

## **2012-2013 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (KINSHASA) COUNTRY GUIDELINES FOR U.S. FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS**

The Fulbright Program is sponsored and administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the United States Department of State, and awards scholarships to lecture, conduct research, and study abroad. The program is managed in country by the Public Affairs Section (PAS) at U.S. Embassy Kinshasa.

Country guidelines contain **summary** information about the Fulbright award, and logistical and program support provided through ECA, contact information for PAS or the U.S. embassy, and advisory information about your host country. These guidelines are an important resource, and should be reviewed prior to departing for your host country. This document may be supplemented by PAS during your arrival orientation at post. Please note that this information is subject to change.

### **THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION OF U.S. EMBASSY KINSHASA**

U.S. Embassy Kinshasa is located at Avenue des Aviateurs, 310, Kinshasa-Gombé. The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) of the Public Affairs Section (PAS) has overall management responsibility for the Fulbright Program and all other public diplomacy programs at U.S. Embassy Kinshasa. PAS is located at 498, Avenue Colonel Lukusa, JAO Building, Kinshasa-Gombé.

- PAO Marc Dillard: [DillardMD@state.gov](mailto:DillardMD@state.gov)
- Public Diplomacy Officer (PDO) Austin Richardson: [RichardsonAR@state.gov](mailto:RichardsonAR@state.gov)
- Cultural Affairs Specialist Cynthia Kalenga: [KalengaCN@state.gov](mailto:KalengaCN@state.gov)

PAS via Embassy switchboard: 243 81 556 0151 ext 2194  
Fax: (243) 81-556-0175

Fulbright scholars/students in the U.S. may write to PAS at:

Public Affairs Officer  
2220 Kinshasa Place  
Dulles, VA 20189-2220

### **YOUR FULBRIGHT GRANT AND THE BINATIONAL NATURE OF THE PROGRAM**

The Fulbright Program is administered in accordance with regulations established by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FSB). The Board has ruled that Fulbright grant funds cannot duplicate benefits received under other auspices. Therefore, grantees who receive host government or host institution financial contributions (for example, international travel, per diem/subsistence/housing allowance) in cash or kind do not receive allowances for these grant

benefits. Grantees who receive a concurrent grant to the same country under other auspices may have their Fulbright grants reduced if Fulbright grant benefits are duplicated by the other grant.

Host country governments and institutions support the exchange program through two ways: (a) *monetary contributions*, which result in a sharing of program costs, or (b) *non-monetary assistance* to enhance the exchange experience for the guest scholar.

## WHAT THE FULBRIGHT GRANT PROVIDES

### Fulbright Student

Fulbright student grants have two components: (1) a base amount, and (2) a monthly maintenance allowance. Additional funds may be included in your grant as allowances and are described separately. Benefits authorized by ECA are paid in U.S. dollars through the Institute of International Education (IIE).

1. The **base amount** is provided to cover initial or one-time start-up expenses such as:
  - a. Unaccompanied and/or excess baggage.
  - b. Miscellaneous costs, such as visa fees, permits, medical exams, immunizations, etc. This is a fixed sum in each grant and may not reimburse all expenses completely.
2. A monthly **maintenance allowance** is provided to cover recurring subsistence needs such as housing, fuel, utilities, and food. The allowance is based upon the estimated standard living costs in the country of assignment.

### Fulbright scholars

Fulbright scholar grants have three components: (1) travel and relocation, (2) a monthly maintenance allowance, and (3) a monthly stipend. Additional funds may be included in your grant as special allowances and are described separately. Benefits are based upon the estimated standard living costs in the country of assignment, and are not intended to duplicate U.S. salary levels or the standard of living of U.S. diplomatic personnel. Benefits authorized by ECA are paid in U.S. dollars through the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES).

1. Travel and Relocation
  - a. Unaccompanied and/or excess baggage.
  - b. Relocation allowance for expenses such as visa fees, permits, medical exams, immunizations, etc. This is a fixed sum in each grant and may not reimburse all expenses completely.
2. A monthly **maintenance allowance** is provided to cover recurring subsistence needs such as housing, fuel, utilities, and food.
3. Monthly **base stipend**

## **PRIOR TO YOUR ARRIVAL**

### **Travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Grantee air travel is coordinated by the travel agency, HRG Worldwide, which will bill IIE or CIES directly for the costs of your tickets. HRG staff will assist you with your reservation and then send your reservation to IIE or CIES for approval. You must book a round-trip ticket with a return date that corresponds to the grant end date. All air travel and all air shipments paid for with United States Government funds must conform to the Fly America Act, which requires that all such travel and shipments be on “U.S. flag” airlines where such service is available.

