



2026 FUTURE SPACE LEADERS GRANT PROGRAM

The Future Space Leaders Foundation (FSLF) is pleased to announce the 2026 Future Space Leaders Grant Program. Intended for U.S. graduate students and young professionals who are pursuing space- and satellite-related careers, the program will provide grants for participation in the 77th International Astronautical Congress (IAC) to be held in Antalya, Türkiye, October 5th to October 9, 2026.

In addition to attending the IAC, Grant Recipients will also be involved in supplementary career development activities in Antalya. These IAC-associated events include the Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop, the United Nations/International Astronautical Federation (IAF) Workshop and the Young Professionals Workshop. These additional activities will necessitate Grantees' presence in Antalya, Türkiye, beginning on September 30th.

U.S. graduate students and young professionals are encouraged to apply for a Grant from the FSLF. In addition to submitting an application to FSLF, applicants must apply through the IAF process and be accepted to present a paper in a technical or Interactive Presentation session at the 2026 IAC, and/or to serve as a panelist or back-up panelist for the IAC Next Generation Plenary. Successful competition for an FSLF Grant requires acceptance in at least one of these venues.

Eligibility

- Graduate students and young professionals between the ages of 21 and 35 on January 1, 2026, who are United States citizens or green card holders and are currently residing in the United States;
- Individuals interested in pursuing careers involving the development, application and use of space systems; space science research; policy, legal, social and cultural aspects of space activities; international cooperation on space programs; and other similar subjects;
- Individuals who wish to meet and interact with colleagues from around the world with similar interests in space and satellites;
- Individuals who hope to utilize the knowledge and experience they gain during the IAC to further their own careers and to enhance space and related activities.

Grant Program Awards

- Round-trip air fare between a city in the United States and Antalya;
- Support (in-kind services or funding) for lodging, meals and incidental expenses in Antalya;
- Registration for the 77th IAC and activities such as the Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop, the UN/IAF Workshop and the Young Professionals Workshop (Acceptance determined previously. Application is closed)
- Advice from an FSLF mentor on activities before and during the IAC to help Grant Recipients benefit fully from the Congress and related meetings

Here are the mandatory conferences the Fellows are expected to participate in

In Antalya, Türkiye:

- International Astronautical Congress
- Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop (full workshop) (grantees will be automatically enrolled)
- United Nations/IAF Workshop (part time to deconflict with the cross-cultural workshop) (grantee responsible for applying)
- Young Professionals Workshop (part time to deconflict with the cross-cultural workshop) (participants already selected, so this applies to grantees who have been accepted into the workshop).
- Space Generation Congress in Antalya is **optional** subject to your own application and SGAC approval process. We will finance your time in Antalya ahead of IAC to participate in SGC if you happen to be accepted at SGC. **Please apply to SGC independently.**

In Washington, DC in March of 2027:

- AAS Robert H. Goddard Memorial Symposium registration.
- Participation in the National Space Club Dinner at the Washington Hilton may be offered pending availability and funding.

FSLF Grant Application and information available at: futurespaceleaders.org

Application Deadline: May 15, 2026

Announcement: June 24, 2026

Future Space Leaders Foundation
5335 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 520
Washington, D.C. 20015



THE FUTURE SPACE LEADERS FOUNDATION 2026 FUTURE SPACE LEADERS FELLOWS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

- Please read the following guidelines carefully before beginning the application process -

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1 What is the FSLF 2026 Future Space Leaders Grant Program?

The Future Space Leaders Foundation (FSLF) seeks to encourage and facilitate young people to pursue space- and satellite-related careers. To this end, the Foundation has established the Future Space Leaders Grant Program. Grant Recipients are competitively selected US graduate students and young professionals sponsored by the FSLF to participate in the annual International Astronautical Congress (IAC) alongside participants in the Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF). Applicants must be Graduate students and young professionals between the ages of 21 and 35 on January 1, 2026, who are United States citizens or green card holders and are currently residing in the United States.

