



**BULGARIAN AMERICAN  
COMMISSION FOR  
EDUCATIONAL**

**EXCHANGE  
Angela Rodel**

Executive Director  
Bulgarian-American  
Commission for  
Educational  
Exchange



**Fulbright Bulgaria:**

9

**Exchange Opportunities**

# Senator J. William Fulbright

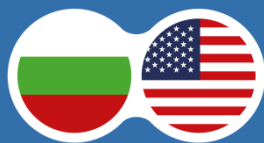
1905-1995



*"Education is the best means - probably the only means - by which nations can cultivate a degree of objectivity about each other's behavior and intentions... Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations."*

## The Fulbright Program

-  Binaltional higher educational exchange program, supported by the U.S. and partner governments and sponsors (private and institutional)
-  Founded worldwide in 1946
-  Number of participating countries: 167
-  Fulbright Commissions in 49 countries
-  Number of grantees since 1946: 380,000+











1967

Bulgaria joins the  
Fulbright program

1993

The Bulgarian-American Fulbright  
Commission was founded

## Fulbright Alumni Leaders

-  1 UN Secretary General
-  1 NATO Secretary General
-  1 astronaut who landed on the Moon
-  60 Nobel Prize winners
-  88 Pulitzer Prize winners
-  39 heads of state
-  75 recipients of MacArthur Foundation “Genius” awards
-  16 recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.





# The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission

- Founded in 1993
- Honorary co-chairs: US Ambassador to Bulgaria and Bulgarian Minister of Education and Science
- Ten-member board: five Americans and five Bulgarians
- Primary goal: administering the exchange of Bulgarian and American scholars, students, teaching assistants and professionals and providing educational advising about opportunities for study in the U.S.
- Annual US government allocation of \$600,000
- Annual Bulgarian government allocation of \$1.1 million as of 2023



## Fulbright Bulgaria since 1993



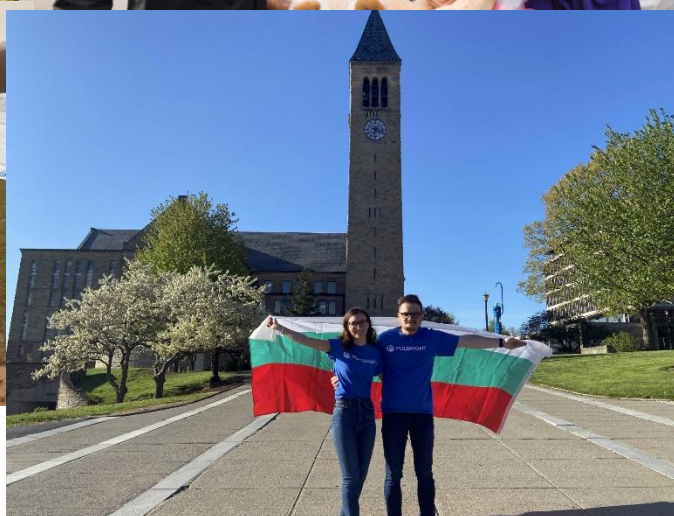
**Fulbright Bulgaria Alumni**

**1400+**

**(roughly half BG and half US)**



# Bulgarian Fulbright Alumni



**Bulgarian citizenship** (Green Card holders and dual BG-US citizens not eligible)

\*Fulbright has active programs in 155+ countries around the world! Citizens of other countries should inquire about Fulbright opportunities at the US Embassy in their home country.

**BA/BS degree** (at least) for candidates for MA and PhD programs, Civil Society and VR

**PhD** for scholar programs

**Good knowledge of English** (TOEFL and GRE/GMAT required for MA and PhD program candidates; no test required for scholars)







**THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM OFFERS:**

**FUNDING FOR TUITION FEES AND LIVING EXPENSES**

**ROUND-TRIP PLANE TICKETS TO THE US**

**HEALTH INSURANCE UP TO \$100 000**

**FREE J-1 VISA**

**\*All disciplines eligible except clinical medicine and dentistry**

**\*Grantees may study at all accredited universities on US territory**





**Eligibility:** Candidates must hold a PhD

**Length:** 3-5 months

**Number of scholarships:** 5-9 annually (depending on budget)

**Letter of invitation:** candidates need to submit an official letter of invitation from a research or educational institution in the US





