

Chapter and Interest Group Event Application Guidelines (2026-27)

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Applications will be reviewed by the Fulbright Association in collaboration with the Institute of International Education (IIE) and approved by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Chapters and interest groups will be notified of funding decisions following the review process.

Purpose of the Grant

The Chapter and Interest Group Grant supports programs and activities that strengthen the Fulbright alumni network, increase awareness of the value of international exchange, foster community engagement, and create meaningful opportunities for alumni to connect, collaborate, and contribute to their local communities.

The Fulbright Association is committed to building a stronger and more connected alumni network that serves as a resource for alumni, students, institutions, employers, and communities. Through this funding, chapters and interest groups are encouraged to develop programs that engage alumni across professions, industries, academic disciplines, and lived experiences while creating opportunities for mentorship, professional development, partnership-building, and public engagement.

Applicants are not expected to address every priority area. However, the strongest proposals typically advance multiple priorities simultaneously. Chapters are encouraged to design activities that create lasting connections, build partnerships, engage new audiences, and generate impact beyond a single event.

Strategic Priorities

Successful proposals will demonstrate how an activity advances one or more of these strategic priorities:

1. Partnership Development and Community Connections
2. Strengthening and Expanding the Fulbright Alumni Network
3. Career Development, Mentorship, and Professional Engagement
4. Emerging Global Leaders
5. Community Impact and Public Awareness

Applicants are not expected to address every priority area. However, the strongest proposals typically advance multiple priorities and create opportunities for continued engagement beyond a single event.

Partnership Development and Community Connections

Expand the reach and impact of Fulbright programming through partnerships.

What we're looking for:

- New or strengthened partnerships with local organizations
- Programs that engage audiences beyond the existing Fulbright community
- Activities that create ongoing relationships and future opportunities

Examples:

- Co-hosted events with universities
- Partnerships with employers or professional associations
- Collaborations with nonprofits, libraries, museums, or cultural institutions
- Joint programs with internationally focused organizations

Strengthening and Expanding the Fulbright Alumni Network

Build a stronger, more connected local Fulbright community.

What we're looking for:

- Engagement of alumni who are not currently active
- Connections across professions, generations, and experiences
- Opportunities for continued involvement in the Fulbright community

Examples:

- Alumni networking events

- Membership recruitment activities
- Programs reconnecting inactive alumni
- Cross-generational networking opportunities
- Events connecting alumni across industries and professional fields

Career Development, Mentorship, and Professional Engagement

Create opportunities for professional growth, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing.

What we're looking for:

- Career and professional development opportunities
- Mentorship connections
- Opportunities for alumni to share expertise and experience
- Engagement with employers, institutions, and industry leaders

Examples:

- Career panels
- Professional networking events
- Mentorship programs
- Industry roundtables
- Professional development workshops
- Alumni speaker series highlighting professional expertise

Emerging Global Leaders

Engage students, recent alumni, and future leaders in the Fulbright community.

What we're looking for:

- Programs that introduce new audiences to Fulbright
- Opportunities for interaction between established alumni and emerging leaders
- Leadership development and mentorship opportunities

Examples:

- Student engagement programs
- Fulbright information sessions
- Young professional networking events
- Applicant workshops
- Alumni-student mentoring programs

Community Impact and Public Awareness

Demonstrate the value of international exchange within local communities.

What we're looking for:

- Public-facing programs
- Community engagement and service
- Activities that showcase Fulbright alumni expertise
- Increased awareness of the Fulbright Program

Examples:

- Public lectures
- Community dialogues
- Service projects
- Cultural exchange programs
- Programs highlighting Fulbright alumni research and accomplishments

Designing Competitive Proposals

The strongest proposals move beyond stand-alone social gatherings and are intentionally designed to advance one or more strategic outcomes for the Fulbright community.

While networking receptions, cultural programs, speaker events, and alumni gatherings remain valuable, competitive proposals should clearly demonstrate how these activities will:

- Engage new audiences
- Build meaningful partnerships
- Create professional development or mentorship opportunities
- Connect Fulbright alumni with one another
- Support students and emerging leaders
- Generate community impact
- Increase awareness of the Fulbright Program and international exchange

Applicants should focus not only on what the event is, but also on what the event will accomplish.

Priority Considerations

Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Engage non-member Fulbright alumni and introduce them to the Fulbright Association community
- Establish new partnerships or deepen existing partnerships with local institutions and organizations
- Create opportunities for mentorship, career development, or professional networking
- Engage students, recent alumni, or emerging leaders
- Connect Fulbright alumni across professional sectors, academic disciplines, industries, and lived experiences
- Highlight the accomplishments, expertise, and contributions of Fulbright alumni
- Increase awareness of the Fulbright Program and its impact within local communities
- Demonstrate measurable community impact
- Include meaningful cost-sharing or local support
- Create opportunities for ongoing engagement beyond a single event or activity

Characteristics of Strong Proposals

Strong proposals typically accomplish several of the following:

- Engage new or previously inactive Fulbright alumni
- Build or strengthen a local partnership
- Create a professional development or mentorship opportunity
- Engage students or emerging leaders
- Showcase Fulbright alumni expertise
- Generate meaningful community impact
- Increase public awareness of Fulbright and international exchange
- Create opportunities for continued engagement after the funded activity concludes

Allowable Uses of Funds

Grant funds may be used for reasonable and necessary expenses directly related to approved activities, including:

- Venue rental
- Event materials and supplies

- Food and refreshments
- Speaker travel expenses
- Marketing and outreach
- Technology and virtual event expenses
- Community service project materials
- Other program-related expenses approved by the Fulbright Association

Unallowable Uses of Funds

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Alcohol
- Gifts, prizes, or entertainment expenses
- Institutional overhead
- Equipment purchases
- International travel
- Extensive local travel unrelated to program objectives
- Honoraria for U.S. Fulbright alumni (other honoraria may be approved with prior authorization from the Fulbright Association)
- Advocacy or lobbying activities
- Activities that do not align with the goals of this grant program

Acknowledgement

By submitting this application, I acknowledge that I have read and understand these guidelines and certify that the proposed activity aligns with the objectives of the Chapter and Interest Group Grant.