2018 MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 4:00PM GMT ON WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 11, 2017

We recommend printing these instructions and referring to them while completing the application.

Thank you for your interest in the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). Begun in 2014, the Fellowship supports young African leaders as they spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa. Please visit yali.state.gov for more information. The Mandela Washington Fellowship will bring up to 700 young leaders to the United States in the summer of 2018 for academic coursework and leadership training and will create unique opportunities in Africa for Fellows to put practical new skills to use in leading their organizations, communities, and countries. The Mandela Washington Fellowship includes:

- **A six-week Academic and Leadership Institute:** Fellows are placed at U.S. colleges and universities across the country and in both urban and rural areas. Institutes will focus on skills development in one of three areas: **Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, or Public Management.** The intensive six-week Institute model includes linkages between academic sessions, leadership development, site visits, community service, networking, and organized cultural and civic activities. Fellows will gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and the Institutes will take place from mid-June to late July 2018.

- **A Summit in Washington, DC:** At the conclusion of the Academic and Leadership Institutes, all Fellows will participate in a high-level, three-day Summit. During this event, Fellows participate in networking and panel discussions with each other and U.S. leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The Summit will take place in late July or early August 2018.

- **An optional six-week Professional Development Experience:** As part of the Fellowship application, individuals may apply to participate in a professional development experience (PDE) at a U.S. company, civil society organization, or public sector agency in the United States. The PDE offers Fellows practical training and the opportunity to learn transferable skills, expand their professional network, and apply concepts learned at the Institutes to real-world situations. Placements will relate to Fellows' professional interests and goals but are typically not an exact match for their current position at their home organization. This experience offers Fellows new perspectives on their fields, deepens their awareness of issues present in both the United States and their home countries, and equips them with best practices that can be applied to their work upon their return home. Professional Development Experiences will be intensive and demanding, and chosen Fellows may be

placed at organizations across the United States. Fellows selected must be available to be in the United States for approximately 13 weeks total (academic institute plus placement with a U.S. organization). Up to 100 Mandela Washington Fellows will be selected for the Professional Development Experience.

- **Activities in Africa:** Fellows will have access to networking opportunities, ongoing professional development, and volunteer opportunities upon their return home after the Fellowship.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is a program of the U.S. government and is supported in its implementation by IREX.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

There is no fee to apply to the Mandela Washington Fellowship. If you are selected for the Fellowship, the U.S. government will cover all participant costs.

Financial provisions provided by the U.S. government will include:

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from Fellow's home city to the U.S. and domestic U.S. travel as required by the program;
- A six-week Academic and Leadership Institute;
- Concluding Summit in Washington, DC;
- Accident and sickness benefit plan;
- Housing and meals during the program; and
- An optional six-week Professional Development Experience (for up to 100 Fellows).

Please note: the Fellowship will not cover salary while Fellows are away from work or funds for personal purchases such as gifts.

Please note that Fellows will be housed in university dorms or similar accommodations. Fellows may be expected to share a bedroom and bathroom with another Fellow of the same gender. Most meals will be provided at campus cafeterias or restaurants, though participants may have access to a kitchen to cook some meals on their own. Please note that campus cafeterias will not offer the same types and varieties of foods that applicants may access in their home countries. It is important that applicants are aware of these arrangements and that they are comfortable with such accommodations. To the extent possible, care will be taken to ensure that any special requirements regarding diet, daily worship, housing, and medical care are satisfied. However, Fellows should understand that food and housing may be very different from what they are used to at home and should be open to new experiences.

TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is open to young African leaders who meet the following criteria[1]:

- Are between the ages of 25 and 35 at the time of application submission, although exceptional applicants younger than 25 will be considered;
- Are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;

[1] Current IREX employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX-implemented grant programs, either as individuals or as the responsible party representing an institutional applicant.

