

James H. Billington
*The Librarian of Congress
Chair, RLP*

James W. Symington
*Former U.S. Representative
Chair, RLP Advisory Committee*

Geraldine M. Otremba
Chief Executive Officer, RLP

The Library of Congress • 101 Independence Avenue, S.E. • Washington, D.C. 20540
www.loc.gov/rlp



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Legislative History	5
Program Administration	5
Nomination and Selection Process	7
Participants	8
Programming Overview	8
Themes	9
U.S. Orientation	9
Local Hosting Partners	9
Activities	10
Homestay	11
Parliamentary Program	12
Human Interest Stories	14
Program Budget	15
Alumni Conferences	16
Program Evaluations	18
Program Impact	20
Recommendations for Program Enhancements	22
Conclusion	23

List of Attachments

- A. Hosting Organizations
- B. Nominating Organizations
- C. Host Communities
- D. Federal Assembly Participants
- E. Parliamentary Program Hosts -
Members of Congress and Governors
- F. Fiscal Year 2000 Final Budget
- G. Summaries of Alumni Conferences



RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FY 2000 REPORT TO THE U.S. CONGRESS

Executive Summary

The Russian Leadership Program (RLP) at the Library of Congress brings emerging Russian political and civic leaders to the United States on intensive, seven- to ten-day visits that introduce them to American democracy and free enterprise in action. The RLP, known internationally as the “Open World” Program, drew its inspiration from a relatively inexpensive component of the Marshall Plan that funded U.S. visits for emerging young postwar German leaders who subsequently helped reshape their country into a stable, market-oriented federal democracy. Among the RLP’s special features are its inclusiveness and size, its focus on up-and-coming leaders, its openness to those who do not speak English, its emphasis on enrolling local and regional decision makers as well as national-level officials, and its component of homestays with American families. Since June 1999, when the exchange was first implemented, nearly 4,000 current and future Russian leaders from 43 ethnic groups and 88 of the country’s 89 regions have participated in the RLP.



*Dr. Billington joins
Sen. Stevens
(pictured at right) in
the Capitol to
announce the
creation of the RLP*



The RLP holds the distinction of being the first-ever grant-making program and the only exchange program established within the Legislative Branch. With leadership from Senate Appropriations Committee and Joint Committee on the Library Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and with bipartisan and bicameral backing, Congress initiated the program as a \$10 million pilot project in 1999 (in P.L. 106-31) and made the Library of Congress responsible for its creation and administration. Congress continued the RLP at the same funding level for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 in P.L. 106-113. Some 85 members of the House of Representatives and the Senate were actively involved with the program in 2000, hosting and meeting with participants.

The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2001 (P.L. 106-554 §1 (a)(2)), which became law on December 21, 2000, provided for the transition of the RLP pilot program to the Center for Russian Leadership Development, enjoined the Center to seek and accept private donations, and provided the Center with \$9,978,000 in federal funding.

Candidates for the 2000 “Open World” exchange were nominated by a range of outstanding international, Russian, and U.S. organizations, both public and private, as well as by alumni of the 1999 exchange. Nominees submitted detailed applications and underwent a thorough, multistage screening process. The successful candidates represented the cutting edge of a new generation of Russian leaders. Participants were drawn from all levels of government—federal, republic, oblast, regional, and municipal—and from across the political spectrum. The 2000 RLP cohort also included leaders from the nascent nongovernmental and commercial sectors. Participants were relatively young, with an average age of 38 in 2000. Women made up roughly a third of the RLP visitors.



Duma deputies in an RLP delegation focused on agriculture enjoy a panoramic view of Washington, D.C., from the

enced in operating exchange programs and hosting visitors from the former Soviet Union. These organizations selected local host communities and families, prepared community profiles to aid in placing the Russian participants, and oversaw the development and implementation of individual programs, among other tasks. As part of their community-based programs, participants had working meetings with state and local officials, university and nonprofit representatives, and members of the press; visited schools, libraries, churches, historic sites, hospitals, and commercial enterprises; attended hearings, city council meetings, and judicial proceedings; and observed a wide array of other governmental processes.

As in 1999, the American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS (the American Councils) provided logistical support for the program. To implement the stateside portion of “Open World 2000,” the Library awarded competitive grants to a number of nonprofit organizations experi-



RLP participants tour Iowa's Living History Farms as part of a local program organized by the Russia Initiative

The partnerships with the hosting organizations also made possible one of the RLP's most important features: the homestay. Staying in private homes immersed Russian participants in American family and community life and gave them unparalleled opportunities to take part in typically American social, cultural, and religious activities. In 2000, 547 host families in 46 states provided Russian guests with meals, accommodations, and a window onto everyday life in the United States. The American hosts in turn greatly benefitted from the opportunity to learn about Russia from the political and civic leaders who are spearheading that country's transition from communism to an open, democratic society.



