



Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

Pre-Departure Toolkit



The Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by IIE.

Congratulations on receiving the U.S. Department of State's Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship! As a Gilman scholar, you are part of a legacy that has awarded thousands of students with scholarships to study and intern abroad in more than 140 countries around the world. Gilman scholars represent all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands and come from over 1,100 colleges and universities across the nation. We congratulate you on this significant accomplishment!

You are about to start on an incredibly exciting adventure. This packet includes information that will help prepare you for your time abroad as well as outline the expectations and opportunities you have as a Gilman scholar. This document is by no means a comprehensive preparation for your time abroad but should be used to complement the information provided by your individual program and an open mind.

We wish you all the best during your program abroad!

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP EXPECTATION AND REQUIREMENTS | 4 |
| Gilman Scholar Expectations | 4 |
| Gilman Scholar Requirements | 4 |
| AWARD DOCUMENTATION | 4 |
| RECEIVING YOUR GILMAN FUNDS (IlePay/Zelle) | 5 |
| Payment Resources | 5 |
| PREPARING TO GO ABROAD | 5 |
| Budgeting | 6 |
| Cultural Adjustment and Culture Shock | 6 |
| Making the Most of Your Experience | 7 |
| Identity Abroad | 8 |
| PRE-DEPARTURE ACTIVITY: SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL | 9 |
| OVERSEAS EVENTS TIPS AND ETIQUETTE | 10 |
| HEALTH & SAFETY ABROAD | 10 |
| General Tips | 10 |
| International SOS | 11 |
| STAYING CONNECTED WITH THE GILMAN PROGRAM | 12 |
| Social Media | 12 |
| Photo Submissions to Gilman | 12 |
| GILMAN PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD | 12 |
| Alternate Follow-On Service Opportunities | 12 |
| ALUMNI BENEFITS AND RESOURCES | 13 |
| Non-competitive Eligibility (NCE) for Federal Employment | 13 |
| Webinars | 13 |
| Networking Opportunities | 13 |
| Graduate School Opportunities | 13 |
| Gilman Alumni Ambassadors | 14 |
| CONTACTING GILMAN | 14 |

GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP EXPECTATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Gilman Scholar Expectations

- ❖ Positively represent the U.S. and Gilman on your program abroad and at your campus/internship location.
- ❖ Follow guidelines set forth in the [Terms & Conditions](#) contract.
- ❖ Notify the Gilman Program of any changes to your program or plans outlined in your application by emailing us at gilmanrecipients@iie.org
 - Gilman Scholarship recipients are expected to complete their study/intern abroad programs as confirmed in the award documentation process. If serious and compelling reasons exist and you need to make updates to your program or your participation in it, you must contact the Gilman Program as soon as possible. These requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may have an impact on your award.
- ❖ Follow guidelines regarding use of Gilman Scholarship funds. Gilman funds must only be used to pay for eligible study/intern abroad program costs (program tuition, room and board) and other study/intern abroad related costs (books, local transportation, insurance) and airfare in accordance with the [Fly America Act](#). Gilman Scholarship funds cannot be used for personal expenses, airfare for travel not in accordance with the Fly America Act, or for travel that is not a part of, or required by, the recipient's study/intern abroad program. Use of Gilman Scholarship funds for any purpose other than those outlined in the terms and conditions could be cause for revocation of this award.

Gilman Scholar Requirements

All Gilman scholars must complete the following tasks, as agreed to in the Gilman [Terms and Conditions](#).

Upon reviewing and accepting your Gilman Award, please carefully review the [Pre-departure Checklist](#) which will provide you with next steps on requirements that all Gilman Scholars must complete prior to leaving the U.S., during your time abroad, and returning to the U.S. after your program.

If at any point you do not meet the Gilman Scholarship requirements as outlined above and within the Terms and Conditions, the Gilman Program may have cause to terminate your award early or cancel it completely. Each case will be evaluated on an individual basis. Please contact the Gilman Program if you have any questions or concerns.

AWARD DOCUMENTATION

Award Documentation Requirements Checklist

Congratulations on winning your Gilman Scholarship! Upon being notified of your Scholarship, please review the [Gilman Scholarship Program Scholar Checklist](#). This checklist provides you with a guide to accepting your award and a list of the required award documentation you need to submit to your Gilman account for the Gilman program to review and approve before processing your scholarship payment.

