



ASPEN STRATEGY GROUP RISING LEADERS PROGRAM

The mission of the [Aspen Strategy Group \(ASG\)](#) is to convene decision-makers in resolutely nonpartisan public and private forums to address key foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States. Since its inception in 1984, the ASG has been strongly committed to cultivating the next generation of leaders in the field.

This commitment was formalized in 2021 as the ASG welcomed its [inaugural cohort](#) of the **Aspen Strategy Group Rising Leaders Program**. Each year, the [Rising Leaders Program](#) brings together approximately 30 young professionals in the first 5-10 years of their career to contribute to the conversation on critical issues while honing their leadership skills. Hailing from diverse backgrounds and sectors, all Rising Leaders have one thing in common: their passion for U.S. national security and foreign policy.

The goal of the Rising Leaders Program is to nurture a highly diverse new generation that will work together on complex global challenges. To achieve this, it focuses on:

- **Breaking down silos** between young professionals working in different but complementary industries in U.S. foreign policy and national security.
- **Forging the bonds** early for lifelong collaboration across party lines.
- **Creating a nexus** between established senior leaders in the field and promising young professionals.
- **Publishing and amplifying innovative, exciting new voices** in foreign policy via our public stages, social media platforms, and annual policy book.

As a group, Rising Leaders exchange ideas with senior current and former government officials, military leaders, members of Congress, journalists, academics, policymakers, and businesspeople, in addition to [ASG members](#). The program offers a unique opportunity for participants to learn from key decision-makers—and most importantly, each other—under the aegis of the Aspen Strategy Group.

The year-long curriculum includes:

- **Regular discussions** with senior foreign policy and national security experts.
- **Writing workshops and a required policy paper** on a relevant topic. Members of the cohort are strongly encouraged to co-author with a peer of a different perspective. The papers are compiled, published, and promoted as an ASG policy book.
- **Formal and informal mentorship opportunities.**
- **A bespoke Gildenhorn Rising Leaders Aspen Seminar.**
- **Attending the [Aspen Security Forum](#)** in Aspen, CO in the summer and Washington, DC in the winter.



At the culmination of the program, the Rising Leaders join a lifetime network of alumni to further connect with other bold thinkers in national security and foreign policy. Over the course of their careers, they have a lasting affiliation with the Aspen Strategy Group's public and policy programs. In line with the broader mission of the Aspen Institute, the Rising Leaders ultimately drive change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the greatest U.S. foreign policy and national security challenges of our time.

2025 RISING LEADERS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Application Timeline

Applications for the Class of 2025 will be available [here](#) from **Monday, October 21 to Friday, December 8 at 11:59 PM (EST)**.

Core Programming

Kick-Off Event | Washington, DC Wednesday, March 12 – Friday, March 14

Incoming Rising Leaders will gather in Washington, DC for networking and discussions about current U.S. national security and foreign policy issues, including a bespoke Gildenhorn Rising Leaders Aspen Seminar and off-the-record conversations with ASG members and other experts.

2025 Aspen Security Forum | Aspen, CO Tuesday, July 15 – Friday, July 18

At the core of the program is the Aspen Security Forum, the premier national security and foreign policy conference in the United States. The Forum features the highest caliber of speakers, including domestic and international government officials, business executives, leading academics, and noted journalists. At the Forum, Rising Leaders will participate in a writing workshop with notable journalists, and may additionally be invited to attend off-the-record discussions with leaders in the field.

2025 Aspen Security Forum: DC Edition Washington, DC | December

The DC Edition of the Aspen Security Forum brings together high-caliber domestic and international speakers for one to two days of programming in the nation's capital. At the DC Forum, Rising Leaders will have the opportunity to network with alumni of the program, as well as launch their collective policy book. There will also be a final Gildenhorn Rising Leaders Aspen Seminar to conclude the cohort's time together.

Virtual Meetings

Rising Leaders will have virtual meetings on a regular basis to hear from senior government officials; members of Congress; journalists; prominent thinkers and practitioners in academia, policy, and business; and Aspen Strategy Group members.

Capstone Project

Members of the cohort are required to author a policy paper on a relevant topic informed by their experiences and discussions over the course of the year. In the nonpartisan spirit of the Aspen Strategy Group, Rising Leaders are strongly encouraged to co-author the paper with a peer of a different perspective. The papers are then compiled, published, and promoted as an ASG policy book to amplify emerging and innovative voices in the field.

Preferred Qualifications

- Young professionals with five to ten years of experience in the field
- Demonstrated interest and involvement in U.S. national security, diplomacy, international development, human rights, homeland security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and/or other related fields
- Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident

Please note that full-time students and those living abroad during the term (March–December 2025) are discouraged from applying.

Program Requirements

All successful applicants must be able to attend the kick-off event in Washington, DC from Wednesday, March 12 – Friday, March 14 and the 2025 Aspen Security Forum in Aspen, CO from Tuesday, July 15 – Friday, July 18 and in Washington, DC in early December 2025.

Application Process

The program application includes:

- Brief statement of interest (max 250 words)
- One short answer essay question (max 300 words)
- One-page resume/CV
- An academic or professional letter of recommendation submitted through the reference portal

Interviews will be conducted in January 2025 and successful applicants will be notified in February.