



**NALCAP**

**NORTH AMERICAN LANGUAGE  
AND CULTURE ASSISTANTS  
PROGRAM IN SPAIN**

**GENERAL INFORMATION  
2024-2025**



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## 1. What is NALCAP?

The North American Language and Culture Assistants Program (NALCAP) is a public diplomacy initiative of the Ministry of Education of Spain. The goal of the program is to bring native-like speakers of English into every language classroom in Spain to advance language skills and bring about cultural awareness that leads to mutual understanding. This action fosters a knowledge of our world outside of one's own country and brings the citizens of the United States and Spain to a closer understanding of each other's customs and traditions.

The program involves over 30 countries and many different languages. NALCAP is the name given to the program for candidates from the United States and Canada. US citizens may only apply to teach English.



## 2. Is NALCAP for you?

If you are an American college student or graduate and want to spend a year abroad in Spain, sharing your language and culture, well then, this is the program for you!

This program awards grants that provide the extraordinary opportunity of becoming a language assistant in collaboration with schools in Spain and at the same time learning about the culture and language of Spain.



Language assistants serve as linguistic role models to Spanish students, therefore a native-like language level in English is a requisite.

We are looking for responsible, broad-minded individuals with a flexible attitude who are open to new ideas and cultures. These qualifications are essential as recipients will have a direct impact on the education of students all across Spain.

Your role is to encourage students to broaden their knowledge of your language and culture. Therefore, you are expected to plan and conduct activities that focus on the English language and American culture, such as listening and speaking activities, role plays, or games for your students. You will lead these activities in class, with either the teacher or a smaller group of students in a different classroom. At schools with bilingual programs, you may also be asked to participate in the teaching of other school subjects in English, such as science, social studies, technology, and art - always under the guidance of the classroom teacher.

NALCAP is an international exchange program. As such, you are considered to be a cultural ambassador representing the United States in Spain. It is important that your experience in Spain reflects this role.

It is recommended that participants have at least a basic level of Spanish to navigate daily life and needs in Spain (for example, renting an apartment or grocery shopping). In the classroom, you will only be speaking in English and need to do so in order to provide that linguistic model to our students. They need to hear your pronunciation, your intonation, the way you use the vocabulary and the grammar, to be able to further their skills in the English language.

Teaching English in Spain is one of the best ways to get a feel for life in another country. Language assistants will have plenty of time to enjoy the local culture, meet local people, improve their Spanish and travel. It is a remarkable opportunity for both personal and professional growth.

It is our sincere wish that you have a meaningful and valuable experience in Spain sharing your language and culture while making a meaningful impact in your school communities, contributing to the vibrant educational landscape in Spain and fostering cross-cultural understanding.



### 3. What does the NALCAP program provide?

The program conditions will include:

- Your schedule: Between 14 and 16 class periods a week. Most schools try to accommodate a 3-day weekend.
- You will receive a monthly stipend of about 800 - 1000€ depending on the region of Spain that you are assigned. You may supplement this grant with private tutoring of English classes for up to 30 hours per week.
- Length of the program: 8 months October 1 – May 31. Until June 30 in Madrid.  
*Unfortunately, other start and end dates are not possible.*
- Medical insurance.
- Medication is not included in the insurance but is quite affordable in Spain.
- An orientation course at the beginning of the school year.
- An official certificate upon completion of the program.
- Paid school vacations. For example, a long Christmas and Easter break.



- Option to renew for a second year with a positive evaluation from the school. There is a five-year max. total in the program.
- Please note that the program does not provide accommodation. You will need to find housing on your own.

Please note that only your school or regional education office can issue the official certificate of having participated in the program or be able to write you a recommendation. The Embassy of Spain in the U.S. is unable to provide this service.

Medical insurance coverage is offered to all recipients. Pre-existing conditions are not covered, and in such cases, additional insurance coverage is strongly recommended.

Participants are responsible for their travel expenses to and from the United States and for housing in Spain. They will also need to pay for the visa fees, other fees for the paperwork involved, and possible travel to the nearest consulate.

