

Lafayette Fellowship – Information for Candidates

This document outlines the eligibility requirements, application procedures, timeline, and selection process for the 2026 Lafayette Fellowship. It is intended to guide applicants through all key stages and criteria. Please read the guidelines carefully before preparing your application and visit [our website](#) or contact lafayettefellowship@villa-albertine.com for any questions.

This information is for candidates applying to the Lafayette Fellowship, departing for France in July 2026 and beginning studies at a French higher education institution in September 2026.

Program Overview

The French Embassy in the United States is pleased to launch the Lafayette Fellowship, a new scholarship program designed by Villa Albertine, The French Institute for Culture and Education, and France Science, to support the next generation of young leaders with a strong interest in the transatlantic relationship.

Launching on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence and celebrating the French-American friendship, the Lafayette Fellowship will fund one year of master's level study in France for up to 30 outstanding American students.

Open to both Francophone and non-Francophone candidates, the initiative partners with top French higher education institutions that offer programs across STEM, the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, either in French or entirely in English.

In addition to their academic studies, fellows will take part in the French-American Leadership Program, a dynamic, year-long experience featuring lectures, masterclasses, site visits, and mentorship support, offering a 360-degree immersion into European innovation, culture, and policy.

This annual program aims to deepen academic and cultural exchange between France and the U.S. and nurture future leaders committed to strengthening the transatlantic relationship.

It also strives to spread awareness about France's many internationally ranked universities and academic excellence programs taught in English.

The program is open to students in STEM, the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, particularly those with a strong interest in contributing to global challenges such as sustainability, health and biotechnology, peace and security, social equity, and emerging technologies including artificial intelligence.

Fellows will participate in a program that combines rigorous academic study with cultural immersion, mentorship, and leadership development.

The Fellowship covers one year of:

- o Tuition, travel, program activities, and administrative costs.
- o A € 1,500 monthly stipend to cover accommodations and basic living expenses*.

*Candidates may receive other scholarships, but they **cannot receive monthly stipends from more than one program simultaneously**. If a candidate is awarded two scholarships (including the Lafayette Fellowship) with a monthly allowance, they must choose one.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must be **under the age of 27 as of July 1, 2026**. They must hold a **bachelor's degree from a U.S. institution**, completed between **January 2023 and June 2026**, and possess a **GPA of 3.7 or higher on a 4.0 scale** (no rounding).

Knowledge of French is not required for acceptance into the Lafayette program. However, if applicants plan to enroll in a program taught partially or entirely in French, they must provide official proof of French language proficiency. Students are welcome to provide language certificates and their dates of issue in their applications, if they are applying for a program taught in French.

Admission to one of the Lafayette Fellowship's French partner institutions—either for a degree program or a visiting program approved by the institution—is a prerequisite for receiving the Fellowship. Candidates must **apply separately for admission** to their selected French institution in parallel with their Fellowship application.

Candidates who are not selected for the Lafayette Fellowship in their first attempt are welcome to reapply for another cycle, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

Participating Higher Education Institutions

The Lafayette Fellowship provides unique access to internationally ranked programs within top French institutions across the country, including:

- o [Aix-Marseille Université \(Aix-Marseille\)](#)
- o [École Normale Supérieure de Lyon \(Lyon\)](#)
- o [Ecole Polytechnique \(Palaiseau\)](#)
- o [HEC Paris \(Jouy-en-Josas\)](#)
- o [ISAE-SUPAERO \(Toulouse\)](#)
- o [Sciences Po – Paris Climate School \(Paris\)](#)
- o [Sorbonne University \(Paris\)](#)
- o [Toulouse School of Economics \(Toulouse\)](#)
- o [University of Bordeaux \(Bordeaux\)](#)
- o [Université Côte d’Azur \(Nice\)](#)
- o [Université Grenoble Alpes \(Grenoble\)](#)
- o [Université Paris Cité \(Paris\)](#)
- o [Université Paris-Saclay](#), including AgroParis Tech, CentraleSupélec, and École Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay: Institut d’Optique as well as Versailles University and Evry University (campuses south of Paris)
- o [Université PSL](#), including [École Nationale des Chartes](#); [Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs / School of Decorative Arts](#); [Ecole Normale Supérieure](#); [Paris-Malaquais School of Architecture](#); [Paris School of Artificial Intelligence](#); and [University Paris Dauphine \(Paris\)](#)
- o [University of Strasbourg \(Strasbourg\)](#)

In parallel with the Fellowship application, candidates are required to separately complete the application process for their chosen French partner academic institution through the university’s platform, abiding by their individual requirements and timeline.

Candidates must apply for admission to at least one (and up to two) partner Institutions.

The awarding of the scholarship is conditional upon admission to one of the partner institutions. The laureates will be required to submit a letter of admission or a formal certificate of acceptance from a participating French institution in the

Lafayette network.

The scholarship cannot be advanced or deferred to a later academic year.

Key Dates

- **Applications Open:** Friday, August 29, 2025
- **Applications Close:** Sunday, November 30, 2025 (11:59 PM ET)
- **Final Selection Results Announced:** February 2026
- **Departure to France:** July 2026
- **Start of Study in France:** As of September 2026 (depending on the academic institution's calendar)

Application Components

Applicants must submit their applications through the Lafayette Fellowship [online portal](#) by November 30, 2025. Applications will not be accepted by email or post mail.

There is no application fee.

