



PROFESSIONAL
FELLOWS



Great Lakes
COMMUNITY ACTION
PARTNERSHIP



GREAT LAKES CONSORTIUM
FOR INTERNATIONAL
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

GLC PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM “EMPOWERING CITIZEN-LED DEMOCRACY” SPRING 2025 ANNOUNCEMENT

*Applications Now Open for European Participation
in the GLC Professional Fellows Program for
Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia
& the United States of America*

Deadline to Apply: April 11th 2024

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



The **Great Lakes Consortium (GLC)'s Professional Fellows Program** is a two-way, expenses-paid international exchange program focused on governance and society for approximately 21 emerging mid-level leaders from Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. The 2025 fellowship program, titled "Empowering Citizen-led Democracy," will support grassroots active citizens to be strong advocates for citizen-led democracy in Eastern Europe. The fellowship program provides in-person, virtual and blended

professional development for community leaders to develop skills for community organizing, citizen engagement, community-led development and advocacy. European Fellows will build a global network of like-minded professionals and enhance leadership and professional skills. Professionals from non-governmental organizations (NGO's), community organizers, civil society and those from marginalized and rural communities are especially encouraged to apply.

European Fellows will share ideas, collaborate and build a global network of professionals dedicated to supporting civic participation and public activism in Eastern Europe and the United States. The fellowship is an expenses-paid trip to the U.S. of approximately 42 days that includes a four-week internship placement in a professional setting with individually tailored agendas and activities in public institutions, non-profit organizations, and advocacy groups. The onsite internships will be in diverse communities across the U.S., including urban, suburban, or rural communities, and fellows will be matched with placements based on program interest and goals. Before and after the onsite internship, the US trip includes peer-to-peer training, networking, and cultural activities in Chicago, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. In addition, the program will include pre- and post-program training opportunities and requirements over the course of 1.5 years.

Fellows will be in one Spring 2025 delegation.

The GLC Professional Fellows Program is funded by the **U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Global Leaders Division** and is organized by the Great Lakes Consortium (GLC), a program of **Great Lakes Community Action Partners (GLCAP)**, a non-profit organization based in Northwest Ohio. The program partners with CO-PLAN in Albania, Pro European Network Association (PEN) in Bulgaria, Civil College Foundation (CCF) in Hungary, CeRe in Romania, Center for Community Organizing (CKO) in Slovakia, and partners across the U.S. and Europe.

PROGRAM PHASES & EXPECTATIONS

Phase One: Fellowship Program Launch, Training & Departure Prep

Selected finalists and alternates must complete the minimum 20 hours of virtual and in-person trainings and coursework. The content will be focused on community organizing, leadership development, citizen-led democracy, and will include team building and networking opportunities. This training requirement will primarily be in the evenings and weekends and trainers will be from European and U.S. partners and experts on the topic areas.

The 20-hour virtual and in-person training and coursework prepares Fellows for their on-site four-week internship in the United States through goal setting and lessons and activities on key community organizing concepts. Topics may include the following:

- Community Organizing versus Social Services
- Elevator Pitch
- Community Organizing Cycle
- Governance and Civil Society
- Community Outreach
- Consensus-building and Issue-cutting

Spring 2025 delegations will undergo common training program, followed by additional program. Final dates for training sessions will be shared with selected finalists and alternatives approximately three months in advance, or as soon as possible. Final decisions on participation in either the Spring 2025 delegation of the U.S. fellowship program will be based on completion of and level of participation in Phase One's trainings and coursework.

In addition, in the several months prior to departure, selected European Fellows coordinate with GLC program staff and European Country Directors for the following:

- Travel logistics including visa processing
- Cultural orientation and expectations with GLC program staff and European Country Directors
- Matching to U.S. Mentors based on European Fellows' identified interest areas and program goals, meeting virtually with potential or confirmed U.S. Mentors at least once before departure, and providing input for U.S. Mentors as they develop the internship's professional agenda based on their priorities
- Pre-Departure Orientation and providing necessary information and documents

In most cases and when possible, European Fellows will be matched with at least one other European Fellow based on alignment of their interest areas and program goals.

Phase Two: 42-Day U.S. Fellowship Program

The second phase of the GLC Professional Fellows program is the 42-day fellowship in the United States. The U.S. fellowship program begins with European Fellows' arrival to the US together for peer-to-peer learning, networking, and cultural activities. The delegation will visit Columbus, Ohio or Detroit, Michigan before departing to their respective host communities across the U.S. for their four-week internship.

The internship is a 35-hours-per-week professional learning experience and supports social and cultural connections in the host community in the US. U.S. Mentors are asked to provide a first-day orientation to the host organizations' rules and culture, a weekly check-in meeting to support two-way communication and plan for the week ahead, and an exit interview before departure. In addition, the Fellows are also asked to do one volunteer service activity and one cultural presentation in their host community. Before the end of the internship, European Fellows will be asked to apply new ideas gained in the U.S. and in collaboration with their U.S. Mentor, develop an Individual Project Plan (IPP). The IPP is a one-page document that outlines a six-to-nine-month project to be implemented after returning to their home country.