#### 4. Who can participate in NALCAP? Eligibility.

Applicants qualify for the program if they meet the following requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen and have a valid U.S. passport through the date of the last day of your participation in the program (May 31st, 2025, in all of Spain except for Madrid which is June 30th, 2025)
- Have a conferred BA, BS, AA or AS degree or be enrolled as a sophomore, junior or senior in a BA or BS program
- Be a native-like speaker of English
- Be in good physical and mental health (required when applying for a visa)
- Have a clean background check (required when applying for a visa)
- Aged between 18-60. You must be 18 years old as of January 1, 2024, and not be 60 or over on January 1, 2025, to participate in the program. Age ranges have been designated according to educator labor regulations in Spain.

## 5. How can I apply to NALCAP?

If you wish to apply to the NALCAP program, please refer to our *Application Guidelines* and the *New PROFEX 2 Handbook* on our website which detail the entire process - from before the application cycle opens to the final selection. The *New PROFEX Handbook* offers step-by-step instructions on how to electronically submit your application on the PROFEX 2 portal.

Applications are processed and reviewed on the online portal called PROFEX 2 run by The Ministry of Education of Spain. **Applications may only be submitted when the application period is open.** If you applied last year, you may reuse your PROFEX 2 account (username and password). You will, however, need to resubmit all the required documents for a new application.

Before the application process opens, please make sure to have all your documents ready. You will need to submit these 4 documents in PDF format to the PROFEX 2 portal:

1. A copy of the main page of your valid U.S. passport.
2. An official college transcript or a copy of your diploma(s).
3. A signed Statement of Purpose explaining why you would like to participate in the program.
4. A letter of recommendation from a college professor/instructor/employer with the following requirements.

It is important to upload all your documents and submit your application as soon as possible. Placements are usually assigned based on your application number.

For complete information, please refer to our website.

## 6. Where in Spain can I be placed?

**Preferred placements** in different Spanish regions may be requested on your application. Please note that you will be applying to **a region**, not a city or town (exceptions have been made in the region of Andalucia in past cycles). The Ministry of Education of Spain will attempt to accommodate your preferences, but unfortunately, a specific placement cannot be guaranteed. Language assistants are needed in cities and in smaller towns. The Ministry strives to achieve expansive institutional and geographic distribution in placements. Having a language assistant in a small-town school will most likely enrich those students' lives in unimaginable ways, bringing about that mutual understanding of peoples and cultures to every corner of the country.

These types of placements offer endless opportunities to enjoy real life in Spain, and you may end up having a life-changing experience in an unexpected place. On top of that, the cost of living in these towns is significantly lower, and therefore the standard of living is usually better than in big cities.

If you would like to be placed with a significant other or friend, make sure you write this on your application. There is a section on the application where it asks you about locations and whether you are going with a significant other. In that section, state that you would like to be placed in the same location as the other person, giving their name and contact information. Both applicants must state this information on each of their applications and submit them at the same time. These applications will not be renewed unless both applications have been submitted at the same time. Once you receive a regional placement, contact the regional education office (email addresses are on our website under the Contact Us section) and request to be placed together. There are no guarantees, but it could help. Final decisions are made by the regional education office.

Note that changes in your regions of preference are not allowed once you have submitted your application.

Below is a map of Spain divided into its 17 regions (called *Comunidades Autónomas*) and the cities of *Ceuta* and *Melilla*, which are located on the African continent. It is important to note that some of the regions in Spain, such as *Cataluña*, *Comunidad Valenciana*, *Islas Baleares*, *Galicia*, *País Vasco*, and *Navarra* have two official languages. Please keep in mind that in these regions you will come across the use of both languages – Spanish and the regional language – both at your school and in your everyday life.

Please do not be discouraged if you do not get the placement that you chose. We have heard so many stories from language assistants who did not get their original choices and absolutely loved their experience in Spain!





