

## **2013-2014 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. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 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. The PAS is located separately from the U.S. Embassy at 498, Avenue Colonel Lukusa, Kinshasa-Gombé. It is widely known locally as the “Centre Culturel Americain.”

- PAO Ellen Masi, Email: [MasiEB@state.gov](mailto:MasiEB@state.gov)
- Public Diplomacy Officer (PDO) Austin Richardson, Email: [RichardsonAR@state.gov](mailto:RichardsonAR@state.gov)
- Cultural Affairs Specialist Cynthia Kalenga, Email: [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

**All Fulbright grantees must register with the embassy in case of emergency.** This can be done on this website at any time: <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

### **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. In the DRC, monetary contributions from the host institution and government are rare, and assistance in the weeks and months after the grantees' arrival can be limited. It is important that grantees demonstrate some independence, while remaining in close contact with the PAS.

## WHAT THE FULBRIGHT GRANT PROVIDES

### For Student Grantees

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. Round-trip economy airfare. The Fulbright student is responsible for making travel arrangements according to the Fly America Act and securing tickets.
  - b. Unaccompanied and/or excess baggage.
  - c. 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.

### For Scholar Grantees

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. Round-trip economy airfare, unless the host institution cost-shares in part or in whole. The Fulbright scholar is responsible for making travel arrangements adhering to the Fly America Act (see below for details) and securing tickets.
  - b. Unaccompanied and/or excess baggage.

c. 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 and within Democratic Republic of the Congo**

#### **Fly America Act**

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 DRC. You are encouraged to purchase the maximum-length visa currently offered by the Embassy of the DRC. Upon arrival in Kinshasa the Public Affairs Section will assist the grantee and any dependents to obtain a one year-visa and a research permit from the DRC Ministry of Higher Education. This process can be expedited slightly if you can provide the PAS with a letter signed by the rectors of your host institution in the DRC, outlining your study plans and requesting a “research clearance.” Nevertheless, the process for securing your one-year visa once in the DRC can be a lengthy and complicated process, especially for grantees working outside of the province of Kinshasa.

If a grantee has chosen to study at an institution outside of the metropolitan area of Kinshasa, it is incumbent upon them to put them into contact with the Public Affairs Section as soon as possible, so that they can undertake site visits, develop contacts, and prepare any needed documentation.

Finally, please note that, for entry into the DRC, grantees must bring a World Health Organization immunization card demonstrating that they have received a yellow fever vaccination within the last ten years.

## **Sending and Receiving Mail**

*Personal mail:* Fulbright grantees have been approved for access to the diplomatic pouch to receive and send first-class *letter* mail (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 one-time 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. Once in Kinshasa, Fulbright scholars should arrange with a PAS representative in order to gain access to Embassy grounds and to pick up their mail.

**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 ship materials to the U.S. Embassy, addressed to themselves, via international mail services like DHL, FedEx or UPS. However, grantees are responsible for paying any customs duties 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. Please note as well that the DRC has a national mail service, but delivery routinely takes months or years, if at all. However, international shipping companies such as DHL, FedEx and UPS do have offices in the DRC, and can send and receive mail (including package mail) at much faster rates.

### Schooling for Dependents

Kinshasa is home to several international and private schools, including institutions tied to the American, French and Belgian communities. Please note that these institutions are paid, private schools, and can be expensive relative to Congolese public and private institutions.

For more information on the American School of Kinshasa (TASOK) Grantees can contact Irene Epp, Director of the American School of Kinshasa (TASOK) or Ms. Kareen LaPlanche, Business Manager via e-mail at [adminassistant@tasok.cd](mailto:adminassistant@tasok.cd) and [business@tasok.cd](mailto:business@tasok.cd), respectively.

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

Pricing at the Lycée Prince de Liege, the Belgian School, is as follows.

Pre- K	€2150
Kindergarten	€2640
Primary School	€3240 plus €250 Registration Fee
7 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> grades	€4300 plus €250 Registration Fee
10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grades	€4900 plus €250 Registration Fee

The English-speaking School of Lubumbashi (TESOL), offers education in English for students from preschool (age 4) through Grade 12. They can be reached for further information at +243 81 187 0749, +243 81 198 7013, [tesolschool@yahoo.com](mailto:tesolschool@yahoo.com), or through [www.tesolschool.org](http://www.tesolschool.org).

Pricing for 2013 is as follows:

Pre-kindergarten	\$3900
Kindergarten	\$3900
1 <sup>st</sup> - 9 <sup>th</sup> grades	\$4200
10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grades	\$4,200
Registration fee	\$200

\*Please note that for 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, students study at TESOL each day but is conducted through distance learning, using the University of Nebraska at Lincoln's Independent Study High School courses

There are few international schools in the DRC outside of Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. With at least three months of advance notice, PAS representatives can investigate schooling opportunities in other areas during a site visit.

## **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, which is required and must be done in person at the US Embassy in Kinshasa, upon arrival in the host country. These briefings discuss the situation generally in the DRC and provide tips for staying safe in day-to-day life in urban areas. Given the location of the Embassy in the capital, the briefers can provide greater detail for staying safe in Kinshasa than for provincial cities.

Grantees should take care in arranging for a secure apartment, with solid doors and bars on accessible windows. Street crime and residential burglaries are not infrequent in Kinshasa, and Fulbrighters are advised not to walk in most urban areas after dark, as muggings can occur. 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 reports of thieves snatching jewelry and other objects from open vehicle windows while stopped in heavy traffic. Carjackings are rare 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. 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.

