



Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX)

American Councils for International Education



The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program encourages long-lasting peace and understanding between the U.S. and the emerging democracies of the former Soviet Union. FLEX provides opportunities for high school students (ages 15-17) from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and to spend a year in the United States, living with a family and attending an American high school. The program's major goal is democracy-building – exposing likely future leaders of these countries to our democratic society and free market economy.

EDUCATION FLEX students will acquire an understanding of important elements of a civil society. This will include concepts such as volunteerism, the idea that American citizens can and do act on their own to deal with societal problems, and an awareness of and respect for the rule of law.

EXCHANGES FLEX expands communication between the people of the United States and partner countries in the interest of promoting mutual understanding and respect. Two-way learning is the norm over the period of the exchange, which lasts for one academic year. These long-term exchanges lead to enduring ties between participants and Americans and result in a greater understanding of American culture.

ENGAGEMENT FLEX helps students acquire an understanding of democracy, American values, important elements of a civil society, and an awareness of and respect for the rule of law. Focal concepts include civic responsibility and volunteerism – the idea that citizens can and do take the initiative to deal with societal problems.

EMPOWERMENT FLEX students develop leadership skills throughout the exchange that they put to use upon their return home. As they share what they have learned, they make a difference in their home communities by initiating activities that build on acquired skills and experiences gained in the United States. Alumni have acted as change agents through community service activities such as raising money for orphanages, developing web sites for local NGOs, and giving presentations to share what they have learned about American cultural values.

FLEX Snapshots

- More than 17,000 high school students from 12 Eurasian countries have studied in the U.S. under FLEX since its inception in 1993.
- Through an open, multi-layered, merit-based competition, approximately one in 30 of the initial applicants is ultimately selected as a participant.
- Every year approximately 110 current students attend a civic education workshop in Washington, D.C. to gain a practical understanding of concepts and values fundamental to American society.
- During International Education Week (IEW) each November, students make presentations about their home countries in their schools, at community gatherings, religious congregations and businesses.

Program Administration

The FLEX program receives an annual allocation from Congress, which has entrusted the United States Department of State (DOS) with responsibility for administration of the program. DOS awards grants to private, not-for-profit organizations that submit bids to help run different components of the FLEX program. Grantee organizations, such as

American Councils, help with recruitment and selection, placement of students with families and in schools, monitoring of students while they are in the U.S., acting as liaisons with natural families in the former Soviet Union, civic education programming, facilitation of programming for disabled students, and coordination of alumni activities.

For information on hosting, or how you can get involved, contact:

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