



Switzer Fellowship

(+ other environmental-focused fellowships)

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Introduction

The Switzer Fellowship is a one-year fellowship for graduate students from diverse academic and personal backgrounds in New England and California whose career goals focus on environmental improvement. Switzer Fellows demonstrate leadership in their field, as well as commitment and competency to advance social equity as a fundamental part of their environmental problem-solving.

Switzer Fellows are environmental and social change leaders in science, policy, justice, health, economics, advocacy, planning, business, law, and more. Switzer Fellows come from diverse social, academic, and economic backgrounds. They are committed to social equity, interdisciplinary work, applied results, and collaborative leadership.

OVERVIEW

Robert and Patricia Switzer established the Switzer Foundation in 1985 out of a deep belief in the power of individuals to make a difference in the world and the need to support leaders dedicated to solving applied environmental problems.

- One-year fellowship for graduate students in New England and California, focused on environmental improvement and social equity leadership
- Open to diverse fields: science, policy, law, planning, economics, and more
- Part of a vibrant alumni network of 750+ fellows active since 1986

Duration One Academic Year

Regions New England (6 states) & California

Cohort 20 Fellows Annually

Network 750+ Fellows Since 1986

Funding

Funding covers...

- \$17,000 unrestricted cash award, paid in two installments (June & January)
 - Eligible uses: tuition & university fees, living expenses, research-related expenses
- Leadership Retreats: two multi-day in-person retreats per fellowship year
- Career Coaching: guidance during and beyond the fellowship year

Switzer Network: lifelong access to 750+ alumni community, events, job sharing, webinars.

“Current network activities include virtual and in-person networking events, job opportunity and information sharing, webinars and trainings, social gatherings, and grant opportunities.”

Post-fellowship access to Leadership Grants and Professional Development Fund available.

Eligibility

Mid-career students encouraged; must articulate how the program enhances their environmental leadership

All applicants should have strong academic qualifications with career goals focused on environmental improvement

[Eligibility](#)
[Check here.](#)

- U.S. citizen, permanent resident, DACA recipient, or refugee/asylee (international students ineligible)
- Enrolled at accredited graduate institution **in California or New England** (ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI) for full (2026–2027) academic year; online programs ineligible
- **Master's candidates:** at least one semester/quarter completed; seeking Master's as terminal degree.
 - Master's students planning a Ph.D. should wait and apply during their Ph.D. program.
- **Ph.D. candidates:** at least three years of doctoral work completed, or qualifying exams passed by July 1, 2026

Application Components

- **Personal Essay:** 2–3 pages (10,000 character max); focus on leadership, motivation, equity lens, and personal background — not academic summaries
- **Two Letters of Recommendation:** submitted by recommenders directly in PDF; at least one from an academic advisor; only two accepted
- **Current Resume (PDF):** academic, work, and volunteer experience with descriptions and time commitments; no CVs

Application Components

cont'd

- **Graduate Transcripts:** most recent graduate transcript required; unofficial accepted if official unavailable; PDF or JPEG
- **Short-Answer Questions:** (1) summarize post-grad environmental impact in 3 sentences; (2) how will the Switzer Network help your goals and what will you contribute?

**Visit the Switzer “Frequently Asked Questions”
section for more details.**

<https://www.switzernetwork.org/fellowship/become-fellow>

Selection Criteria

Applications are reviewed with the below in consideration:

- Environmental Commitment
- Applied Focus
- Innovative Problem-Solving
- Leadership Potential
- Collaboration & Engagement
- Social Equity Awareness & Experience
- Communication Skills

Consider how your application reflects these (including letters of recommendation).

Selection Criteria, cont'd

Fellowship applicants are evaluated **based on their leadership and commitment to environmental problem-solving.**

Successful applicants also demonstrate **commitment and competency to advance social equity** as a fundamental part of their environmental problem-solving and **clearly articulate** how their environmental work affects human communities.

The foundation selects Master's- and Ph.D.-level candidates with a **clear vision** of how they will apply their skills and experience to practical environmental issues. **Ph.D. applicants** should have a well-defined research focus and be clear about how their academic goals will contribute positive change to applied problems.