### **Visas and Residence/Work/Research Permits**

Grantees should take copies of all identification certificates and documents, including marriage and birth certificates, driver's licenses, etc., to your assignment country. Make photocopies of the first two pages of your passport, which should be kept separate from your passport in case of loss or theft. Also bring extra passport photos for obtaining visas and conducting other business.

#### **Visas**

Grantees must obtain an entry visa prior to arrival in the DROC. Upon arrival in Kinshasa the Public Affairs Section will assist the grantee and any dependents to obtain a one year-visa and “carte de sejour” (residence permit).

The Ministry of Research under the Ministry of Higher Education grants research clearance in the DROC. The Rector of the University of Kinshasa will request a research permit and clearance on behalf of the grantee.

To obtain a permanent resident permit the grantee should submit to the local immigration police a letter of support from the host institution, a certificate of residence signed by a local administrative authority, payment of US \$150, and photos.

A yellow fever vaccination received within the last ten years and a World Health Organization immunization card is required for entry into the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## **Sending and Receiving Mail**

### **Personal mail**

Fulbright grantees have been approved for access to the diplomatic pouch to receive first-class letter mail only (maximum of two pounds). Magazines, newspapers, DVDs, and package mail are not authorized. Take sufficient U.S. postage stamps with you for first-class mail to the U.S. The Department of State accepts no liability for loss or damage. First-class mail via the pouch can take up to two weeks or more for delivery.

The address format for correspondence is as follows:

Your Name  
2220 Kinshasa Place  
Dulles, VA 20189-2220

### **Books and Educational Materials Sent by Diplomatic Pouch**

Fulbrighters have access to the diplomatic pouch for sending a maximum of four 8.5"x11" copy paper-size boxes of books and other educational materials. These pouch privileges are provided by the U.S. Embassy on a one-time, one-way basis only; materials cannot be sent back to the U.S. by pouch at any time during your stay. Package mail in excess of the four permitted boxes will be returned to the U.S. at your expense. For additional information on the exact dimensions, address information, and recommendations, consult the *Instructions for Shipment of Books and Educational Materials by Fulbright Scholars* document included in your pre-departure orientation packet.

**CAUTIONARY NOTE:** In the past, abuse by several Fulbright scholars caused near revocation of privileges for all program participants. Anyone who violates pouch regulations will be barred from use and will have to make other arrangements for handling personal and professional correspondence.

### **Customs Restrictions on Professional and Personal Affects**

Besides the limited pouch shipment and airline excess baggage, grantees may airmail materials addressed to themselves via international mail, but are subject to paying customs duty at the local post office before taking possession of the materials. All goods taken into the host country must be declared. There are no duties levied on equipment, such as computers, that are imported for personal use. Firearms may not be brought in without prior arrangements with the Department of Customs and the host country police department. Pets require special handling and prior clearance with the Department of Animal Health before they can be imported into the host country. Please be aware that additional transit stops may also require clearance when traveling with pets. The Community Liaison Office at the U.S. Embassy can provide additional information.

### **Schooling for Dependents**

There are many schools in Kinshasa that are run by expatriates and that are available for all ages of students. The Embassy also works closely with the American School of Kinshasa (TASOK). Grantees can arrange registration for dependents at TASOK by contacting Ms. Irene Epp, Director, or Ms. Karen LaPlanche, Business Manager, Tel. +243 81-880-1330. Email: [business@tasok.cd](mailto:business@tasok.cd) or [adminassistant@tasok.cd](mailto:adminassistant@tasok.cd). School bus is provided by the school.

