasonable efforts to accommodate special requirements regarding diet, daily worship, etc.
- All air travel will be booked in coach class on carriers and schedules (arrival and departure dates) determined by GMF based on program requirements. Fellows will receive advance notice of all itineraries prior to booking; however, GMF is unable to accommodate special requests for preferred carries or routing.
- GMF will provide group airport transfers in the United States
- Public transportation will be the preferred method of daily transportation in the U.S. cities.

## V. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or any other protected characteristic as established by U.S. Law. Please review the following eligibility requirements for the YTILI fellowship:

- Are between the ages of 24 and 35 by January 29, 2018.
- Are a citizen of one of the participating countries\*: 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, United Kingdom.
- Currently resides in one of the participating countries\*: 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, United Kingdom.
- Are eligible to receive a U.S. J-1 Visa. For more information on the J1 Visa program, please visit: <https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/common-questions/>
- Have at least two (2) years of entrepreneurial/leadership experience with a startup business or social venture.
- Are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident of the United States.
- Are not a U.S. government employee.
- Are proficient in reading, writing and speaking English.

Please note: Fellows are not allowed to have dependents (including spouses and children) accompany them during the fellowship, including the U.S. experience and the European Summit.

The U.S. Department of State and The German Marshall Fund of the United States reserve the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible. If you do not meet the technical eligibility requirements for this program, we invite you to visit [www.exchanges.state.gov](http://www.exchanges.state.gov) for information on other U.S. Department of State exchange opportunities.

## VI. Selection Process and Criteria

The YTILI Fellowship selection process is a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed and scored against the evaluation criteria outlined below. Following the initial review, U.S. Department of State and GMF will select a group of semi-finalists. All semi-finalists will be interviewed by the U.S. embassies or consulates in their country of residence, either in-person or by video conference. If advanced to the semi-finalist round, applicants must provide a copy of their international passport (if available) or other government-issued photo identification at the time of the interview.

Following the semi-finalist interview, U.S. Department of State and GMF will make the final selection of the fellows. Notification of status will be sent to all applicants following the initial evaluation and to semi-finalists at the conclusion of the selection process. The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

- **Venture Development and Entrepreneurial Competencies**  
*This category evaluates how the applicant presents their commercial or social venture, including the stage of growth of their venture, and their experience working as an entrepreneur. Applicants will be evaluated based on their entrepreneurial experience, commitment to growing a commercial or social venture in their country of residence, and the potential to benefit from participating in the YTILI fellowship program.*
- **Professional Achievement and Leadership Potential**

*This category evaluates an applicant's professional achievements and leadership potential both as an entrepreneur and in other aspects of their career. Applicants will be evaluated on notable professional achievements, demonstration of leadership skills; and the potential to become a leader within their local entrepreneurial ecosystem.*

- **Civic and Community Involvement**

*This category evaluates an applicant's desire to learn about U.S. entrepreneurial ecosystems and engage in transatlantic dialogues on issues of innovation and entrepreneurialism. Applicants will be evaluated based on their desire to explore entrepreneurial themes, examine systems of innovation, and apply best practices to growing their venture and participating in local entrepreneurial activities.*

- **YTI Goals and Program Benefits**

*This category evaluates an applicant's motivation to set goals for their personal experience with the YTI program and how the experience would advance their own professional development and the growth of their venture. Applicants will also be evaluated on their potential to contribute towards a dynamic fellowship cohort.*

**Fellowship Selection Process and Activity Timeline:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Application release	Monday, January 29, 2018
Application close	Friday, March 2, 2018 5pm EST
Initial Application Review & Scoring	March 2–9, 2018
Semi-Finalist Selection & Notification of Status Sent to All Applicants	Week of March 12th
Semi-Finalist Interviews by US Embassies or Consulates (In Country of Residence)*	March 19-30, 2018
Fellowship Selection & Notification of Status Sent to All Semi-Finalists	Week of April 2nd
<b>Public Announcements of 2018 Fellows</b>	<b>April 12, 2018</b>
Visa Processing for Finalists	April-August
European Opening Summit	June 4–7, 2018
U.S. Immersive Experience	October 14–21, 2018
Washington, DC closing convening	October 21–24, 2018

*\*Please note that semi-finalists must be available for either an in-person or video interview for US Embassy or Consular staff during the two-week window noted above.*

## VII. Frequently Asked Questions

***Q: If I am selected as a YTILI Fellow can I defer my award?***

A: 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 convening in Washington, DC, as outlined in the Fellowship Activity Timeline.

***Q: If I applied last year and was not selected, can I apply again?***

A: Yes, previous applicants are able to apply again so long as they meet the eligibility requirements for the 2018 program.

***Q: Do I get to choose what city I would be based in for the U.S. immersive experience?***

A: 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>

***Q: What types of cities participate in the program?***

A: 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, Kansas City, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC. Selected fellows will be provided information on the final list of participating cities.

***Q: Is my family or partner able to travel with me?***

A: No, the fellowship program is designed for individuals only.

***Q: If I am employed with a company, do I need their permission to apply?***

A: 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 pro-actively communicate with employers, complete any due diligence, and meet any obligations that may require employer notification.