



Baltic-American Freedom Foundation

2023 Annual Report for fiscal year ending August 31, 2023

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 2023, scholarships and small grants worth nearly \$21 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 nearly \$21 million in scholarships and small grants to over 800 individuals and more than 250 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 accomplishes its mission through an extensive commitment to educational exchange programs. 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 Danguole Spakevicius Altman and Richard Sheridan, Kim G. Davis, Joanne Medero, Ambassador Michael Polt, the Hon. Randal Quarles, Mr. Peter Ragauss, Dr. Asta Sendonaris, Sec. Rodney Slater, the Hon. Mark Sullivan, and Andres Trink. BAFF retains the services of Alan Griffin as Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer and Matthew Elkin as Counsel. BAFF has chosen third-party 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 full-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. peers. ***BAFF Leadership Academy*** offers full scholarships for Baltic high school students to participate in a summer program designed to develop entrepreneurship and leadership skills. ***Baltic-American Dialogue*** provides funding for Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian public organizations to host American experts to travel to the Baltics to speak on topics of mutual interest. ***Baltic-American Security Exchange (BASE)*** facilitates the exchange of critical knowledge and establishes contacts between Baltic and U.S. security experts. ***Innovation Awards*** recognize innovation and entrepreneurship in Latvian and Lithuanian organizations who collaborate with American partners or serve the U.S. market.



Baltic-American Freedom Foundation

Scholarships and Grants, Inception to August 31, 2023

Scholarships & Grants	Participants and Grantees	Awards to 8/31/2023
Professional Interns	403	\$ 11,430,076
Graduate Scholars FY14-FY17	27	\$ 677,786
Research Scholars	87	\$ 3,502,047
Leadership Academy	277	\$ 1,770,517
Alumni Professional Development Grants	18	\$ 65,173
Baltic-American Dialogue		\$ 830,871
BASE and other security-related grants		\$ 860,503
Support for Innovation & Entrepreneurship		\$ 292,002
Enrichment Trips		\$ 506,764
Alumni Activities		\$ 552,726
Other Grants & Awards		\$ 505,234
Totals	812 individual scholarships, 268 grants to organizations	\$ 20,993,699

Recent Host Organizations and Institutions

Professional Internships—Aegis Hedging Solutions, AON, Artists Alliance, Atlantic Council, Elegran, Flatbush Pictures, Independent Diplomat, Plug and Play, Riverside Company, Skanska USA. **Research Scholars**—Columbia University, George Washington University, Harvard University, National Center for Biotechnology Information.

BAFF Alumni

In 2020, the Board of Directors appointed twelve alumni to the inaugural BAFF Alumni Council as advisors on alumni programs to ensure the lasting impact of BAFF participation. The Alumni Council has initiated programming including a mentorship program for younger alumni, a research-related podcast, and numerous networking and social events. Alumni Council members were instrumental in planning the BAFF Tenth Anniversary celebration, held June 18, 2022. A larger group of BAFF Ambassadors has contributed to event planning and implementation, including the traditional Thanksgiving Dinner, held annually in early December.

CIEE

BAFF has selected CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange for the administration, management, and program support for BAFF 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 U.S. 501(c)3 not-for-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 and the Romanian-American Foundation.

BAFF programs are administered by Regional Program Director Ilze Doskina and staff in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. A U.S. team led by Juliette Van De Geer provides overall direction and participant services during scholarship recipients’ experience in the U.S.

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