

HUMAN FREEDOM INITIATIVE

*George W. Bush Presidential Foundation
North Korea Freedom Scholarship Fund*



GEORGE W. BUSH
INSTITUTE



HUMAN FREEDOM INITIATIVE

Extending freedom, which is essential to lasting peace and prosperity at home and around the world, by developing leaders in emerging democracies, standing with those who live under tyranny, and fostering U.S. leadership through policy and action.

BACKGROUND

In November 2016, Laura W. Bush announced a new scholarship opportunity for U.S.-based North Korean refugees saying, “At the Bush Center, we want to help these refugees on their path to success.” Over the last decade, several hundred North Koreans have risked everything to escape and reestablish themselves in the United States. After conducting two studies of the community and its needs, the Bush Institute has worked with Korean-Americans and others to establish a scholarship fund that will enable these escapees to pursue higher education, helping them to succeed and to build new lives in freedom.

By almost any measure, North Korea is the worst place on earth. More than 24 million people live in the northeast Asian country under the rule of Communist dictator Kim Jong-Un. They are subjected to widespread human rights violations, including executions, torture, and detention, and denied fundamental rights like free expression, association, assembly, and religion.

In 2014, the Bush Institute’s Human Freedom Initiative set its sights on how to improve the human condition in North Korea. The timing of this effort was meant to mark the tenth anniversary of the North Korean Human Rights Act, which President Bush signed into law in October 2004.

In contributing to a mandate for change, the Bush Institute undertook the first non-partisan effort in the United States involving the government, industry, NGO, academic, and entertainment sectors, as well as the refugee community, in the pursuit of three broad goals:

- Expose the suffering of the North Korean people.
- Put the gulags and other human rights issues on the radar screen of opinion leaders and the public.
- Develop policies with the public and private sectors to help the North Korean people.

PROGRAM IMPACT

After escaping tyranny and deprivation in North Korea, refugees make a perilous journey through China seeking freedom. Most North Korean refugees resettle in South Korea, but a small group has come to the United States. These refugees face ongoing challenges in adapting to life in the United States. Most are self-sufficient, but often working in low-level jobs, with little chance for advancement. Some refugees, especially the younger generation, have sought to improve their opportunities through higher education, but face economic obstacles. This fund helps refugees take advantage of the opportunities America offers and become successful members of our community.

“The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.”

- President George W. Bush

SCHOLARSHIP FUND FAQ

- **How is the scholarship fund being set up and administered?**

The Bush Institute partners with Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) in administering the scholarship fund. CFT ensures that the fund complies with all relevant laws and regulations, makes grants at the direction of a selection panel, and monitors recipients' eligibility and academic performance.

- **Who is eligible to receive a scholarship?**

Eligibility for this scholarship requires that recipients be lawful permanent residents of the United States who were born in North Korea prior to legal immigration to the United States or their immediate family members.

- **Who decides who receives a scholarship?**

A selection panel including representatives from the Bush Institute, CFT, Korean-American community, private sector, and academia screens applications and chooses recipients.

- **Where can scholarships be used?**

A prospective student could use the grant at any public or private accredited institution of higher learning, including community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, trade and vocational schools, as well as other education providers for the purposes of attaining professional certification and English-language classes.

- **When will scholarships be awarded?**

The first scholarships will be awarded in 2017.

- **How will the applicants learn about the scholarship program?**

We make use of a number of channels to inform prospective students about the program. First, CFT publicizes the scholarship program through existing networks used by students and guidance counselors. Second, we conduct outreach to the Korean-American community to help spread the word. And third, we communicate directly with the small North Korean refugee community in the United States.

- **Where can I learn more?**

To apply for the scholarship, please visit <https://cftexas.academicworks.com/opportunities/1196>.

For more information on the Bush Institute's work on North Korea, please visit <http://www.bushcenter.org/reports/northkorea/>.

For more information about the project, please contact Lindsay Lloyd.

Email: humanfreedom@bushcenter.org | Phone: (214) 200-4300