

James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program
2025-2026 Application Cycle

Applications must be received by January 15, 2025.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a global network of policy research centers. In a complex, changing, and increasingly contested world, the Carnegie Endowment generates strategic ideas and independent analysis, supports diplomacy, and trains the next generation of international scholar-practitioners to help countries and institutions take on the most difficult global problems and safeguard peace.

The James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is designed to provide a substantive work experience for students who have a serious career interest in the area of international affairs. Approximately 15 students will be hired to work as employees at Carnegie in Washington, DC on a full-time basis for 10-12 months.

ASSIGNMENTS: Gaither Junior Fellows provide research assistance to scholars working within Carnegie's programs, listed below. They have the opportunity to conduct research, contribute to op-eds, papers, reports, and books, edit documents, participate in meetings with high-level officials, contribute to congressional testimony and organize briefings attended by scholars, activists, journalists and government officials.

QUALIFICATIONS: Applicants must be nominated by an official of their university or institution who has been designated for this purpose (usually the career placement officer, fellowship advisor or an academic department chairperson). A listing of participating institutions and nominating official titles may be found at <http://carnegieendowment.org/about/jr-fellows>. Applications are accepted only from graduating college seniors or individuals who have graduated within the past academic year. No one will be considered who has started graduate studies (except those who have completed a joint bachelor's/master's degree program).

Applicants should have completed a significant amount of coursework related to their discipline of interest. Language and other skills may also be required for certain assignments. The selection process for the program is very competitive. Accordingly, applicants should be of high academic quality.

Qualifications for Gaither Junior Fellows may vary by program. Please review the bulletin for program requirements and more information on what each program is looking for.

APPLICATION PROCESS: All application materials must be received by the program **on or before Wednesday, January 15, 2025**. Colleges/universities generally set earlier deadlines internally. Applicants should consult their designated nominating official concerning nominations. Each nominating institution may nominate two students.

Finalists in the selection process will be interviewed by phone or videoconference in the spring. Selection decisions are generally made in mid-March and no later than March 31st. Students will not be notified of their status until the entire selection process has concluded. This includes students who are not selected for interview, as we occasionally get late requests from programs to schedule additional interviews.

DIVERSITY INITIATIVE: As an organization dedicated to pursuing global engagement and peace, we believe the work of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is enriched and should be informed by a diverse array of perspectives. We are committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community among staff and partners and on our public platform.

DURATION: All fellowships will begin on or about September 1, 2025 and last through June 30, 2026. Gaither Junior Fellows are hired for a period of 10-12 months. Some fellowships may extend through July 31, 2026 or August 31, 2026 by mutual agreement between the research program and the junior fellow.

SALARY AND HOUSING: The monthly salary is \$4,000, paid semi-monthly, subject to federal, state and local taxes. A generous benefits package is provided, including medical, dental and life insurance as well as vacation leave. Gaither Junior Fellows will be provided up to \$1,500.00 (grossed up for taxes) in relocation support but are otherwise responsible for their own housing arrangements.

All of the following must be **submitted** by the designated nominating official no later than January 15, 2025:

- Application information (see: Checklist)
- An essay (personal statement) of one page or less, double-spaced on why the student would like to become a junior fellow.
- Resume/C.V. (preferably 1-2 pages)
- Two letters of recommendations. These recommendations can come from anyone the student feels can best speak to their abilities as a potential Gaither Junior Fellow.
- Transcript of undergraduate records. The transcript may be unofficial. (We prefer unofficial)
- An essay of no more than three (3) typewritten, double-spaced pages on one of the following topics. These topics are intended to test skills in analysis, logic, and written expression. The essays should be analytical thought pieces, not research papers. Students should submit an essay related to their primary research program interests, although the James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program may ultimately select an applicant for a program outside of his/her designated primary interest or make an assignment to more than one program.
 - While candidates may indicate a second research program choice on the application, we strongly encourage candidates to tailor their application towards only their first choice.

Applicants must respond to the question pertaining to the program to which they are applying.

- A. Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program.** Choose any two countries in the world, from two different regions, including at least one from the Global South. Explain how political developments in those countries in the past five to ten years embody what you believe are some of the most important elements of the global democratic recession. Be sure to give some indication why you have chosen the countries you focus on.
- B. American Statecraft Program.** America's role in the world is changing, whether it likes it or not. What are the 3-5 most important factors that will shape the context in which America conducts its foreign policy in the next two decades?
- C. Nuclear Policy Program.** Which state without nuclear weapons do you believe is most likely to acquire them?
- D. Technology and International Affairs Program (Please respond to just ONE of the two following questions).** When you read or hear discussions about 'risks of AI' what questions do you have that you do not think are being answered well? **OR** What technology issue will have the greatest impact on international stability in the coming decade, and why?

