**Meridian’s Scholarship for Global Leaders of Digital Financial Inclusion**

As part of Meridian International Center’s [*Digital Finance Future*](http://www.meridian.org/digitalfinancefuture/) convening series, this scholarship will enable select individuals to further their learning and training in digital financial inclusion, and contribute to inclusive economic growth in their communities and countries.

Participants of *The Digital Finance Future* are highly encouraged to apply, in addition to members of Washington’s foreign diplomatic community, international organizations and the media. Financial inclusion practitioners, researchers and policymakers are also welcome to apply for the scholarship.

The scholarship will cover the cost of tuition and/or registration for one course or conference. Below is a sample of opportunities. Applicants may also propose other opportunities for consideration and indicate in the appropriate section of this application.

**Applications for the scholarship are due by Friday, July 14**. Meridian will select and notify recipients by the end of July. Scholarship recipients will be required to report back to Meridian within one month of participating in the course or conference selected. A full outline of eligibility criteria and reporting guidelines, as well as the application, immediately follow. **Please email your completed application to** **digitalfinance@meridian.org****.**

**Eligibility Criteria**

* Proficient in reading, writing, and speaking English;
* Demonstrated interest or professional experience in digital financial inclusion;

**Scholarship Opportunities**

***Courses + Trainings:***

* **The Digital Frontier Institute** – a not-for-profit that offers seven online courses on digital financial services in an effort to help define a distinct profession in financial inclusion and provide a platform for human capital development that ensures success of this new industry. A list of upcoming courses are available here: <https://digitalfrontiersinstitute.org/the-institute/courses/>
* **Boulder Institute’s Microfinance Training Program** – an in-person experience held at various locations around the world that brings together representatives from microfinance institutions, support organizations and government agencies to enhance their understanding of inclusive financial services and how to effectively serve the lower-income markets in their countries. Trainings range across topics of financial inclusion, rural financial services, and microfinance institution governance in heated markets, among others, with current opportunities listed here: <http://www.bouldermicrofinance.org/>
* **\*The Helix Institute of Digital Finance** – an organization that provides online and in-person training and data for digital financial service providers. Courses combine research with hands-on field visits and conversations with practitioners in order to equip participants to overcome operational barriers, obtain strategic clarity and develop tactics to tailor best practices to their local ecosystems. A preview of upcoming courses is listed here: <http://www.helix-institute.com/training-courses>
* **\*The Fletcher School Leadership Program in Financial Inclusion** – an innovative, online and in-person training initiative designed by Tufts Fletcher School's Institute for Business in the Global Context, specifically for banking regulators and policymakers from emerging and frontier markets to promote and further develop their work on policy and regulation in financial services for the poor. ***The next application period opens at the end of August for the class of 2018.*** <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/FinancialInclusion>
* **\*Harvard Kennedy School’s “Rethinking Financial Inclusion: Innovation for Policy and Practice”** – an executive program, based at Harvard’s campus in Boston, that combines an evidence-based approach to understanding the market for finance and client needs with theoretical insights on how to design financial products to meet those needs. The executive program convenes leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to provide a conceptual framework for policy and product design. ***The next program session is October 8–13, 2017. The deadline to apply is August 8, 2017.*** <https://exed.hks.harvard.edu/programs/rfi/overview.aspx>
* **\*Harvard Business School–Accion Program on Strategic Leadership in Inclusive Finance** – a six-day, in-person program that offers leaders from around the world an opportunity to connect with peers while engaging with Harvard Business School’s top thinkers in business strategy and management. The program addresses strategic issues arising out of the dual goals of economic and social value creation. ***The application period opens in August for the next program, which takes place March-April 2018*.** <http://www.centerforfinancialinclusion.org/collaborators-a-sponsors/harvard-business-school-accion>

***\*****You will need to submit an additional application directly through the institution. If the institution accepts you into their program, Meridian will provide the scholarship to cover the costs of the course.*

***Conferences***

* **Women’s World Banking’s “Making Finance Work for Women”** – ***October 24-25, 2017 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania***. The Summit will convene 300 participants in sessions addressing issues in women’s financial inclusion. Attendees will include leaders from the financial services, consumer products, and technology industries, investors, philanthropists and government, along with Women’s World Banking’s global footprint of 49 member institutions from 32 countries. <https://www.mfww2017.womensworldbanking.org/register1/>
* **The MasterCard Foundation Symposium on Financial Inclusion** – ***November 8-9, 2017 in Accra, Ghana***. SoFI2017 will bring together over 300 experts and practitioners in financial inclusion to catalyze the next generation of financial service providers to cultivate a more client-focused mindset in the design and delivery of financial services for poor people. <https://evolve.eventoptions.co.za/register/SoFi?t=f9960410-2869-11e7-be07-099e15326a4e>

**Reporting Guidelines**

Scholarship recipients must complete a two-page written report due within one month of participating in the selected course or conference. Writing a post for Meridian’s blog is also highly encouraged and may be considered substitutable for a report. In either form, scholarship recipients must be able to address the following:

* Describe your biggest takeaway related to financial inclusion learned specifically through your participation in the course or conference supported by Meridian’s scholarship.
* What were the immediate outcomes of your learning gained through the experience afforded by Meridian’s scholarship?
* What is the anticipated impact of your learning over the next 6 months to a year? How will you measure that impact?

**Applicant Information**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Professional Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Organizational Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Level of Education: *Please indicate highest level of degree earned and/or relevant certifications and the respective institutions (e.g. B.S. Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University)*

Contact Information:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if you:

* Are a grantee of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – *Yes or No?*
* Attended any session(s) of Meridian’s Digital Finance Future series; if so, please specify which one(s):

* Have already participated in any program(s) and/or training(s) on financial inclusion; if so, please specify which one(s):

**Essays**

Please describe a specific problem or need that you want to address by advancing your learning in digital financial inclusion. (200-300 words)

Which opportunities from the list above and/or discovered in your own research would you like to participate in through this scholarship? Please list in order of preference:

For each opportunity listed, please describe how that specific course or conference will enable you to better promote financial inclusion through digital services in your professional field, and in a particular country or region, if applicable. (300-400 words)