- Are eligible to receive a United States J-1 visa;
- Are not employees or immediate family members of employees of the U.S. government (including the U.S. Embassy, USAID, and other U.S. government entities);
- Are proficient in reading, writing, and speaking English;
- Are citizens of one of the following countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- Are residents of one of the above countries; and
- Are not alumni of the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

Please note: Fellows are not allowed to have dependents (including spouses and children) accompany them during the Fellowship.

The U.S. Department of State and IREX 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.

Applications not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee. If you do not meet the technical eligibility requirements for this program, we invite you to visit http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us for information on other U.S. Department of State exchange opportunities.

MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE

September 13, 2017	Application opens
October 11, 2017	Application deadline
December 2017– February 2018	Semifinalists interviewed by local U.S. embassies and consulates
Late March 2018	Applicants are notified of their status
April-May 2018	Visa processing and Pre-Departure Orientations for finalists
Mid-June 2018	Fellowship begins in the United States

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The Mandela Washington Fellowship selection process is a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by independent readers. Following this review, chosen semi-finalists will be interviewed by the U.S. embassies or consulates in their home countries. 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.

Independent readers will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- A proven record of leadership and accomplishment in public service, business and entrepreneurship, or civic engagement;
- A demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship;
- The ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and respect the opinions of others;
- Strong social and communication skills;
- An energetic, positive attitude;
- A demonstrated knowledge, interest, and professional experience in the sector/track selected; and

- A commitment to return to Africa and apply leadership skills and training to benefit the applicant's country and/or community after they return home.

General Application Instructions and Tips

- The Mandela Washington Fellowship uses an Internet-based application system. You will need access to a computer or mobile device and the Internet to apply.
- You do not have to finish your application in one session. You may save your work and return to complete your application as many times as necessary. Once you have submitted your application, you can no longer add any additional information or make any changes. All information and documents must be uploaded prior to your final submission. You must submit your completed application by the deadline.
- Answer all questions on the application in English.
- Spaces marked with a red asterisk (*) must be completed.
- All answers in the application, including written responses to essays and optional internship questions, must be your own, original work. Using language copied from other past applicants' essays or using language from websites is considered plagiarism and will result in applications being disqualified.
- You may wish to review the application and its questions before filling out the application. Some applicants find it helpful to draft their responses offline (in a separate Word document for example) and then cut and paste their responses into the appropriate sections of the application.
- This is the official application for the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders administered by the U.S. Department of State. Only those applicants who complete this application will be considered. Applications and information submitted through email or other means will not be considered.

Online Application Sections

General Information

- Provide your legal name as spelled on your passport or national identification card.
- Provide your date of birth using the "month, day, year" format. You will be required to provide documentation verifying age and for eligibility at the interview stage if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Provide your country of citizenship and your country of residence. You will be required to provide documentation verifying citizenship at the interview stage if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Indicate your marital status (single or married).
- If applicable, provide the citizenship of your spouse.
- Provide your place of birth (city or town and country).
- Indicate whether or not you have a disability and provide details if applicable.
- Indicate whether or not you have a passport and if so, provide the document's expiration date. If you indicate that you have a passport you will be required to present it at the interview stage if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Indicate if you live in a national capital city, major city, other city or town, or rural area. A national capital city is the seat of your federal or national government (example: Abuja, Nigeria or Dakar, Senegal). A major city is defined an urban area with a large population of about 100,000+ people (Example: Cape Town, South Africa). A town is roughly defined as a semi-urban area with a population between 2,500 – 100,000 people (Example: Lamu, Kenya). A rural area is defined as any area with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants and is distinctively not in an urban area (Example: Chachani, Tanzania).

CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact information you provide will be used to reach you during the application and selection process. Please provide accurate addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses that you use and check on a regular basis.

INSTITUTE TRACKS: DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

You must choose one of the three tracks: Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, and Public Management. You will be asked to rank your track choices.

Overall, the Institutes are designed to provide Fellows with background on U.S. practices and help Fellows to expand their networks to include Americans with whom they may find opportunities to collaborate with in the future. **The Fellowship is not designed to help Fellows identify funding for projects or organizations**.

