

Request for Applications: Columbia Global Scholars Program

RFA issue date: March 23, 2026

Application Link: <https://cwp.submittable.com/submit>

Deadline for submissions: April 24, 2026 11:59 PM

Overview

Columbia Global will host the inaugural cohort of Columbia Global Scholars in the 2026-2027 academic year to support the social impact leadership development of Columbia University's graduate students as an enrichment to master's-level programs across the University.

The Columbia Global Scholars Program will equip participant students with a comprehensive leadership development experience, a global network, and the capacity to take their scholarship to action and impact.

The program will span a duration of the 2026-2027 academic year and include a range of program elements:

- **Orientation and cohort strengthening:** Foundational cohort experience convening students from different schools at Columbia University.
- **Intensive skills workshops during academic breaks:** Developing the skills, qualities, and abilities for social impact leadership.
- **Spring Break immersion at a Columbia Global Center:** Seven-day experiential learning at a Columbia Global Center (TBA) to observe social change work firsthand in international contexts.
- **Mentorship:** Connecting with social impact leaders and practitioners, who will offer guidance, expertise, and support.
- **Monthly, hybrid guest speaker series:** Guest speakers from Columbia faculty, and New York's nonprofit, policy, and social enterprise ecosystem.
- **Peer Learning Circles:** Monthly sessions providing essential cohort connections and collaborative learning opportunities.
- **Action plan presentation:** Students will develop action plans to inform their post-graduation work and present them to the cohort.

The program recruits students across schools and departments to reflect the complexity of real-world social challenges and the work of Columbia Global — including democracy, economy, climate, public health, and more.

Eligibility

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be enrolled in a two-year, full-time Master's degree program at Columbia University

- Have completed one full year of graduate study by August 2026
- Enrolled for both Fall 2026 and Spring 2027 semesters
- Good academic standing, as defined by applicant's school or degree program
- Availability to participate in all program elements, including immersions during academic breaks

Selection Criteria

- Demonstrated leadership experience in social impact work
- Vision and potential to become a social impact leader
- Possess empathy, curiosity, and humility, with the ability to work independently and collaboratively
- Demonstrate a strong desire to acquire new knowledge and skills

Time Commitment

The Columbia Global Scholars Program will run for eight months from September 2026 through April 2027.

Immersions during academic breaks are required and in-person.

- September 1-4, 2026 (week before Fall 2026 semester)
- January 11-15, 2027 (week before Spring 2027 semester)
- March 14-19, 2027 (Spring Recess)

Programming throughout the academic year (at least two meetings per month) will be scheduled around student availability.

How to Apply

Please complete an application by **April 24, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.** to be considered for the program. You can access the application link at <https://cwp.submittable.com/submit>.

Please include the following materials in English with your online application:

- Personal statement essays addressing the following four questions
 - Describe your area of social impact interest and the work you have done in it. (200 words maximum)
 - Why is this area of social impact important to you, what communities does it involve, and what impact is your work having? (400 words maximum)
 - Selected program participants will develop action plans focused on the next phase of their work as it relates to a specific project, initiative, or challenge, which they hope to implement post-program. Please describe a specific project or initiative you would like to develop and/or implement after the program term or a challenge you would like to address related to your work. (400 words maximum)
 - What do you hope to gain from this program? Be specific about the skills, perspectives, or forms of leadership you seek to develop. (300 words maximum)
- Official or Unofficial transcript, PDF only
- Resumé or Curriculum Vitae (two-page maximum)
- One letter of recommendation from a faculty member or professional supervisor in social impact field

About Columbia University, Columbia Global, Columbia Global Centers, and Columbia World Projects

Among the world's leading research universities, [Columbia University](#) in the City of New York seeks to advance the frontiers of scholarship and foster a community deeply engaged in the complex issues of our time through teaching, research, patient care, and public service. The University is composed of 17 undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools, and four affiliated colleges and seminaries in Manhattan, and a wide array of research institutes and Global Centers around the world. More than 40,000 students, award-winning faculty, and professional staff define the University's underlying values and commitment to pursuing new knowledge and educating informed, engaged citizens.

[Columbia Global](#) was established in 2022 to bring together major global initiatives from across Columbia University to advance knowledge and foster global engagement. These initiatives include the Columbia Global Centers, Columbia World Projects, the Committee on Global Thought, the Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement, and the Institute for Ideas and Imagination. Columbia Global's vision is to reimagine the university's role in society as not only a nexus for learning and intellectual exploration but also as a catalyst for creativity and impact locally, regionally, and globally.

The [Columbia Global Centers](#) serve as Columbia University's physical and intellectual gateway to the world. Located in 11 cities across four continents, the Global Centers are a manifestation of Columbia's commitment to leverage the remarkable scholarship, expertise, and resources of the university to help address the world's most complex challenges while fostering intellectual endeavors in ways that inspire, surprise, and challenge.

[Columbia World Projects](#) supports connections between the Columbia community and social impact practitioners and policymakers around the globe to achieve concrete change benefiting humanity. More than a think tank, we are a get-it-done tank, working to create positive change both in the world at large and within Columbia.