The 2026 Grant Program will offer grants to participate in the 2026 IAC which will be held in Antalya, Türkiye, October 5 to 9, 2026. Grant Recipients are also expected to participate in all or portions of a variety of IAC-associated activities held the week prior to the Congress.

Here are the **mandatory** Associated Events that the Fellows are expected to participate in as noted:

In Antalya, Türkiye:

- International Astronautical Congress
- Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop (grantees will be automatically enrolled)
- United Nations/IAF Workshop (grantees responsible for applying)
- Young Professionals Workshop (Only if you applied the year before and were accepted)
- Space Generation Congress in Antalya is **optional** subject to your own application and SGAC approval process. We will finance your time in Antalya ahead of IAC to participate in SGC if you happen to be accepted at SGC. **Please apply to SGC independently.**

See Paragraph 3 on pages 5 and 6 for more information on these Associated Events.

In Washington, DC in March of 2026:

- AAS Robert H. Goddard Memorial Symposium.
- Participation in the National Space Club Dinner at the Washington Hilton may be offered pending availability and funding.

Other **optional opportunities**:

Optional conference of your choice, **pending budget approval**. A third funded conference may be offered pending funds but is not guaranteed.

Grant Recipients must have been selected to present a paper (orally at an IAC technical session or in an interactive poster session) and/or to participate as a panelist or back-up panelist in the IAC Next Generation Plenary. It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit abstracts and apply for these opportunities; it is also the responsibility of the applicant to notify the FSLF of acceptance.

To optimize their IAC experience, Grant Recipients will be provided advice from an FSLF mentor regarding the IAC. Participants will also receive invitations to participate in the activities of the IAC Student Program (organised by the IAF's International Space Education Board) and/or the IAF Young Professional Program as appropriate, both of which are conducted during the Congress.

Grant Recipients must report on post-IAC follow-up activities after returning home.

After the Congress, alumni Grant Recipients will be eligible to maintain participation in IAF student and young professional activities through the IAF website and related program.

2 Who can apply?

The 2026 FSLF Fellows Program is open to individuals who are:

- 21 to 35 years old on January 1, 2026.
- Graduate students currently attending an accredited university or young professionals currently employed in a space-or satellite-related field.
- United States citizens or green card holders and are currently residing in the United States.

In addition to submitting an application to FSLF, applicants must apply through the IAF process and be accepted to present a paper in a technical or interactive presentation session at the 2026 IAC, and/or to serve as a panelist or back-up panelist for the IAC Next Generation Plenary. Successful competition of an FSLF Grant requires acceptance in at least one of these venues.

3 How can I apply?

First, in order to be considered for the Grant program, the following materials must be submitted by the Grant applicant to the FSLF by May 15, 2026:

- A completed, signed application form that presents information about the candidate's personal background, education, and employment experience.
- An essay (1500 words or less) discussing the candidate's contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional to date, the candidate's perception of benefits that IAC attendance would bring, and the candidate's plans regarding post-IAC outreach to share the experience and the enthusiasm.

The application form and the essay should be submitted at futurespaceleaders.org. The deadline for submission of the application form and essay to the FSLF is May 15, 2026.

Second, the Grant applicant must also arrange for:

- Two reference letters from university teachers, employers or other individuals who are familiar with the applicant.

Reference letters must be submitted directly by the authors to futurespaceleaders.org. The deadline for submission of the reference letters to the FSLF is May 15, 2026.

Third, Grant applicants must apply through the IAF process and be accepted to present a paper in a technical or interactive presentation session at the 2026 IAC, and/or to serve as a panelist or back-up panelist for the IAC Next Generation Plenary. Such participation is a requirement for receiving this Grant. It is expected that Grant applicants will be notified about their paper at IAC by May 1, 2026. Applicants must notify FSLF directly that their paper has been accepted for an IAC technical/poster session or that they have been accepted as a panelist or back-up panelist for the IAC Next Generation Plenary so that their participation can be factored into consideration of their FSLF Grant application.

