

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRANSATLANTIC FELLOWS (BFTF) PROGRAM

The U.S. Embassy in Cyprus is pleased to accept applications for the 2024 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows (BFTF) program. Please review the program information and eligibility requirements below before proceeding to submit your application. ***Applications should be submitted only through the [online form](#) by 23:59, Sunday, February 4, 2023. The form will close at midnight and applications will no longer be accepted.***

U.S. Embassy Cyprus will select **one primary nominee and one alternate nominee** to participate in the 2024 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship, scheduled to take place at Purdue University, Indiana, between June 22 and July 20, 2024 contingent upon the feasibility and safety of in-person programming.

Description:

BFTF 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 students, ages 16-18, to explore U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, support for democracy and civil society, and economic prosperity through a series of lectures, seminar discussions and presentations, and a broad assortment of practical, mentor-led workshops. 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 program, participants 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, disinformation, and the media, exploring how freedom of expression provides rights to and imposes responsibilities on citizens. Upon their return, participants are expected to implement service projects in their communities and present an alumni project plan to a youth-serving or youth-centered organization in their home country.

Eligibility Requirements

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 civic participation. They should possess 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.

To be considered, candidates must:

- be born between June 23, 2005, and June 22, 2008 (i.e., be 16, 17, or 18 years of age at the time of the program start);
- obtain consent from their legal guardian(s) to travel to the U.S. and participate in the program, unless they are over the age of 18 *at the time of submitting their application*;
- 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 Cyprus in fall 2024, 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;
- 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 fly to the United States from Larnaca airport.

PLEASE NOTE:

- U.S. citizens are not eligible to apply for this program.
- To be considered, applications need to be fully completed using Latin characters. Any applications submitted in part or in whole in Greek or Turkish language will not be reviewed.

Violations of program rules, host institution rules, or local, state, or federal laws can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

Funding/Travel

The program is funded by the U.S. Government and provides a full scholarship for participants, which covers visa, travel, lodging, educational materials, ground transportation expenses, and travel insurance.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **What are the plans for BFTF if health and travel disruptions continue through the summer due to the global health pandemic?** Should ECA determine that conditions do not allow for an in-person U.S.-based exchange, ECA would work with the implementing partner, Purdue University, to transition the 2024 program to a virtual platform.
2. **Will COVID19 vaccinations be required to participate in the program?** There are no COVID restrictions currently in place, all restrictions have been lifted.
3. **Will the Summer Institute take place in Summer 2024?** Unfortunately, the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus will not hold the Summer Institute program this year. We urge students who are interested in educational exchanges to follow our social media channels for program announcements and to learn about other exciting opportunities.
4. **What degree of English proficiency should a nominee have?** All participants must be highly proficient in English; throughout the program they will need to fully understand lectures, actively participate in discussions, and read and write assignments in English.
5. **Can an individual who is not a citizen of Cyprus apply for the BFTF program?** Yes. However, BFTF is designed to further mutual understanding between U.S. citizens and Europeans. If you are not a citizen of the Republic of Cyprus and wish to apply, please explain clearly how your nomination will achieve this goal. Also, please note that selected participants will be required to fly to the United States from Larnaca airport.
6. **I have traveled to the United States before; will I be disqualified?** No. Applicants with minimal experience in the United States may be considered for the program. However, priority will be given to applicants with no previous experience in the United States.
7. **How much free time will a participant have during the program?** There will be some limited free time during the program. However, applicants 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.
8. **If a nominee has relatives in the U.S., would they have time to see them?** Participants will NOT be allowed to leave the program 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 program officer and the host institution.
9. **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.

10. **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.
11. **How much money will participants need to bring for the program?** The Department of State 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 program. 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.
12. **Can the sibling of a BFTF alumni apply for the program?** Yes. However, priority will be given to applicants who are unrelated to past BFTF participants.
13. **Will applicants with disabilities be considered?** Yes, the Department of State 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 application process so that we may begin working with Purdue University to ensure appropriate accommodations.
14. **Does an applicant who will be older than 18 years of age at the program require guardian's approval?** Yes. If an applicant is younger than 18 years of age *at the time of submitting the application*, they need to obtain approval from their legal guardian.

HOW TO APPLY – DEADLINE

Applications should be submitted only through the [online form](#) by 23:59, Sunday, February 4, 2024. The form will close at midnight and applications will no longer be accepted.

Optional: Applicants may request someone to submit a recommendation on their behalf. Recommendations must be submitted using the [online recommendation form](#). *(Limit of one recommendation per applicant)*

Eligible applications will be reviewed and selected applicants will be invited via email to personal interview, approximately 10 days following the application deadline.

Please consult <https://cy.usembassy.gov/benjamin-franklin-transatlantic-fellows-and-summer-institute-programs/> for more information. We would also urge you to monitor the Embassy's social media accounts (@USEmbassyCyprus) to learn about other exiting program and exchange opportunities we offer.