



# Funding Your Study Abroad

Paula Messina, Regional Director, University Relations,  
AIFS Abroad

Andrew Sandefur, Global Program Advisor, AIFS Abroad

Jenna Reitz, AIFS Marketing + Recruitment Ambassador,  
AIFS Abroad



Fewer than  
10% of US  
college  
students  
study abroad.



Having this opportunity on your transcript and resume  
sets you apart from your peers.



# Know Your Finances

***Know how much study abroad is going to cost—create an excel sheet***

- How much are program fees? What is included?
- How much is not included in the program fees? How much will I need for airfare, passport, extra insurance, etc.? Home school tuition or fees?
- How much will I need when I am abroad? Books, food, fun, independent travel?





# Choosing the Right Program

You can consider programs from an academic, financial, and/or location point of view:

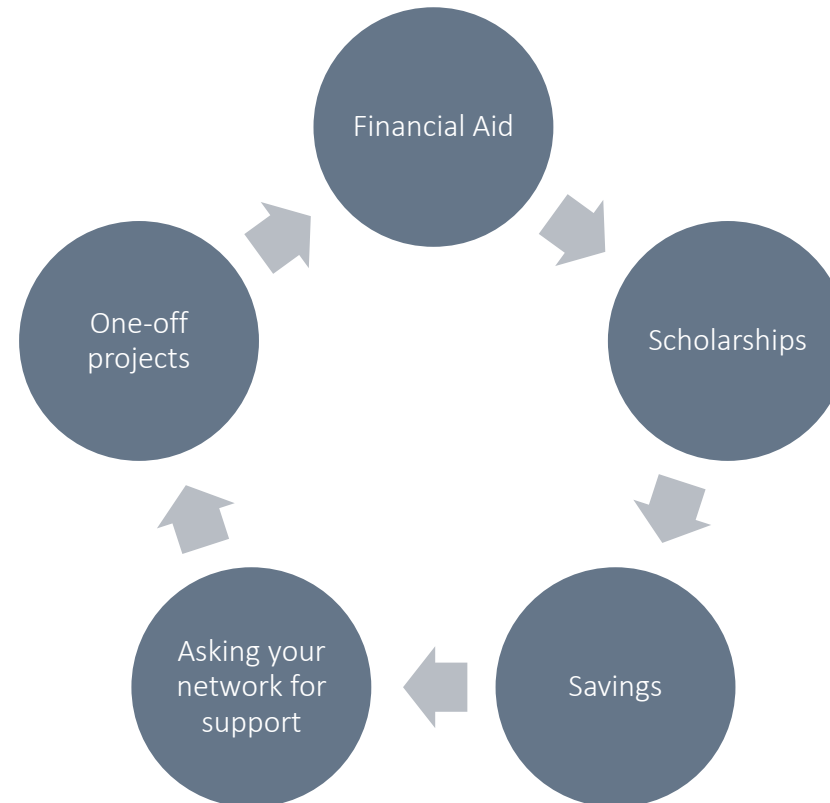
- **Program Location and Cost** – Which locations might more financially feasible for me?
- **Program Length and Cost** – Short term programs can be good budget wise





# Take Advantage of Available Resources

***Five Pillars of funding your study abroad experience:***





# Financial Aid



*Can my Financial Aid can be used to pay program fees?*

- Fill out your FAFSA- opens Oct 1 for next school year. Grants like the Pell Grant or state & college grants are free money & have deadlines!
- Talk to your Financial Aid office about your eligibility for grants & student loans. Ask about what Financial Aid will carry over to study abroad. Also, ask about scholarships.
- Financial aid can include subsidized and unsubsidized loans.

*SCHOLARSHIPS, SAVINGS & CREATIVE FUNDRAISING will help to complete your funding*

# Apply for Every Scholarship you can...



- Don't limit yourself to study abroad scholarships
- Organize your applications- Google search, Excel list (*deadlines*, eligibility, application requirements, etc.)
- Get a good letter of recommendation or two
- Some ideas:

Location or major-specific scholarships

Professional Associations- ie, Zonta Women in Business

Large corporations- Coca-cola, Staples, Ford, etc.

Work scholarships- franchises, unions, company matching

Wild card scholarships (left-handed, heritage scholarships, etc.)