The Lafayette Fellowship application form requires you to provide:

- General Information: personal information, nationality, and contact details
- Proof of eligibility
- Education history, including university transcripts
- Academic institutions that you are applying to and the academic program or degree you intend to pursue in France.
- A CV
- A cover letter
- A video personal statement
- At least three, but no more than four, letters of recommendation
- French language certificates (with the date(s) of issue), only if you are applying for a program taught in French

You will need to upload copies of the following documents. Please note that all documents must be submitted in English. If official documents, such as birth certificates or passports, are not in English, you must upload English translations.

- Your passport, birth certificate, or other government issued identification for proof of age and nationality.
- A single PDF of your official or unofficial transcript from the college or university where you are currently enrolled or previously studied, showing your complete academic record to date. Please note that unofficial transcripts are accepted during the application process. If selected for the Lafayette Fellowship, applicants will be required to provide their official transcripts.
- A full CV detailing academic and extracurricular achievements, leadership roles, awards, scholarships, employment, and relevant experience. Please do not include a photograph in your CV. Your CV should not exceed two letter size pages in length with a minimum 10pt font.
- A cover letter outlining your motivations for applying, your intended academic plans in France, and your commitment to participating in the French-American Leadership Program. Candidates are asked to elaborate on their study plans as Lafayette's French partner institutions rank among the most competitive academic institutions in France. Recipients of a Lafayette Fellowship will subsequently be required to submit an application directly to the host institution. Preparing the cover letter serves both to strengthen the scholarship application and to facilitate preparation for academic admission. The cover letter will be reviewed by Lafayette jury members as part of the assessment of a candidate's ability to succeed in a highly competitive graduate environment in France. The cover letter must not exceed **700 words**.
- **Three letters of recommendation**, including:
 - Two **academic references** from professors who taught and assessed candidates.
 - One **extracurricular reference** from a mentor, employer, coach, or other figure who can speak to the candidate's character and leadership.
 - An **optional fourth letter** may also be submitted (academic or extracurricular).

Letters of recommendation must be signed and uploaded as PDF documents. You will need to provide the names and email addresses of all recommenders on the application platform. Please note that your recommenders may be contacted for further information.

Applicants are requested to upload signed recommendation letters as part of their application. However, if academic recommenders prefer to directly submit their letters via email, they should submit the documents to lafayettefellowship-recommendations@villa-albertine.org by November 30, 11:59 pm (ET). In this case, it is

the responsibility of applicants to ensure that their recommenders submit any letters via email by November 30, 11:59 pm. Recommenders must include the first and last name of the applicant that they are supporting in the subject line of the email. Submissions via email do not apply to the extracurricular letters of recommendation.

Video Personal Statement

Applications must include a personal statement in a video format. The video should describe the candidate's background, goals, and how they plan to contribute to French academic life and society. It should be a compelling, unscripted presentation of who they are and why they are applying.

This is your chance to speak authentically about your journey, your academic and professional aspirations, and the impact you hope to make. You should also reflect on your leadership potential, your interest in global issues, and your vision for enhancing the French-American relationship.

The video must be in English and may not exceed three minutes. It should be uploaded to a platform such as YouTube or Vimeo and set to "unlisted." You must include the link (and password, if applicable) in your application, and the video must remain accessible until the end of February 2026.

Reminder: The Lafayette Fellowship selection criteria emphasizes:

- Academic excellence
- Leadership potential and commitment to helping society
- Dedication to developing the French-American relationship

Please do not upload documents other than those required.

All application materials must be **complete, accurate, and submitted by the deadline**. Incomplete or fraudulent applications will be disqualified.

Lafayette Fellowship Selection Process

Once the application deadline has passed, all submitted applications will be considered for the selection process.

The selection process consists of two phases:

1. **District Pre-Selection:** Applications will be divided into four U.S. districts (Western, Southern, Midwestern, and Eastern)*, based on where applicants completed their undergraduate degrees. Each District Committee, comprising of French Embassy representatives and professors, will select candidates for online interviews. Following these interviews, the district committee will then choose up to 12 candidates to advance to the national selection.
2. **National Jury:** A distinguished panel of educational and scientific experts, public intellectuals, and district committee members will select up to **30 final Lafayette Fellows**. The committee will evaluate applicants based on **academic excellence, leadership potential, and commitment to the French-American relationship**.

A **waitlist** will be created for exceptional applicants not selected in the final round.

Early December 2025: Applications will be evaluated for eligibility and completeness, and a longlist of candidates will be compiled. Online interviews with pre-selected candidates will take place between 8 December 2025 and 16 January 2026. At the end of January 2026, the National Jury will convene, followed by the announcement of laureates in February 2026.

By December 2025, all applicants will be notified regarding whether or not they have been selected for an interview. Final fellowship results will be announced in February 2026, along with a waiting list. Please note that feedback cannot be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

* Lafayette Fellowships cover students across the 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, U.S Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands.

Applications will be grouped into the following four districts:

- Western District: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.
- Southern District: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas.
- Midwestern District: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

- Eastern District: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia.

Our Recruitment Policy

The Lafayette Fellowship seeks to assemble a representative and diverse cohort, selecting candidates from a wide range of academic disciplines, backgrounds, and U.S. regions. We aim to build a community of Fellows who reflect the richness of American society and who bring varied perspectives to the transatlantic dialogue. Selection is conducted fairly and without discrimination on the basis of financial means, marital status, race, ethnic origin, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, social background, disability, caste, or any other characteristic unrelated to the Fellowship's criteria.

Privacy and Data Policy

The information provided in applications will be retained by the French Embassy in the U.S. for five years. It will be used only for purposes related to eligibility verification, application review, and Fellowship administration.

If your application is unsuccessful, your data will be permanently deleted following the selection process. For selected Fellows, your data may be retained indefinitely for program administration purposes. You must review and accept the [Lafayette Fellowship Privacy Policy](#) before submitting your application.