Early childhood Center	N/A
Pre-kindergarten	None
Kindergarten-1 <sup>st</sup> grade	\$4,800
2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> grades	\$5,400
4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grades	\$6,000
6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> grades	\$8,200
9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> grades	\$10,160
11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grades	\$10,710
Registration fee one time only	\$2,000
ESL	\$2,500
Application/testing	\$200

## **PAS AND EMBASSY SUPPORT**

In an effort to support U.S. Fulbright scholars/students and their families, the following services are provided by PAS and the Embassy:

### **Security**

All Fulbright grantees will receive a security briefing upon arrival in the host country. Grantees should take care in arranging for a secure apartment, with solid doors and bars on accessible windows. Street crime and residential burglaries are potential problems. Fulbrighters are advised not to walk downtown or in parks after dark, as muggings occur frequently. As in any major U.S. city, people are cautioned to watch valuables at all times. Men should carry wallets in a front trousers pocket; women should carry tightly closed purses held securely to their sides. There are frequent reports of thieves snatching jewelry and other objects from open vehicle windows while stopped in heavy traffic. Carjackings are not uncommon but seem to come in spurts, so use caution, particularly when driving at night. Travelers' checks, passports and other valuables should not be left in a hotel room; check all important documents and valuables in a hotel safety deposit box. Better yet, leave non-essential jewelry and irreplaceable items at home in the U.S.

Use caution when traveling to national parks or nature preserves, especially in the DRC. Travelers should only use the services of reputable travel firms or knowledgeable guides when traveling on safaris or to nature preserves. Safaris are best undertaken with a minimum of two vehicles so that there is a back-up in case of mechanical failure. Please understand that almost all tourist infrastructure in the DRC is extremely limited, as are the local authorities abilities to perform search and rescue.

### **Arrival and Temporary Lodging**

The PAO or another PAS representative will meet and assist incoming Fulbrighters at the airport. It is preferable for grantees to arrive on weekdays rather than weekends. Grantees must provide CIES or IIE with their final itineraries **at least 3 weeks in advance**.

The host university provides furnished housing for lecturers and offers them temporary hotel accommodations if permanent housing is not ready when they arrive. This housing is usually very basic, with water and electricity supplies occasionally interrupted. University housing is not provided for senior researchers or Fulbright students. Fulbright researchers and students must arrange their own accommodations. If needed, PAS will arrange for temporary accommodations at the grantee's expense for a few days until the grantee finds permanent lodging.

### **U.S. Embassy Access**

The Embassy issues Fulbrighters badges for access to Embassy offices once they complete the security brief. Please arrange to visit the Embassy within one week of your arrival.

### **Check Cashing and Local Banking Arrangements**

Fulbright grantees have been approved for check cashing facilities at the Embassy. Fulbright grantees may also open bank accounts at local commercial banks if they have resident permits.

ATMs are increasingly available, but are subject to fees and can also be a target for pickpockets and thieves.

Prior to their departure from the U.S., Fulbrighters should consult their U.S. banks concerning overdraft privileges. When mail is delayed, scholars and students may not have current information about account balances. Additional U.S. dollar travelers' checks and a major U.S. credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Diner's Club, etc.) are valuable for travel and emergencies. An increasing number of retail facilities such as hotels, restaurants, grocery and clothing stores accept credit cards. However, the DRC remains an almost entirely cash-driven economy.

### **Local Health Services and Access to Embassy Health Facilities**

Fulbright grantees should ensure you have current yellow fever vaccination and tetanus immunizations. Vaccines for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, and current booster/vaccines against childhood diseases (tetanus diphtheria, polio, and measles/mumps/rubella) are also strongly recommended for adults, as well as children. For additional information, consult the Centers for Disease Control's website: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

Grantees should carry copies of complete medical records and basic information that will enable quick and efficient medical assistance, if necessary. Seek the guidance of your personal physician prior to departure from the U.S. in selecting basic health information records to bring with you. Grantees should carry a good supply of aspirin, vitamins, band-aids, and preferred over the counter medications. Fulbright grantees do not have access to the Embassy health unit.

The Embassy can make arrangements for the grantee to use a private clinic (Centre Privé d'Urgences) that specializes in emergency care. The monthly fee is around US \$30 for each person. The clinic has modern equipment and its staff physicians, some of them expatriate or Western-trained, are available for consultations and emergency care.

Grantees will be given information on health precautions and immunizations applicable for Sub-Saharan Africa in general. Fulbright grantees should consult with the PAO for updated information on specific local health problems.