Local organizations- Rotary, Kiwanis, Masons, Elks, Moose Lodge, etc.



# Do some searches...

- **Benjamin A Gilman International Scholarship** <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/> Open to US citizens or nationals; Pell Grant recipients
- **Fund for Education Abroad** <https://fundforeducationabroad.org/apply/> Open to US citizens and permanent residents
- **Diverse International Women of Color (DIWC)** <https://diwcfund.org>
- **Tortuga Backpacks** <https://www.tortugabackpacks.com/pages/study-abroad-scholarship>
- <http://www.studentscholarships.org/> The largest scholarship search database on the internet
- <http://www.internationalscholarships.com/> A search database for scholarships for study abroad & international students
- <http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/> A student guide to financial aid and scholarships
- <http://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships> A student guide to financial aid and scholarships
- <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx?sf53479980=1> US Dept of Labor scholarship finder
- <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/study-abroad-scholarships-grants> Blog post with links to several study abroad scholarships
- Meet with your home university study abroad office to ask for their resources





# AIFS Scholarships & Grants\*

- <https://www.aifsabroad.com/financial-aid/>
- 10 scholarships and 9 grants awarding amounts from \$200 to \$10,000 of program fee reductions
- Deadlines for scholarships: Oct 1 for J-Term & Spring; March 1 for Summer programs; April 15 for fall
- Grants are automatically applied (if you qualify)
- Apply via the AIFS Student Portal

*\*Not applicable to Customized, Faculty-Led programs*





# Writing a winning scholarship essay...

- Get online advice – essay guides
- Follow the prompt(s)
- Statement of Purpose/Personal statement essay:
  - Tell your story- past, present & future- how will study abroad affect your future?
  - Connect your study abroad experience to your academic and career pursuits
  - Key identifies to include- community college, first gen student, disability, ethnic minority, LGBTQ+ HACU/HBCU/MSI
- Tips
  - Compose in Word – paragraph format
  - Character limit: Don't go over!
  - Review! Review! Review! Use resources- faculty, Writing Center
  - Don't start the night before the deadline!
  - Be careful with AI!





# With imagination, you'll get there...

## Creative Funding Ideas

- Lifestyle changes
- Virtual & In Person ideas
- Crowd funding
- Back to basic ideas

*Real student examples*



# Poll: According to financial guru Suze Orman, what is the fastest way to save up money?



a. Get a part time job



b. Open a savings account



c. Cut down on monthly expenses



d. Work more hours at your current job

# Look at your expenses

*Are there ways you can cut your actual expenses to save for study abroad?*



- Buy a coffee maker for home instead of going to coffee shop several times a day
- Stop eating out, start cooking
- Avoid the temptation of buying unnecessarily online (Amazon, etc)
- Stop a habit (smoking, drinking coffee/soda) and put money toward studying abroad in a “Travel Fund” jar
- Stop subscriptions, memberships, annual passes, etc.



# Use your (social) network...



**What are your networks?** School (current & former), community, religious organization, sports, etc. *Everyone* you know should be aware that you are going abroad & how they can help to fund you.

**Where are your contacts?** Facebook, Instagram, TikTok...

Tell your story- your major, school, background. Talk about your future goals- grad school, dream job?

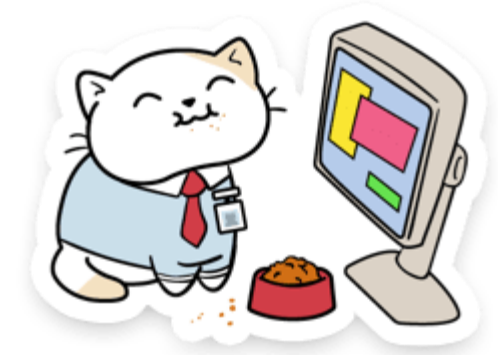
Why do you want to study abroad? How will it impact your future? State some study abroad outcomes (UC Merced study abroad statistics)

Post photos, fun facts about the city, country, & program – include your funding website information. Make your Facebook cover photo a photo of the country. Post your funding info. Make a video of the program/city/country. Make a TikTok video.

Disclose how the funds will be used & why a donation makes a difference

Post more than once!

# Crowd Funding Sites



GoFundMe, etc. Some students prefer Venmo, PayPal, Zelle, CashApp, etc.