Fellows should be prepared to examine U.S. case studies and approaches to challenges and relate them to the African context. The Mandela Washington Fellowship does not encourage U.S. universities to teach African models to Fellows. Consequently, institute speakers may not be specialists on African subjects. As leaders, Fellows should be prepared to think about what elements of the U.S. approach or strategy might be useful in their own contexts.

While Institutes focus on specific tracks and themes, not all sessions will directly relate to each Fellow's current work. Sessions are designed to help Fellows broaden their understanding on a variety of topics to prepare them as they progress to even higher levels of leadership. During the course of their Fellowship, Fellows are encouraged to build their own networks and connections by reaching out directly to Americans in their host communities. This may only be done during unstructured time. As part of the Fellowship, Fellows are required to attend all program sessions by their college and university hosts.

Institute Tracks:

- **Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes:** Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will cater to entrepreneurs who hope to take on leadership roles in the private sector or expand their business ventures on the continent. Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will expose participants to business and entrepreneurial approaches in the United States. Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will also build technical and leadership capacity in areas such as strategy, operations, supply chain management, business ethics, social entrepreneurship, microfinance, organizational development and management, marketing, innovation and technology, emerging markets and risk analysis, strategic business planning, and corporate social responsibility. The Institutes will focus on developing Fellow skills in business and entrepreneurship while examining the development, history, challenges, and successes of U.S. enterprises and social enterprises. The Institute focuses on leadership development and best business practices. Fellows should not anticipate identifying funding or investment opportunities during the Institutes or Summit.
- **Civic Leadership Institutes:** Civic Leadership Institutes will be oriented to young Africans who are civically engaged and serving the public through non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, or volunteerism. Civic Leadership Institutes will expose participants to the meaning of civic leadership in the United States while building technical and leadership capacity in areas such as citizenship, community building, economic development, grassroots activism, political organizing and leadership, and volunteerism. Institutes on Civic Leadership will provide participants with an overview of how citizens have shaped the United States both as individuals and in groups. The Institutes will focus on U.S. case studies in topics such as education, gender equality, health, human rights, and poverty reduction. The goal is to provide Fellows with U.S. best practices and lessons learned that they can then use to develop solutions within their own contexts. In order to define the content of the Institute and enhance the academic experience, programs may focus on a specific theme or sub-themes such as organizational management, strategic planning, fundraising,

community relations and outreach, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, media, and coalition-building. Fellows should not anticipate identifying funding opportunities during the Institutes or Summit.

- **Public Management Institutes:** Public Management Institutes will be tailored to young Africans who work or aspire to work in all levels of government agencies, regional organizations such as the African Union, international organizations such as the United Nations, or other publicly-minded organizations or think tanks. The Institutes on Public Management will provide participants with an overview of Public Management and Leadership including economic development; workforce development; financial management in public organizations; and planning. Public Management Institutes will expose participants to U.S. public management models and best practices, while building technical and leadership capacity in areas such as transparency, procurement, public financial management, government tender processes, legislative/executive collaboration, citizen engagement and outreach, human resource management, program implementation, and policy formulation. Within the broader frame of the public policy process, Fellows will be exposed to specific public management questions on topics such as public finance, rule of law, education, public health, environment, and foreign policy.

Instructions:

- Rank the sector/track in order from the track that most closely aligns with your daily work, education, or community involvement. **Please note that if selected for the Mandela Washington Fellowship you may not be placed in your first choice track but you may be placed in a different track that, based on your application materials, fits your profile.**

CURRENT PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- This section asks for information about where you are currently working or studying.
- This section also asks you to select up to five sectors in which you have expertise and/or interest to help us better understand your professional areas of focus. Please note: this will not factor into your selection but may be used to help place finalists at their Academic and Leadership Institute. This may also be used by the YALI Network (if you have opted in) to provide you with tailored opportunities.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

