



FLEX Program Promotion

2019

FLEX program is funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State and administered by American Councils for International Education and partner organization.

Toolkit for FLEX
Program Alumni

FLEX Program Promotion Toolkit for Alumni

Dear FLEX alumnus/a,

It is an honor for us at American Councils to have you represent our community and programs to potential FLEX students. We would like to thank you for your support.

In order to deliver a strong message to the audience, we have prepared a small toolkit for you.

In this document we have included the following information:

- Presentation tips
- Logistics and planning
- Sending information about the program via email and social media
- Information about the program

You will also receive the following documents from us:

1. Draft PowerPoint presentation
2. Alumni Presentation Report Form

In order to help us reach out to more potential candidates, please follow these three suggestions:

- Create a team of alumni who can help you with the presentations.
- Start presentations one month before the testing date.
- Visit schools that also include students with disabilities or at-risk community members.

Let us know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Best wishes,
FLEX Alumni Program Team



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PRESENTATION TIPS:

As a FLEX alumnus/a, you are a representative of the FLEX Program and should speak positively and truthfully about the program. Below are a few tips to help you give a successful presentation.

- Utilize FLEX promotional materials. Included in the Toolkit is a PowerPoint to guide your presentation— feel free to customize it with photos from your program. You may make copies of the brochure or request hard copies from the American Councils office near you.
- Maintain a broad view of the FLEX Program. Familiarize yourself with information about the program by visiting the program website. You will likely be asked about program and you should be able to talk about the program as a whole.
FLEX: www.discoverflex.org
- It is better to admit that you do not know the answer than to give misinformation. If you do not know the answers to certain questions do not make something up. Collect their email address and offer to put this person in touch with an American Councils staff member.
- Remember that program requirements and testing locations change from year to year. Likewise, program-specific activities may change. Excursions, cultural activities, high school situations, and hosting arrangements are as individual as each and every host family. Speak generally about the program and do not promise that any specifics about program opportunities. Talk about a typical day at your high school, and with your host family and friends. Prospective students enjoy hearing tangible stories, and it may be easier to share your enthusiasm for the program when you talk about your personal experiences.
- Always focus on the positive! You can discuss the challenges and difficulties you faced, but also describe how you addressed the challenges and how they helped you gain a more global view or grow as a person.

During the presentation:

- As people enter, be friendly; welcome attendees. Encourage them to sign-in if this doesn't violate privacy laws in your country.
- Depending on the size of the group, ask attendees to state their name, their grade, and why they came or are interested in FLEX.
- Remind attendees to record their email address on the sign-in sheet if interested in more information or to take printed materials if you have them.
- Limit your presentation to approximately 30 minutes and allow an additional 15-30 minutes for questions.
- Direct questions that you can't answer to the American Councils office near you.



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LOGISTICS AND PLANNING:

Two weeks in advance:	One week in advance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish contact with a principal, teacher, or administrator at the school or with a staff person or volunteer at a community organization (schools, American Corners, Alumni Resource Center and other partner organization venues). • Briefly explain the FLEX program to your contact. Inquire if the school would be interested and willing to accommodate a FLEX presentation for students. • Determine a date, time, and format (ex. during class, after school, at a club meeting). • Review the FLEX PowerPoint presentation and ask American Councils office for brochure, program overview, press release and Frequently Asked Questions. • If you would like, request brochures from American Councils office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the date, time, location, technology needs, and any special instructions with your school contact. • Confirm that students will be notified of the presentation in advance. • Read the presentation tips. Think about your presentation and what you want to say. • Personalize the slides on the PowerPoint presentation with your experiences and photos. Having pictures that help you to tell your personal stories are most helpful. Make note cards if you would like. • Rehearse your presentation. Ask a friend or family member for feedback on your clarity, volume, and rate of speech. If no one is available, practice in front of a mirror.
On the day of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress professionally. • Make sure you have all your materials (PowerPoint, notecards, brochures, sign-in sheet). • Arrive at the venue 15-30 minutes before your scheduled presentation. • Set-up any audio-visual equipment and test your PowerPoint presentation. • Arrange the sign-in sheet (if this doesn't violate personal data protection laws in your country) and any brochures for easy access. 	Within one week after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the FLEX Presentation Report Form. • Share the email addresses of any attendee(s) who requested additional information with American Councils. These can be typed into the form's designated field or you can scan and e-mail the sign-in sheet to American Councils. • If you plan to count your outreach efforts toward a presentation competition, share the report form with the correct person at American Councils.

SENDING INFORMATION ABOUT FLEX VIA EMAIL:

1. Collect names and postal or email addresses of teachers, principals, or guidance counselors in your community, parents of potential applicants, and/or eligible friends.
(Remember to be aware of people's privacy! Use BCC for those who would not want their email address shared.)
2. Copy the text below into an email and edit the applicable portions.
3. Send!
4. Follow-up with the recipients a couple weeks before testing or the application deadline to see if they have any questions.