A Duma delegation gets an insider's view of preparations for the Democratic National Convention as part of an RLP program

A special feature of "Open World 2000" was a thematically organized parliamentary exchange under which 30 U.S. senators, members of Congress, and governors hosted 106 members of Russia's two houses of parliament: the Duma, the



Duma deputies visit Washington for a hands-on introduction by the International Republican Institute to American campaign

lower house, and the Federation Council, the upper house. (Members of the Federation Council also serve as heads of regional legislatures or as governors.) Special topics around which the parliamentary delegations were organized included the rule of law, ecology/environment, land reform, and budget/finance. The Russian parliamentarians visited Washington, D.C., for substantive meetings with high-level administration officials and congressional members and staff, and traveled to their hosts' home states for site visits and in-depth discussions with government officials and representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

In order to help program alumni meet and establish working relationships with each other, the Library of Congress in 2000 sponsored ten alumni conferences for RLP past participants in cities across Russia. The RLP 2000 alumni conferences attracted considerable coverage in the Russian press. At every conference, RLP alumni expressed a strong desire to

maintain their ties with the program and each other by establishing regional alumni associations and by establishing links on the Internet. Conference attendees also voiced their interest in setting up reciprocal working visits to Russia by their American hosts. The conferences generated and helped further many promising alumni-initiated projects.

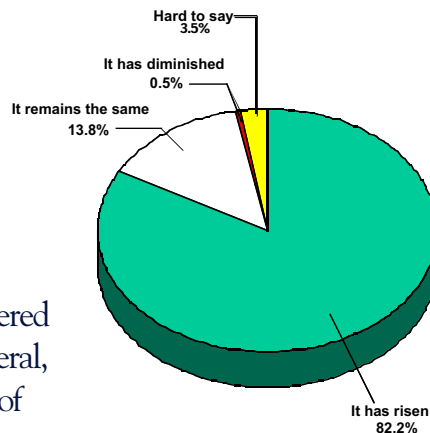
The evaluations of the RLP undertaken to date have yielded very positive results. A 2000 survey of 1999 alumni demonstrated that a substantial majority have a better understanding and assessment of a wide array of American governmental and social institutions as a result of participation in the program. Fully 83 percent of the surveyed alumni responded that they had gained a better understanding of the role of volunteer organizations in American society thanks to their RLP experience; 81 percent reported that their understanding of the American legal system had improved. Data from a survey of RLP 2000 participants indicate that 82 percent are more ready to cooperate with American leaders as a result of the exchange. (See chart at right.)

The RLP in 2000 successfully recruited and delivered a high-quality program to 1,605 present and future federal, regional, municipal, civic, media, and business leaders of the new Russia. Fiscal Year 2001 will offer new challenges to the RLP as the Library's RLP office not only plans for and oversees another round of exchanges, but also helps shape the RLP's transition from a pilot project to a permanent center.



State Duma Deputy O. N. Smolin (second from right) and V. E. Kopnov (far right), deputy head of the State Duma's International and Interparliamentary Relations Office, meet at the Library of Congress with Senator Richard

How has your readiness to cooperate with American leaders altered as a result of the exchange? Russian Leadership Program Year 2000 Data



“In 1999 the Library of Congress launched an exchange program educating some 2,000 younger Russian local officials about the complexities of American democracy. That program...deserves to be enlarged tenfold.”

Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Wall Street Journal, Tuesday, August 29, 2000

Legislative History

The RLP holds the distinction of being the first-ever grant-making program and the only exchange program established within the Legislative Branch. With leadership from Senator Ted Stevens, and with bipartisan and bicameral backing, Congress initiated the program as a \$10 million pilot project in 1999 (P.L. 106-31) and gave the Library of Congress responsibility for its administration. Public Law 106-113, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2000, extended the program for a second year, continued the Library in its administrative role, and made \$10,000,000 in FREEDOM Support Act funding available to pay for program expenses. The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2001 (P.L. 106-554 §1 (a)(2)), which became law on December 21, 2000, provided for the transition of the RLP pilot program to the Center for Russian Leadership Development, enjoined the Center to seek and accept private donations, and provided the Center with \$9,978,000 in federal funding. (The \$10 million originally included for the Center in the Legislative Branch appropriations bill was reduced by a 0.22 percent government-wide rescission in FY 2001 appropriations incorporated in P.L. 106-554.)

Program Administration

The Librarian of Congress, Dr. James H. Billington, served as chairman of RLP 2000. Chief Executive Officer Geraldine M. Otremba again headed up the Library's RLP office, which was staffed by Senior Program Officer Aletta Waterhouse, Senior Program Administrator Irene M. Steckler, Program Coordinators Vera



Federation Council delegates join Dr. Billington and RLP Chief Executive Officer

DeBuchannane and Natalia Jagannathan, Administrative Assistant Sharon A. Holland, and Program Financial Analyst Chester Lee Turner III. Library RLP staff played a key role in program design and planning, evaluated and selected hosting organizations, participated in the vetting of RLP candidates, approved activities proposed for RLP delegations, oversaw the operations of hosting organizations, and managed the program's budget and Web site. (Attachment A provides an overview of the hosting organizations and their RLP programs.)