- This section includes four short answer questions and two essay questions that must be completed. Each response has a space limitation for writing and a word limit is indicated on the application. Your responses will give the selection committee an opportunity to better understand you as a leader and your desire to participate in the program.
- The questions are:
    1. Please give a brief description of your professional background and current work. Why have you chosen this work? (150 words)
    2. Describe a specific instance or time when you made a mistake or encountered a setback that sparked a period of personal growth or understanding. What did you learn? (150 words)
    3. While on the Fellowship, you may be exposed to new challenges and experiences such as adapting to a different environment, living without familiar amenities, interacting with new and different types of people (including individuals from the United States and other Fellows), and studying intensively, among others. If selected, how would you respond to challenges that may arise during your time as a Fellow? (150 words)
    4. Describe a specific problem or challenge in your community that you have solved or are currently working to address. Explain the steps you took or are taking to address the problem. Why is this issue important to you? (250 words)

5. The Mandela Washington Fellowship seeks dynamic, innovative, and accomplished leaders from all sectors of society. Please explain how you stand out in your field? (250 words)
6. What skills and knowledge do you hope to gain from the Fellowship? How will this impact your activities when you return home? What contributions do you envision making in your country within the next 5 years? (250 words)

OPTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

- As described above, the Professional Development Experience component of the program is optional and competitive. You do not have to apply for the Professional Development Experience component in order to be considered for the Mandela Washington Fellowship.
- To apply for the optional Professional Development Experience, you will be required to answer the following additional questions:
    - What are your goals for the Professional Development Experience? How might you apply an experience working in an American organization to your work after returning to your home country? (250 words)

*Please note: Fellows may also have the opportunity to apply for Professional Practicums **in Africa** after your return home. The U.S. Professional Development Experience has no relationship with or bearing on that selection process.*

PREVIOUS U.S. EXPERIENCE

- Please provide accurate information regarding your travel to the U.S. including prior travel and/or upcoming travel. As noted in the application, also include all past experience in the U.S. such as work, trainings, degree programs, study abroad experience, or extended stays or residencies.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

- English language proficiency is required for participation in the Fellowship. All activities including academic sessions, discussions, meetings, cultural activities, and social interactions will be in English. Please fill in the chart evaluating your language skills as accurately as possible.
- Applicants who are Deaf please note, interpretation in the United States may only be available in ASL, and Fellows should be proficient in or must learn American Sign Language prior to their arrival in the USA. Please fill in the chart your English Reading and Writing ability and your proficiency in American Sign Language (ASL) for the Speaking and Listening Comprehension sections.

RESUME/CV

- In this section, you will provide information about your past education, work experience, volunteer experience, and any awards you have earned. **You do not need to upload a separate resume/CV document.**

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

- In this section, we invite you to upload up to three files that you feel will strengthen your application. These materials are entirely optional and must be in English. Documents can be attached in .DOC or .PDF format and must be no larger than 25mbs. Recommendation letters are an example of supplemental files.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

- The question in this section is optional and asks for information about how you learned about the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for applications for the Mandela Washington Fellowship is 4:00 PM GMT on Wednesday, October 11, 2017. Applications must be completed online at https://yaliapp.irex.org.

ABOUT THE BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders (U.S. based programming) is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State. ECA's mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange that assist in the development of peaceful relations. ECA does this through a wide range of international exchanges including the Mandela Washington Fellowship. ECA works in close cooperation with U.S. embassies overseas to promote personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad. For further information, go to: http://exchanges.state.gov

ABOUT IREX

IREX is an international nonprofit organization providing thought leadership and innovative programs to promote positive lasting change globally. We enable local individuals and institutions to build key elements of a vibrant society: quality education, independent media, and strong communities. To strengthen these sectors, our program activities also include conflict resolution, technology for development, gender, and youth. Founded in 1968, IREX has an annual portfolio of over $70 million and a staff of over 400 professionals worldwide. IREX employs field-tested methods and innovative uses of technologies to develop practical and locally-driven solutions with our partners in more than 100 countries. For further information, go to www.irex.org.