Award Documentation Resources

To ensure you are submitting the correct award documents, please review the [Award Guidelines](#) on the Gilman website and our Documentation videos! You can also find this information under the Documents tab in the Gilman portal.

Documentation Videos:

- [Acceptance letter](#)

- [Proof of Insurance](#)

Documentation Submission Tips

See our submission tips under our applicant page on [Submission Tips](#).

- [Compress/Reduce File Size](#)
- [Combine PDF files](#)
- [Rotate Pages Within PDF](#)

Using Your Gilman Scholarship for Your Airfare

If you are planning on using your Gilman Scholarship to help pay for your study/intern abroad program airfare, please review the [Gilman Fly America Act Guidance](#).

RECEIVING YOUR GILMAN FUNDS (IlePay/Zelle)

Once all of your required award documentation has been submitted and approved, you will receive an automated email confirming your documentation is approved and the Gilman program has started processing your scholarship payment. Please note the payment process can take between 2-3 weeks.

For a smoother and more efficient transfer of your payment, the Gilman Scholarship is distributed via IlePay (Zelle), an electronic/mobile payment service similar to Venmo, using the email address we have on record for you from your application.

Please review our [Receiving Your Payment](#) page on the Gilman website.

Payment Resources

- ❖ [How Zelle Works](#)
- ❖ Steps to accept your [Gilman Scholarship video](#).
- ❖ Troubleshooting Tips – If you have any issues in registering with Zelle, please see the tips provided on the [Receiving Your Payment](#) webpage under Troubleshooting Tips.
- ❖ [Registering with Zelle](#)
- ❖ [My Bank is Not Listed](#) – If your bank is a small regional bank or credit union, the bank might not work with Zelle transfers or may have transfer limitations. Please see what you can do when your bank is not a Zelle partner using the information noted in our [guide](#).
 - Or check out the information on what to do if your bank doesn't offer Zelle [here](#).
- ❖ [Add a Secondary Email to Your Bank Account](#)- Some banks allow you to add in a secondary email to your bank account without any issues (such as Chase QuickPay in our example below). However, **we HIGHLY recommend you speak with your bank directly BEFORE making any updates to your bank account profile information**. Some banks place a 30 - day security hold on your bank account, which prevents the Zelle transfer from reaching you and can further delay your scholarship payment being sent to you.
 - If this option does not work for you or your bank is not able to add a secondary email to your account, please contact us as soon as possible.
- ❖ If you're using *Zelle* through your bank or credit union's mobile app or online banking, please check their support FAQs or contact their customer support team for help in registering.

PREPARING TO GO ABROAD

Budgeting

It is always a good idea to research and understand your finances and budget prior to studying/interning abroad. We are happy to provide you with additional resources on how to get the most out of your finances while abroad in our new Pre-departure video series. Please check out these budgeting resource videos below:

- Budgeting Abroad – [Preparing to Go Abroad](#)
- Budgeting Abroad – [Tips for Abroad](#)

Additional Budgeting Resources

- ❖ [Budgeting Worksheet](#)
- ❖ Online/application budgeting resources
 - [Mint](#)
 - [YNAB \(You Need a Budget\)](#)
- ❖ Currency conversion
 - [Oanda](#)
 - [XE](#)
- ❖ Websites can help you compare the cost of items like food, apartment rentals, clothing, water, and other incidentals. Some of the more useful websites include:
 - [Expatisan.com](#)
 - [Numbeo.com](#)
 - [Databank.worldbank.org](#)

Cultural Adjustment and Culture Shock

Integrating yourself into a culture requires active participation. More than likely, you chose a location abroad because it interested you more than any other. Get excited about exploring all these things that you think are going to interest you and use them as ways to adjust to your host culture.

To further help you in your adjustment to your new host culture and dealing with culture shock, we are providing additional resources as part of our Pre-departure video series. Please check-out our Adjustment and Culture Shock videos below:

- Cultural Adjustment and Culture Shock – [Cultural Adjustment](#)
- Cultural Adjustment and Culture Shock – [Stages of Culture Shock](#)
- Cultural Adjustment and Culture Shock – [Adjustment and Coping to Culture Shock Tips](#)

Stress Abroad

Multiple things can trigger stress and may occur when you least expect it. Everyone deals with stress in their own way, but following the tips below may alleviate some stress during your time overseas:

- **Make a To Do List:** Being able to visualize what you need to accomplish will keep you organized and on track to succeed.
- **Be Present and Realistic:** Your primary responsibility while overseas is language acquisition. Keep in mind you will not be able to see every museum, try every restaurant, or visit every town. While we encourage you to learn as much as possible about the local culture, we also want you to be realistic about the time you have outside of your classes or internship.

