

NALCAP

North American Language and Culture

Assistants Program in Spain



Frequently Asked Questions

2024-2025



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1. THE PROGRAM

1.1. What is NALCAP?

The North American Language and Culture Assistants Program (NALCAP) is an educational outreach initiative of the Ministry of Education of Spain. The program provides U.S. and Canadian college students and graduates, majoring in any subject, with the opportunity of becoming language teaching assistants to teachers in Spain while at the same time being immersed in the Spanish language, culture, and society. Program recipients must have native-like proficiency in English to carry out their tasks in schools.

1.2. What is the main goal of the program?

The main goal of the program is to bring native-like speakers of English into every classroom in Spain to enhance students' language skills. The language assistant serves as a linguistic model for students in Spain. Listening to a native-like speaker is proven to better language skills. Grant recipients will also be sharing their culture in the classroom. 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.

1.3. What is the duration of the program?

Grant recipients will spend 8 months in Spain from October 1 until May 31. For those selected for the region of Madrid, the duration of the program is from October 1 to June 30. You are advised to carefully check the duration of your assignment in the information provided in the Letter of Acceptance that you will receive.

1.4. Can I start later than October?

Unfortunately, you cannot. The program runs from October 1 – May/June (see your Letter of Acceptance). Short term placements or joining the program after the start date is unfortunately not possible with NALCAP. The only possible exceptions for arriving later than October 1 are related to visa issuing delays or accepting placements that have been rejected due to unforeseen circumstances.

2. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

2.1. What are the eligibility requirements?

- Be a U.S. citizen and have a valid 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
- Have a clean background check
- Be aged 18 - 60. You must be at least 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.*

It is recommended that participants in the program have a basic level of Spanish for daily life and needs in Spain - renting an apartment, buying groceries and such. It may also be helpful at your school on a very limited basis (ex. The principal does not speak English and you need to discuss something). However, in the classroom you should only be speaking in English.

Grant recipients are requested to be responsible, broad-minded, and have a flexible attitude as well as being open to new ideas and cultures. These qualifications are necessary as recipients will have a direct impact on the education of students in Spain.

2.2. What are the age requirements?

You must be at least 18 years old as of January 1, 2024, and not be 60 or over on January 1, 2025, to participate in the program.

2.3. I am a freshman. Can I apply to the program?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. You need to be at least in your sophomore year of college at the time of the application, in addition to the age requirements. But we look forward to your participation in the near future.

3. APPLICATIONS

3.1. How to apply

The entire application process will be done electronically through our online portal - PROFEX 2. Applicants will need to follow the information in the *Application Guidelines* and the *PROFEX 2 Handbook*, in addition to these FAQs. We recommend various read throughs of these documents before and during the application process.

3.2. What documents do I need to submit for the application?

You will need to submit 4 documents. All documents are to be uploaded in PDF format onto the PROFEX 2 application.



1. A copy of the main page of your valid U.S. **passport**.
(See the RECAP on our website for a picture of the page).
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 with the following requirements:
 - ✓ Not be longer than 250-300 words
 - ✓ Written in **English**
 - ✓ Addressed to the Ministry of Education of Spain
 - ✓ Stating that you are a native-like speaker of English
 - ✓ Explaining why you would like to participate in NALCAP
 - ✓ **Signed and dated by you**. Digital signatures are accepted

Please note that your signature on this statement is an application requisite.

4. A letter of recommendation from a college professor/instructor/employer with the following requirements:
 - ✓ Be on an **organization's official letterhead**
 - ✓ Include the writer's **name, job title, and contact information**
 - ✓ Explain **how the writer knows the applicant and for how long**
 - ✓ Assess **the applicant's qualifications and qualities** towards their success in NALCAP
 - ✓ Provide a **final statement** where the writer speaks to the applicant's ability to be a language assistant in Spain
 - ✓ Be **written in English or Spanish**
 - ✓ Be **no more than 1 page** in length
 - ✓ Be **addressed** to the Ministry of Education of Spain
 - ✓ Be **signed and dated** by the writer **no earlier than September 1, 2023**

Please refer to the ***Letter of Recommendation Guidelines*** on our website for more information.

