



# PRESS KIT

## Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative



YLAI empowers entrepreneurs to strengthen their capacity to launch and advance their entrepreneurial ideas and effectively contribute to social and economic development in their communities. In fall 2018, 250 YLAI Professional Fellows from Latin America and the Caribbean will expand their leadership and entrepreneurial experience through fellowships at businesses and organizations across the U.S. The Fellows will also participate in a Program Launch, an Entrepreneurship Institute, and a Closing Forum in Washington, D.C. Following the Program, Fellows can participate in extended alumni activities such as reverse exchanges and extended entrepreneurial education.

### Important dates and useful links

**Fellowship period:** Sept. 2018 – Oct. 2018

**Webpage:** <https://ylai.state.gov/fellowship/>

**Official Hashtag:** #YLAI2018

### Official YLAI Social Media

**@YLAINetwork**



**Flickr:** ylainetwork

**Medium:** <https://medium.com/ylainetwork>





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Meridian International Center

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## **Announcing the 2018 Finalists for the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLA) Professional Fellows Program**

**Washington, D.C.:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and its implementing partner, Meridian International Center, are proud to announce the finalists for the 2018 [Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative \(YLA\) Professional Fellows Program](#). This program will bring 250 business and social entrepreneurs from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States in September 2018 to collaborate with counterparts in businesses and organizations in 20 cities across the United States. Through this exchange program, Fellows will advance their entrepreneurial ventures and build leadership skills to effectively contribute to social and economic development in their communities. Up to 60 U.S. hosts will be able to visit their Fellows in-country to provide guidance on their action plans while expanding their own contacts and markets abroad.

The YLA Professional Fellows Program will begin on September 20 in Detroit, Michigan, followed by [four-week fellowships](#) throughout the United States. The program concludes with a Closing Forum in October in Washington, D.C. focused on leadership and skills development training. Fellows return to their ventures with new skills, resources, ongoing support from U.S. counterparts, and an improved network, strengthening business ties between the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The 2018 YLA Professional Fellows were selected through a competitive application process, which attracted 2,500 applications. These 250 business and social entrepreneurs represent 36 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and focus on topics including, but not limited to, agriculture, clean energy, consulting, e-commerce, education, entrepreneurship development and support, food and beverage, health care, hospitality, LGBTQI, marketing and branding, mobile applications, and women and youth empowerment. We invite you to read their profiles [here](#).

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State funded this program, which is implemented by Meridian International Center in partnership with [3 Day Startup](#) and community-based members and universities throughout the United States.

### **About the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)**

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us. Visit <https://eca.state.gov/> for more information.

For information on the YLA Professional Fellows Exchange Program, please visit <https://ylai.state.gov/>.

For press inquiries, please contact [ECA-Press@state.gov](mailto:ECA-Press@state.gov).

### **About Meridian International Center**

Meridian International Center is a premier nonprofit, global leadership organization headquartered in Washington, DC. Building on more than 55 years of experience, Meridian prepares U.S. and international leaders to meet global challenges and opportunities. Through various programs, Meridian delivers the approach and environment for leaders to understand global issues and cultures, exchange ideas, collaborate on solutions, and build valuable relationships.

For further information, please contact the Meridian program team at [YLA@meridian.org](mailto:YLA@meridian.org).



# in the News



## [State Department Sending Dallas Entrepreneurs Abroad to Share Business Expertise](#)

July 11, 2018

**Dallas Innovates**



## [Shift Collaborative selected by State Department to work on economic development in Brazil](#)

April 23, 2018

**NextPittsburgh**



## [Generation Us: Nicaraguan senior advocate makes most of time with JABA](#)

Nov. 30, 2017

**The Daily Progress**



## [Local businesses, nonprofits mentoring Latin American entrepreneurs](#)

Nov. 2, 2017

**Insider Louisville**



## [Building global ties with donuts and more](#)

Oct. 23, 2017

**Albuquerque Journal**



## [Latin American and Caribbean entrepreneurs complete Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative in Miami](#)

Nov. 10, 2016

**Miami Herald**