- E. Middle East Program.** The Middle East region is going through a huge, agonizing and protracted transformation characterized by dwindling oil revenues, rising populations, failing governance structures and government services, rising extremism and sectarianism, and high youth unemployment. The current situation has enabled regional powers to intervene in each other's affairs as well as non-state actors such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State to emerge and spread new toxic ideologies. What do you see as one of the most difficult threats facing the region today and the underlying drivers of turmoil? Discuss the impact this has had on two countries in the region and strategies that will help move these countries toward a better future.
- F. International Security and Political Economy [to work with the International Security and South Asia Programs] (Please respond to just ONE of the two following questions).** Many scholars argue that the world is experiencing a worrying period of democratic backsliding, while skeptical voices suggest that backsliding concerns are overblown. With reference to existing data sources and democracy ratings, which position do you find more compelling and why? **OR** Should the United States end its ambiguity over defending Taiwan?
- G. Asia Program.** To what extent are states in Asia "forced to choose" between the US and China? Consider political, economic, security, and other factors to substantiate your analysis.
- H. Russia and Eurasia Program.** The U.S.-Russia relationship has plummeted to unprecedented post-Cold War lows amid the war in Ukraine. Can this downward trajectory be arrested? What are the key dangers in the current situation and how might the White House seek to prevent things from getting out of hand?
- I. Africa Program.** The African continent is critical to the future of the global economy in this century. Africa has the world's youngest and fastest growing population. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement now encompasses the world's largest free trade area, by number of participating countries (54 signatories compared to the European Union's 27). With the world's largest number of mobile money accounts, digital innovations are providing new solutions to some legacy challenges on the continent, around financial inclusion for instance. And Africa's abundant natural resources endowments, including minerals and metals as well as forests in the Congo basin, will be crucial to the global clean energy transition to combat climate change. Yet, the continent is increasingly becoming the epicenter of global poverty - with 33 of the 45 countries designated by the United Nations as "least developed" situated in Africa. Nearly two dozen countries are at risk of debt distress and around 600 million people lack access to affordable and reliable electricity. What domestic/or global factors will shape the specific role that African countries play in the global economy? Illustrate your points with examples from two African countries.
- J. Global Order and Institutions Program.** The UN Secretary-General has depicted the world as "gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction." What accounts for the failures of many multilateral institutions, and what—if anything—can be done to improve international cooperation in addressing major global challenges?
- K. Sustainability, Climate and Geopolitics Program.** Imagine it is the year 2040 and you are working for a major international organization. Your teenaged niece, who is about to begin studying for a bachelor's degree in Climate & Geopolitics, asks you to summarize how the climate crisis and the responses to it have transformed international affairs since you were a student. In the interest of time, she asks you to focus on 2-3 of the most important developments. What do you tell her?

- L. Europe Program (Please respond to just ONE of the two following questions).** Should Europeans attempt to build a “European Pillar” in NATO? What could this look like? **OR** What challenges do Europeans face when considering their response to China’s support for Russia in Ukraine?
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James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program

Each year, the James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace holds a rigorous national competition to select approximately 15 graduating seniors to serve as research assistants. They are matched with senior fellows to work on a variety of international affairs topics. Junior Fellows have the opportunity to conduct research for Carnegie publications, participate in meetings with high-level officials, contribute to congressional testimony and organize briefings attended by scholars, journalists and government officials.

James C. Gaither Junior Fellows spend 10-12 months (beginning September 1st) at Carnegie in Washington, DC. Positions are full-time and include a salary and benefits package. We encourage you to review our website (<http://carnegieendowment.org/>) for more information on each program/project listed below.

As an organization dedicated to pursuing global engagement and peace, we believe the Carnegie's work is enriched and should be informed by a diverse array of perspectives. We are committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community among staff and partners and on our public platform, and we encourage diverse candidates to apply.

