



ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship 2026

Position Title	Research and Policy Associate
Organization	Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration
Location	Washington, DC
Stipend	\$72,000 in the first year, \$74,000 in the second year
Benefits	Access to employer health insurance. Professional development funds and relocation funds provided by ACLS.
Start Date	September 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The [Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that mobilizes college and university leaders to address immigration issues impacting higher education, our students, campuses, communities, and the nation. Our national membership has grown to more than 580 two-year and four-year public and private institutions, serving more than 5 million students in 42 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico. We represent a broad coalition committed to ensuring that immigrant-origin, refugee, and international students can access, succeed in, and contribute to higher education and the workforce.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Presidents' Alliance seeks a Research and Policy Associate to join our policy team in Washington, D.C. Reporting to the Manager of Research and Policy and working closely with the Director of Policy and Strategy, the Deputy Director of Federal Policy, and the Director of State Policy and Legal Strategy, the Associate will support research, data analysis, and policy analysis that furthers the Alliance's strategic priorities.

The Fellow will support the Presidents' Alliance work by (1) Drafting policy briefs, explainers, and memos that analyze the impact of state and federal policy developments on undocumented, refugee, and international students; (2) Synthesizing research and data pertinent to the experiences of these populations in higher education and the workforce, helping shape evidence-based policy recommendations; and (3) Developing messaging campaigns that advocate for inclusive and equitable access to academic and career pathways for international and immigrant-origin populations.

The Presidents' Alliance office space is based at 740 15th Street N.W. Washington, D.C.; however, the work of the organization is conducted primarily remotely and all employees work remotely, though some travel to member campuses, conferences, and events may be required. Because this position focuses on policy, the Fellow must be based in the Washington D.C. area. Daily work responsibilities will be conducted remotely; the Fellow will be expected to be available for several in-person meetings per month, including biweekly policy team meetings and ad hoc meetings and events with key partners and policymakers. The fellowship tenure is 24 consecutive months, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Develop resources that communicate the impact of federal and state policies on international and immigrant-origin communities in higher education.
 - Assist with drafting weekly member updates, background research, editing, and review of policy briefs, explainers, memos and FAQs on policy developments affecting focal populations.
 - Draft talking points and advocacy tools for Presidents' Alliance staff and member campuses to support engagement with press, communities, and policymakers.
 - Work with coalition partners, as appropriate, to co-develop resources, amplify shared policy goals, and coordinate joint advocacy efforts.

This position is *only* available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program.
You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.

- Serve as a thought partner to Alliance staff, aligning research findings with policy strategy and communications priorities.
- Participate in management of data and research portfolio.
 - Work with the Manager of Research and Policy to update data on the Higher Ed Immigration Portal.
 - Identify opportunities for original data and story collection that support policy and litigation efforts. Examples may include collecting testimony from students, faculty and staff; organizing opportunities for campuses to share data and impact stories; and conducting background research to support litigation efforts.
- Advance knowledge of Presidents' Alliance materials and resources through event coordination and public messaging.
 - Support planning, coordination, and implementation of virtual webinars and briefings.
 - Lead development of conference proposals and represent the Alliance on virtual panels and at relevant conferences. Some travel may be required.
 - Support planning and implementation of Alliance events, including policy roundtables, strategy sessions, and the 2027 SUCCESS Convening.
 - Develop materials for social media, press statements, and digital engagement to elevate the Alliance's voice.

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or interpretive social sciences. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Excellent research, writing, analytical and communication skills, including the ability to quickly understand complex issues and communicate this knowledge to external stakeholders.
- Experience working with higher education and community stakeholders, including the ability to negotiate competing priorities and consider layers of impact and engagement.
- Time management and project management skills with the ability to prioritize tasks, deliver high-quality, accurate work, and meet multiple deadlines.
- Basic familiarity with descriptive quantitative analysis, including the ability to translate quantitative research for non-academic audiences.
- Ability to work independently, solve problems creatively, and collaborate effectively with colleagues, member institutions, partners, and Presidents' Alliance team members.
- Familiarity and ease with software/tech (e.g. Microsoft Office, Google Suite, Zoom).

Preferred:

- Policy expertise in refugee resettlement, undocumented student advocacy, immigration and higher education, and/or international education.
- Experience working on strategic messaging campaigns or developing narrative materials that communicate complex topics to a range of audiences.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: <https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9 PM EDT, March 11, 2026.

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