Applicants who hold dual citizenship from a country belonging to the European Union, in addition to your U.S. citizenship, or if you already have a residency card (TIE), you will need to provide the following documents as well:

- ✓ A medical certificate. The medical certificate needs to be on a doctor's letterhead and on a standard sized sheet of paper. The certificate must verify that you are free of drug addiction and are in good mental and physical condition and have no limitations that would impair your ability to be in a classroom.
- ✓ A background check. You will need to request a police background check in your country of origin.

Both of these documents must be presented at your school upon arrival. You do not need to provide them with your application.

3.3. When are applications open for the 2025 cycle?

The application cycle this year will run from **February 12th through April 5th , 2025.**

3.4. When can I register on PROFEX 2?

You can start to register on PROFEX 2 before the application period begins, if you wish, and start gathering the necessary documents.

PLEASE NOTE that you will NOT be able to upload documents or submit the application until the application period opens.

Please see the NEW PROFEX 2 handbook for step-by-step instructions on how to electronically submit your application on the PROFEX 2 portal.

3.5. Do I need to submit a background check with my application?

No, not with your application. But you will need this document later on, when you apply for your visa (once accepted to the program).

If you are a dual citizen of the U.S. and a country in the European Union, and you plan on using your European passport to enter Spain (thus **not** requiring a visa), you will still need the background check but obviously not for the visa application. Please request a police background check in the country where you have been living for the past 6 months and present it upon arrival at your assigned school.

3.6. Do I need to submit a medical certificate with my application?

No, not with your application. But you will need this document later on, when you apply for your visa (once accepted to the program).

If you are a dual citizen of the U.S. and a country in the European Union, and you plan on using your European passport to enter Spain (thus **not** requiring a visa), you will still need a medical certificate. Present it at your assigned school upon arrival.

3.7. What should the medical certificate state?

The certificate must verify that you are free of drug addiction, are in good mental and physical condition, and have no limitations that would impair your ability to be in a classroom. The medical certificate needs to be on a doctor's letterhead and on standard sized paper.

3.8. How can I get a medical certificate?

Contact your family physician who should have your health records and ask them for the required medical certificate. You can also find a doctor in your area who can provide the certificate. For medical certificates for visa applications, please refer to **your local Consulate General of Spain** website for specific requirements.

3.9. Who can write a recommendation letter for the applicant?

You should ask a college professor/instructor/employer or mentor. Please share the letter of recommendation guidelines with the person writing the letter for you. Remember that the program requires that all applicants provide a current letter of recommendation dated no earlier than September 1, 2023.

Please make the writer aware that they will not be able to upload the recommendation letter to our portal. Only applicants may upload application documents to the portal. No exceptions can be made.

3.10. What level of Spanish do I need?

A basic level of Spanish is recommended. You will not need it for most of your internship duties at your school, but it will be helpful on a personal level to navigate everyday life.

3.11. What happens if I am in the process of renewing my passport while applications are open?

Submit your application with your current passport number and a PDF copy of the old passport. Once you receive your renewed passport, it is essential and critical that you change the old passport number to the new one. Not doing this immediately may cause issues with your visa application process. To do this, follow these instructions on the PROFEX 2 portal:

1. Log into PROFEX 2 and go to the MY PROFILE section of the portal:

My Profile - General Data - Basic Data - Click "Modify" - Click "Change Document Number."

2. Enter your new document number and click on SAVE.

3. **Upload a scanned copy of your new passport in PDF format in the "Attached Documents" section of PROFEX 2.**

4. Await instructions from the program reviewers or tech support with the confirmation of the change.

Keep in mind that your username is your passport number, so it is extremely important to keep this information updated, in addition matters concerning visas.

3.12. How do I know if the application registration is complete?

When your status is **ADMITIDA**.

An application is considered to be entirely reviewed and completed only when ALL 4 required documents submitted to PROFEX 2 have been reviewed and approved. If this is the case, your status will then change to **ADMITIDA**. Once your status is **ADMITIDA** you now qualify to receive a regional placement. Access the application frequently to check your status. Also, check your junk mail folder often.

Please keep in mind that **ADMITIDA does NOT mean you have been accepted into the program**. It just means that you have submitted the correct paperwork. You are one step from being accepted into the program.

Please see our **Application Guidelines** for complete information.

To check on your PROFEX 2 status, please follow the instructions in the NEW PROFEX 2 Handbook.