### **Arrival and Temporary Lodging**

All grantees will be met and assisted upon arrival, by a PAS representative. We strongly encourage grantees to arrive on weekdays rather than weekends. Grantees must provide CIES or IIE with their final itineraries **at least 3 weeks in advance**.

University housing is not generally provided for senior researchers or Fulbright students. If you have come to a separate arrangement with your host institution, please inform the PAS so that they can inspect the housing for safety and security. 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. If the grantee would like to pursue this option, they should contact the PAS by e-mail, outlining generally where they would like to stay and

what their acceptable price range is.

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

When visiting the U.S. Embassy, please arrange with the PDO or a PAS representative at least 24 hours ahead of time, for required security processing. We ask you to leave all computers, hard drives and removable memory devices at home, as they are generally not allowed on Embassy grounds. If you need to bring these for a meeting, please provide notice at least 48 hours in advance, so that special accommodations can be made.

### **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, however, are widely available, and often charge only minimal fees. Nevertheless, grantees should be careful to use ATMs only at reputable banks, during the daytime, and preferably in safe areas of town.

Prior to their departure from the U.S., Fulbrighters should consult their U.S. banks concerning overdraft privileges and/or set up on-line banking capabilities. When mail is delayed, scholars and students may not have current information about account balances. A major U.S. credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Diner's Club, etc.) is valuable for travel and emergencies. Most retail facilities such as hotels, restaurants, grocery accept credit cards. Travelers Checks are *not* widely accepted in the DRC. We discourage grantees from bringing them to the DRC.

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

Fulbright grantees should ensure that they 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 in Kinshasa 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. Basic information can be provided by the health unit on known medical facilities in other major towns in the DRC. Please note that there are few facilities with the resources to appropriately handle cases of major trauma. Prevent traumatic injury by taking precautions, like always wearing a seatbelt while riding in vehicles and wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle.

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, cooked or treated before eating. The U.S. Embassy medical unit recommends bleach purification for raw fruits and vegetables. Drinking tap water can lead to diarrhea from various bacteria or parasites and/or hepatitis. Drink only boiled and filtered or bottled water, even when brushing your teeth.

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.

Malaria is endemic to the Congo but can be prevented with proper precautions. Prophylaxis is strongly recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. The grantee should bring an adequate supply of all required medications.

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**

Some Host Universities can provide furnished housing for Fulbright lecturers and their families. Fulbright lecturers should communicate with their department heads regarding housing and other facilities. All information on housing, including the address and the contact information for your landlord, should be shared with the PAS as soon as possible.

Fulbright researchers and students, however, are responsible for finding their own housing. Housing can be very expensive.

Household effects are readily available and expensive. Grocery stores are plentiful in urban areas, but food is expensive by U.S. standards. Water cannot 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, but they can be expensive.

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 and in the DRC lag behind in both email and Internet.

## **Academic Life**

*University of Kinshasa - Contact Information*

Professor Jean-Berchmans Labana Lasay' Abar, Rector; Tel: 243-81 511 6785

Professor Mudugo Virima, Academic General Secretary; Tel: 243-999930963

*University of Lubumbashi - Contact Information*

Professor Chabu Mumba, Rector; Tel: 243-99-703 3047 / 99 300 8316

## **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.

## **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 and Mobile Phones**

1-800 numbers can be accessed from DRC, but are not free of charge. Use of international long-distance calling cards is very limited. International calling rates are quite high - approximately US \$0.25 per minute to the U.S.

Most Fulbrighters find it impossible to live without a mobile phone. There are several companies - Airtel, TIGO, Vodacom and Orange are most common - and mobile networks are expanding. U.S. phones must be compatible with GSM networks to function in the DRC. Unlocked 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 four-wheel drive vehicles are essential for driving outside major cities and to game parks. During the rainy season, many roads are passable only with four-wheel 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  
Fulbright Association  
State Alumni

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

### **Public Holidays**

In addition to observing U.S. holiday, the U.S. Embassy also observes some DRC holidays, according to the following holiday schedule for 2013:

January 1, 2013	Tuesday	New Year's Day (Observed)	US/DRC
January 4, 2013	Friday	Day of the Martyrs	DRC
January 16, 2013	Wednesday	National Heroes Day	DRC
January 17, 2013	Thursday	National Heroes Day	DRC
January 21, 2013	Monday	Martin Luther King's Day	US
February 18, 2013	Monday	Washington's Birthday	US
May 1, 2013	Wednesday	Labor day	DRC
May 17, 2013	Friday	Liberation Day	DRC
May 27, 2013	Monday	Memorial Day	US
June 30, 2013*	Sunday	Independence Day	DRC
July 4, 2013	Thursday	Independence Day	US
August 1, 2013	Thursday	Parents' Day	DRC
September 2, 2013	Monday	Labor Day	US
October 14, 2013	Monday	Columbus Day	US
November 11, 2013	Monday	Veteran's Day	US
November 28, 2013	Thursday	Thanksgiving Day	US
December 25, 2013	Wednesday	Christmas Day	US/DRC

\*Congolese holidays that fall on Saturdays or Sundays may be observed on the preceding or following day depending on the GDRC's decision, which is generally made at the last minute.

## **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. However, please do not wait until reports are due to raise with CIES/IIE or PAS any concerns you may have.