### **Additional Health Information**

Food and water precautions apply to Kinshasa. Locally purchased raw fruits and vegetables should be peeled or treated before eating. The Public Affairs Office recommends bleach purification for raw fruits and vegetables.

The most prevalent medical problems in the local population are malaria, intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, and upper respiratory diseases. Sand fleas (also called chiggers), which embed themselves in the skin, are common and can be treated by medical personnel. The AIDS situation is more serious than in the U.S. and adequate protection is advised.

Immunization against yellow fever, tetanus, poliomyelitis, hepatitis A and B, typhoid, rabies, meningococcus, and the usual children's diseases are recommended before arrival.

Malaria is endemic to the Congo but can be prevented with proper precautions. Prophylaxis is

strongly recommended by the Public Health Service. The grantee should bring an adequate supply of all required medications.

Trauma, particularly from motor vehicle accidents, is the most common cause of death among personnel assigned to Kinshasa. There are few medical resources available to deal appropriately with major trauma. Prevent traumatic injury by always using seatbelts in vehicles. Most vehicular accidents occur due to alcohol consumption.

Drinking tap water can lead to diarrhea from various bacteria or parasites and/or hepatitis. Drink and use only boiled and filtered or bottled water, even when brushing your teeth.

Fulbright grantees have health care provisions under the Department of State Group Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). ASPE is subject to specific limitation; it is not an all-purpose health insurance. Grantees must review the information spelled out in the ASPE brochure. The Fulbright grant also provides emergency medical evacuation as described in the ASPE brochure. Read more at [exchanges.state.gov/aspe](http://exchanges.state.gov/aspe)

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

### **Permanent Housing and Household Goods**

The Host University provides furnished housing for Fulbright lecturers and their families. Fulbright lecturers should communicate with their department heads regarding housing and other facilities. It is also a good idea to ensure that the university rector is aware of your impending arrival.

Fulbright researchers and students are responsible for finding their own housing. Housing can be very expensive. PAS can provide contact information for these upon request.

Household effects are readily available and expensive. Grocery stores are plentiful, but the food is expensive by U.S. standards. More reasonable prices can be found in local markets, but with less personal security. Water can not be safely drunk from the tap.

The television system used is PAL. Because the U.S. uses the NTSC system, DVDs brought from the U.S. will not be viewable on locally-acquired TV sets, unless they are multi-system. Satellite television service is widely subscribed to and costs about US \$100 per month for a package that includes news, sports and movie channels.

### **Computers and Other Electronic Equipment**

Fulbrighters do not have duty-free privileges, so all computers and electronic equipment brought into the country must be taken out of the country when the grant is completed or duty must be paid. Previous Fulbrighters have donated computer equipment to host universities at the end of their stay in exchange for the university's obtaining duty-free entry. Do not send computers as unaccompanied baggage.

Power outages and power fluctuations are common and can destroy a computer. The best

solution is to bring a laptop which does not require a transformer and can easily convert from 120 to 220 volts. Another option is to purchase a transformer to convert your computer from 110 to 220 volts, and a heavy-duty surge protector and a voltage regulator. All can be purchased in-country. A previous Fulbrighter also advised that by bringing his own laser printer on his grant, he was able to avoid the tedious process of getting copies made at the university.

Larger cities offer a variety of email and Internet service providers at reasonable rates. Direct Internet access is available, though a bit more expensive, and is becoming more widely used, particularly in the NGO and business communities. Unlike the U.S. where the universities were in the forefront of providing Internet service, universities in Kinshasa lag behind in both email and Internet.

Cameras intended for personal use are allowed into the country duty-free.

### **Academic Life**

#### **University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN) - Contact Information**

Jean Berchmans LABANA, President of the Board of Rectors, Tel: +243-815116185, [rectorat@unikin.cd](mailto:rectorat@unikin.cd)

Professor Mudugo VIRIMA, Academic General Secretary, Tel: 243-999930963

#### **Superior Institute of Commerce (ISC) – Contact Information**

Albert KABAMBA MUEU, Director General, Tel: +243 815132542, [alkabamba@yahoo.fr](mailto:alkabamba@yahoo.fr)

#### **National Pedagogic University (UPN) – Contact Information**

Edward TSHISUNGU LUBAMBU, Rector, Tel: +243 815364589, [tshisunguedouard@yahoo.fr](mailto:tshisunguedouard@yahoo.fr)

### **Academic Calendar**

The academic year runs from August through May. There are two semesters: August-December and January-May. Fulbright lecturers should plan to arrive in early or mid-August. While classes may not actually start on dates scheduled, course assignments are often decided during the last semester of the previous academic year. Given this, lecturers must be present before classes are scheduled to start.

