

Call for Applications

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
Mexico 2023-2024

Application Deadline: March 10, 2023

Introduction

The International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program (IAEFP) is recruiting fellows from the U.S. to promote agriculture among youth in Puebla, Mexico. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by the [University of Missouri](#) and the educational leader UPAEP in Puebla.

The fellowship will support and train eight fellows to be based in a high school for an academic year to promote agriculture and leadership among the students and community.

The IAEFP seeks individuals with a bachelor's degree in an agriculture-related field to expand agricultural engagement with youth in Puebla, Mexico. The fellows will support hands-on education using 4-H Clubs and related project curricula that facilitate youth's learning and leadership in agriculture and the many skills necessary throughout food value chains. While fellows may lead some activities in the classroom, their focus is extracurricular activities.

IAEFP Fellows will bring their agricultural and youth development knowledge to a community and work with its youth. The fellows will have potential impact in a school community and its food security, as well as the career and leadership paths of young people and agricultural producers.

The fellows will also grow their own capacities and knowledge with the lessons they will learn in a different cultural, language, and natural environment, the many opportunities for exploration and learning in the IAEFP. The cohort of eight fellows will have the opportunity to grow strong friendships among the cohort and the program team, and will benefit from the growth potential from mentorship of a faculty member.

Beyond these benefits, the nine-month agricultural education immersion in Mexico will give fellows a distinct advantage for being hired to work as an extension specialist in the U.S., where cultural competence with diverse audiences, including Latino newcomers, is a growing necessity.

Location

The IAEFP Mexico fellowship is anticipated to be in Puebla City and nearby communities in the mountainous central Mexican states of Puebla and Tlaxcala. These are gorgeous areas just southeast of Mexico City, characterized as subtropical highlands with a breadth of diverse microclimates across altitude and geography. Puebla has large-scale horticultural production, medium-scale farms, as well as small-holder activities and eco-tourism. The state of Puebla currently boasts 6.5 million residents, and its capital city was founded in 1531. The state has

several industries including agriculture, manufacturing, education, textiles, and a growing food processing sector. While many parts of Mexico have safety issues, the states of Puebla and Tlaxcala have been relatively safe, and the implementing partners prioritize security for all involved.

Other IAEFP programs will be hosting fellows [in Ghana and Guatemala](#) this and next year.

Application Process

Timeline

For full consideration, potential fellows must complete the IAEFP Mexico online application prior to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 10, 2023. Contact Lindsey with any questions or concerns (CIP@Missouri.edu).

Online Application: https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eQL7qq4lfr9C41E

Applying online via our application is highly encouraged. If applying online poses a hardship, contact us (CIP@Missouri.edu) well before the closing date for an application packet. Reasonable accommodation can be provided to applicants with disabilities on a case-by-case basis.

Process

For an applicant package to be considered complete, the following documents are required to be submitted in the original online application (link above) or via email:

1. Online Application
2. Resume (no more than 2 pages)
3. Statement of Interest (1 page) - The statement of interest must describe your motivation and reasons for seeking this fellowship.
4. Three references (name and contact information), ideally at least one who can speak to your experience in 4-H/FFA or comparable organization.

Final candidates will be asked to submit a proof of citizenship and a college transcript with the field of study, school name, students name, and course work.

Selection

Applicants will be evaluated based on how well each person meets the required and preferred qualifications as evidenced by the education, experience, and training described in the resume, statement of interest, and application. Applications will be reviewed on March 11th to ensure that candidates meet the basic eligibility and qualification requirements and that required supporting documentation has been submitted.

Top candidates will be interviewed via Zoom by the Selection Committee, which will make selections by early April 2023. Selected fellows will participate in virtual training activities to help prepare for the fellowship scheduled to start on July 24, 2023. The fellowship will continue through May 2024, following the academic year of the Mexican high schools (preparatorias).

IAEFP Mexico Eligibility

Required Attributes

- Bachelor's Degree in agriculture-related field
- U.S. Citizen
- Nine-month commitment
- Spanish language skills
 - The program requires Spanish language skills that are at least “Limited Working Proficiency”¹ and prefer “Minimum Professional Proficiency” level or stronger.

Preferred Skills

- Leadership, motivation, and passion for agricultural development and education
- Have some experience (paid or volunteer) in agriculture: agricultural production, agri-business development, food safety, animal sciences, horticulture, environmental sciences, etc.
- Flexibility and resilience in international and multicultural exchanges
- Teaching experience
- Training in leading STEM/Learn by Doing
- Interest and experience in Positive Youth Development/Ag Education careers
- Experience building cultural competency
- Understanding of U.S. school-based agriculture and youth extension programs
- Able to provide hands-on experience in and outside of the classroom in various forms, such as extension
- Communication and writing skills
- Ability to work in cross-cultural teams

Fellowship Logistics - Benefits

The Fellowship includes the following benefits:

- Stipend to cover living expenses, similar to what in Mexico a recent college graduate earns,
- Housing is provided (separate from stipend),
- Round-trip airfare to Puebla from the U.S.,
- Extra stipend for December holiday break,
- Costs of visa, mandated vaccinations are covered,
- Pre-service, in-service, and post-service training and support from the University of Missouri to include:
 - Program orientation with FAS officials
 - Cohort pre-service virtual training sessions building on the AgriCorp model
 - Content and cultural competency training
 - Classes or tutoring to grow Spanish language proficiency
 - Training and support upon arrival in-country, and throughout the fellowship
 - One-on-one mentorship from subject matter expert during fellowship
 - Access to online academic resources from University of Missouri

¹**Limited Working Proficiency** - Someone at this level can handle basic work commands and social phrases. They can carry on limited casual conversations at the office and discuss their personal life. Someone at this level still needs help with more extensive conversations in the language.

Minimum Professional Proficiency - Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

From <https://careers.state.gov/faq-items/what-are-the-language-proficiency-definitions/>

USDA Information

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program in 2018 to provide fellowships to eligible U.S. citizens to assist developing countries in establishing school-based agricultural education and youth extension programs.

According to the [USDA IAEFP page](#), the program aims to:

- Develop globally minded United States agriculturists with experience living abroad;
- Help meet the food and fiber needs of the domestic population of eligible countries; and
- Strengthen and enhance trade linkages between eligible countries and the United States agricultural industry.

The IAEFP has made awards to host fellows in Ghana and Guatemala, led by Texas A&M, in Uganda led by Catholic Relief Services, and is now adding Mexico, through its partnership with the University of Missouri.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment. CAFNR International Programs is a partner with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Foreign Ag Service (FAS), and complies with University of Missouri and USDA non-discrimination statements. The USDA non-discrimination statement and related reporting/complaint processes are available on the [And Justice For All Poster](#) (pdf).

Who is the Ideal Fellow?

Our colleagues at [Texas A&M University](#) defined the ideal IAEFP fellows: “they are motivated individuals with an interest in the development of youth and international agriculture programs. Fellows will be a class of premiere individuals who strive to be leaders, coupled with a passion for agriculture. It is important that our Fellows know the task ahead of them is not an easy one, but the rewards, personal growth, and experience of this opportunity will play a major role in their lives’ future success.”

Any questions, concerns, potential interest needing more information, etc., can be directed to Lindsey at CIP@Missouri.edu. We look forward to discussing and finding fantastic candidates for this opportunity.