



2022 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRANSATLANTIC FELLOWS SUMMER INSTITUTE

Summary: The U.S. Embassy in Athens and the Youth Programs Division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. State Department is pleased to invite candidate nominations for the 2022 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship. The four-week institute addresses U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, democracy and civil society development, and economic prosperity. The program will take place in person from June 25 to July 23 of 2022; The institute will be hosted by Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana,. The deadline for candidate nominations to be received by Greek high school students is **Monday March 14, 2022**

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 four week program will enable teenagers, 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 institute 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: Through the award given to Purdue University, Athens U.S. Embassy, will cover all costs of the exchange program. (In-country and international travel expenses including domestic travel in the home country, including a visit to Athens for a visa interview; round trip international travel to the United States; passport fees; a travel allowance; pre-departure orientation costs; and alumni activities.)

Athens U.S. Embassy will be responsible for making all travel arrangements and providing international airline tickets for their participants to fly round-trip to Indianapolis airport in Indiana in the United States. Posts will be given detailed travel information for their participants once completed the selection process. Since most participants will be minors and will be traveling from their home country alone, Purdue University will provide adult chaperones to accompany participants on flights between one or two selected European airports to the United States and back.

3. **Health Benefits:** Participants will be covered by ECA's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits program. Purdue University is responsible for enrolling participants. ASPE is a limited, health benefit program (not insurance) that covers medical expenses associated with each illness or accident up to \$100,000 per occurrence. ASPE does not cover routine examinations or pre-existing conditions. ASPE information is available at <http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com>.

We will convey this information to participants at the pre-departure orientation. Participants are encouraged to read the ASPE benefit guide in its entirety, to obtain a full understanding of health benefits, coverage, and limitations.

4. **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 institute 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.

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 institute 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. It is important that these requirements and restrictions are made clear to all candidates before their nominations are submitted.

5. **English Language Ability:** All candidates must be proficient in English so that they can actively participate in the academic program. Purdue University will take into account that the level of comprehension and speaking ability of participants may vary and will prepare lectures and discussions that meet the highest academic standards while using language appropriate for those whose first language is not English.

6. **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, 2006 (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 2022, following completion of the institute;

- 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;

- have had little or no prior U.S. study or travel experience in the United States;

- 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.

7. Frequently Asked Questions: This FAQ section addresses some commonly asked questions by posts. .

a. What degree of English proficiency should a nominee have? All participants must be highly proficient in English; throughout the institute they will need to fully understand lectures, actively participate in discussions, and read and write assignments in English.

b. Can we nominate an individual who is not a citizen of the nominating post country? Yes. However, the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship is a program designed to further mutual understanding between U.S. citizens and Europeans. If you wish to nominate someone who is not a citizen of the nominating country, please explain clearly on the application the reasons for the nomination.

c. My nominee has been to the U.S. before; would he/she be disqualified?

No. Nominees with very minimal experience in the United States may be considered for the program. However, priority should be given to nominees with no previous experience in the United States. If you find it necessary to nominate a candidate with previous U.S. experience, please be sure to clearly indicate the

purpose of the nominee's visit to the U.S., the year it occurred, and the length of his/her stay, as requested on the nomination form.

d. 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.

e. 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 institute to visit relatives or friends. Occasionally it is possible for a pre-approved visit on a specific day designated by the host institution, if the schedule permits. These situations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the ECA program officer and the host institution.

f. How important it is to nominate a gender-balanced group? Very important! We strive to have the best possible diversity and gender balance in the institute.

g. Can a participant arrive early/late or stay after the Institute? 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 institute.

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

i. 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 institute. Participants should bring their own spending money if they wish to purchase souvenirs or other items during their time in the United States.

j. One of our BFTF alumni has a sibling who would like to apply for the BFTF program. Can he/she apply? Priority will be given to nominees who are unrelated to past BFTF participants. Posts should make every effort to recruit and nominate candidates from widely diverse areas and backgrounds.

k. Will applicants with disabilities be considered? Yes, the Youth Programs Division welcomes nominations for individuals with disabilities. We are committed to working with Purdue University to arrange reasonable accommodations for all participants. Notification of a disability will not negatively impact selection. We ask that you identify disabilities during the

nomination process so that we can begin working with Purdue University to ensure appropriate accommodations.

5. Up to 45 Fellows will be selected. there are any difficulties recruiting. ECA will make the final selection (switching alternates and principals on occasion to achieve greater diversity, gender balance, or to adjust for unqualified candidates) and will notify post of final determination of principal and alternate participants This is a competitive selection process focused on the overall qualification of the participant.

6. All communications and questions regarding this FY 2022 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship should be addressed to Markella Karagiorga, American Embassy, Athens Telephone: 6958476873 Email: KaragiorgaMN@state.gov

In order to apply, please submit the completed Application Form and the Essay by February 18, 2020 via e-mail to:

**Markella Karagiorga
Public Affairs Section
Email: KaragiorgaMN@state.gov
Interviews will be held *between March 15-17, 2022***

Attached please find application form