### **Teaching Requirements, Attendance, and Staff Hours**

Lecturers may be assigned up to four courses, due to staff shortages in various departments. As stated in the Fulbright grant, PAS expects all lecturers to fulfill their professional responsibilities, including class attendance, faculty meetings, special projects, etc. Lecturers should communicate with their department heads as soon as possible to get an idea of classes to be assigned; however, Fulbright lecturers should also take note of workload assigned to them, and advise PAS if the host department is unbalanced in assignments.

### **Phoning Home & Mobile Phones**

1-800 numbers cannot be accessed from DROC. Use of international long-distance calling cards is very limited. International calling rates are quite high - approximately US \$2 to \$2.50 per minute to the U.S. PAS can provide information on these services.

Most Fulbrighters find it impossible to live without a mobile phone. There are several companies - Airtel, TIGO and Vodacom are most common - and mobile networks are expanding. U.S. phones, unless compatible with the GSM900 system, will not be compatible with the host country system. Mobile phones purchased in Europe should work.

### **Local Transportation and the Used Car Market**

Fulbrighters who plan to drive should obtain an international driver's license from AAA before leaving the U.S. Japanese vehicles are common here, and therefore spare parts are easily available. Excessive speed, unpredictable local driving habits, poor vehicle maintenance, and the lack of basic safety equipment on many vehicles are daily hazards. Vehicle travel outside major cities at night should be avoided due to the poor condition of the roads and the threat of banditry. High clearance or 4W drive vehicles are essential for driving outside major cities and to game parks. During the rainy season, many roads are passable only with 4W drive vehicles.

Fulbrighters are not granted duty-free privileges to purchase or import vehicles. For that reason, Fulbrighters are advised not to import vehicles, as import duty is very expensive and delays are common in clearing vehicles through customs. The Embassy and PAS cannot assist with customs clearance.

Scholars who plan to drive are advised to look for a used vehicle upon their arrival in the host country. Prices are high by U.S. standards (US \$5,000 or more depending on the type of car), but most grantees can sell the vehicle for approximately the same amount upon departure. Car rental is possible but also expensive. PAS cannot provide official vehicles for personal use.

Depending upon where you live, it may be possible to call for a taxi by phone, especially if you can identify a reliable driver. Public transportation is not considered to be safe. Even long distance travel in modern buses can be unsafe, both because of criminal activity aboard the buses and because of hazardous driving conditions.

Roads are generally poorly maintained, with numerous potholes even on major thoroughfares. Travel via passenger train is unsafe, particularly during the rainy seasons, because of the lack of routine maintenance and safety checks.

### **Other Websites or Resource Material**

**Consular Information Sheet**

[travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)

**Fulbright Association**

[www.fulbright.org](http://www.fulbright.org)

**Fulbright Community on State Alumni**

[alumni.state.gov/fulbright](http://alumni.state.gov/fulbright)

### **Public Holidays**

In addition to observing U.S. holiday, the U.S. Embassy also observes some DROC holidays, according to the following holiday schedule for 2012:

January 2 (Mon)	New Year's Day	Local
January 4 (Weds)	Day of the Martyrs	Local
January 16 (Mon)	National Heroes Day	Local
January 17 (Tues)	National Heroes Day	Local
May 1 (Tues)	Labor Day	Local
May 17 (Thu)	Liberation Day	Local
June 30 (Sat)	Independence Day	Local
August 1 (Weds)	Parents' Day	Local
December 25 (Tues)	Christmas Day	U.S./Local

### **FULBRIGHT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Fulbright award requires submission of two reports: 1) at the interim or mid-point of the grant, and 2) a final report prior to departing the host country. Grantees will receive instructions from CIES or IIE, as appropriate, on filing these reports on-line.