

ASPEN STRATEGY GROUP RISING LEADERS PROGRAM

The mission of the Aspen Strategy Group (ASG) is to convene decision-makers in resolutely non-partisan public and private forums to address key foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States. Since our 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 when we welcomed the inaugural cohort of the **Aspen Strategy Group Rising Leaders Program**. Each year, the Rising Leaders Program brings together thirty young professionals in the first five to ten years of their career to contribute to the conversation on critical issues while honing their leadership skills. Hailing from a broad range of 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 well-rounded 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.
- **A writing workshop 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 Napa, CA in the summer and events in Washington, DC.



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.

ASPEN SECURITY FORUM
aspen institute

aspen strategy group

2027 RISING LEADERS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Application Timeline

Applications for the Class of 2027 will be available here from **Tuesday, October 27 to Sunday, December 13 at 11:59 PM ET.**

Core Programming

Kick-Off Event | Washington, DC
Wednesday, March 17 – Friday, March 19

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.

2027 Aspen Security Forum | Napa, CA
Sunday, July 18 – Tuesday, July 20

At the core of the program is the Aspen Security Forum, the premier national security and foreign policy conference in the United States. For 2027, the Forum will be held in Napa, CA, bringing together the highest caliber of speakers, including domestic and international government officials, business executives, leading academics, and noted journalists. At the Forum, Rising Leaders may also be invited to attend private events and join off-the-record discussions with leaders in the field.

Closing Rising Leaders Programming
Washington, DC | December

In December, the Rising Leaders will gather in Washington, DC for their closing Gildenhorn Rising Leaders Aspen Seminar, the launch of the policy book comprised of their co-authored papers, and a reception with alumni of the program.

Virtual Meetings

Rising Leaders will have virtual meetings on a regular basis throughout the year with 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 non-partisan 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, foreign policy, diplomacy, international development, human rights, homeland security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and/or other related fields.
- Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (Green Card holder).

Please note that full-time students and those living abroad during the term (March–December 2027) are discouraged from applying.

Program Requirements

All successful applicants must be able to attend the kick-off event in Washington, DC from Wednesday, March 17 – Friday, March 19; the 2027 Aspen Security Forum in Napa, CA from Sunday, July 18 – Tuesday, July 20; and the closing Rising Leaders programming in early December 2027.

Application Process

The program application includes:

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

Interviews will be conducted in January 2027 and all applicants will be notified of their status in February.

Questions? You can find our FAQ page here.