**Fulbright works with all 4000+ accredited public and private US universities on the territory of the United States:**

According to a 2021 Thompson Reuters study, **9 of the top-10 most innovative universities in the world were from the US:**

<https://www.govtech.com/education/higher-ed/reuters-ranks-top-100-innovative-universities.html>

Stanford University; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); Harvard University; University of Washington; University of Michigan System; Northwestern University; University of Texas System; University of Wisconsin System; University of Pennsylvania; Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (KAIST)







- **Profile:** for representatives of **Bulgarian NGOs** (ideally with 3+ years experience)
- Similar to Fulbright Scholar grant, but **no PhD required**
- **Length: 3-5 months**
- **Number of grants: 1-3** per year (depending on budget)
- **Letter of Invitation:** required from host NGO or institution in the US

Ask your American colleagues to host you for the period of your Fulbright scholarship. It is important to note that the US university does not have any financial obligations to you if you receive the fellowship (i.e. Fulbright will pay your stipend, living expenses, etc.)

The invitation must be on official departmental or institutional letterhead. It must confirm that the host institution agrees:

- to host the scholar/CS rep for the indicated period (including start and end dates)
- to provide access to libraries and other informational resources
- to provide office space
- to indicate a contact person (usually this is the colleague you will be working with most closely)



## ONLINE APPLICATION ( <https://www.fulbright.bg/ucheni/> )

**CV – up to 3 pages**

**3 recommendations**

**Project proposal for research or teaching activities – 6 pages max**

**Bibliography**

**Translated and legalized diplomas and transcripts from all higher education  
and certificate of completed PhD for scholars**

**Invitation letter from host institution**



**Profile:** Full- or part-time doctoral students at Bulgarian universities (редовен или задочен докторант)

**Length:** up to six months

**Number of grants:** 1-3 per year

**Letter of Invitation:** while not strictly necessary, candidates are strongly advised to try to secure an invitation at the time of application







# Fulbright Grants for MA and PhD Programs at US Universities

- 1) **Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders Grants:** Competition open now for self-placed candidates at top US universities for AY2023-24
- 2) **Fulbright IIE-Placed Academic Grants:** Competition will be open February-May 2023 for programs at all US universities starting in AY 2024-25





## Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders Grant: MA/PhDs at Top US Universities for AY 2023-34

- Up to **\$100,000** in funding per student for an MA/PhD program
- Eligible universities: **Top 15** graduate schools in a given academic field
- **Self-placed**: Candidates must independently secure their own admission to US graduate programs
- Selected candidates must return to Bulgaria for **three years** after completing their degrees.
- Up to **seven** Bulgarian Leaders grants will be awarded for AY2023-24
- **All academic fields** eligible except clinical medicine and dentistry.

## What expenses will FBL grant cover?

**The grant will cover up to \$100,000 for the following expenses:**

- Tuition/fees for a single or multiple-year MA or PhD program
- Living expenses (according to Fulbright standard monthly rates)
- Travel: round-trip travel between US and Bulgaria
- Health insurance: providing coverage of up to \$100,000
- Free J-1 visa

**NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES include:**

- Any costs associated with the application process (application fees, standardized testing costs, translation of documents, etc.)
- Any dependent costs (for spouses, children, etc)
- Any living expenses above the standard Fulbright monthly rate

**Opportunity Funds Mini-Grants** to FBGL candidates to offset cost of grad school applications: up to 5 grants of \$1000; deadline: **October 21**

<https://www.fulbright.bg/en/fulbright-bulgarian-leaders/>

## What counts as a “top” US university for the Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders Grant?

- No universal “top grad school” rankings – depends on academic field!
  - Top US journalism MA program? **University of Missouri**
  - #2 Computer Science MS program? **Carnegie Mellon**
- Search 2023 US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT GRAD SCHOOL RANKINGS BY FIELD:  
[https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools?int=top\\_nav\\_Grad\\_Schools](https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools?int=top_nav_Grad_Schools)
- Many ranking lists are further **divided into subfields** (i.e. engineering has rank lists for aerospace vs. chemical vs. civil engineering); try to be as specific as possible, within reason
- **In case of lack of clarity, ask us!** The Fulbright Commission, in consultation with MON, reserves the right to decide which universities are eligible for Bulgarian Leaders Grant funding.





## Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders Grant:

### Three-year Home Residency Requirement

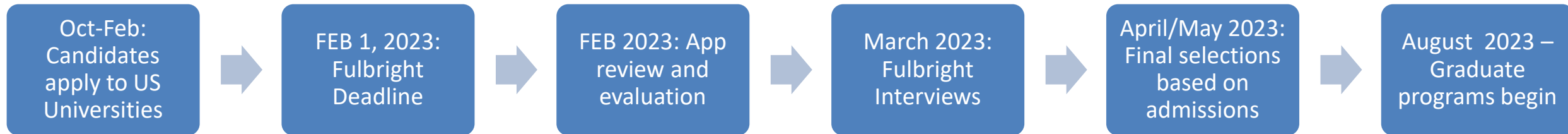
- All Fulbright exchange participants are subject to a two-year home residency as part of the J-1 Visa requirements
- The Bulgarian government has expanded this requirement to **three years** for Bulgarian Leaders Grantees as a condition of the expanded funding
- After the completion of the MA/PhD degree and after OPT (Occupational/Professional Training) allowed under the J-1 visa, **all grantees must physically return to Bulgaria for three years**
- Grantees may work/volunteer in the **public or private sector** at the organization of their choice; there is no requirement to work at a government agency during this three-year home residency period.

## What does “self-placed” at top US universities mean?

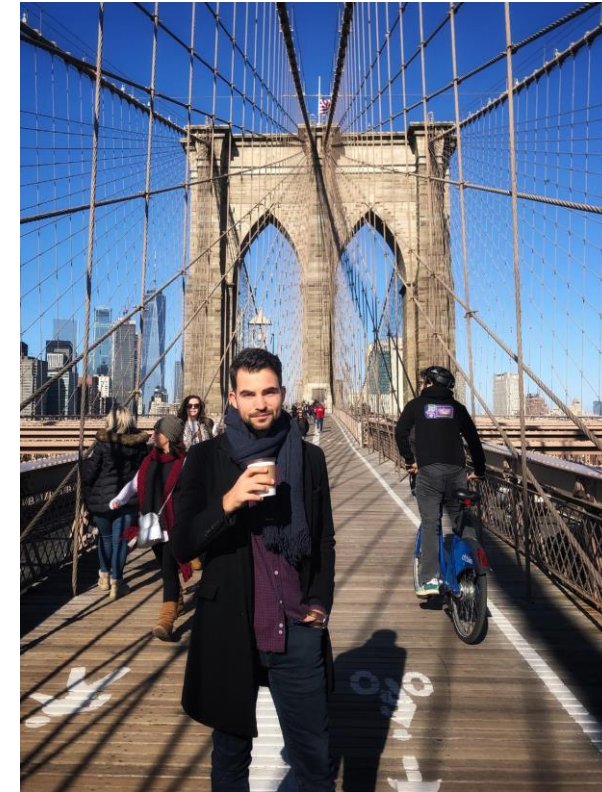
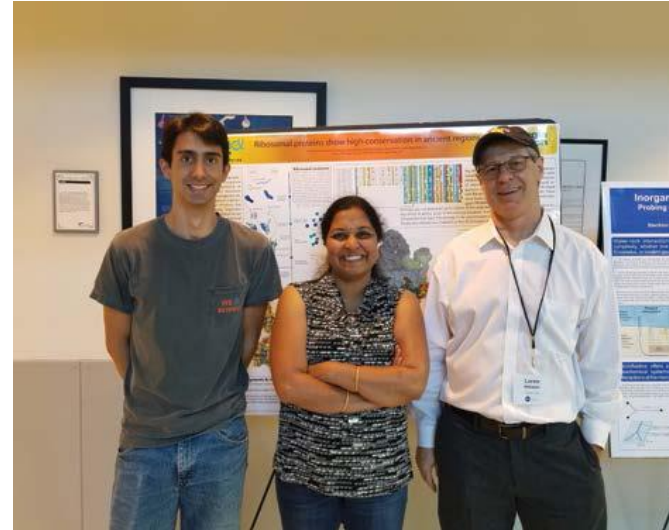
- Candidates for the Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders **must apply independently to US universities** – the Fulbright Commission will **NOT** apply on their behalf
- Candidates are responsible for researching eligible MA/PhD programs in their field and completing all the application requirements, including any standardized testing, legalizing diplomas, etc.
- Candidates are responsible for observing all deadlines:
  - For US unis: usually between October and February (most between Nov. 1 and Jan. 1), depending on the field and the university
  - For Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders Grant: **February 1, 2023**

