NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

gTLD

Supported Applicant Toolkit

Applicant Support Program
Updated 29 January 2026

ICANN

Welcome to the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Support Program!

We are pleased to have you with us on this journey of learning and exploration as you prepare to submit a gTLD application.

This toolkit is designed to be a guide to help you navigate and access the financial and non-financial support available, understand the different touch-points and learning opportunities, engage with volunteer mentors and pro bono service providers, and get involved in the ICANN Community.

Applying for a gTLD is a major business decision - our goal is to empower and enable you with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively submit an application. The toolkit content will be updated regularly as more resources become available, events are added, and training is developed to support your learning journey.

Let's get started.

Navigating ICANN information and resources

ICANN's mission is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet, you need to type an address – a name or a number – into your computer or other device. That address must be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world.

ICANN was formed in 1998 as a nonprofit, public-benefit corporation with a community of participants from all over the world. The multistakeholder model of Internet governance has played a crucial role in shaping an inclusive, sustainable, and effective governance structure for the Internet. By leveraging the strengths and perspectives of different stakeholders, it promotes a balanced and consensus-driven approach to managing the Internet as it becomes an increasingly critical global resource.

As a Supported Applicant, you are now a stakeholder and may have questions about how ICANN operates, why you may want to get involved, and where to find more information. ICANN for Beginners is a great place to start.

Keeping up with the latest news and announcements

Leading up to the opening of the next gTLD application submission period in 2026, you'll want to keep up to date on ICANN news, announcements, and happenings within the community. Many resources exist to keep you informed; learn about the key ways ICANN communicates and select the options that work best for you.

News Subscriptions	Receive the latest ICANN content directly to your email. Simply select the content or topics that interest you most, and you'll always find the latest ICANN news and content to read in your inbox. Sign up for news.
Announcements	Read ICANN Announcements to stay informed of the latest policymaking activities, regional events, and more. View recent announcements and subscribe.
Blogs	Read ICANN Blogs to stay informed of the latest policymaking activities, regional events, and more. View recent blog posts and subscribe.
Social Media	ICANN values a variety of perspectives and your voice is important. Connect and start a conversation with us across our social media platforms in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Join the conversation today.

Understanding your ASP benefits

The New gTLD Program: 2026 Round is intended to expand the Domain Name System via gTLDs that reflect new communities, geographies, and voices; and to provide new domain name registries with opportunities to innovate and compete, giving consumers more choice.

Applying for a gTLD requires significant financial and technical resources and may be out of reach for some. The intent of the ASP is to make the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round application and evaluation processes and fees more accessible to entities that would like to operate a registry but are unable to apply because of financial and other resource constraints.

As a Supported Applicant, you have access to the benefits and services that can assist you throughout the process – from applying for a gTLD, through contracting and delegation, into maintaining a sustainable registry.

Non-Financial Benefits	Financial Benefits
- Training materials (e.g. applying for a gTLD, becoming a registry operator) - Capacity development program - Access to an applicant counselor - List of volunteer professional service providers and mentors	75-85% reduction in applicable gTLD evaluation fees - Bid credit (pending outcome of contention resolution) - Reduced base registry agreement fees

Accessing the right support at the right time

Various support mechanisms are available depending on your individual needs or questions. Supported Applicants are encouraged to access all resources available to ensure you have the awareness, knowledge, and ability to complete the required steps to submit a gTLD application when the round opens.

Applicant Counselor

The Applicant Counselor provides guidance to supported applicants through regular touch-points, publications, and communications. Some areas where you may have questions include:

- **Where to find existing published materials and resources** on topics such as: Domain Name System (DNS), gTLD case studies on sustainable business models, ICANN Grant program, Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) bid credits, Extended Evaluations, Objections, Contention Sets, and more.

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- **How to access RSP resources** for finding service providers and how to connect with them.
- **Understanding costs involved** with the gTLD application process.
- **Understanding contracting requirements,** such as: Registry Customer Support, reservation and use of names, participation in Registry Stakeholder Group, etc.

To contact the Applicant Counselor, send an email to globalsupport@icann.org and your inquiry will be directed to the appropriate queue.

Mentors

Mentors volunteer their time to provide perspective and guidance based on their own personal experience in the industry. A mentor may provide advice on:

- **The Domain Name Industry -** the different types of business models to consider and other aspects of running a registry.
- **ICANN -** how to engage with ICANN's multi-stakeholder community and which committees may be beneficial for you to join.
- **The gTLD application -** navigating the application and evaluation processes, identifying resources, providing guidance, and sharing experience as appropriate.

