



### **Summary**

The Baltic-American Freedom Foundation (BAFF) was founded in 2010 to provide opportunities for citizens of the Baltic states to gain education and professional development through exchanges in the U.S. From inception through 2021, scholarships and awards worth more than \$18 million have been awarded.

### **History**

BAFF is the legacy foundation created by the Baltic-American Enterprise Fund (BalAEF). Established in 1994, among BalAEF initiatives were some 19,800 mortgage loans and 125 business investments. In 2008, as BalAEF prepared to exit its investments, the Fund's leadership, building on the experience of other Enterprise Funds, created a legacy foundation, the Baltic-American Freedom Foundation (BAFF). BAFF was established in 2010 and authorized by USAID to fund educational exchange programs collectively known as BAFF Scholarships. With an endowment from BalAEF that would exceed \$35 million after returning \$25 million to the U.S. Treasury, BAFF has thus far disbursed more than \$18 million in scholarships and awards to nearly 650 individuals and more than 100 organizations.

### **Mission**

Continuing a longstanding American commitment to the Baltic region, the BAFF mission is "to deepen the ties between and among Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the United States through programs of education and exchange centering on economic growth and democratic values".

### **U.S.-Baltic Ties**

BAFF is accomplishing its mission through an extensive commitment to educational exchange programs. The BAFF Scholarships are a gift from the American people to the citizens of the Baltic states, to further build and strengthen the friendship and goodwill existing between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the United States.

### **Governance**

BAFF financial and program oversight is provided by a **Board of Directors** who serve *pro bono*: Co-Chairs Ms. Danguole Spakevicius Altman and Mr. Richard Sheridan, Mr. Kim G. Davis, Ms. Joanne Medero, Ambassador Michael Polt, Mr. Peter Ragauss, Dr. Asta Sendonaris, Secretary Rodney Slater, the Honorable Mark Sullivan, and Mr. Andres Trink. BAFF retains the services of Mr. Alan Griffin as Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer and Mr. Matthew Elkin as Counsel. BAFF has chosen third-party program administrators CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange to implement its programming.

### **Current Programs**

The **Professional Internship Program** offers enrolled post-secondary students and recent graduates a fully-funded opportunity to complete an internship in a U.S. company or non-profit organization to gain professional career experience and training. The **Research Scholar Program** provides established academics the opportunity to collaborate on a research project with their U.S. colleagues. **BAFF Leadership Academy** offers high school students full scholarships to participate in a summer program designed to develop entrepreneurship expertise and leadership skills. **Baltic-American Dialogue** provides funding for Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian public organizations to host speakers from the U.S. to travel to the Baltics to speak on topics of mutual interest and importance. **Baltic- American Security Exchange (BASE)** facilitates the exchange of critical knowledge and establishes contacts between Baltic and U.S. security experts. **Transatlantic Business Awards** recognize innovative achievements by Estonian-based companies with an emphasis on their contributions in strengthening economic ties. The award is administered jointly by BAFF, the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, and AmCham Estonia. Similar programs in Latvia and Lithuania recognize innovation and entrepreneurship in collaboration with American partners or the U.S. market. The **Latvian-American Innovation Awards** are awarded in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Latvia and the American Chamber of Commerce Latvia. The **Lithuanian-American Innovation Awards** are presented in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Lithuania and the American-Lithuanian Business Council.



**Scholarships and Grants, Inception-August 31, 2021**

<i>Scholarships &amp; Grants</i>	<i>Participants &amp; Grantees</i>	<i>Awards to date</i>
Professional Internships	356	\$10,351,594
Graduate Scholars	27	\$677,786
Research Scholars	67	\$2,936,341
Leadership Academy	198	\$1,369,285
Enrichment Trips		\$413,340
Alumni Activities		\$322,437
Estonian-American Innovation/Transatlantic Awards	14	\$119,064
Latvian-American Innovation Awards & Others	15	\$86,479
Lithuanian-American Innovation Awards	6	\$53,373
Baltic-American Dialogue Grants	122	\$657,757
Baltic-American Security Exchange Grants	40	\$502,994
Other Grants & Awards		\$586,788
<b>Total Scholarships &amp; Grants</b>		<b>\$18,077,238</b>

Note: COVID-19 restrictions limited scholarship participation 2020-2021. We anticipate participation to resume in 2022.

**Recent Host Organizations and Institutions**

**Professional Internships**—AON, Brand Assembly, Center for European Policy Analysis, Elegran Capital & Advisory, International Bar Association, Plug and Play, Poseiden Paddle and Surf, Prezi, Protheragen, SAP, Skanska, We Travel, Wheeler Kearns Architects. **Research Scholars**—Penn State University, National Center for Atmospheric Research, University of Iowa, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Arizona State University.

**BAFF Alumni**

In 2020, the Board of Directors appointed twelve alumni to the inaugural BAFF Alumni Council to advise on alumni programs to ensure the lasting impact of BAFF participation. Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, the Council has initiated multiple professional development and networking programs as well as social opportunities. A larger group of BAFF Ambassadors has contributed to event planning and implementation. Traditional alumni events include an annual Thanksgiving dinner and summer games. BAFF alumni are notable for their entrepreneurial focus. Several have established companies in the tech sector, and others are active in creating linkages between Baltic companies and the U.S. entrepreneur ecosystem in Silicon Valley.



### ***CIEE***

CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange has been chosen by BAFF for the administration, management, and program support for BAFF scholarship programs. Since 1947, CIEE has pursued its mission “to help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world.” CIEE is a non-profit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to administer international work and study exchange programs. CIEE also administers scholarship programs on behalf of the Albanian- American Development Foundation, the Hungarian-American Enterprise Scholarship Fund, and the Romanian-American Foundation.

### ***Staff***

BAFF scholarships are administered by BAFF Regional Program Director Ilze Doskina and Baltic staff in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. A U.S. team led by Laura Lyons provides overall direction and participant services during scholarship recipients’ experience in the U.S.

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