

The U.S. Embassy Bucharest is pleased to invite nomination submissions for the 2021 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship. The program is scheduled to take place June 26 – July 31, 2021 but is contingent upon the feasibility and safety of in-person programming, which will continuously be monitored.

The five-week program addresses U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, democracy and civil society development, and economic prosperity. The program will be hosted by Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. The deadline for candidate nominations to be received by the Embassy is **Friday, February 26, 2021, 23:59 hrs.**

The interested candidates/high school students must ask for the nomination form at the following e-mail address: [alexandrescui@state.gov](mailto:alexandrescui@state.gov). If the candidates do not receive the requested form in a term of 24 hrs. during working days (Mon-Fri), they should call 0040-721 288 797 from Monday to Friday, 10:00 – 16:00 hrs.

The nomination forms must be sent at the following e-mail address: [alexandrescui@state.gov](mailto:alexandrescui@state.gov) in a Word format no later than Friday, February 26, 2021, 23:59 hrs.

#### 1. Program Description:

The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship is an intensive short-term exchange program, created to foster relationships among young Europeans and Americans to build strong linkages and awareness of shared values. The five-week program will enable students, ages 16-18, to explore U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, support for democracy and civil society, and economic prosperity. The program will consist of a series of lectures, seminar discussions and presentations, and a broad assortment of practical, faculty- and mentor-led workshops. The coursework and classroom activities will be complemented by community service activities, site visits, social and cultural activities, and homestays with American families to deepen participants' experience of U.S. society during their exchange.

During the academic residency, participants also will have the opportunity to discuss other topics such as democratic practices, conflict resolution, problem solving, communication skills, critical thinking, tolerance and respect for diversity, youth leadership, team building, and the media. The program will explore how freedom of expression provides rights to and imposes responsibilities on citizens. Upon their return home, participants will implement service projects in their communities and present an alumni project plan to a youth-serving or youth-centered organization in their home country. These organizations may include

the U.S. Mission Youth Councils, American Corners or American Spaces, and exchange alumni associations.

## 2. Other Essential Program Information:

**Program Funding:** All costs for in-country and international travel and for all U.S.-based activities of the exchange will be covered.

**Program Requirements and Restrictions:** Candidates must exhibit demonstrable interest in pursuing leadership opportunities in their home countries and convey a genuine desire to learn about the United States and its people, society, and institutions. They are expected to fully participate in the academic program and the follow-on activities afterward in their home countries. They should attend all lectures and organized activities, complete assigned readings, and be ready to share their culture with Americans. They should be made aware that the program is very intensive and that there will be little time for personal pursuits unrelated to the program. Participants will travel to the United States on J-1 visas, under the International Visitor government designation held by ECA/PE/C/PY. There should be no fees incurred for the J-1 visa application. Participants are not allowed to arrive in the U.S. prior to the start date of the program or to remain in the U.S. after its end date. Violations of program rules, host institution rules, or local, state or federal laws can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

**English Language Ability:** All candidates must be proficient in English so that they can actively participate in the academic program.

**Candidate Description and Qualifications:** All candidates are expected to have a strong interest in learning about diplomacy, the transatlantic relationship, the role of a free press in a democratic society, and public or community service. They should have a strong demonstrated interest in communications, advocacy, debate, and/or civic participation. They should have the academic aptitude for a program of this intensity and the personal qualities needed to be successful, including maturity, strong social skills, flexibility, and open-mindedness.

Candidates nominated for this Fellowship will:

- be born between June 26, 2003, and June 26, 2005 (i.e., be 16, 17, or 18 years of age at the time of the program start).
- be highly proficient in English, as demonstrated in a personal interview or the results of a standardized test;

- be committed to enrolling in high school or university in their home countries in fall 2021, following completion of the program;
- demonstrate strong leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy;
- indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States;
- demonstrate a high level of academic achievement, as indicated by academic grades, awards, and teacher recommendations;
- demonstrate a commitment to community and extracurricular activities;
- be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful and inquisitive;
- be willing and able to fully participate in an intensive summer program, with community service and educational travel;
- be comfortable with campus life, shared living accommodations, travel and interaction with a multinational, co-ed group of participants from across Europe and the United States;
- be comfortable engaging with the Americans they meet in the host communities; and
- be able to adjust to cultural and social practices different from those of their home countries.

### 3. Frequently Asked Questions:

a. What are the plans for BFTF if the pause in U.S. based in-person youth exchanges continues through the summer due to the global health pandemic?

Should the Educational and Cultural Affairs Department of the U.S. Government determine that conditions do not allow for an in-person U.S. based exchange, ECA intends to work with the implementing partner, Purdue University, to transition the 2021 program to a virtual platform.

b. Will COVID19 testing and/or vaccination (if available) be required and are the costs associated with testing and/or vaccination covered? Information regarding COVID19 testing and/or vaccinations will be provided at a later date.

c. How much free time will a participant have during the program? There will be some limited free time during the program. However, nominees **MUST** understand that this is an intensive academic program, and they are expected to fully participate in all lectures, activities, site visits, and scheduled events.

d. If a nominee has relatives in the U.S., would he/she have time to see them? Participants will NOT be allowed to leave the program to visit relatives or friends.

e. Can a participant arrive early/late or stay after the program? No. Participants who choose to travel to the United States on a Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship are required to abide by the J-1 visa rules. Participants may NOT arrive in the United States before the program start date or remain in the country after the close of the program.

f. Can a participant miss one part or component of the program? No. All participants are expected to participate in all scheduled lectures, events, site visits, trips, and activities.

g. How much money will participants need to bring for the program? ECA will cover all basic costs of an individual's participation in the U.S. based exchange. Generally, the host institution will provide meals through a combination of a cafeteria meal plan and a pre-loaded debit card for use at local restaurants. Information on housing and meal arrangements will be provided by the host institution prior to the start of the institute. Participants should not expect to receive any spending money from the program. Participants should bring their own spending money if they wish to purchase souvenirs or other items during their time in the United States.