Tell your story! Upload at least 4 images and videos of you- your life, your studies, your goals, your program, your study abroad city (YouTube has plenty of short travel videos.)

Write a detailed description of your story (see above!)

Explain what the money will be used for- tuition, program fees, cultural activities, airfare, housing, etc. Go into detail about the aspects of the program- subjects you will study, places you will visit.

Post updates & comments. Say thank you right away. Keep track of who donated & send them a postcard from abroad. Send regular updates from abroad.

Share the campaign across social media sites & by email.

Set up giving levels or tiers- what will you do in exchange for donations? Postcards, gift, visit in person on return- how creative can you get?

Remember, if you cancel and do not go abroad, you should return all monies donated.

# Virtual Fundraisers

Use your talent- Are you a crafter, artist, artisan? **Sell your creations using an online** platform like Etsy, Ebay. Are you a singer, musician, poet or performer? **Create a virtual performance** & ask for donations.

Use your talent- **Create a master class** & charge for it- Do you code? Do you paint? Do you sew? Do you cook?

**Online auction.** Auction off your stuff, artwork, etc on Ebay

**Online yard sale-** sell on online platforms like Mercari, Facebook Marketplace, Poshmark

**Buy old thrift store furniture,** restore & sell it online (Facebook Marketplace)



# In-person fundraisers

Mow lawns/rake leaves/general yard work- *advertise online Nextdoor.com*

Dog walker/feeder/caregiver

Recycle bottles

Bake sales- *make a menu, use social media, bake for events*

Yard sale- *donations from neighbors, sell drinks/food*

Babysitting- *advertise online Nextdoor.com*

Spaghetti dinner night, Pancake breakfast, Ice cream social

Bingo night, game night tournament

Host a concert, spoken word, performance

Car wash

Holiday gift wrapping service

Paint & Sip

# More ideas to make or save some extra \$\$\$...

- Seasonal work- Christmas (retail); Spring season (garden centers)
- Food delivery (Uber eats, Door dash, etc.) or shopping (Instacart)
- Use points or miles accruing cards to buy your airfare and cashback credit & debit cards to save money (program fees)- beware of interest!
- Set up a “Keep the Change” savings account with your bank
- Ask your family to give you money or travel-related gifts for holidays and birthdays





# Angelica: Baking her way to Barcelona

Angelica created a quarter-page menu of baked goods and prices on one side and an explanation of herself, study abroad program and goals on the other.

Every day she walked her campus admin and faculty offices to sell and deliver baked goods. She and her sister baked at night. She raised over \$1500.

**Angelica S., Barcelona Spring 2020**



# Ada: Radio contest winner



I entered the 102.7 KIIS FM “Ryan pay my bill” contest and I won \$1000! It can get very confusing on how to win & how it works, but the KIIS FM website has all the instructions. I submitted my car payment statement via email. Ryan calls one name, every hour for ten hours a day. Once a name is called, that person only has 30 minutes to call back and claim the money, otherwise it's lost. I used my network and told all my friends, in case I was not able to listen.

Ryan called my name at 6am, I was getting out of the shower so I didn't hear. Luckily my friend, Julie, called me saying Ryan just called out my name. So, I immediately called in (I put the number in my contacts just in case) and claimed my money!

**Ada G., Costa Rica Winter 2020**

# Christina: \$1500 2-day yard sale



"Even with Financial aid and scholarships, I knew that I still needed to save money. So, since I have a lot of friends and family, I asked them if they could donate any of their old stuff so that I could have a HUGE yard sale. My family asked their friends and their neighbors as well. People donated old clothes, shoes, books, toys, furniture, etc. I also sold and made drinks like horchata and jamaica to sell at the yard sale since it was a hot day. During the yard sale, I also had signs up that promoted that the funds were going towards my study abroad experience and more people wanted to help. I ended up raising over \$1500."

"I also sold candy bars at work and saved as much as I could with part-time hours. I didn't go out as much and cut back on the fast food. I also did side jobs like babysit and yard work."

**Christina S., Barcelona Fall 2022**

Share your project, idea or funding story with us:

Paula Messina

[pmessina@aifs.com](mailto:pmessina@aifs.com)

# For more information on AIFS programs...

Fill out the QR code



Visit our website: [www.aifsabroad.com](http://www.aifsabroad.com)