

Colombia-Canada language assistants program

In January 2012, the Ministry of National Education of Colombia made a commitment to the Honourable Noël Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate of Canada, with regard to education cooperation between the two countries. One of the main focuses of the commitment is to improve Colombia's national bilingualism program, one of the aims of which is to improve the foreign-language skills of Colombian students and teachers. The Colombia-Canada language assistants program is a key component of this goal.

The **Colombia-Canada language assistants program** entails inviting Canadian postsecondary students to be language assistants at Colombian educational institutions that have language centres. The program is available to English- and French-speaking Canadian students, with a contract between the assistant and the institution to start in either February or August and last one academic year. The Colombian institution would grant a subsidy equivalent to \$800 per month (approximately) to cover living expenses. The Colombian government, through the Colombian Institute for Education Credit and Technical Studies Abroad (ICETEX), would pay for health insurance and defray expenses incurred during an orientation period in Bogota.

The document below provided by the Colombian embassy contains further background information about the program.

Students at institutions in your jurisdictions who are interested in participating in the program are invited to contact the Colombian embassy at:

Embassy of Colombia in Canada
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 7X7

Telephone: 613-230-3760 (general)
Fax: 613-230-4416
E-mail: embajada@embajadacolombia.ca

LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM

The Program is established through agreements between ICETEX and governments and institutions with the aim of encouraging bilingualism in Colombia and other countries. The Program promotes the mutual knowledge of academic, linguistic and cultural aspects between countries.

Every year, ICETEX invites Colombian educational institutions with a languages center to participate jointly in the Program. The governments or institutions assign assistants in their countries to teaching institutions in Colombia that have showed interest to participate in the Program. The Colombian teaching institution establishes an agreement with the assistant for an

academic year and grants a subsidy of monthly living expenses corresponding to approximately \$800. ICETEX pays for health insurance and living expenses in the Program for the period the assistants attend an introductory course in Bogota.

Agreements with:

1. China
2. Germany
3. United States
4. France
5. Jamaica
6. United Kingdom
7. Brazil

Regarding ICETEX:

The Colombian Institute of Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad (ICETEX) is a government entity that promotes higher education in Colombia and facilitates access to international opportunities offered to Colombians by foreign governments and agencies. ICETEX also provides scholarships for international students from countries which offer scholarships to Colombians, however, as Canada's ELAP scholarships are structured to increase direct collaboration between Canadian and Colombian postsecondary institutions. ICETEX also tries to attract Canadians to Colombia to spend a year teaching French or English as a second language, a grant program for Canadians to go teach in Colombia under the supervision of a Colombian professor. The Canadian teacher's assistant has duties, including presenting talks, and receives funds for various expenses.

Document provided by Colombia, through DFAIT