3.13. What happens if there are issues with the paperwork (missing, doesn't meet requirements)?

You will be contacted as soon as possible by a reviewer via email. Check your inbox and junk mail folders frequently. If you forgot to upload a document or have been asked to upload one, do it to the **Attached Documents (Documentos Anexos) section under MY PROFILE**.

3.14. How are the placements assigned?

Priority in assigning a position for a given application will be based on your application number but not exactly in order, as the admissions process has many intricacies. For example, in most cases, first time renewals are assigned positions before anyone else.

No application will be assigned a position without having reached the status of **ADMITIDA** on PROFEX 2.

3.15. Who selects the applicants?

The Ministry of Education of Spain and the regional education offices (*Consejerías de Educación*) in each of the regions of Spain (*Comunidades Autónomas*) select the NALCAP award recipients.

3.16. What is the timeline once applications have been submitted?

Here's a timeline of what to expect on your way to receiving an assignment. Please be patient. The program reviewers have numerous applications to process. Check your email frequently and don't forget to check your junk email folder too. TIA!

1. When you submit your application, your status will be **EN REVISIÓN**. Upon review, if all 4 documents meet the requirements, then it will change to **ADMITIDA**. If something is missing, your status will remain **EN REVISIÓN** until you provide your reviewer with whatever is needed (they will reach out via email. You will need to access PROFEX 2 and check to see if there have been changes in your status.
2. You receive an email that your status is **ADMITIDA**. This means that your application has been reviewed and approved. You now qualify to receive a regional placement.
3. You receive an email that you have been assigned a regional placement in Spain. You have **3 days to accept or decline the position on PROFEX 2**. Please note that if you do not accept the position, you will not be eligible for another position for the 2024-2025 school year. You may , however, apply in future application cycles.
4. Starting around **late May and through the fall**, regional education offices will begin sending out the **Letters of Acceptance**. This letter is of the utmost importance. On it you will receive all the pertinent information concerning your assignment. In addition, you will need it to apply for a visa before leaving the U.S. and then for a residency card once you have arrived in Spain.

3.17. I applied last year but declined to enter the program. Do I have to submit a new application?

Yes. If you registered on PROFEX last year, you will be able to access the portal with the same username and password. However, you must submit a brand-new application with all the updated required documents.

3.18. How can I delete an application that has already been submitted?

To delete a submitted application, please contact profex.soporte@educacion.gob.es or auxiliares.extra@educacion.gob.es sending them the application number you would like to delete.

4. ACCEPTING OR DECLINING YOUR REGIONAL PLACEMENT

4.1. Accepting or declining your regional placement

Applicants have **3 days to accept a placement** after receiving the placement notification email.

Follow these steps to accept or decline your placement:

- Log in to your account on PROFEX 2.
- Click on **Acceso al trámite**.

- Then click on **Mis solicitudes**.
- Your new status on PROFEX 2 should be **Candidato seleccionado**.
- Click on **Ver**.
- In the new window, click on **Aceptación o rechazo**
- Click on **Aceptar Plaza** to **accept**.
- Click on **Rechazar Plaza** to **decline**.

4.2. I need to withdraw from the program after accepting a placement. What should I do?

If you need to withdraw from the program, after having officially accepted the offer and **only due to unexpected and extenuating circumstances**, please email the following contacts as soon as possible:

- If you were allocated to **a regional education office**, please contact them directly (contact info on our website - CONTACT US section).
- If you were allocated to **cupo ministerio**, contact renuncias.auxminis@educacion.gob.es
- You will also need to contact the school you were placed in.

We ask you to seriously consider this option. Please note that your withdrawal from the program at later stages of the application process may affect a school's chances of receiving another language assistant.

Should any unusual or extreme situation occur preventing you from continuing in the program once in Spain, a written explanation should be provided to the Department Chair and Principal of the school and to your regional education office in Spain.

Note: "Unusual and exceptional circumstances" are defined as serious health issues or specific family circumstances (proof may be required).

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. What roles and responsibilities do I have as a language and culture assistant?

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/or Art - always under the guidance of the classroom teacher.

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

On the flip side, if you experience a situation that you do not feel comfortable with, make sure you reach out to your principal or regional education office. Talking through situations is always the best way to search for and attain resolutions.

5.2. What is my teaching schedule?

NALCAP language assistants will carry out their activities during 14 to 16 class periods per week, depending on the region. The assistant and the classroom teacher or department chair may agree upon other tasks or responsibilities for the assistant to carry out, such as attending meetings and participating in extracurricular activities. You may also be asked to participate in events organized by the school.