## 7. What can I expect after submitting my application?

Be aware that the whole process will start almost one year before you finally start at your school on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Please check the NALCAP timeline to become familiar with the steps and the **approximate** timing.

Upon reviewing your application, if there are any issues, you will be contacted via email. Please check your junk folder on a regular basis! Note that all the email addresses that are sent from the Ministry of Education of Spain will end in the domain [@educacion.gob.es](mailto:@educacion.gob.es)

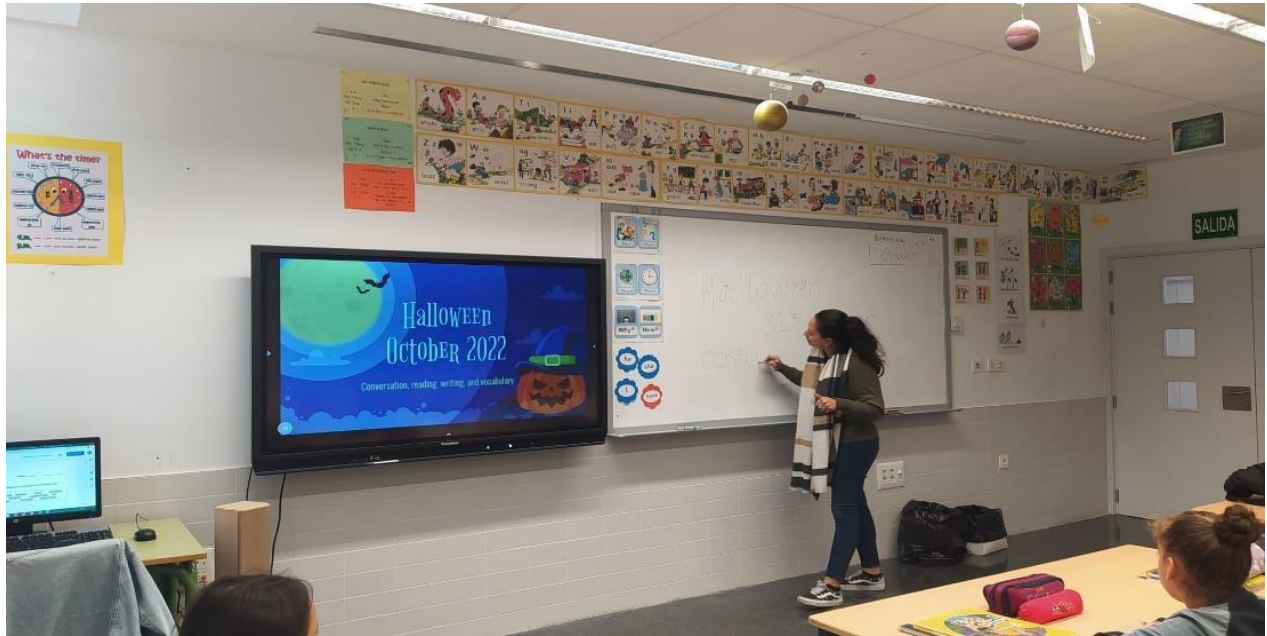
**\*ADMITIDA status does not mean that you have been selected as a language assistant. It means that your application has met the requirements and that you are now eligible for a placement.**

Applicants continue to be offered positions until very late in the process. Therefore, **at no time will you receive a notification that you have not been selected.** Once the summer is over, the chances are slim. We are aware and understand that other opportunities have been explored.

## 8. What should I do after being selected?

Once you accept your placement, you can begin to gather the required paperwork for your visa application, such as the **Background Check, the Apostille (legalization) and in some cases, an official translation.** Kindly note that both the background check and its corresponding apostille are handled by American offices and that these processes may be quite long in some cases. Expedited services may be available.

To submit your **visa application**, you will also need to have received your **Letter of Acceptance** from your regional education office in Spain. This letter will be sent around mid/late May and through August/September and is of the utmost importance as this provides you with all the pertinent information concerning your placement. It is best to have the other paperwork ready so that when you receive this letter, you can submit your visa application.