- **Learn to Budget:** Financial stress is common when living overseas and is something you may also face. When in doubt, ask yourself, “Is it worth it?” With a little research, you may find activities or deals that are cheaper (or even free with your student ID!).
- **Reach Out:** Do not hesitate to contact your program provider, host/home university advisor, or your Gilman advisor if you are dealing with an issue that you don’t know how to address. Friends, colleagues, and your host family are also good resources when dealing with stress.
- **Maintain your regular habits:** Some stress relievers include maintaining habits that keep you relaxed such as exercising, keeping up with hobbies that you enjoy, or eating foods that make you happy (like peanut butter!), or making time to chat with your best friend from home.

As with culture shock, please make sure to reach out to your host program, home school, and/or Gilman Advisor if you are feeling deeply stressed abroad or struggling to cope. We are here to help! You also have access to up to five free counseling sessions with a licensed counsellor through International SOS (see information below).

Communicating Across Cultures

Depending on where you are studying/interning abroad, you may experience a culture very different from your own when trying to communicate with locals.

High Context Cultures

The Middle East, Africa, and Latin America are considered high context cultures due to tendencies to leaving many things unsaid and letting the culture explain. Words and word choice become very important in communication because few words can communicate a complex message.

- Characteristics: Relational, collectivistic, intuitive, and contemplative
- Communication style: Indirect, flowery language, humility, read between the lines and non-verbal
- Work Style/Ethic: Team- and relationship- oriented
- Friendships: Fewer, tighter, and more long-term
- Time: Time is open and flexible. Process is more important than product

Low Context Cultures

North America, most of Western Europe, and Australia/New Zealand are considered low context cultures where communicators tend to be much more explicit and the value of a single word is much less important.

- Characteristics: Logical, linear, individualistic, action-oriented
- Communication style: Direct, straight-forward, concise, explicit, clear, and simple. Focus on verbal, not on body language
- Work Style/Ethic: Task-oriented, individualistic
- Friendships: Many, looser, and short-term. Tasks are more important than relationships
- Time: Time is highly organized. Product is more important than process.

Making the Most of Your Experience

Behaviors

Before you go, you should take time to mentally prepare for your program in order to make this opportunity an enriching cultural and language exchange. Keep an open mind, be respectful of differences, and above all be adaptable.

Once you arrive at your destination, you should adopt a few behaviors to get the most out of your experience:

- Make an effort to befriend the local people, instead of only hanging out with other students/interns from your program. Ask local people where they go for entertainment and join them.
- Try to engage a wide variety of people. Ask questions and listen. It is always helpful to remind yourself that you have your own cultural biases that may be clouding your understanding of a comment or situation. Find a

cultural informant who is someone you can ask about conversations and situations that you experience. This can be staff at your program, local people you live with, and/or friends you make during your time abroad.

- Avoid intense debates, especially when it concerns delicate topics such as religion and politics. One careless word is all it takes to accidentally offend the very ones you are there to learn from.

Being a good cultural ambassador

While you are abroad, you are an ambassador representing the United States, the Gilman Program, and your home institution. It is important to be respectful at all times. Your actions, both positive and negative, are likely to have long-term repercussions for future participants of your program.

Be a good student or intern. After all, you are studying or interning abroad! As a student, you should attend all classes, do your homework carefully and diligently, and show respect to your professors and fellow students. As an intern, you should arrive early for your assigned hours, do your tasks carefully and diligently, and show respect to your supervisor and co-workers.

Avoid expressing negative opinions or generalizations about the host country. Such statements usually serve only to reveal the ignorance of the speaker. Remember that you are a guest in someone's home, school/workplace, and country. Be respectful and courteous!

For more information about being a good representative of the U.S. while abroad, refer to the Glimpse Foundation's guide on [American Identity Abroad](#).

