

2015 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRANSATLANTIC FELLOWS SUMMER INSTITUTE

Call for Nominations

1. (U) SUMMARY: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)'s Youth Programs Division invites all EUR posts to submit nominations for the 2015 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institutes. Two four-week Institutes, offered in summer 2015, will accommodate up to 90 Fellows total. Each Institute, one at Wake Forest University in North Carolina and the other at Purdue University in Indiana, will be designed for 35 European students and 10 Americans, ages 16 to 18. Institute activities include discussion of global issues of common interest, leadership and media training, collaborative project development, community service, educational travel, and plans for follow-on activities. Both Institutes will take place **from June 27 to July 25, 2015**. Please submit nominations via the Youth Programs Sharepoint site by **Wednesday, April 1, 2015**. See paragraph 16 for submission guidelines. End Summary.

The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institutes

2. (U) The goals of the Institutes are: (1) to develop a commitment to transatlantic cooperation; (2) to foster relationships between American and European youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups; and (3) to develop a cadre of youth leaders who will share their knowledge and skills with their peers through positive action.

3. (U) The Summer Institutes will enable teenagers, ages 16-18, to participate in an intensive, four-week exchange program in the United States that focuses on global issues facing both European and American youth. The Institutes will focus primarily on an exploration of issues through interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities. Participants will learn more about democratic practices, volunteer service, conflict resolution, problem solving, communication skills, critical thinking, tolerance and respect for diversity, youth leadership, team building, and the media. The Institutes also explore how freedom of expression both provides rights to and imposes responsibilities on citizens. Fellows will participate in a variety of activities such as training sessions, workshops, community-based programs, study tours, and cultural events.

4. (U) Community service activities, social and cultural activities, and homestays with American families will deepen the Fellows' experience of U.S. society during their exchange.

5. (U) After the Institute, in addition to implementing service projects in their home communities, the Fellows will present what they have learned as well as an alumni project plan to a youth-serving or youth-centered organization in their home country. These may include U.S. Embassy Youth Councils, American Corners or American Spaces, and exchange alumni associations.

6. (U) Program Hosts: Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, will continue to host separate institutes during summer 2015. The content of both programs will be similar even though exact topics will vary.

Participant Numbers for Two Institutes

7. (U) Embassies in Europe may recruit and nominate participants for the 70 Europe slots in the Institutes. Each embassy may nominate up to two, rank-ordered, principal candidates for the Institutes. ECA expects to accept the first principal candidate from each nominating post as a Fellow. Posts are strongly encouraged to nominate a gender balanced slate of participants; this program has had significantly less representation from boys than girls in past years. Posts may choose to nominate up to two alternate candidates at the time of principal candidate nomination. Alternate candidates will travel only if a principal Fellow is unable to attend the Institute.

Funding/Travel

8. (U) Funding for all U.S.-based activities will be provided by ECA through cooperative agreements with the U.S. host institutions.

9. (U) In-country and international travel expenses must be covered by all participating posts for their Fellows. These expenses include domestic travel in the home country, such as a visit to the capital for a visa interview; round trip international travel to the United States; a travel allowance; pre-departure orientation; and alumni activities. *Other sources, another in-country organization, private sector funds, or the participant's own funds may be used to pay these expenses, as long as the participant meets the Summer Institute selection criteria.*

10. (U) Posts will be responsible for making all travel arrangements and providing international airline tickets for their participants to the designated location (either Greensboro airport in North Carolina or Indianapolis airport in Indiana) in the United States. Posts will be given detailed travel information for their Fellows once ECA completes the selection process and has assigned the Fellows to the WFU or Purdue Institute. Since many participants will be minors and will be traveling from their home country alone, the U.S. host institutions will provide adult chaperones to accompany participants on flights between one or two European airports to the United States and back. All posts will also need to provide a pre-departure orientation to review the details of the program, cross-cultural issues, and travel and financial matters.

11. (U) Alumni: Posts should also be prepared to follow up with the participants after the U.S. Institute and support them in alumni activities appropriate to the program goals. The U.S. host institutions will provide long-distance support to alumni.

Recruitment/Candidate Profile

12. (U) Nominees should have a strong interest in learning more about diplomacy, the transatlantic relationship, the role of a free press in a democracy, and public or community service. They should have a strong demonstrated interest in communications, advocacy, debate, or civic participation. They should have the academic aptitude for a program of this nature and personal qualities needed to be successful participants, including maturity, strong social skills, flexibility, and open-mindedness. These factors are particularly important given the diverse group atmosphere of the Institute. English fluency is required.

13. (U) Nominees must exhibit serious interest in pursuing leadership opportunities in their home countries, and demonstrate a genuine desire to learn first-hand about the United States and its people, society, and institutions. Nominees must also understand that, if selected, they will be expected to fully and seriously participate in all program components during the month, as well as in follow-up activities afterward in their home countries. In addition, Fellows should be ready to inform and educate Americans about the cultures and societies of their home countries in non-structured gatherings and in public presentations.

14. (U) Selected participants will travel to the United States on J-1 visas under the International Visitor government designation held by ECA's Youth Programs Division (ECA/PE/C/PY), which will issue the DS-2019 forms. There should be no fees incurred for the visa application or for SEVIS. ECA will also provide travel health benefits through its Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE).

15. (U) **Candidate Qualifications:**

- a. Be 16, 17, or 18 years of age as of June 27, 2015;
- b. Highly proficient in English, as demonstrated in a personal interview or the results of a standardized test;
- c. Committed to enrolling in high school or university in their home countries in fall 2015, following completion of the Institute;
- d. Demonstrate strong leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy;
- e. Indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States;
- f. Sustained high level of academic achievement, as indicated by academic grades, awards, and teacher recommendations;
- g. Demonstrate a commitment to community and extracurricular activities;
- h. Have had little or no prior U.S. study or travel experience in the United States;
- i. Be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful and inquisitive;
- j. Willing and able to fully participate in an intensive summer program, community service, and active educational travel program;
- k. Comfortable with campus life, shared living accommodations, travel and interaction with a multinational, coed group of participants from across Europe and the United States, and comfortable with engaging various Americans in the broader community. Able to adjust to cultural and social practices different from those of their home countries.

16. (U) Nomination Format: Please submit nominations through the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute Sharepoint site **by Wednesday, April 1, 2015**. There you will be able to enter the information for your nominee(s). Nominations must include complete biographical data and substantive post justifications. Note that because the Youth Programs Division will issue DS-2019 forms for these programs, it is essential that the information provided is accurate (otherwise, please indicate that confirmed passport information will be forthcoming).