



2018 NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP (NMS) PROGRAM FOR CUBAN CITIZENS APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM GOALS

The Nonprofit Management Scholarship (NMS) Program for Cuban citizens was designed to identify exceptional individuals who are committed to making a meaningful contribution to the civil society sector in Cuba and provide these individuals with graduate level academic study and professional development experiences in the United States.

The nonprofit management sector is very broad in the United States. IREX welcomes applications from individuals interested in Arts & Culture, Urban Planning, Environment, Sports, Women's Issues, Health, Agriculture, Education, LGBTI, Youth Development, or any other field of the nonprofit sector.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The NMS program provides opportunities for citizens from Cuba to study in the United States at the graduate level. At the end of their studies, participants will receive a graduate degree in nonprofit management.

Applicants will be considered for a **graduate degree program** in nonprofit management. The selection committee and IREX will make the final decision to award up to 4 fellowships from all regions in Cuba. **Participants may not choose their own host university in the United States.**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING

Prior to beginning their academic study, participants will first participate in English language training, with a focus on English for academic purposes and field-specific vocabulary and terminology necessary to succeed in a graduate-level nonprofit management program. The length of the English language training program will depend on the needs of each student and may range from three to four months.

INTERNSHIPS

Internships provide an essential opportunity for participants to gain professional experience and skills which they can directly apply to their future careers in management of independent organizations in Cuba. Participants will conduct a three-month internship with a nonprofit organization in the United States during their program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the program, participants will have opportunities to engage in additional professional development opportunities related to nonprofit management. These opportunities include online webinars, an in-person workshop, and participation in a nonprofit mentoring program. Topics may include those specific to the sector and to participants' professional development, such as Networking for Success, Sustainable Growth Strategies, and Nonprofit Management Best Practices.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

To further build participants' professional skills and expose them to the principles of community service and social responsibility in the United States, participants will have the option to participate in a volunteer community service project during their program.

Under the terms of this grant, participants must return to Cuba immediately upon completion of the program. Participants are not eligible for visa extensions or transfers (for example, from J-1 to F-1) under any circumstances. No exceptions will be made.

TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

IREX encourages individuals of all race, color, religion, national origin, socioeconomic background, disability, and gender to apply for the NMS Program.

Competition for the NMS Program is merit-based and open to anyone who:

- Is a citizen of and qualified to hold a valid passport issued by the country of Cuba;
- Is currently residing in Cuba;
- Is the recipient of an undergraduate degree by the time of application and able to provide proof of prior successful academic experience;
- Is able to begin the program in the United States as early as the spring of 2018;
- Is able to receive and maintain a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Is committed to returning to Cuba after completion of the program;
- Has working knowledge of spoken and written English at the time of application; and
- Submits a complete application by the application deadline.

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the NMS Program:

- U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Spouses of U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals currently participating in academic, training, or research programs in the United States;
- Individuals who are not citizens or qualified to hold a passport from Cuba;
- Individuals currently residing or working outside Cuba;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years;
- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime;
- Current IREX employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX-administered programs, either as individuals or as the responsible party representing an institutional applicant. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents.

IREX reserves 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.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

- J-1 visa support;
- Roundtrip travel from Cuba to host university in the United States;
- English language training;
- Tuition and mandatory university fees;
- Accident and sickness insurance;
- Monthly allowance for housing and living expenses; and
- Small allowance for educational materials.

The NMS program provides no financial or visa support for dependents.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The NMS Program is conducted as a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by a panel of specialists. Chosen semifinalists will be interviewed and will take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in January 2018. Program finalists and alternates will be chosen based on results of the initial application review, interview committee, and test scores.

All applicants will be notified of their status in March 2018 for scholarships to begin in the spring of 2018.

The selection panel will use the following **criteria** to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- Demonstrated experience or interest in civil society, community or non-governmental organizations;
- Demonstrated ability to take initiative;
- Successful academic experience;
- Commitment to return to Cuba following completion of the program;
- Commitment to engaging in work and/or volunteer endeavors designed to benefit their community;
- Flexibility and adaptability necessary for success as a graduate student in the U.S.; and
- Solid working knowledge of the English language, with the capacity to improve to meet university admission requirements following intensive English training.

PLACEMENT

IREX works with a network of over 500 colleges and universities throughout the United States. IREX will seek to place participants in programs that correspond to their academic and professional interests as described in the application, taking into consideration the applicant's academic credentials and test scores. **2018 applicants will be considered for only graduate degree programs.**

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- All forms and supporting materials may be typewritten and submitted with the completed application. Handwritten applications must be neatly printed.
- You may also save the PDF of the application form to your computer and type directly into each box. To sign the application electronically, please click on the red "signature of applicant" label in the signature box to begin. You will select to create a new digital ID and then follow the instructions to enter your name. If you are unable to digitally sign the application, you may still print and sign the application before final submission.
- Please answer **ALL** questions on the application in English (except where specified.)
- **If you currently hold a passport, please include your full name as it appears there. Write your family name (surname) first, exactly as it is spelled on your passport (if available).** Do not translate name spellings (for example, write Juan and not John).
- Include complete contact information (including index codes for all addresses and city/country codes for all phone numbers.) Do not translate street or city names into English, only into the English alphabet (for example, write Avenida de los Presidentes instead of Presidents' Avenue).
- Please answer all questions and **DO NOT** leave a space blank. If a question does not apply to you, enter N/A (not applicable).

NOTES:

- Applications are free of charge and may be duplicated. There is no fee to apply for this program.
 - Any documents submitted in addition to those specifically mentioned in the application will be discarded and not considered.
 - Applications that include plagiarism or other evidence of academic misconduct will be disqualified. All essays will be checked using plagiarism detection software.
 - Finalists will be required to provide certified/notarized copies of university transcript and diploma in the language of instruction and if possible, an English translation, prior to receipt of scholarship.
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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for applications for the Nonprofit Management Scholarship Program is **5:00pm Havana time, Wednesday, December 5, 2017**. Completed applications may be submitted via email to nms@irex.org or sent by post or faxed to the IREX office in Washington, DC:

IREX
1275 K Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
USA

Email: nms@irex.org
Fax: +1-202-628-8189

IREX recommends that applicants also keep a copy for their own records. No application will be returned to the applicant after the end of the competition. All applicants will be notified of their status by late spring 2018.

Each complete application should include the following:

- Completed Application including signed Privacy Policy Statement
 - Two completed Reference Forms
 - Copy of Passport (if available)
 - Copies of TOEFL, IELTS and/or GRE score reports (if available and applicant has previously taken the exams)
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NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR CUBAN CITIZENS TIMELINE

December 5, 2017	Application deadline
Winter 2017	Application review and selection of semifinalists
Jan - Feb 2018	Semifinalist interviews and standardized testing
March 2018	Finalists and alternates announced
Spring 2018	Pre-Departure Orientation
August 2018	Arrival to the U.S.
	Welcome Orientation
	English Language Training begins
	Academic Study begins