Grant applicants should forward notification regarding IAC participation to contact@futurespaceleaders.org; the Subject line of the email message should read "IAC Participation for [name of applicant]." This information should be forwarded to the FSLF as soon as received.

4 How is the selection made?

The selection of Grant Recipients will be made based on the following point system. The maximum score an applicant can achieve is 150 points.

1. Application Form: (0-15 points)**2. Essay: (0-60 points)**

Applicants must provide an essay that conveys why they are a Future Space Leader and why they should attend the 75th IAC. The essay will be scored as follows:

- Their contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional to date – 0 to 15 points
- Their knowledge base, unique interests in space, involvement with the space community and activities in support of space to date – 0 to 15 points
- Their ideas for providing future leadership in the space community and any other topics that show their passion for space – 0 to 15 points
- What they expect to gain from attending the IAC and their plans for sharing this experience with others upon returning home – 0 to 15 points

3. Participation in IAC Technical Sessions and/or in the IAC Next Generation Plenary (0-30 points)

As noted above, in order to be eligible for a Grant, an applicant's abstract must be selected for inclusion in an IAC technical/ interactive presentation session and/or the applicant must be selected as a panelist or back-up panelist in the IAC Next Generation Plenary. It is the responsibility of the applicant to apply directly to the IAF for these opportunities and also to notify the FSLF as soon as they are notified of acceptance.

- Abstract has been accepted and included in an IAC technical session as oral presentation – 15 points
- Abstract has been accepted and included in an IAC technical as interactive presentation session – 15points
- Abstract has been rejected and participant is not selected to participate in Plenary session – Disqualification (unless selected as panelist or back-up panelist in Next Generation Plenary)
- Participant has been selected to participate in Next Generation Plenary – 15 points
- Participant has been selected as a back-up participant in Next Generation Plenary – 5 points
- Participant has not been selected to participate in Next Generation Plenary and doesn't have an abstract that is accepted – Disqualification (unless abstract has been accepted as described above)

4. Prior Attendance at the International Astronautical Congress (0- 5 points)

- Applicant has never attended the IAC – 5 points
- Applicant has previously attended the IAC – 0 points

5. Reference Letters (0-30 points)**5 Notification of Grant Recipients**

Grant Recipients will be notified via email no later than June 24, 2026.

6 Responsibilities of Grant Recipients**1. Confirmation of Attendance**

After notification of selection, Grant Recipients must confirm their acceptance by June 30, 2026.

Important Note: Applicants are welcome to apply for other funding to attend the IAC alongside the FSLF Grant. However, upon receipt of funding from a third party source, it is the applicant's responsibility to inform the FSLF about the form of sponsorship (cash/flights/accommodation/etc.) and the amount of sponsorship received. The FSLF will, in such case, make adjustments to its Grant accordingly.

2. Logistics

Passports: Grant Recipients are responsible for possessing/obtaining a US passport that is valid for at least six months beyond their dates of travel.

Travel Arrangements: **In order to participate in the IAC and related events, Grant Recipients must arrive in Antalya, Türkiye, on September 30th, 2026, (if registered to SGC) or October 1st at the latest, and depart Antalya, Türkiye, on October 10th, 2026.** Grant Recipients must submit to the FSLF information regarding their proposed flights between the US and Antalya, Türkiye, USA, by July 19, 2026. These proposed flights must be ones at the lowest possible cost. If the proposed flights are acceptable, the FSLF will provide a go-ahead for booking the tickets. All costs associated with an extension of stay for personal or other reasons either before or after the IAC and related events are the responsibility of the Grant Recipient. Upon submission of receipts following the IAC, FSLF will reimburse for approved airfare.

Hotel Reservations and Other Expenses: Grant Recipients will coordinate with Executive Director to arrange for lodging. Independent lodging may be approved.

Registering for IAC and Related Events: Grant Recipients will register themselves for the following events:

- IAC 2026
- Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop
- UN/IAF Workshop (part-time due to deconflict with the cross-cultural workshop)
- Young Professionals Workshop (for those previously selected, part-time due to deconflict with the Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop)

Upon submission of receipts following the IAC, FSLF will reimburse for all registration fees for the above events.