2025-2026 Programs or Projects

Democracy, Conflict, and Governance

American Statecraft

Nuclear Policy

Technology and International Affairs – *Strong writing skills and research skills are essential.*

Middle East – *Strong reading fluency and the ability to perform academic as well as on-line research in Arabic essential. Strong background in Middle East politics and/or history is a huge plus.*

International Security and Political Economy [to work with the International Security and South Asia Programs] – *Quantitative data analysis and GIS skills are required. A strong mathematical background is a plus. An academic background in international relations theory or international political economy along with an interest in military issues is essential.*

Asia Program – *Mandarin Chinese language skills, particularly reading comprehension, are essential.*

Russia and Eurasia – *Excellent Russian and/or Ukrainian reading skills required.*

Africa Program

Global Order and Institutions

Sustainability, Climate and Geopolitics - *Data skills (such as helping create graphs or tables for Carnegie publications) are a plus. Applicants should have completed coursework related to sustainability and climate issues. A foreign language or regional expertise is a plus—the program seeks to bring an international perspective into US debates on climate change.*

Europe - *Fluency and the ability to perform research in a European language other than English are a plus. Background knowledge on European politics is essential.*

For information on how to apply, contact your Designated Nominating Official or visit <http://carnegieendowment.org/about/jr-fellows>.

Junior Fellows Checklist for Nominating Officials 2025-26

In order to submit an application for your nominated student, you will need the following documents on hand (Document Uploads page):

1. Resume
2. Personal Statement (1 page)
3. Substantive Essay (3 pages – ideally; sometimes exceed with a works cited page)
4. Two letters of recommendation (or recommender contact information)
5. Transcript (unofficial is fine)

And then the following information to enter via Embark:

1. Application Form Page
 - a. Student name, university, contact information (phone and email), address
 - b. Permanent address (optional)
2. Research Program Page
 - a. Program they are applying to (should match the substantive essay response)
 - i. Optional: Second Choice
 - b. Language proficiency – Your student can provide up to 5 languages, and they should rank themselves from basic to native/near native (other options are intermediate and advanced).
 - c. An open text box is provided in case your student provides any additional information.
 - d. Reading/writing is most important when it comes to language proficiency.
3. Availability for Interviews and Work Page
 - a. Work Permits. The program runs from September 1 to at least June 30 of each year. If you do not yet have employment authorization but expect to have authorization when the program starts, or if your eligibility to work in the United States is temporary and may expire during the program year, please explain briefly:
 - i. If students anticipate having work eligibility through a program (such as OPT, academic training, etc.), please have them list that information here.
 - b. Will you be studying, living or working abroad during the program interview period (typically Mid-February through early March)? If yes, please note the best way to reach you in case you are selected for interview:
 - i. This is most important for when we are contacting students to interview. If we see that you are abroad, we will contact first via email rather than by phone.
 - c. If selected for a fellowship position, would you be available to begin work on September 1st? Please explain:
 - i. What is really important here is if students are not available.
 - d. Graduation date (anticipated or previous)
 - e. Gender identity
 - i. Options: Male; Female; Non-binary or non-conforming; I prefer not to answer.
 - f. Race/ethnicity
 - i. Options: Asian; American Indian or Alaska Native; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latinx; Middle Eastern or North African; White or Caucasian; Two or more races; Other; I prefer not to answer.
4. Nominating Official Information Page
 - a. Please fill in your own information (or the information of the nominating official if this is being entered by an assistant or colleague)

We recommend collecting all this information up front and then submitting it in one go. Once you submit, you will be able to review the entire application. You can also make edits up through the application deadline (January 15, 2025). You can also reference prior applications (if you have submitted prior applications under your account).

We can send this document in soft copy (aka, Word) if helpful. Please just let us know.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the application information sent to participating universities?

The program generally sends information to participating universities in early October. Information is updated annually and essay topics change from year to year. Any important programmatic changes are also announced annually with the new application materials.

Is there guidance regarding the application components?

The application consists of applicant information (address, participating university, language skills, graduation date, etc.) along with five core components. A resume, a one-page personal statement, two letters of recommendation, a three-page substantive essay, and your transcript.

For the **resume**, we prefer that it be one-to-two pages, and it should reflect your research and writing experience as much as possible.

For the **personal statement**, the applicant should describe why they are applying to their particular research program and how being selected by the junior fellows program would fit into their career aspirations.

For the **substantive essay**, for your research program of choice, the applicant must respond to the prompt while demonstrating their skills as it relates to analysis, logic, and written assessment.

For the **transcript**, please note that an unofficial transcript is preferred, though an official transcript is also acceptable. If you have transferred, please make sure to either submit a transcript from your first institution also or make sure that the information is reflected by your current transcript.

For the **letters of recommendation**, these can be submitted by anyone whom the applicant wishes. We recommend that applicants choose recommenders who can speak directly to the applicant's ability to write and support research projects.