## 9. What about the visa?

Once you receive your letter, along with the other required documents, you can apply for a visa. You must do this **before leaving** the USA. You will be applying for a **Student/Study/National Visa**.

Only the Consulates General of Spain in the U.S. have the authorization to handle visa applications. Award recipients must apply for a student visa to travel to Spain to participate in the program with specific and adjusted requirements for NALCAP.

The visa process is stressful. There is a lot of paperwork, and timelines can be long. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide you with detailed instructions as each Consulate of Spain has its own procedures and requirements. You will need to find your local consulate and check in with them. Breathe and know that thousands of NALCAPERS before you have gone through the process.

Updated information regarding visa requirements from the Consulates General of Spain will be posted on our website, usually by April, in the *Applying for a visa* section. This information will guide you through the visa application process, but the information provided by the consulates overrules any information provided by us on our website.

If you have dual citizenship, the U.S. plus the European Union, you do not need a visa. However, you are required to present a medical certificate and a background check upon arrival at your school in Spain. More info in our FAQs.

After arriving in Spain, language assistants must apply for their TIE card (*Tarjeta de Identidad de Extranjero*) within a month at the latest. The TIE is a residency permit for your time within the program and will have an assigned number (NIE or *Número de Identificación del Extranjero*), personal information, and your photo. You will need to make an appointment with your local immigration office, *Oficina de Extranjería*, or police station to request this residency card. Appointments are usually made online. Please note that it can take weeks just to get an appointment, depending on where you are located (in bigger cities, it will take longer). You will also need to check on what documents are required at your local office. Your school should be able to guide you through this process. Please note that you have to apply for your visa before leaving the U.S. and that you can only apply for the TIE once you are in Spain at your local *Oficina de Extranjería*. You cannot apply for a visa in Spain.

## 10. How can I best prepare to move to Spain?

Once you have your visa, it is time to buy your tickets. We strongly urge you not to purchase your plane tickets until you have received your visa in hand unless the plane tickets include a no-fee-change-in-dates policy. There have been cases where recipients have missed flights because they had not received their visas on the date of the purchased flight. Visas may take many weeks to be processed. Please do not assume you will have your visa by a certain date.

As soon as you know the name of your school, you should contact them and introduce yourself. They will be looking forward to hearing from you and are usually open to helping you with settling into life in Spain. If you write to them in August, many schools will be closed, so please be patient if you don't hear back from them immediately.

Moving to any new city is challenging and even more so to a new country. You will have to find housing on your own and may not settle on the first place you see or live in. It can sound overwhelming but break it down into simple steps – it'll make everything less stressful. The program provides many opportunities for

personal and professional growth. You will come back a different person than the one who went over to Spain to begin this adventure. Flexibility is the keyword as not everything will go as planned. Keep an open mind. Embrace the cultural differences. Embrace the ambiguities. The program will be what you choose to make of it.

Further information is offered on the *What to Expect in Spain* section of our website.



## 11. What steps should I take when arriving in Spain?

Once you are in Spain you will have to make several arrangements:

- Open a cell phone account and get your Spanish SIM card
- Look for housing
- Open a bank account
- Apply for a residency card (TIE)
- Turn in your onboarding paperwork as requested by your regional education office. Doing this asap will help to avoid administrative delays in the issuing of your stipend in most cases.

See our *What to Expect in Spain* section on our website for more information.

It's usually helpful to connect with others on social media or other virtual means. Language assistants who have already been in the program and have a placement in your region are a great source of information. Reddit and Facebook can be helpful resources. You can also find many WhatsApp groups for your location.

