



*«Let us build a new relationship with Russia and the New Independent States — one based on two peoples coming together in a common commitment to make the tough choices for the long-term health of each country and the world; two peoples aware that having stared each other to the brink of nuclear holocaust, we now have a special responsibility to find in each other and within ourselves the capacity to reconceive our possibilities as two nations, two peoples, one world.»*

-Bill Bradley

Then-U.S. Senator Bill Bradley co-sponsored with U.S. Congressman Jim Leach supporting the historic legislation providing for secondary school exchanges between the U.S. and the countries of the former Soviet Union. That program is now known as the FLEX program.



2013-2014



## Find Out About This Historic Exchange with the Program with the United States



Bureau of Educational  
and Cultural Affairs



### What does youth exchange achieve?

The concept of exchange programs grew out of a desire for nations and their peoples to build bridges of understanding after World War II. Since then, the youth exchange movement has become well known and accepted in many countries throughout the world. What makes youth exchange successful is the unique way in which young people learn about another country and culture: by living as a member of a host family, not as a guest. The success of this formula has resulted in a global awareness of the positive impact of exchange, not only on relations among nations, but on the lives of hundreds of thousands of participants, their peers, schools, communities, and parents. Many of today's world, national, and local leaders have themselves participated in an exchange experience and can attest to its positive impact on their lives.

### What does the scholarship provide?

- The FLEX scholarship provides the following:
- Round-trip domestic and international travel (from home to the United States and back)
  - Monthly allowance to help students participate in social activities and buy necessary personal supplies
  - Placement with a selected and screened U.S. host family for one year
  - Enrollment in a U.S. secondary school
  - Program orientation activities including pre-program preparation and re-entry preparation
  - Program activities arranged in local U.S. communities
  - Medical insurance, excluding pre-existing conditions and dental care

### What is NOT provided?

- The FLEX scholarship does NOT cover the following costs:
- ⇒ Acquisition of an international passport
  - ⇒ Personal expenses not covered by the monthly stipend
  - ⇒ Excess baggage costs
  - ⇒ Telephone calls made from the U.S. to home or an e-mail account

### Who pays for the program?

This scholarship program is fully funded by the United States government and administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State. ECA fosters understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries around the world. ECA programs include educational and training programs that promote personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad.

The FLEX program is supported at the local level by U.S. citizens and local secondary schools that voluntarily host, educate, and support students with no financial compensation.

### What is the FLEX program?

Youth exchange programs with the countries of the Soviet Union began in the 1980s. Exchanges between the U.S. and the USSR, which focused on graduate students and scholars, began earlier, in the 1950s. The FLEX program is the first large-scale, long-term program to focus on secondary school students.

This program was created by the United States Congress to extend a hand of friendship from the people of the United States of America to the people of the countries of the former Soviet Union. It established the first long-term exchange program for secondary school students to travel to the United States for a year. Now in its twenty-first year, the FLEX academic year program has provided scholarships to over 23,000 secondary school students. In 2012-13, 800 students are studying in the U.S. on the FLEX program. Each scholarship recipient will live for one year as a member of a U.S. host family and study in an American high school.

Secondary school students with disabilities are invited to participate in the competition. Approximately 20 students with disabilities are invited to the U.S. under this program each year. Selected students with disabilities meet the same criteria as other participants in the program.