A description of the mentorship services offered can be found on the ASP Resources webpage in the List of Pro Bono Service Providers and Mentors.

Pro Bono Service Providers

Pro Bono Service Providers offer volunteer hours for professional services related to their technical, legal, translation, and general business areas of expertise. A pro bono provider could help with various aspects of your gTLD application including:

- **General business services** to provide assistance in developing business and marketing plans, guidance in operationalizing a gTLD, translation services, financial, and/or legal services.
- **Application services** for guidance in writing and submitting a comprehensive, complete, and competitive gTLD application.
- **Technical services** to help navigate the technical aspectss of a gTLD application and understand the ongoing infrastructure requirements to run a registry including: RSP services, Internationalized Domain Names, DNS services, proxy services, rights protection management, and more.

A complete list of providers, regions, languages, types of services offered, and contact information can be found on the ASP Resources webpage in the List of Pro Bono Service Providers and Mentors.

Getting involved in the ICANN community

When you participate at ICANN, you are part of a global community helping to ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. Joining one of ICANN's multistakeholder groups is a great way for you to increase your knowledge of ICANN and participate in policy development, while partnering with others who have similar backgrounds and interests as you. You'll also gain valuable skills through professional development and connect with new people.

Find your ICANN group with a handy online matching tool.

At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) ● Learn more ● Get involved	The ALAC is the primary organizational home for the voice and concerns of the individual Internet user, representing the At-Large Community. Advocating for the interests of end-users, the ALAC advises on the activities of ICANN, including Internet policies developed by ICANN's Supporting Organizations; it also participates in ICANN's outreach and engagement programs. Individual ALAC members are organized into five Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs) based on their geographic regions including Africa (AFRALO), Asia, Australasia and Pacific Islands (APRALO), Europe (EURALO), Latin America and the Caribbean islands (LACRALO), and North America (NARALO).
Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) ● Learn more ● Get involved	The GNSO develops (and over time, recommends changes to) policies for gTLDs (e.g., .com, .org, .biz). The GNSO strives to keep gTLDs operating in a fair, orderly fashion across one global Internet, while promoting innovation and competition. The GNSO is structured around four broad stakeholder groups in order to represent the wide variety of groups and individuals that compose the ICANN community. There are multiple ways to participate in the GNSO – both as an applicant and when you become a Registry Operator.
Commercial and Business Users Constituency (BC) ● Learn more ● BC Membership	The Business Constituency is a body representing the views of the Internet business user community. The BC represents business of all types – multi-nationals, medium-size, and small enterprises. One of the BC's strengths is its association membership – which extends outreach directly to over 50,000 companies and indirectly to over 1.5 million companies worldwide.

Building knowledge through multiple resource offerings, news, and events

Learning content aims to provide applicants with comprehensive and easy-to-use resources presented in various formats to support different learner types.Learning resources incorporate an on-demand learning curriculum, virtual touch-points, newsletters, and information on upcoming meetings and events that may be of interest.