5.3. Do language assistants replace teachers?

Never. 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.

6. TYPE OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT AND LOCATION

6.1. What kind of schools might I be assigned to?

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.

6.2. Can I apply to a specific location?

Applicants must choose 3 preferred destinations in Spain on their applications. Please note that you will be applying to **a region**, not a city or town (there have been exceptions to this in the region of Andalucía). The Ministry of Education of Spain will attempt to accommodate your preferences, but a specific placement cannot be guaranteed. Language assistants are needed in cities and in smaller towns. We ask you to keep an open mind on placements. Experiences in smaller locations will also be worthwhile. 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.

6.3. I have been assigned a small town, but I selected a city as my placement on my application.

Placements are given out in areas all across the country. As stated before, there are no guarantees on placements. Many of the placements are given in small towns. Please keep an open mind to these placements, as these types of places 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.

6.4. I would like to be assigned to the same region with a significant other/ friend. Can I?

When applying make sure you write in on your application that you would like to be assigned to the same location with another person. There is a section on the application where it asks you about locations and if you are going with a significant other/friend. In that section, write in that you would like to be placed in the same location as the other person, giving the other person's name and contact information. Make sure both applicants write in this information on each application. Applications for placement with another person will only be considered when **both applications have been submitted**. We strongly encourage you to submit your applications together 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.

6.5. How likely am I to be placed in my preferred locations and school settings?

Please know that while every effort is made to accommodate your preferences, there are no guarantees that you will be placed in your selected regions or school settings. The program is looking for broad-minded and tolerant individuals who are willing to be placed in any school in Spain, whether it be a city or a small town. The Ministry of Education of Spain strives to achieve expansive institutional and geographic distribution in placements in its quest to promote cultural awareness and understanding.

6.6. Can I change my region of preference once I have submitted my application?

Unfortunately, no. If you would like to change your region of preference once you have submitted your application, your only option is to delete your first application, and complete a new one. This of course is only possible while applications are open. Keep in mind that this means that you will lose your first application number and thus, your position for assignments. To find out how to delete an application, see 3.18.

7. CONDITIONS

7.1. What does the program cover?

- ✓ A stipend of €800-1000 per month is awarded for your participation in the program.
Please note that you will receive your first stipend during the month of November and perhaps later if administrative issues arise in your regional education office. We recommend taking some savings to Spain.
- ✓ Medical insurance
- ✓ An orientation course at the beginning of the school year
- ✓ An official certificate of participation for a completed program

7.2. Does the stipend include holidays/vacations?

Yes. You will have the same holidays and vacations as your school.

7.3. When do you receive your first stipend?

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; smaller towns in Spain are much cheaper). It is your responsibility to create a realistic budget for yourself. Some assistants do just fine on the grant provided, while others need to supplement their stipends by other means.

7.4. What stipends are offered in the different regions?

The following stipend amounts were offered last year 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.
- Madrid and Comunidad Valenciana: 16 hours/week, 1.000€/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

Also keep in mind that the cost of living and thus living expenses can vary substantially in the different regions.

Complete information concerning your stipend will be offered in your *Letter of Acceptance*.

7.5. What are the costs of participating in NALCAP?

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

1. Paperwork for visa application (ex. background checks, apostilles, translations among others) and perhaps travel to your local consulate
2. Visa application fees
3. Your flight
4. Living expenses in Spain until you receive your grant (ex. security deposits, cell phone lines, covering costs until you receive your first stipend, among others)

7.6. Where does the orientation course take place and how long does it last?

Before starting your assignment, you will need to attend an orientation course scheduled and provided by your regional education office in Spain. You will receive information about orientation from this office. The orientation course may be held at the end of September or early October and may be offered during various days. Each regional education office offers its own orientation course with different schedules.

7.7. What does the medical insurance cover?

Medical insurance varies depending on the regional education office where you are placed. Your regional education office will provide you with all the information on the coverage. You will be able to find this information in your *Letter of Acceptance*. **Please be aware that most insurance policies will not cover preexisting conditions, so you may need to supplement your policy if this is the case.**

7.8. I need to take medication. Should I bring my own supply to Spain?

Absolutely. We highly recommend you bring your own supply of necessary medication with you when you travel to Spain, at least for the first few months, until you understand how the Spanish system works and you find out whether you have access to the same medication in Spain. Please note that most insurance policies will **not** cover medication. But you will find that medication in Spain is quite affordable.