Social Events and Technical Tours: FSLF will reimburse recipient for the cost of attending the Gala Dinner on October 3. Please register for it upon registration to the conference.

FSLF will reimburse grantees' travel, hotel, registration fees and other expenses up to \$4,000 USD.

A variety of other social events and technical tours are available at IAC 2026. Their costs are not part of the Grant Program, but Grant Recipients are free to participate on their own.

Grant Recipients may choose to acquire their own insurance covering health-related emergencies, medical expenses, emergency evacuation, and repatriation of remains, trip cancellation, or interruption. The FSLF will not be responsible for covering any such expenses incurred by Grant Recipients attending approved conferences or events.

3. Expected Attendance at IAC and Associated Events

Grant Recipients are expected to participate in all five days of the IAC, attend the Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop, and take part in all or portions of the UN/IAF Workshop, the Space Generation Congress and the Young Professional Workshop.

- IAC 2026: October 5-9, 2026

Participation in the IAC includes a variety of activities such as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Welcome Reception, plenary events, technical sessions, interactive presentation sessions, the Young Professionals Program, the Student Program, the Global Networking Forum, and the exhibition.

- Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop Sunday October 4th

The Workshop is designed for both native English and non-native English speakers and provides Grant Recipients and IAC Next Generation plenary speakers with the opportunity to rehearse and review their presentations. **This workshop is mandatory for all Grant Recipients. Grantees will be automatically enrolled.**

- UN/IAF Workshop: October 3-4

The UN/IAF Workshop and the 77th IAC provide a unique forum of discussion among space experts, policy and decision makers, and representatives from academic community and private industry. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences and to examine opportunities for better cooperation.

Grantees are responsible for registering. For additional information and registration, see:

<https://www.iafastro.org/events/un/iaf-workshop.html>

- YOUNG PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP: Grantees already selected by the IAF IPMC Leadership Development Programme can participate in pre-Young Professional Workshop activities and join the Young Professional Workshop on October 4th following the Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop.

The Workshop will gather a group of approximately 50 young delegates from IAF member organizations around the world to discuss topics associated with their professional space careers. The selection for this workshop was previously determined. This only applies to grantees already selected for this workshop. For additional information, see:

https://www.iafastro.org/assets/files/activities/ipmc/EXTENDED%20Call%20for%20delegates%20nominations%20IAC%20IPMC%20YP%20LDP%202026_2.pdf



**2026 FUTURE SPACE LEADERS GRANT PROGRAM
OF THE FUTURE SPACE LEADERS FOUNDATION (FSLF)**

APPLICATION FORM

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name	
Last Name	
Gender Identity	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Not disclosed
Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)	
City and Country of birth	
Citizenship	
Street Address	
City and State	
Zip Code	
Country	
Email	
Phone number	
Please specify whether you are: <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student <input type="checkbox"/> Young Professional	

Please check the following boxes where applicable:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have previously attended an International Astronautical Congress (IAC). If so, which year and city?
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have applied for financial support from another organization to participate in this year's IAC. If so, please provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have received funding from the IAF Youth Grant Programme, the Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme, the FSLF Grant Program or another sponsor to attend the IAC in previous years. If so, please provide details.

2. EDUCATION

Name & Address of School/University	Degree/Diploma	Graduation Date Month Year

Skills and Qualifications: Indicate Licenses, Skills, Training, Awards

3. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Present Or Last Position:

Employer/Company	
Street Address	
City and State	
Zip Code	
Country	
Supervisor's Name	
Supervisor's Phone Number	
Supervisor's Email	
Supervisor's Position/Title	
Your Employment Dates	From To
Responsibilities	

Previous employments:

Dates: From/To	Employer/Company	Position

4. ESSAY

An essay is required as part of each Future Space Leaders Grant Program application. This essay -- up to, but no more than, 1500 words in length -- should enable reviewers of your application to understand why you are a Future Space Leader and why you should attend the 77th IAC. The essay should discuss your contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional. The essay can also cover your unique interests in space, your involvement with the space community, your activities to date in support of space activities, your plans and ideas for providing future leadership or any other topics that you believe will show your passion for space. Your essay should indicate your perception of the benefits that IAC attendance might bring to you, including relevance to your career. It also should include your plans regarding post-IAC presentations and outreach activities, including use of social media, to share your experience and your enthusiasm.

