



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
ASCA 2026 TIMOTHY WELSH FELLOWS PROGRAM
Topic of Study: Facility Access

Deadline: May 20, 2026

Applications are now being accepted for the ASCA Timothy Welsh Fellows Program (click [here](#) to apply). In its 24th year, this Fellowship is a unique, board-run program which offers an exciting career development opportunity, aiming to identify and foster future swimming coach leaders. Annually, the ASCA Board of Directors identifies select coaches to spend a year of research, education, and career exposure dedicated to a project intended to support the growth and sustainability of our profession.

Matriculated Fellows will join an illustrious group of coach leaders more than 200 strong, who have all impacted the sport of swimming nationwide! For the 2026 Class, ASCA is seeking experienced coaches and program leaders interested in applied research and problem-solving, and individuals with real-world operational experience.

This year's topic will focus on one of the most pressing challenges in our sport: **Facility access. We know that saving pools saves lives! How can saving pools also save our programs, our coaches, and our athletes? How can swim programs achieve competitive success despite limited, aging, or inaccessible facilities?**

Across the country, coaches are navigating an increasingly difficult operating environment, facing aging pools, reduced pool access, rising costs, and infrastructure constraints. Pool space is shrinking due to facility closures, school and municipal budget constraints, and competing community demands. Many existing pools are aging rapidly, requiring costly maintenance or facing permanent shutdown. Even with available water, access is often fragmented, shared across multiple user groups, restricted to off-peak hours, or priced beyond what programs can sustainably afford. Despite alarming pool shutdowns, some programs continue to thrive.

These constraints create significant downstream challenges: inconsistent training schedules that disrupt athlete development; overcrowded lanes that hinder technical progress and increase injury risk; limited team growth due to capped roster sizes; and difficult tradeoffs between revenue generation and high-performance outcomes. At the same time, coaches are facing a growing administrative burden, taking on responsibilities such as facility management, negotiations, and logistics.

Compounding these issues, water safety and swim education programs are declining in many communities—shrinking the long-term pipeline of athletes and placing even greater strain on the facilities that remain.

And yet—despite these constraints—some programs continue to produce exceptional results towards drowning prevention. This Fellowship will uncover facility trends in the USA by highlighting the main challenges we all face and identify strategies that make survival possible in this new world of older pools.

Selected fellows will collaborate on a nationally relevant project that includes a case study on the situation facing American pool facilities today. It will be a deep dive into competitively successful programs operating under facility constraints, and provide a possible curated resource connecting coaches to facility experts and solutions for practical strategies to maximize limited space.

Key dates:

- **Application deadline:** May 20, 2026
- **Fellows Announced:** July 8, 2026
- **Program duration:** August 2026-August 2027
- **Required in-person participation:** World Clinic Sept 8-11, 2026 (Orlando, FL)

Fellows Criteria:

- Show aptitude for leadership (at any level)
- Be actively coaching or working in the swimming field
- Have at least five years coaching experience
- Have completed education (cannot be a student/in school)
- Be working/living in the USA during the upcoming Fellowship year
- Be a member in good standing of ASCA
- Attend the 2026 ASCA World Clinic in Orlando in person

Any ASCA member interested in contributing to meaningful, practical solutions for the future of swimming, and developing your voice as a future coach leader in our sport, is encouraged to apply! The ASCA Timothy Welsh Fellows Program is board-supported and Chaired by Coach Kathleen Prindle.

Application deadline for the 2026 Fellows class is May 20, 2026. The online application is available at www.swimmingcoach.org . Inquiries may be addressed to ASCA staff liaison Ariel Hodges at ahodges@swimmingcoach.org or to program Chair Kathleen Prindle at performanceaq@gmail.com.

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