<b>ONLINE APPLICATION</b>
CV – 3 pages maximum
3 letters of recommendation (2 academic, one professional)
Essay: Study Objectives (up to 2 pages max)
Essay: Personal Statement (up to 2 pages max)
Translated and legalized diplomas and transcripts for all higher education institutions attended
Additional documents (optional): Writing Sample/Portfolio
<a href="https://www.fulbright.bg/fulbright-bulgarian-leaders">https://www.fulbright.bg/fulbright-bulgarian-leaders</a>





**\*\*Most US universities send out notices of admission/rejection from **March 1-May 1**, with most results announced by **April 15**.**



**Competition dates:** Feb 1-May 12, 2023, for **AY2024-25**

**Candidates must have completed BA/BS by September 1, 2023**

**Award level:** up to \$60,000 per student

**Number of awards:** up to four

**Eligible unis:** All accredited universities on the territory of the US!



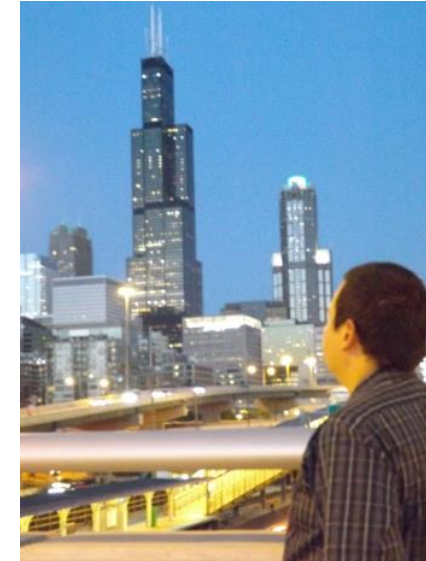
**Blagovest Blagoev (Todor Kableshkov School of Transportation):** two-year **MA program** in Transport Engineering at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Won full tuition waiver from U of I.

His Fulbright grant was split between two years to cover living expenses.



**Margarita Pavlova (New Bulgarian University):** three-year **PhD program** in cognitive psychology at the University of Kansas. Fulbright funding supported the student her first year, then the university covered the remaining years.







## Fulbright Schuman Grants for Scholars and Students



The **Fulbright-Schuman** program provides grants to candidates from the 27 **EU member-states** for up to one academic year (nine months). Schuman grants are open to all academic disciplines for research or teaching projects related to **EU-US relations, EU foreign policy, EU institution and transatlantic relations.**

The Fulbright-Schuman program is administered by the Belgian Fulbright Commission and sponsored by the US State Department and the General Directorate for Education and Culture of the European Commission.

Eligibility:

- **Students holding at least a BA/BS degree** – for individual research projects or MA/PhD degree programs.
- **Scholars holding PhDs** for research or teaching projects;
- **Students and scholars in the sphere of innovative policies and technologies;**
- **Students and scholars in the sphere of international education and administration.**

Detailed information on all Fulbright-Schuman grants and application documents can be found at: <http://www.fulbrightschuman.eu/grants-eu-citizens/>

The deadline for Fulbright-Schuman applications for AY2023-24 is **December 1, 2022.**



## Fulbright Educational Services

- EducationUSA: consultation services for study in the US
  - Undergraduate admissions and financial aid consultations
  - Graduate study
- Fulbright Test Center: full-service Prometric electronic testing services
- Fulbright Test Prep Courses: GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, SAT, and others
- Fulbright Project Management Courses

**Deadline for Fulbright Scholar, Civil Society, and Doctoral Students (Visiting Researchers):  
December 5, 2022**

**Deadline for EU Schuman Grants: December 1, 2022**

**Deadline for Fulbright Bulgarian Leaders Grant (for MA and PhD programs starting in Fall 2023): February 1, 2023**

*\*\*Candidates are responsible for applying independently to the eligible US graduate programs, whose deadlines may vary from Nov 2022-Feb2023*

**Deadline for Fulbright IIE-Placed MA/PhD Grants: May 12, 2023 (for programs starting in Fall 2024)**



# Get in touch with Fulbright Bulgaria

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