After the internship placement, European Fellows will reconvene in Washington, D.C. for the final seven days of their 42-day fellowship program for additional peer-to-peer learning and activities with GLC program staff, networking and cultural activities, and a three-day conference hosted by the U.S. State Department, the Professional Fellows Congress. The Professional Fellows Congress will include Professional Fellows from around the world for

peer networking and will include opportunities to meet government leaders and program alumni.

During their internship, European Fellows will stay with U.S. host families. In common activities before and after the internship (Columbus, Detroit, Washington, D.C.) fellows will be accommodated in double occupancy hotel rooms with one other Fellow from the delegation.

Specific dates for the Spring 2025 delegation are currently proposed for April 2 to May 9, 2025.

Phase Three: Individual Projects & U.S. Mentors Visits

The third phase will begin with participants returning to their home country, where they will begin working on implementation of their Individual Project Plans. Participants will be required to share their new experiences with their community members and cooperate closely with GLC partners in their country.

As part of the exchange, U.S. Mentors who worked with European Fellows in the U.S. will travel to Europe for up to two weeks and spend approximately one week with each European Fellow in their home country. During this time, U.S. Mentors will participate in seminars, workshops, visit civil society organizations including European Fellows' employer or volunteer organizations, and provide mentoring and coaching. In partnership with the GLC European Country Director in their home country, European Fellows are expected to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of the U.S. Mentors program to their home country. European Fellows are expected to share their U.S. fellowship experience in these events and activities, and to support outreach and recruitment to their networks to ensure their home community benefits from the U.S.

Mentor's events and activities. European Fellows are also expected to support U.S. Mentors' travel logistics planning, cultural activities, and to share critical cultural information for their home country so that U.S. Mentors' have a successful and fulfilling travel experience.

Phase Four: GLC Professional Fellows Program Evaluation & Wrap-Up

European Fellows will provide regular updates to GLC European Country Directors as well as GLC program staff on how innovative learnings and ideas from the GLC Professional Fellows Program were implemented in their organizations and home country communities, and what impact the program made. Alumni success stories will be published in the months following the wrap-up of the program and each European Fellow is expected to contribute to the document with a success story within six-to-nine months after their return.

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Phase Five: GLC Alumni and PFP Alumni Network Participation Ongoing

All European Fellows and U.S. Mentors have access to the GLC Alumni Network of over 300 European Fellows and 130 U.S. Mentors to build global and cultural competency and networks with community organizing leaders in Europe and the U.S. 2025 European Fellows have access to the GLC Alumni Network as soon as they are selected as a finalist or alternate. Attendance at monthly and ongoing GLC Alumni Network events and activities counts towards pre-program training program hours in case finalists or alternates miss any scheduled training program hours. Attendance is encouraged.

The U.S. State Department also organizes the [International Exchange Alumni network](#). GLC PFP European Fellows are encouraged to participate in the alumni network's activities and potential funding opportunities with the U.S. State Department and local embassies.

Please note: Applicants and selected fellows must maintain regular email contact with GLC Staff and Country Directors during the entire course of the program.

QUALIFICATIONS & SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants Must:

- Be 25 to 40 years old at the time of application
- Have English proficiency
- Be a citizen, national or permanent resident of their home country (Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia)
- Live and work in their home country at the time of the application and during Phase One of the program (Fellowship Program Launch, Training & Departure Preparation)
- Have at least two years of professional experience at the time of the application
- Be able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa
- Submit a completed online application with required attachment by the application deadline
- Committed to returning to their home country after completion of the fellowship program

The GLC Professional Fellows program is in English. Applicants must have proficiency in spoken and written English at the time of the application and during program participation. It is recommended that applicants have at least a B2 proficiency level or better.

Participants will be selected through a competitive merit-based process. We would like to invite applicants between 25 to 40 years old who are creative and have new ideas, have accomplishments in solving issues, especially in marginalized or rural communities, and who can make a large impact by implementing innovative ideas and changes. Participants need to display evidence of good organizational management skills, be active members of their local community, and be interested in long-term international cooperation.

Applicants must have good communication and presentation skills along with computer and internet access and proficiency. Successful candidates should be emerging civil society leaders and professionals with volunteer experience or current employment related to the fellowship theme of governance, society, and citizen-led democracy. Selected participants will be

encouraged to develop connections between their countries, the U.S., other European countries, and within their own country.

All selected participants must be self-directed, able to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting, and have demonstrated leadership abilities. Applicants should be genuinely interested in developing an individual project of their own selection in their workplace or home community.