7.9. If I take my spouse/children to Spain, do they get medical insurance too?

No. The medical insurance offered only covers the language assistant, not their dependents. If selected, you will have to make arrangements to cover medical expenses for your dependents if they go with you to Spain.

7.10. Who pays for travel costs to and from Spain?

Travel to and from Spain is at the language assistant's own expense.

7.11. Are room and board provided by the program?

No. Participants in the program are responsible for finding housing and covering their housing and food costs. This is why the stipend is allotted.

Housing: You are responsible for finding your own housing in Spain. You should get in touch with the contact person at your school before you leave the U.S., in the hope that they may provide you with some possible housing options in your area. They can recommend an inexpensive hotel or youth hostel where you can stay for the first few days or offer you other options.

We highly recommend **NOT** getting permanent housing until after you have arrived in Spain or have at least been in contact with your school. (Obviously, staying at a hotel or Airbnb for your first days/weeks while you find something permanent is a good and safe option.)

Reasons for this include:

1. It is not advisable to sign a lease without seeing the apartment and surrounding neighborhood first.
2. You will probably not know the region well enough before you arrive to know which areas are near or easily accessible to your school.
3. Scammers may take advantage of the fact that you are not in the country.

7.12. How can I get a letter of recommendation once I have completed the program?

Only your school or the regional education office can provide you with a letter of recommendation once you have completed the program. Unfortunately, neither the Embassy, the Consulate or the Ministry of Education can do so.

8. RENEWALS

8.1 Who are considered to be renewal candidates? How can they renew their positions?

Renewals are only for those language assistants **who are currently in NALCAP** in Spain and would like to apply for another year.

Please contact your regional education office to renew for a second year in the same region in January. If you would prefer to move to a different region, you will need to contact the Ministry of Education in Spain at auxiliares.extra@educacion.gob.es. You can find further information on renewing, albeit in Spanish [here](#).

If you have been a language assistant in Spain this past year but are part of another program and would like to apply for a position in NALCAP, please be aware that you are **NOT considered a renewal**. You will need to follow the procedures for **first time applicants**.

Please note that the maximum number of years of service permitted for this program is 5 years.

8.2 Can renewal candidates automatically re-enter Spain? How do they renew their NIE/TIE?

No. The language and culture assistants approved for Ministry renewal may apply for the renewal of their *Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero* (TIE) within 60 days prior to the expiration date of their TIE. To this end, language assistants must consult the required documents for the TIE renewal are at the *Oficina de Extranjería* in their region in Spain (*Comunidad Autónoma*) where they are assigned.

Please be aware that **TIE renewals are not automatic**. If your *“Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero”* expires, you must go back to the U.S. or Canada and apply for a visa at your local Consulate General of Spain in your home country (US or Canada). You can find more info on our website under the What to Expect in Spain section in the Language Assistant Guide provided by the Ministry of Education of Spain.

All questions involving TIE should be directed to your local *Oficina de Extranjería* in Spain. Your school or regional education office should be able to help and guide you through the process.

9. VISA APPLICATIONS

9.1. Do I need a visa? Which consulate should I contact?

Yes, you do. The only exception is if you hold a passport issued by a country in the European Union, in addition to your U.S. passport (dual citizenship).

You will need to contact your local Consulate General of Spain in order to apply for a *Long-Term National Type Student visa* to live in Spain. **You cannot leave for Spain before obtaining a visa.**

Visa applications are consular matters. The Consulates General of Spain in the U.S. are in charge of issuing visas. The most updated information regarding Consular jurisdiction, visa applications, and visa instructions will be posted on our website. However, any and all information offered by your local consulate overrule the information posted on our website. All questions regarding visa applications should be directed to your local consulate.

*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 did not receive 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.***

9.2. Are my dependents eligible for a visa?

Yes, they are. Your dependents will be issued a visa, but please note that they are not permitted to work under this visa. In addition, you will have to acquire medical insurance for them. The program only covers medical insurance for the language assistant, not their dependents.

10. FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our website for complete information on the program. If you still have questions after reading the information on there, you can email us nalcap@educacion.gob.es