## 12. Will I be able to support myself financially?

Applying to NALCAP is free of any charge, as it is a government program. However, you should be prepared for some out-of-pocket costs related to your participation in the program:

1. Paperwork fees for the visa application (e.g., background checks, apostilles, translations).
2. Visa processing fees and costs associated with applying for a visa like traveling to the consulate.
3. Your flight.
4. Living expenses in Spain until you receive your grant (e.g., security deposits, cell phone lines, covering costs until you receive your first stipend).
5. Even though you will receive a monthly stipend as an assistant, you will not receive the first one until the first week of November at the earliest, as stipends are sent out on a monthly basis. Some regional education offices may experience administrative delays in getting the stipends out. This is not the ideal situation by far and should never happen. That being said, random regional education offices may experience this unfortunate situation. You should have enough savings to cover the first months or so of living expenses in Spain (October, November, and December). Keep in mind that you will most likely have to provide a security

deposit when renting an apartment. Having extra spending money will also allow you to have a cushion in case of need. Most assistants leave for Spain with at least \$3000.

This estimate really depends on your personal spending habits, lifestyle, and the region where you will be living (Madrid is very expensive, whereas smaller towns in Spain are cheaper). It is your responsibility to create a realistic budget for yourself. Some assistants do just fine on the stipend provided, while others need to supplement it by other means. You will also be able to work legally in Spain for up to 30 hours, in addition to your time at your school. Many language assistants do private tutoring on the side to supplement the stipend.

The following stipend amounts will be offered for regional quotas:

- *Canarias*: **14** hours/week, **820€**/month upon acceptance for Islas de Tenerife y Gran Canaria. **920€**/month for Islas de El Hierro, La Gomera, La Palma, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote y La Graciosa.
- *Castilla y León*: In some schools' **800€/14** hours and in others **935€/16** hours.
- *Comunidad Valenciana*: **16** hours/week, **1000€**/month.
- *Comunidad de Madrid*: **16** hours/week, **1000€**/month.
- *Galicia and Extremadura*: **16** hours/week, **935€**/month.
- *Islas Baleares* **15** hours/week, **875€**/month.
- *Murcia*: **16** hours/week, **914.29€**/month
- Rest of regions: **14** hours/week, **800€**/month.

***\*Complete information on your placement, including the amount of the stipend and the medical insurance, will be offered in your Letter of Acceptance.***



### 13. What should I expect as a language and culture assistant?

As a language assistant, you will be teaching classes in English. You will have to feel comfortable preparing a class, as well as standing in front of one. Language assistants will be placed in public elementary, secondary, or language schools. Elementary schools may include early childhood programs. Secondary schools comprise middle and high schools. Language schools usually have adult students and schedules will most likely include afternoon and evening hours. Please note that you may be assigned to English as a foreign language classes or other class subjects (for example, science, technology, or art) that are taught in English in schools with bilingual programs. We ask you for flexibility and open mindedness as the program is not always able to grant you your desired placement.

Language assistants are usually assigned a mentor teacher at school. They will be your contact person and the one who will be giving you your school schedule. Schools usually try their best to give language assistants a three-day weekend, but this will always depend on how class scheduling works out for the school as a whole. Every school is different, and everyone's experience will be different. Some schools have only one language assistant and others have five. Our best advice is to try and make the most out of the experience by being open and approachable, but if you feel that something is not quite right, communicate this with your school.

It is also important that you comply with your schedule in a responsible manner. A strong performance will provide you with a positive reference letter for the future, in addition to making the most out of your experience. You are encouraged to be conscientious and aware of the standards and rules set forth by the program and your school. You should strive to form healthy working relationships with teachers and other members of the school staff. Please note that you may be removed from the position due to disciplinary or performance issues.

You will be assigned a schedule with 14-16 class periods. This does not mean that you will be in the school for 14-16 hours. There will most probably be some gaps in your schedule. These may include lunch and/or recess breaks. Your commute is also not included in your schedule.

As a language assistant, you will be a TA to teachers, but **you will never replace the teacher**. You should never be in charge of a class of students on your own on a continuous basis. Language assistants are not responsible for areas related to classroom discipline, assessment, or conducting meetings with parents. If you were to find yourself in a situation where you are being assigned responsibilities that do not pertain to you, notify the principal at your school first and then your regional education office, if needed.

See our *What to Expect in Spain* section on our website for further information.

