



**Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange Fulbright**

## **EDUCATION USA** **OPPORTUNITY FUNDS-BULGARIA 2017**

**For high school students in grade 11**  
**Deadline for submitting applications: January 9, 2017**

The U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria and the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange are pleased to announce the 2017 competition for the Opportunity Funds-Bulgaria Grants for high school students in grade 11.

The Opportunity Funds-Bulgaria Program is funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, and the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria, and supported by the services of the EducationUSA Advising Center at the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission.

This program is one of the most prestigious U.S. government-funded exchange programs and is designed to support talented international students who need financial help to take their first steps toward study in the United States at an accredited institution of higher learning. The program promotes the Department's objectives of broadening outreach to youth and underserved audiences, advancing mutual understanding, and supporting social inclusion.

### **Allowable Costs**

Opportunity Funds assist highly qualified students who are likely to be awarded full financial aid from U.S. colleges and universities but lack the financial resources to cover the up-front costs of obtaining admission, such as testing, application fees or airfare.

A maximum of \$5,000 in Opportunity Funds may be spent on each student to cover costs associated with any of the following:

- Test preparation programs;
- Testing fees and submission of test scores;
- Round-trip transportation, overnight accommodation, and meals at testing sites located far from the student's home;
- Application fees to accredited colleges/universities in the United States;
- Visa and SEVIS fees;
- Round-trip transportation to a U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a visa or attend a pre-departure orientation at the EducationUSA advising center (including overnight accommodation and meals if needed);
- Round-trip international airfare to the U.S. institution where the student will study;
- One-time settling-in allowance (e.g. laptop). Total costs should be determined by using the maintenance living costs listed on the student's I-20. The one-time "settling in" payment should be equal to 1 to 1½ times the monthly average (total yearly cost/number of months covered) in the I-20;

**Your Official Source on U.S. Higher Education**

Visit [EducationUSA.state.gov](http://EducationUSA.state.gov) for more information.





### **Student Eligibility**

Opportunity Funds are available only to students who participate in an ongoing cohort advising program with EducationUSA advisers. The EducationUSA advising center at the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission is currently running an online virtual group advising program. The students must maintain an active participation in the cohort advising program to remain eligible for Opportunity Funds.

Secondly, students should be in the top 5% of their class with grades and leadership potential that proves their highly talented status.

Thirdly, students should be able to demonstrate strong financial need through the required documentation outlined below. A baseline indicator of average family income \$500 or 900 BGN per month per parent is suggested.

### **Student Application Process**

The students apply for the program through the Opportunity Funds Database which is part of the Bulgaria EducationUSA advising center page at: <https://www.educationusa.info/secure/apps/student/registration/center/EUR-BU-041>

Students will use this link to fill out the application fully on line and upload their documents.

### **Application Requirements**

Applications must include the following:

- 1) Student's high school transcripts for all years up to application time (most likely 9-10 and 11 grades);
- 2) A parents' income statement (with letters from employers or confirmation from unemployment bureau);
- 3) A statement of household expenses (review of monthly expenses (bills) and number of family members living in their household);
- 4) Copies of average utility bills and rent or mortgage receipts;
- 5) A budget planner with a request for the expenses expected by the student.

### **Application Timeline**

**January 9, 2017:** Student application deadline

**February 6, 2017:** Award letters sent

**In order to apply, you should submit the completed Application Form and supporting documents online by January 9, 2017.**

**For more information about the program, please contact:**

Snejana Teneva, EducationUSA Adviser  
Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission  
12 Vitosha Blvd.  
1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  
T: 359 2 981 6830  
M: 359 898 823 329  
E-mail: [steneva@fulbright.bg](mailto:steneva@fulbright.bg); [snejana.teneva@gmail.com](mailto:snejana.teneva@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg); <http://educationUSA.state.gov>  
Visiting hours: Monday-Friday, 2:00p.m. - 4:00p.m.

**Your Official Source on U.S. Higher Education**

Visit [EducationUSA.state.gov](http://EducationUSA.state.gov) for more information.