Application Timelines

Late Oct 2026
Applications Open

Dec (14)
Deadline to request connection
with a Switzer Fellow alumni

Jan 2027 (day TBD)
Application deadline – all materials
due

May 2027
Masters and Ph.D. candidate
interviews

Jun 2027
Award notifications

**Does not require
institutional
endorsement.**

Next Steps

- **Review eligibility** (region, degree level, citizenship, program type).

- **Download and study** the evaluation rubric at: switzernetwork.org

- *(Optional, but recommended)* **Connect with a Fellow alumni** via the directory or connection request (by Dec 15)

- **Watch a recorded info session** at: switzernetwork.org/fellowship-information-sessions

Switzer Fellowship
switzernetwork.org

Begin your personal essay early. Review the “how to apply” page: switzernetwork.org/how-apply

- **Consider and contact recommendation writers early.** Be sure to provide information about this fellowship to better inform their letter.

Additional
Environmentally-
focused
Fellowships

Additional (1)

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (Student Opportunities)

noaa.gov/education/opportunities/students

- Filter the database for **graduate** or **postdoc** (as applicable) opportunities
- Best for students interested in: **oceans, fisheries, environmental policy, climate adaptation, & coastal systems.**

"NOAA has opportunities for students of any level — from kindergarten through high school, undergraduate and graduate, and even recent graduates. Opportunities include one-day events, summer internships at NOAA, multi-year fellowships, and more."

Additional (2)

United States Environmental Protection Agency

(Graduate/Research Fellowships)

epa.gov/careers/research-fellowships-and-scholarships

Common competitive programs:

- NSF-EPA INTERN partnerships
- ORISE/EPA fellowships
- ASPPH/EPA Environmental Health Fellowship
- EPA research internships

Best fit for students interested in: **environmental toxicology, public health, environmental chemistry, policy, sustainability, & environmental justice.**

"EPA resources for the Greater Research Opportunities (GRO) Undergraduate Fellowships and Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellowships for Graduate Environmental Study are no longer available. For historical information, please search for the GRO and STAR Fellowship page in the [EPA Web Archive](#)"

Additional (3)

United States Department of Energy (Internships & Fellowships)

energy.gov/internships-fellowships

Common competitive programs:

- DOE Computational Science Graduate Fellowship (CSGF)
- DOE Office of Science Graduate Fellowship
- SCGSR (Science Graduate Student Research)

Best fit for students interested in: **environment + computation, climate + AI/modeling, renewable energy systems, Earth systems science.**

"DOE's strategic priorities include scientific discovery, economic prosperity, secure energy, national security, and the safe environmental cleanup of the national nuclear weapons complex. Our 17 groundbreaking, award-winning National Laboratories tackle the critical scientific challenges of our time, from combating climate change to discovering the origins of our universe. Our expansive mission means we have many opportunities in a variety of fields such as STEM, national security, international affairs, business, and program development. We offer many early career programs, to include apprenticeships, internships, fellowships, scholarships, graduate research opportunities, competitions, and more."

Additional (4)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Environmental/Climate Fellowships

nasa.gov/learning-resources/internship-programs/nasa-fellowships

Common competitive programs:

- NASA FINESST
- NASA Earth & Space Science Fellowships
- Earth systems modeling support

Best fit for students interested in: **remote sensing, climate science, atmospheric science, hydrology, Earth observation.**

"Each year, NASA Fellowships' awards research grants, as authorized by Congress, to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) using Minority University Research Education Project (MUREP) funds. NASA Fellowships are designed to prepare graduate-level students for careers in research through hands-on experiences and workforce training, developing a well-trained science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce. NASA Fellowships, partnered with The National GEM Consortium, fosters faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students in disciplines needed to help advance NASA's missions and directly contribute to advancements in space exploration."



Take this
survey to
give
feedback!

Questions?

We're here to help you navigate the process.

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fasa.caltech.edu/fellowships

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