#### 14. What if I like it? Can I renew for an extra year?

Language assistants may **renew in the program** for more than one school year. The limit for participation in the program is five years overall but attention must be paid to the regulations stipulated by each regional education office. Each of these offices sets a certain limit of years in the program for their jurisdiction.

Renewals are only possible if the assistant receives positive feedback from their assigned school. During this process, you can request to stay in your same school and/or region or move to a different location. Please consult with your regional education office for specific information on renewing around the month of January.

Priority in assignments works as follows:

1. First year renewals in the same region.
2. First year applicants and first year renewals in a different region.
3. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> year renewals.

All questions concerning renewals should be addressed to [auxiliares.extra@educacion.gob.es](mailto:auxiliares.extra@educacion.gob.es)





## 15. How can I keep informed?

It is normal for many questions to arise, but there are multiple ways to keep informed.

### THE NALCAP WEBSITE

This will be your primary source of information. On the left side, you will find the menu with all the options. Please pay close attention to all documents included in the *Applying to NALCAP* section.

Please also regularly check the *Updates in the Process* section of the website.

### NALCAP SOCIAL MEDIA

We provide updated information on our NALCAP social media accounts. We encourage you to follow us and share our account with anyone who might be interested in the program. Just click below!



### THE NALCAP PODCASTS



Learn about the [daily experiences of American language assistants in Spain](#).

The podcasts are an incredible resource to hear directly from language assistants about different topics dealing with daily life in Spain. Episodes include information on what it's like to live in a small town, cultural aspects, cultural differences, and points of view from lead teachers and students, among others.

### THE NALCAP WEBINAR AND ORIENTATION SESSIONS IN SPAIN

You will have several briefings to help you be prepared for this experience:

- In the summer, the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain in the USA and Canada organizes a webinar discussing what you need to do in Spain.

- Subsequently, the Ministry of Education of Spain organizes an orientation session for language assistants from all countries.
- Lastly, each regional education office organizes an orientation session and/or training activities for language assistants placed in a school in their region.

The date and time for the NALCAP webinar will be announced on our social media.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Most answers to your questions can be found in the *Application Guidelines*, the *FAQs*, and the *NEW PROFEX 2 handbook*.

For any other questions not referred to in these documents, please contact us via email. The address can be found in the Contact Us section of our website.

16. Important information. Please read carefully.

## DATA PROTECTION

The Ministry of Education of Spain will use the information you provide on your application form for the purpose of reviewing your application and sharing updates and information concerning your application with you. If accepted into the program, we may use the information provided for the handling of your participation in NALCAP and for NALCAP promotional services. We may also share your information with collaborating institutions, government departments, and other third parties involved in the program. Applying to the program acknowledges acceptance of these conditions.

## BE AWARE OF POSSIBLE SCAMS

The Ministry of Education of Spain reminds applicants that registration for the program is FREE. We will never ask for any type of payment via email or any other means. **Be aware that we will never ask for or require any financial information** concerning credit or debit cards and/or bank access codes.

Please remember that all the email addresses that belong to the Ministry of Education of Spain end with the domain [@educacion.gob.es](mailto:@educacion.gob.es)

## PLEASE NOTE

The Education Office of the Embassy of Spain in the U.S. and Canada is responsible for the promotion of the official program in these two countries and for providing general information concerning the program, as well as assistance during the application process. Once you have received your Letter of Acceptance, meaning you have received a placement from the Ministry of Education or a regional education office in Spain, all further information concerning your assignment and experience in the program needs to be handled by these offices in Spain. Only your regional education office in Spain will be able to assist you with any issues or concerns. As much as we would like to help you resolve certain issues, once assigned to a school/region, we are limited in our reach.

We sincerely hope that you have a wonderful experience in Spain sharing your language and culture with our students while immersing yourselves in the vibrant tapestry of Spanish life. We believe that the presence of language assistants in our classrooms will not only enhance students' language skills but also deepen their appreciation for cultural diversity.