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To: YOUR FRIENDS, FORMER TEACHERS, ETC.

Subject: The 2019-2020 FLEX Program Testing is OPEN NOW// Is coming to your city!

Dear: **INSERT NAME OF FRIEND, TEACHER, ETC**

Do you know about FLEX Program? Learn more about it at www.discoverflex.org

I had the opportunity to participate in FLEX Program and want to spread the word. The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) is a United States Department of State-sponsored program for secondary school students. The program provides merit-based scholarships for students to travel to the United States, live with a host family, and attend a U.S. high school for a full academic year. FLEX was established in 1992 and funding is provided through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

With your support, we can make more high school students aware of FLEX. Please feel free to share with your students, colleagues or personal contacts that work with high school students.

or

I want you to learn more about this amazing opportunity!

INSERT YOUR PERSONAL COMMENTS OR STORY HERE

Sincerely,

INSERT YOUR NAME (Host city, years on program)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FLEX PROGRAM:

What is FLEX? Who organizes the program?

The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program is a United States Department of State-sponsored program for secondary school students from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine. The program provides merit-based scholarships for students to travel to the United States, live with a host family, and attend a U.S. high school for a full academic year.

FLEX was established in 1992 and funding is provided through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The program was created from the conviction of former Senator Bill Bradley that the best way to ensure long-lasting peace and understanding between the U.S. and the countries of Eurasia is to enable young people to learn about the U.S. and Americans firsthand, and to teach Americans about their countries. The FLEX program served as the model for the YES (Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study) and A-SMYLE (American Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange) programs and has since expanded to other countries.

The primary goal of the FLEX program is to improve mutual understanding and develop and strengthen long-term relationships between citizens of the United States and other peoples and countries. The State Department supports exchanges for secondary school students from over



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50 countries through FLEX and other academic year programs. Since the program's inception in 1993, over 26,300 students have participated in the FLEX program.

Who is eligible to apply for the program?

In keeping with the U.S. Government-sponsored initiatives dedicated to promoting greater understanding with countries in Eurasia, the competition for the FLEX scholarship is merit-based and open at no cost to applicants who meet the following requirements.

Eligible Applicant must:

- Be enrolled in school, studying in 9th, 10th or 11th grade **(country specific)**
- Be born between **1 January 2002 and 15 July 2004 (country specific)**
- Be enrolled in a secondary school at the time of application
- Have an academic standing of "good" or better
- Have previously studied English and demonstrate English language ability at the time of registration
- Meet U.S. visa requirements
- Be a citizen of the country where he/she applies

The FLEX program can support students with disabilities and encourages their participation.

- High school students with disabilities born between **February 15, 2001 and 15 July 2004** are eligible to apply for FLEX **(country specific)**

Who is not eligible?

Students are not eligible to apply if:

1. In the past 5 years has resided in the U.S.A. for 3 or more months
2. His/her family: has applied or is applying to emigrate to the United States or has made plans to emigrate or has already emigrated to the United States.

What does the Scholarship provide?

- Round-trip international travel
- Medical insurance
- Monthly allowances to help students participate in social activities and buy necessary personal supplies
- Placement with a U.S. host family for one year
- Enrollment in a U.S. secondary school
- Program orientation activities including preparation for going on the program & for returning home
- Program activities arranged in U.S. communities
- Support for alumni as they implement projects in their home communities.

What is not provided?

- An international passport
- Personal expenses beyond what is covered by the monthly stipend
- Excess baggage costs



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- Telephone calls made from the U.S. to home or a Skype account

When and how can I apply?

Students will be able to apply for the 2020-2021 program year in various cities around the country in fall 2019. Exact testing locations will be available at discoverflex.org in August/September 2019.

In order to participate in the program from: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine the student should come to the test center and bring along:

- original version of proof of eligibility (Birth Certificate, ID or Passport)
- one recent photo 3x4 cm
- Pen
- Privacy policy (if applicable in your country)

In order to participate in the program from: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania & Slovakia, applicant should fill out the online application form.

How are students selected?

Independent panels of American professionals in education and international relations in the United States will select program finalists and alternates. Selection will be based on merit as evidenced in a comprehensive application, teacher reference, and demonstrated preparedness for a year-long exchange experience. Students also will be required to provide medical evaluations and be certified as medically fit to participate in the program.

The selection program will be completed in spring 2020, and all applicants will receive notification of their status by mid-May 2020. English-language proficiency is important but it is not the sole element in selection.

What happens next?

- Upon notification, finalists, alternates and their parents receive materials to prepare them for departure.
- Both finalists and alternates must notify American Councils that they accept the scholarship and provide any additional documentation requested.
- Participants must begin the process of applying for an international passport and U.S. visa immediately.
- From May through August, American Councils and its partner organizations match finalists with U.S. host families and arrange for school enrollment.