Personal Goal Setting

To truly reap the rewards of your abroad experience, you should set personal, professional, and academic goals before your departure. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Personal Goals

- What personal skills do you hope to gain from this experience? Greater sense of independence? More self-confidence? How can you achieve personal growth goals while abroad?
- How will you reflect on your own progress, and how will you push yourself further?
- What can you do to integrate more deeply into the local culture?

Academic Goals

- What are your language skills and goals for language acquisition abroad? What are some methods to ensure that you are practicing the target language as much as possible?
- What are you hoping to learn about the host culture that will inform your current academic major or focus?

Professional Goals

- What professional skills are you hoping to gain?
- Do you have any specific professional networking goals? How can you make sure to take full advantage of networking opportunities abroad?

Identity Abroad

Everyone comes to the abroad experience with a range of identities, from how you identify racially or ethnically, to your sexuality or gender identity, to your religion or lack thereof. It is important to take time to consider how your identity or identities may influence your experience abroad either through your own perception or how others may perceive you. We encourage you to research your host country through the lens of the various identities that you carry with you. If you are studying or interning abroad on a formal program, they should be able to connect you with program alumni. Your home school may have a list of alumni who studied or interned in your host country.

Please find below a list of useful webpages to help you navigate your identity or identities and the abroad experience. If you have specific concerns about your identity or identities and your host country, you should discuss

them openly with your host program, home school, and Gilman Advisor to determine the best method to prepare yourself for your time abroad.

- [Navigating Identity and Diversity Abroad \(IES Abroad\)](#)
- [Diversity Guide to Study Abroad \(Diversity Abroad\)](#)
- [Preparing for Life Abroad \(Indiana University\)](#)
- [Diversity Issues in Study Abroad \(Brown University\)](#)

“Will I Lose My Own Culture?”

Sometimes students worry about “losing their culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Don’t worry: it is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for and understanding of your own culture. Don’t resist the opportunity to become bicultural, which is the ability to function competently in two cultural environments.

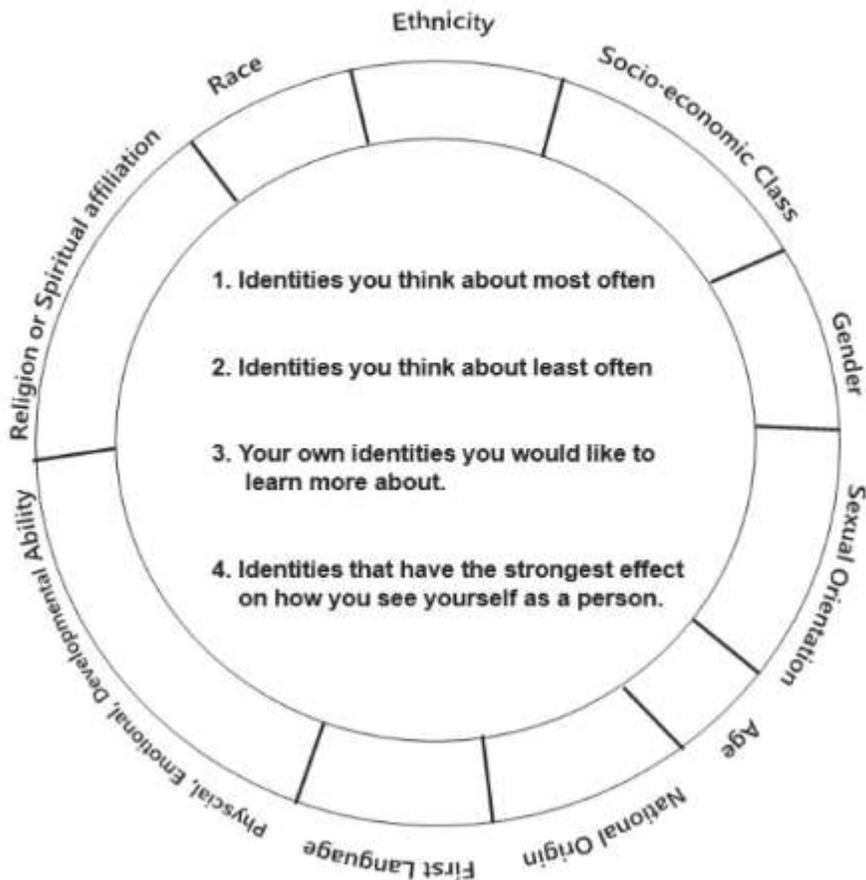
Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, so can an accumulation of small successes lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies/work and social life and to relax and fully enjoy the experience. And you will recover your sense of humor!