Does my school participate in the Gaither Junior Fellows Program?

Visit our [list of participating universities and programs](#).

How can I apply if my school is not a participating university?

You are encouraged to ask your fellowships advisor or career placement office to [contact us](#) to find out how your school may participate.

Must applicants be U.S. citizens?

It depends. You need not be a U.S. citizen if you attend a university located in the United States. However, all applicants must be eligible to work in the United States for 10-12 months from September 1 through at least June 30 following graduation. Students on F-1 visas who are eligible to work in the United States for the full year may apply for the program.

If you attend a participating school outside of the United States, you must be a U.S. citizen (due to work permit requirements).

Is Carnegie seeking candidates from traditionally underrepresented groups?

As an organization dedicated to pursuing global engagement and peace, we believe the work of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is enriched and should be informed by a diverse array of perspectives. We are committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community among staff and partners and on our public platform.

Am I eligible for the James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program?

Applicants must be graduating seniors or students who have graduated during the last academic year. Anyone who has started graduate studies is ineligible for consideration (except in cases where the student has completed a joint bachelor's/master's degree program). The program accepts applications only through participating universities via designated nominating officials.

How do I apply if I've already graduated?

If you graduated during the previous academic year and have not started graduate studies, you may apply through the university from which you graduated.

How do I obtain an application?

Applications, procedures and information are available through designated college/university nominating officials. Due to the nomination process and varying on-campus application procedures, students are unable to apply directly to our program.

Is the application available online?

Due to the nomination process, the application is only available online to nominating officials. Students may apply through designated school nominating officials, who are most familiar with the particular school's nomination process. Please visit our [list of nominating officials](#) on Carnegie's website for more information.

Can applications be submitted electronically?

All applications should be submitted electronically through Embark.

I cannot obtain an official transcript by the deadline. What should I do?

The program accepts unofficial transcripts.

Who is my university's nominating official?

In many cases, information is available in fellowship, scholarship, or career services offices and/or political science departments. See our list of participating schools for the [list of nominating officials](#) on Carnegie's website.

Should the nominating official write a statement of nomination?

A statement from a nominating official (unless it is 1 of the 2 required references) is not considered in the application process.

May I apply directly to Carnegie for the James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program?

The James C. Gaither Junior Fellows Program is competitive and, as such, the program relies on participating universities to nominate uniquely qualified students. We are unable to accept applications directly from students. Students should consult their university on the nomination process.

When is the application deadline?

The program's deadline is January 15th (Friday if the 15th falls on a Saturday, Monday if the 15th falls on a Sunday). However, most set an earlier deadline (some as early as November) to receive and review applications. Consult your university for application deadlines and details on the school's application process.

If a student is interested in more than one program, how should they proceed?

Students who are interested in more than one program have to make a decision to apply under one program. Your nominating official should be able to help you determine which program is the best fit for you.

Are applicants interviewed for the program?

Approximately 3-4 applicants per position are chosen for interview. "Finalists" are interviewed in February and early March.

What arrangements will be made if a student is abroad while interviews are taking place?

All interviews will take place via video or phone regardless of location at the time of the interview. Appropriate arrangements will be made for students in a difficult time zone.

As a James C. Gaither Junior Fellow, what kind of work will I do?

James C. Gaither Junior Fellows provide research assistance to scholars working in Carnegie programs. You may learn more about our programs by visiting Carnegie's homepage. Gaither Junior Fellows have the opportunity to conduct research for books, co-author journal articles and policy papers, participate in meetings with high-level officials, contribute to congressional testimony, and organize briefings attended by scholars, journalists, and government officials.

Can I apply if I have a disability?

All applications will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected group.

What are the criteria upon which applications are considered?

The application process is highly competitive. Approximately 6 percent of applicants are ultimately selected for positions. Applications are judged on the quality of the written essay, related academic study and/or work experience, grades, recommendations, and personal interviews.

Will I be notified if I am not selected for the Program?

Those not selected for interview will be notified during the month of February. “Finalists” will be notified of selection/non-selection before March 31st.

When does the fellowship begin?

All fellowships begin on September 1st. James C. Gaither Junior Fellows are hired for 10-12 months.

Are James C. Gaither Junior Fellows paid?

Positions are paid, full-time positions for 10-12 months. The anticipated salary is \$4,000.00 per month before taxes, paid semi-monthly. A full benefits package is also provided. Junior Fellows also receive relocation support of up to \$1,500 (grossed up for taxes).