

About the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute

The Benjamin Franklin Summer Institute is an intensive, four-week exchange program held in each summer in the United States. Focusing on the global issues faced by European and American youth on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the institute activities include discussions of common interest topics, leadership and media training, collaborative project development, community service, educational travel, and plans for follow-on projects. 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. Teenagers who are 16-18 years old from various countries of Europe and from the U.S. will participate in training sessions, workshops, community-based programs, study tours, and cultural events. Participants will work together to prepare a joint project that promotes the goals of the Institute.

The initiative is named after the legendary American statesman and diplomat Benjamin Franklin. His interests, studies and life took him back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, bringing Americans and Europeans closer in understanding. Even 300 years after his birth, Franklin's life offers inspiration to young citizens of today in the effort to bridge the Atlantic. As a diplomat and a printer, he leveraged the powers of diplomacy and of the media to explore how Americans and Europeans see each other and the world.

The Institute is hosted by Wake Forest University (WFU) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana

Eligibility Requirements

The contest is open to all citizens of the Russian Federation:

- between 16 and 18 years of age at the time of the Institute
- enrolled in a secondary school;
- with demonstrated proficiency in English;
- committed to continuing their education in the Russian Federation in the fall following completion of the Institute;
- with demonstrated leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy;
- who show a serious interest in learning about the United States;
- with a record of sustained high academic achievement, as indicated by academic grades, awards, and teacher recommendations;
- with demonstrated commitment to community service and extracurricular activities;
- with little or no prior U.S. study or travel experience in the United States;
- with no previous participation in U.S.-government funded exchange programs;
- who are willing and able to fully participate in an intensive summer program, community service, and active educational travel program;
- who are 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; and

- who show potential to adjust to cultural and social practices different from those of the Russian Federation.

Criteria for Nomination

I. Essay (50%)

- Content (70%)
 - Shows interest in U.S. and Russian cultural history, traditions and interaction;
 - Demonstrates an understanding of the issues faced by Russia and the United States on the bilateral and international levels;
 - Thoughtful, original discussion;
 - Well-researched; and
 - Convincing arguments supported with specific examples.
- Presentation (30%)
 - Communicates ideas clearly;
 - Well-organized;
 - Uses correct syntax, grammar, spelling, and punctuation;
 - Writes in compelling and original manner;
 - Includes bibliography of five or more varied sources including one non-internet source; and
 - Uses thoughtfully selected, reliable sources.

II. Phone Interview (50%)

- The candidate must:
 - Demonstrate qualities of a mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful, and inquisitive individual;
 - Show leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy;
 - Show a serious interest in learning about the United States;
 - Have a record of sustained high academic achievement;
 - Demonstrate commitment to community service and extracurricular activities; and
 - Have had little or no prior U.S. study or travel experience in the United States.