HOW TO APPLY

- **Step One:** Upcoming virtual Information Session via Zoom on March 25th from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Central European Time. The information session will provide program details, expectations, selection criteria, and give the opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions. **Attendance is highly encouraged.**
- **Step Two:** Please fill out the **Online Application Form, which you will receive access to once you express your interest.** Submit it by the deadline of April 11th 2024. Applications submitted late will not be considered.
 - The **Online Application Form** is a multi-section form that will automatically save your progress for up to 30 days if you sign in with a Google account. Otherwise, it will need to be completed in one go
 - The last part of the application form is an **Essay in English.**

Essay in English Directions:

In the essay, please tell us about why you are interested in the GLC Professional Fellowship Program, and how you are working with civil society and community organizations. Focus on your experience, interests and competencies. Please also describe if you are working with minority, marginalized and rural communities or if you belong to such. Note that we are more interested in your personal experience and competencies, rather than your organization, so please avoid detailing the history and activities of your organization (you can do that in other parts of the application form).

The essay should not be longer than 7000 characters (including spaces).

- **Step Four:** If you are notified that you are selected as a finalist or alternate, **we MUST receive a confirmation email or letter of acceptance from you within one week.** Please check your emails regularly during this time and check your spamfilters. If we do not hear from you, we may give the spot to another applicant.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DETAILS

Program Goals:

The goals of the 2025 GLC Professional Fellows Program are the following:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between mid-level emerging leaders from Europe and the United States
2. Provide opportunities for European and American emerging leaders to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies regarding pressing challenges
3. Enhance leadership and professional skills for European and American participants to encourage positive change in their workplaces and communities
4. Build a global network of like-minded professionals

Fellowship Expenses

All expenses of the U.S. program including visa, health insurance, transportation (including flights to the U.S. and in the U.S. to internship site and Washington, D.C.), accommodations (including home stays with U.S. families and hotels in double occupancy rooms), meals, and cultural programs will be provided. Fellows receive an allowance for meals, transportation and incidental expenses that is provided upon arrival in the United States by GLC program staff. This allowance will be provided via a U.S.-based debit card.

Participants need to have a passport that is valid for at least six months after the program completion in the U.S. Participants need to cover their own expenses incurred within their own country (travel for trainings and interview, visa, and overseas travel preparation from and to the Embassy and the airport, meals or accommodation while visiting the Embassy, pre-departure or after arrival). Selected participants (and alternates) are required to attend in-person, virtual, and blended program-related activities including pre-program training, pre-departure orientation session and meetings, and the interview at the U.S. Embassy in the European Fellow's home country.

Internship Locations & Host Family Accommodations

European Fellows are matched to U.S. Mentor and host organizations for their internships based on program interest and goals. These communities may be in urban, suburban, and rural communities, including in neighborhoods and communities that are racially and culturally diverse. Host families are expected to have one clean single bedroom per European Fellow, a shared bathroom, and shared kitchen. Please note that most European Fellows are not placed in large U.S. cities because of crises in affordable housing. In many U.S. communities outside of the largest U.S. cities, public transportation can be incredibly limited, so a transportation stipend is provided to accommodate the need to take taxis, Uber, and Lyft as needed. Many U.S. Mentors and host families will also assist with transportation as well.

Travel During and After the U.S. Fellowship

European Fellows are asked to travel minimally during the four-week internship placement and are asked not to host family and friends during the whole fellowship program. Any travel during the internship placement and with host families is conditional on several factors: European Fellows must work around their U.S. Mentors' schedule, must communicate to and get approval from both the U.S. Mentor and host family, and must provide contact information and travel details with their U.S. Mentor and host family in case of emergencies. European Fellows travel during the internship placement at their own risk and are asked to be as safe as possible to minimize disruptions to the U.S. fellowship program. European Fellows can travel unrestricted up to one month after the end of the U.S. fellowship program. Before departing to the U.S., European Fellows are required to share with GLC program staff a copy of travel insurance purchased for any travel after the U.S. fellowship ends and to provide contact information for a U.S. contact that can assist in case of emergencies.

GLC Diversity Statement & Notice of Bullying & Harassment Policy

The GLC Professional Fellows Program values diversity, equity, and inclusion of all diverse program participants and the diverse communities impacted and served by its program partners and alumni. GLC believes diversity includes but is not limited to race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, age, ethnicity, ability, physical and mental health status, sex, socioeconomic status, and national origin. All GLC Professional Fellows Program participants including European Fellows should reflect the values of inclusion and equity of diverse communities in their attitudes and behaviors with program participants and GLC partners and host communities in this program at all times.

Any bullying or harassment behavior will not be tolerated. Depending on the severity of any potential incident, GLC program staff may give one warning but reserve the right to remove participants who make program participation unsafe for any other individual.

Please note that we take sexual harassment seriously, as well as race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity-based harassment and what may be acceptable behavior in your local environment may not be in the U.S. In Phase One of the program, all European Fellows should attend the Pre-Departure Orientation with GLC program staff and European Country Directors for more information and review the U.S. State Department-issued guidance documents that will be shared by GLC program staff.

U.S. State Department Notice:

Any updates on program details and requirements are subject to change based on requirements of the U.S. State Department. GLC program staff and European Country Directors will communicate with program participants as soon as possible upon any changes to program details and requirements.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send any questions in English to both your home Country Director and GLC program staff Brianna Dennis at the contact information provided below:

Albania	Enkela Poro	enkela_poro@co-plan.org
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