PRE-DEPARTURE ACTIVITY: SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL

Please use the Social Identity Wheel below to identify and reflect on the various ways you identify socially, how those identities become visible or more keenly felt at different times, and how those identities impact the ways others perceive or treat you. This should help you to further reflect on how those identities impact the ways others perceive you while overseas.

Social Identity Wheel

(Adapted from "Voices of Discovery", Intergroup Relations Center, Arizona State University)



OVERSEAS EVENTS TIPS AND ETIQUETTE

As a Gilman Scholar abroad, you might be contacted by U.S. embassies, Consulates, EducationUSA advising centers, or Fulbright Commissions about opportunities while you are abroad and we encourage to attend! This is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people in your host country and build your professional network. Please respond to these invitations even if you are not able to participate.

HEALTH & SAFETY ABROAD

General Tips

If you encounter a situation that affects your personal health and safety, please keep in mind the following:

- ✓ Communicate with your study/intern abroad program or host institution/organization. Know what resources are available to you. Ask them how to contact emergency services and police in your host country (e.g. find out the equivalent of "9-1-1").
- ✓ Communicate with your home institution. Know what campus services may be available to support you while you are abroad or when you return to the U.S.

- ✓ Review the information provided by the U.S. Department of State:
 - [U.S. Department of State USA Study Abroad](#)
 - [Students Abroad](#)
 - [International Travel](#)
 - [Travel Advisories](#)
 - [Links to U.S. Embassies Abroad](#)
 - [Emergencies Abroad](#)
 - [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)
- ✓ Connect with [International SOS](#) (see below).
- ✓ Respond immediately to all communications from International SOS and/or the Gilman Program if there is a natural disaster or threat to your security in your host country.
- ✓ Make copies of all your travel documents and your itinerary. Leave one copy with family/friends at home and store the other copy in a safe place, separate from the originals. This ensures you will have access to at least one copy of your documents if the originals are lost or stolen.
- ✓ Remember you are subject to local laws while abroad so being aware of what is legal and what is not legal in your country of study/intern is important, so you comply with all local laws.
- ✓ Always carry your international health insurance card and understand what your provider will/will not cover and the procedure for making a claim. As a reminder, all Gilman scholars are required to obtain international health insurance for the duration of their program abroad.
- ✓ Be sure to pack enough prescription medications (as applicable) for your entire trip, carry the medications in original labeled containers, and have a letter from your doctor in case your country of study/intern has restrictions on bringing in medication without proper medical documentation.
- ✓ Refer to the [Center for Disease Control](#) to determine if any vaccinations are required in your country of study/intern.
- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings and your belongings at all times. Don't carry large amounts of cash or have all your money/documents in one location.

International SOS

To keep you safe and healthy while you are travelling on your program abroad, the Gilman Program has partnered with International SOS, the world's leading medical and travel security services company. Please review our [Safety and Health Support](#) webpage for more details on International SOS and Gilman.

General Steps

- Review the [overview of services](#)
 - ✓ More detailed instructions on how the Gilman Program works with International SOS and how to create your MyTrip profile can be found on this [webinar](#) (or [corresponding slides](#)).
- Log-in to the Gilman portal to find your Gilman membership ID and email from the Gilman program.

- Create your one-time MyTrip profile through the dedicated [Gilman program URL](#).
- Once your MyTrip profile is set up, forward your flight booking(s) to: ExchangeTravel@itinerary.internationalsos.com
- Download the International SOS App!
 - ✓ One-click dialing to the closest International SOS Assistance Center
 - ✓ Mobile-friendly medical and travel security information
 - ✓ The latest medical and travel security alerts
 - ✓ Favorite country content for navigation to your most used information

STAYING CONNECTED WITH THE GILMAN PROGRAM

Social Media

- ❖ Join the [Gilman Scholars and Alumni Facebook Group](#)
- ❖ Join the Gilman Alumni [LinkedIn](#) Group
- ❖ Follow Gilman's [Instagram](#) @gilmanscholarship
 - Tag your photos with #GilmanScholarship
 - Also follow Gilman's [IGTV](#)!
- ❖ Follow our tweets on [Twitter](#) @Gilman Program
- ❖ Join our [Pinterest](#) page
- ❖ Watch [YouTube](#)

Photo Submissions to Gilman

We love to see what amazing travels and experiences you are having during your time abroad and you do not have to wait until the mid-point check-in to send us this information. Please review our [photo submission guidelines](#) and send us your best pictures!