5. PARTICIPATION: PRESENTER AT IAC SESSION OR PANELIST IN NEXT GENERATION PLENARY

As part of the 2026 Future Space Leaders Program, you must (1) present a paper in a technical or interactive presentation session at the 2026 IAC, and/or (2) be selected as a panelist or back-up panelist for the IAC Next Generation Plenary.

The IAC paper may be presented orally in one of the technical sessions, or it may be presented in an interactive presentation session. At this point in time, please provide information about your planned session,.

Symposium:

Session:

Title:

Please upload a 400 word abstract along with this application.

Please check this box if you have submitted an application to participate as a panelist at the Next Generation Plenary.

You must notify FSLF directly that your abstract has been accepted for an IAC technical/interactive presentation session or that you have been accepted as a panelist or back-up panelist for the IAC Next Generation Plenary so that your IAC participation can be factored into consideration of your FSLF Grant application. Please forward your notification to contact@futurespaceleaders.org; the Subject line of the email message should read "IAC Participation for [name of applicant]."

6. REFERENCE LETTERS

Two letters of reference are required as part of each Future Space Leaders Grant Program application. These letters should be written by university teachers, employers or other individuals who are familiar with you.

It is your responsibility to contact potential authors of reference letters and to ensure that their letters are submitted to the Future Space Leaders Foundation (FSLF) no later than the application deadline of May 15, 2026. Each reference letter must be written on official letterhead of the author's organization and signed by the author. Reference letters must be submitted directly by the authors futurespaceleaders.org.

7. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

Please fill out this form, sign, date and submit at futurespaceleaders.org. The required essay should be written separately and submitted along with this form. The deadline for submission of the application is May 15, 2026.

8. APPLICANT'S DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

I certify that the information I have provided on this form and in any related material is true and complete and that I will notify FSLF promptly if there is any change in any aspect of this application.

I acknowledge and accept the following conditions associated with receiving this Grant:

I will confirm my acceptance of this Grant by June 30, 2026.

I will arrive in Antalya, Türkiye, on September 30, 2026 (if attending SGC), October 1 otherwise, and depart on October 10, 2026, in order to participate in all five days of the IAC, attend the Cross-Cultural Presentation Workshop, and take part in portions of the UN/IAF Workshop and/or the Young Professional Workshop. I understand that any stay in Antalya, Türkiye, beyond these dates will be at my own expense.

I will provide a proposed low-cost flight itinerary to the FSLF no later than July 15, 2026.

I am responsible for possessing/obtaining a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond my dates of travel.

I may choose to acquire my own insurance covering health-related emergencies, medical expenses, emergency evacuation, and repatriation of remains, trip cancellation, or interruption. I agree not to hold the FSLF responsible for any emergency medical expenses or cancellation fees incurred when travelling to or attending approved conferences or events.

FSLF expense policy

Travel budget is to be sent ahead of time to Executive Director for pre-approval.

Post conference: Expense reports are to be received within 30 days of the end of any conferences.

Reimbursable expenses should be limited to expenses only pertaining to the actual events such as conference registrations fees, travel expenses, accommodation costs, and any meals not included in those served as part of the conferences. As an example, if there is any kind of breakfast served as part of the conference in the morning and a fellow chooses to eat breakfast somewhere else, then that is not reimbursable. Same goes for lunch or dinner.

International cell phone plans, OTC allergy medications, other OTC medications, insurance policies, reading materials while traveling are non-reimbursable personal expenses.

IAC Gala is covered, **please secure your spot upon IAC registration.**

(Applicant's signature)

(Date)