



CLS Passport Assistance

BACKGROUND

The CLS Program is proud to announce the availability of limited funds to support U.S. passport procurement for students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. The CLS Program will issue a reimbursement of **\$165** for U.S. passport application fees (excluding fees to expedite processing and shipping costs) for CLS finalists applying for a first-time passport or a passport renewal in order to participate in the CLS Program. Please note that fees to expedite the application process and costs related to shipping or traveling to procure a passport are not reimbursable.

ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of passport assistance is to cover the cost of a regular U.S. passport for finalists selected for the CLS Program with exceptional financial need who must procure or renew a passport for the purpose of participating in the CLS Program. Passports must be procured or renewed during the eligibility period of **January 1, 2026 – June 1, 2026**. Passports issued before or after this period are not eligible for reimbursement.

Eligible students include:

- **Undergraduate students** who have received a Pell Grant for the 2025–2026 academic year.
- **Graduate students** who can demonstrate financial need.

All applications for reimbursement must be submitted by **July 1, 2026**. Applications submitted after that date will not be reviewed.

Eligible students may request reimbursement by submitting the materials outlined below.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should send the following documents to cls@americancouncils.org with the subject line “Last Name, Language, Passport Assistance” (e.g., “Smith, Arabic, Passport Assistance”) no later than **July 1, 2026**:

- A scan of the issued passport clearly showing the date of issue (between January 1, 2026 and June 1, 2026); and
- **For undergraduate students:** A scan of student’s financial aid award from their current institution indicating Pell eligibility.
- **For graduate students:** A written statement (max. 250 words) describing financial need **and** a letter from the student’s financial aid office or graduate college confirming that need.

Notification will be issued individually on a rolling basis but no later than August 1, 2026.

REIMBURSEMENT

CLS passport assistance functions as a reimbursement system. Finalists will need to pay for the cost of the passport up front and then submit materials for a reimbursement made via an ACH transfer to the bank account indicated in the acceptance materials for the student stipend.

Reimbursements will be issued after the start of the program on a rolling basis but not later than August 2026.

If a finalist is unable to travel for any reason, passport reimbursement will not be issued.