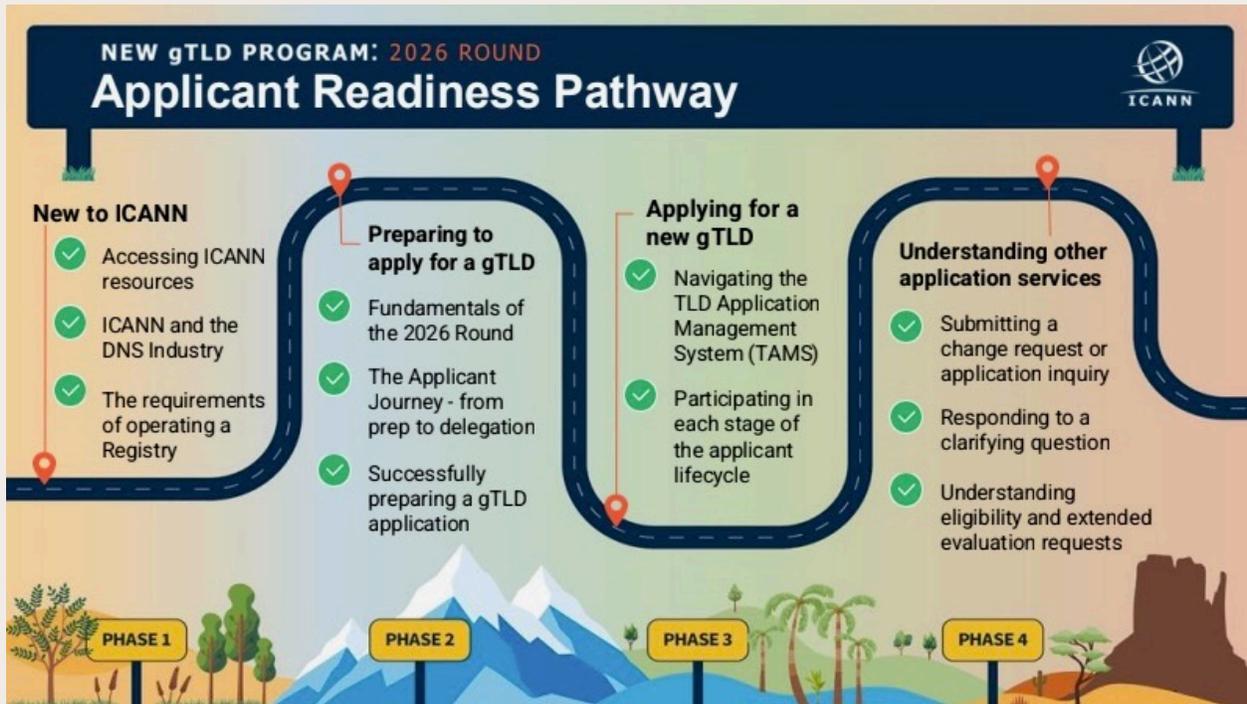|	
Applicant Readiness Pathway	A self-service learning pathway will guide you from onboarding as a newly supported applicant, to preparing to apply for a gTLD, to submitting a gTLD application, navigating the evaluation process, and other application services. These materials are designed to meet you where you are in your knowledge and understanding of ICANN, the DNS ecosystem, and the gTLD application process. New resources and materials will be added as the program progresses for just-in-time capacity development to guide your journey.
Meetings and Webinars	Regular virtual touch-points throughout the learning journey have been designed to help you stay informed and educated on key topics of interest. ICANN intends to partner with the community to collaborate on live and recorded webinars educating on aspects of the gTLD application process and applicant journey, and highlighting business and industry expertise. Notifications will be sent when new events are offered.
Community Connections	Guidance on becoming part of the complex ICANN community and Internet ecosystem will be offered in different formats - through webinars, ICANN meetings, learning curricula, and online resources. Engagement in the ICANN community is critical for success as a registry operator and getting involved early is an important part of the learning journey.
Newsletter	Supported applicants will have a dedicated newsletter containing reminders, new developments, additional resources, and tips for navigating the applicant journey. The newsletter is also a forum for providing feedback on how things are going, what resources are useful, and where ICANN can make improvements to support you.

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Learning Objectives

1. **Identify, locate, and navigate New gTLD Program** information, Applicant Guidebook, and other resources.

2. **Understand the requirements of the New gTLD Program** application and evaluation processes to apply for a gTLD, and be able to explain this information to others.

3. **Make informed decisions** about how to obtain and allocate resources to prepare a gTLD application.

4. Find opportunities to **follow and participate in ICANN's multistakeholder processes** related to the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

Navigating the Applicant Readiness Pathway

Supported Applicants may start with varying levels of knowledge. The learning curriculum encompasses four phases - it begins with ensuring a baseline understanding of ICANN, the DNS ecosystem, and the requirements of operating a Registry, as well as in-depth knowledge of the new gTLD Program: 2026 Round applicant journey, specific evaluations, and the ability to use the TLD Application Management System (TAMS).

PHASE 1 Introduction to ICANN	PHASE 2 Preparing to Apply for a gTLD	PHASE 3 Applying for a new gTLD	PHASE 4 Other Application Services
New applicants build understanding of ICANN and the DNS Industry.	Build knowledge of the New gTLD Program, the applicant journey and prepare an application.	Learn about submitting an application through the TLD Application Management System (TAMS).	Gain fundamental knowledge of additional application processes and services.
• Accessing ICANN resources. • Understanding ICANN and the DNS ecosystem. • Understanding the requirements of operating a registry.	• Understanding fundamentals of the New gTLD Program. • The applicant journey from prep to delegation • Preparing application materials.	• Navigating the application process. • Participating in each stage of the applicant lifecycle.	• Submitting a change request or inquiry. • Responding to a clarifying question. • Understanding future application processing stages.

The **New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Learning Pathway** includes a combination of self-directed resources, core learning events and resources, and contacts for coaching, support, and to resolve questions which remain. It will guide you through the four learning phases to help you prepare for each stage of the application process.

These learning assessments may help you determine where to start on your learning pathway.

Start with this Phase 1 Assessment Quiz to test your knowledge of ICANN, Registry Operator fundamentals, and the Domain Name System fundamentals. Use your score to determine which of the learning content you want to explore first to expand your knowledge of these themes.

