



American Society of International Law

2026 Arthur C. Helton Fellowship Program

Eligibility and Application Information

Established in 2004, the Arthur C. Helton Fellowship Program recognizes the legacy of Arthur Helton, a prominent human rights advocate and ASIL member. Helton died in the August 19, 2003 bombing of the UN mission in Baghdad together with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Sergio Viera de Mello and 20 others.

Funded through the generous support of the Planethood Foundation and ASIL members, Helton Fellowships provide financial assistance in the form of “micro-grants” of \$2,000 for law students and new professionals to pursue field work and research on significant issues involving international law, human rights, humanitarian affairs, and related areas.

Helton Fellowships are intended to provide modest funding that can make the difference in enabling future international lawyers, scholars, and advocates to pursue a life-changing professional experience.

Helton Fellowship micro-grants are intended to contribute to paying for logistics, housing and living expenses, and other costs related to the Fellow’s international law fieldwork and research.



Arthur C. Helton

Eligibility/Qualifications

The Helton Fellowship Program seeks applicants in the early stages of their academic and professional careers who demonstrate the potential to make significant contributions to the use and study of international law around the world.

Law students, practicing lawyers, human rights professionals, scholars, and other individuals seeking assistance in conducting international fieldwork and law-related research are encouraged to apply. Applicants can be of any nationality but must be current law students or have graduated from law school (at either the undergraduate or graduate levels) no earlier than December 2022.

In order to ensure the quality and applicability of their proposal, applicants must obtain written support for their fieldwork or research project from a sponsoring organization. This organization can be any educational institution, international organization, governmental agency, or non-governmental organization working in international law, human rights, humanitarian affairs, international criminal law, or related areas. The sponsoring organization must provide a letter of support for the applicant clearly indicating their awareness of the proposed project, the role that they will play in assisting the potential Helton Fellow in completing the project, and the value of the project to the organization's mission, the surrounding region, and/or the relevant field of international law. Individuals pursuing independent research or fieldwork are not eligible for Helton Fellowships. Applicants should also identify other potential sources of funding to cover costs related to their fieldwork. ASIL does not assist in securing organizational sponsorship or alternative funding for Fellows.

Fellows must begin their fieldwork between April 2026 and September 2026. Helton Fellow projects must be completed no later than March 2027.

In acknowledgement of Arthur C. Helton's commitment to human rights and humanitarian affairs in the field, preferential consideration may be given to applications demonstrating a significant fieldwork component as well as those involving the human rights of refugees, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable populations. Applications for fieldwork in the area of international criminal law and international humanitarian law are also encouraged.

Applicants will be considered by the Helton Fellowship Selection Committee on the basis of the written materials included in the application package. No interviews or any other communications with applicants will be conducted.

Application Requirements

Successful applications must be submitted by the deadline to fellowship@asil.org and must include the following materials:

- Helton Fellowship application form
- Project Budget
- Writing Sample (limit of 10 pages)
- Current CV or résumé
- Confirmation of law student status and/or date of graduation from law school
- Letter of support from your sponsoring organization, including details of your proposed project, impact of the project to the sponsoring organization, on the region, or in the relevant field of international law and
- Two letters of recommendation.

Please combine all applicant materials into one PDF file. Separate letters of recommendation may be sent separately.

Application Form: The Helton Fellowship application form includes space for a description of your proposed project; the impact you see the project having in the sponsoring organization, the

geographic region, and/or the relevant field of international law; and the importance of this project towards your international career development goals.

Project Budget: Applicants must include an estimate of the proposed project's cost, including their travel, lodging, and day-to-day personal expenses, as well as the estimated financial resources needed to complete the project. If the estimated budget exceeds the amount of the Helton Fellowship micro-grant, applicants must include a statement indicating where they expect to obtain the remaining necessary funds to successfully complete the project.

Writing Sample: The writing sample should demonstrate in-depth research, critical thinking, and analysis of a topic related to international law. Excerpts of more lengthy documents are permitted but samples may not exceed 10 pages.

Current CV or Resume: All applicants must submit an updated curriculum vitae or résumé, which includes contact information, education, professional employment and/or volunteer history, and relevant skills and/or interests.

Student Status/Date of Graduation: Applicants are required to provide documentation indicating current academic status or date of graduation. The following documentation will be accepted: photocopy of valid student identification card; photocopy of current official or unofficial transcript indicating student status; photocopy of official or unofficial transcript indicating graduation date; or photocopy or facsimile of diploma.

Sponsoring Organization Letter of Support: The sponsoring organization must provide a signed letter of support on official letterhead clearly indicating their awareness of the proposed project, the role that the organization will play in assisting the applicant in completing the project, and the value of the project to the organization's mission, the surrounding region, and/or the relevant field of international law.

Personal Letters of Recommendation: Applicants should provide two letters of recommendation from any individual who is in a position to assess academic performance, professional skills and expertise, or any other qualifications related to the type of work contemplated by the Helton Fellowship Program. Recommenders may also submit these letters directly to ASIL at fellowship@asil.org.

Timeline

Applications are now open. All applications must be received no later than **Friday, January 16, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.**

Incomplete applications and those received after January 16, 2026, will not be reviewed under any circumstances. **Awards will be announced in March 2026.**