GILMAN PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD

Alternate Follow-On Service Opportunities

We will be offering several opportunities for you to apply for an alternative service project that, **if selected and successfully completed**, would waive your original Follow-on service project proposal. However, you will be still be required to complete the Follow-On Report Survey on this alternate experience instead of your original project in order to complete your Gilman Scholarship post-program requirements. You are welcome to follow through on your original project as well.

[Reach the World Traveler](#) - The Gilman Scholarship Program and Reach the World (RTW), a global education non-profit based in New York City, have partnered to offer a select group of candidates the opportunity to share their journeys online through written posts, photos and video connection with K-12 students in the U.S. Since 2009, more than 700 Gilman Scholars have volunteered with RTW!

Want to see what a Gilman Scholar's journey with Reach the World looks like? [Gerard Avelino](#) was matched with a 2nd-grade classroom in Woodbury, CT during the Fall 2018 cycle.

[Gilman Global Experience Blog](#) is an exciting opportunity for you to showcase your talents with multimedia and share your study/intern abroad experience with a wide audience. We select two video correspondents to represent the program through online video and written content, along with three writing correspondents to represent the program through insightful writing from their experiences abroad.

[Gilman Instagram Takeover](#) is an exciting opportunity for you to share your photography and experiences studying/interning abroad with a wide audience. We select three current Gilman Scholars per academic term to represent the program through insightful photographs and captions for five consecutive days on the Gilman Scholarship Instagram account.

NOTE: You cannot serve as both a Reach the World Traveler AND a Gilman Global Experience Blogger AND/OR Instagram Takeover. We suggest you review both opportunities and encourage you to apply to the program that fits you best. You are more than welcome to apply to both if both interest you.

ALUMNI BENEFITS AND RESOURCES

Upon successful completion of your study/intern abroad program and Follow-on service project, you receive great benefits as a Gilman Scholarship Alum! For more details on the following benefits, please see our [alumni benefits](#) webpage.

[Non-competitive Eligibility \(NCE\) for Federal Employment](#)

Alumni of the Gilman program are eligible for 12 months of non-competitive eligibility (NCE) hiring status with the federal government, with the possibility of extending for up to an additional two years if you served in the military, studied at a recognized institution of higher education or were involved in another activity, which in the agency's view, warrants an extension.

[Webinars](#)

The Gilman Program hosts webinars throughout the year for alumni to discuss various opportunities and careers. We encourage you to watch past webinars (see links below) and sign up for the alumni newsletter to learn about upcoming webinars.

[Networking Opportunities](#)

Find networking opportunities available only to Gilman alumni

- [International Exchange Alumni](#)
- [Gilman Scholars and Alumni Facebook Group](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Networking: Build Something that Will Last](#)
- [Presenting Yourself Online](#)

[Graduate School Opportunities](#)

- [Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey](#)
- [Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies \(HNC\)](#)

- [Thunderbird School of Global Management](#)

Gilman Alumni Ambassadors

Gilman Alumni Ambassadors serve as official representatives of the U.S. Department of State's Gilman International Scholarship Program. They provide testimonials about their Gilman Scholarship experiences at campus presentations and offer application tips via written articles, videos, webinars, and special events. The Gilman Alumni Ambassadors have been trained by the Gilman Scholarship Program.

To be eligible, you must have returned to the United States and have completed your Follow-on Service Project. [Subscribe](#) to our newsletter to see when the next application begins!

CONTACTING GILMAN

Contact the Gilman Program if you have questions or concerns during your program. Please note our office hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Eastern Time and we are closed on Federal Holidays. You can contact us via phone or email as indicated below:

- 1-800-852-2141, extension 3
- Programs in:
 - Middle East/North Africa GilmanAfricaMENA@iie.org
 - Latin America, the Caribbean & North America GilmanWH@iie.org
 - East Asia and the Pacific GilmanEAsiaPacific@iie.org
 - Europe and Eurasia GilmanEurope@iie.org
 - South and Central Asia GilmanSCAsia@iie.org