Move to the Phase 2 Assessment Quiz to test your knowledge of how ICANN engages with the business sector and how to get involved and proactively participate in Internet governance and policymaking.
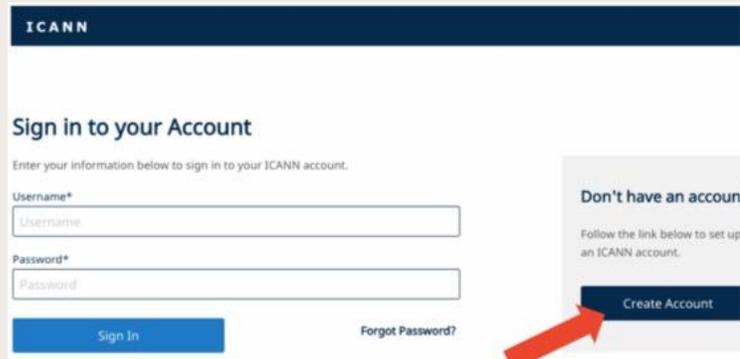
Accessing published tools and resources

ASP Supported Applicant tools, resources, and materials can be found on the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round website within the Applicant Support Program section. You will receive updates as new resources are developed and published to the website.

Logging into your ICANN Account

ICANN Learn is a useful platform to begin to build your foundational knowledge. Follow the instructions below to access ICANN Learn, see the Phase 1 learning curriculum assigned to all ASP Supported Applicants, and start your learning journey today.
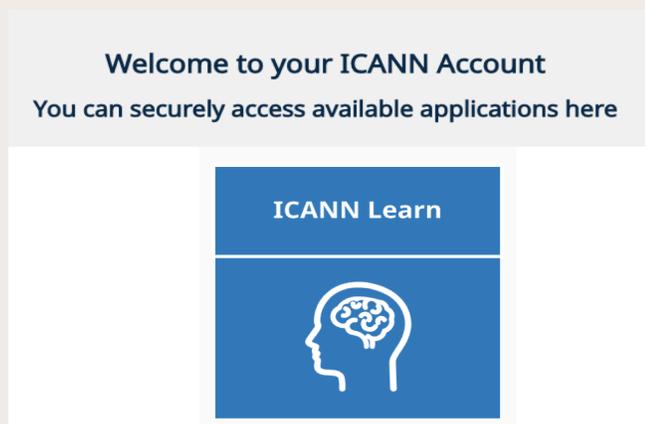
1. If you are new to ICANN and ICANN Learn, first visit learn.icann.org and create an ICANN Account, as shown with the red arrow. Then, fill out the required information and click **"Create Account".**

   If you have registered with an ICANN Account before, just type in your username and password in the fields to the left and click **"Sign In."**

2. If you already had an ICANN Account and signed in, it will take you directly to ICANN Learn – please go on to step three.
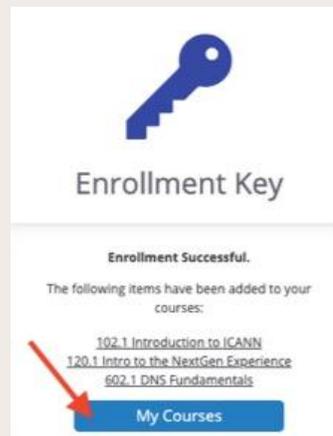
   If you had to create a new ICANN Account, you will be taken to your ICANN applications. From there, you can click on the ICANN Learn tile.

3. Once you've launched ICANN Learn and are in the ICANN Learn dashboard, scroll down and click on **"Enrollment Key,"** as shown with the red arrow below.

4. Enter the key:
    phase 1: **ASP2025P1**
    phase 2: coming soon
    phase 3: coming soon
    phase 4: coming soon

5. The key will automatically enroll you in the ASP Supported Applicant Phase 1 courses. You can find the courses by clicking on "My Courses," as shown with the red arrow below.

Learning courses and other learning opportunities are continually being developed and will be added to the learning pathway as they become available. You will receive updates when more courses are assigned, with new enrollment keys for each phase in the ASP Supported Applicant Learning Pathway.

Maintaining momentum and seeking support

ICANN's New gTLD Program Applicant Support Program is intended to make applying for a gTLD or operating a registry more accessible to applicants who would be otherwise unable due to financial or resource constraints. Proactive participation and engagement in the ASP is encouraged to help build the knowledge and ability needed to apply for a gTLD.

The ASP Team is available to answer your questions, offer support, and receive feedback. We look forward to working with you.

Welcome ASP Supported Applicants!

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