As in 1999, the Library contracted with the American Councils for International Education to provide logistical support for the RLP in Washington, D.C., and Russia. The American Councils is

a nonprofit education, training, and consulting organization that specializes in conducting professional and academic exchanges between the United States and the New Independent States.

American Councils headquarters staff in Washington, D.C., assisted the Library with program planning; developed and disseminated program materials; arranged all international and stateside airline travel; and provided guidance to hosting organizations on programming, cultural issues, and RLP policies and procedures. American Councils' Moscow office managed all aspects of participants' international travel; formed and placed participant groups (with input from the Library and American Councils' D.C. office); conducted a pre-departure orientation program in Moscow that overviewed program goals, logistics, and cross-cultural issues; managed a database of program-related information on participants, hosts, and nominating organizations; and hired and trained English-speaking Russian facilitators for RLP delegations. (The facilitators acted as escorts, unofficial interpreters, and intermediaries between hosts and delegates; most facilitators had previously worked or studied in the United States.) Lewis Madanick and Ann Domorad served as RLP managers in American Councils' D.C. and Moscow offices, respectively.



Moscow cityscape



Members of the RLP Advisory Committee discuss future RLP

In 2000 the Library established an advisory committee to help develop strategies for encouraging private-sector support of and involvement in the RLP. Chaired by former Representative James W. Symington (the executive director of the 1999 RLP pilot), the Russian Leadership Program Advisory Committee also has as members Senator Bill Frist (R-Tenn.);

Ms. Raydean Acevedo, president and CEO, Research Management Consultants; Dr. Vance D. Coffman, chairman and CEO, Lockheed Martin Corporation; Mr. Archie Dunham, chairman, president, and CEO, Conoco; former Senator Sam Nunn, King & Spaulding; Mr. John E. Pepper, chairman of the board, Procter & Gamble; Mr. George Russell, Jr., chairman, Frank Russell Company; Mr. George Soros, chairman, Soros Fund Management; and former Ambassador Frank C. Wisner, vice chairman, American International Group. The advisory committee met on September 27, 2000, to offer guidance on seeking private funding for the Center for Russian Leadership, which was then under consideration by Congress.



Nomination and Selection Process

To help guarantee a diverse and high-caliber applicant pool for the “Open World 2000” exchange, 39 prominent Russian, American, and international nonprofit and governmental bodies were asked to nominate candidates for the program. (A list of nominating organizations is included as Attachment B.) The RLP also solicited nominations from “Open World 1999” alumni, who were each invited to propose two individuals for participation in “Open World 2000.” In addition, the RLP invited reapplications from some 700 “Open World 1999” finalists who had been unable to travel to the United States. The nomination process yielded a total of 4,492 applications, including 339 from 1999 finalists.

The Library established three priority categories of participants to help nominating organizations and others involved in the selection process target individuals who best met the program goal of including emerging leaders. First priority went to federal parliamentarians, mayors, vice-mayors of large cities, and judiciary professionals. The second priority encompassed regional and municipal legislators, vice-governors, vice-mayors of small cities, heads of ministries and public services, high-level staff of newly elected federal and regional officials or the presidential administration, and, lastly, other regional and municipal elected and appointed officials. Making up the third priority were NGO leaders interested in the programmatic themes established for the 2000 exchange (see page 9); private-sector leaders involved in public-sector issues; media and public information leaders; and cultural, educational, and intellectual leaders.

Because of the short lead time prescribed for originally launching RLP 1999, the Library used a streamlined process for choosing participants that year. The Library substantially strengthened selection procedures in 2000 by requiring nonparliamentary RLP candidates to fill out a detailed application and to undergo a multistage selection process. The nominees’ applications were evaluated at the regional level by independent reading committees composed of Russian alumni of U.S. government programs and U.S. citizens working for highly respected NGOs. Readers gave each application a numerical score based on such factors as the candidate’s professional background and degree of involvement in government and community affairs.

In round two of the selection process, a Moscow vetting committee composed of U.S. Embassy and Library of Congress staff developed recommendations based on applicants’ round-one scores, professional backgrounds, publications, and community and political activities. The vetting committee’s recommendations also took into account the Library’s goal of forming a 2000 cohort that was geographically diverse and relatively young. Final recommendations on eligibility were made by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and the U.S. Consulates in the Russian Federation. The selection process winnowed the number of potential participants down to 1,346 finalists and 540 alternates.

Participants

RLP 2000 met its objective of recruiting dynamic, emerging Russian leaders from all levels of government. The 1,605 RLP 2000 participants included 210 federal, regional, and municipal legislators, 97 mayors and vice-mayors, 103 judges, 25 vice-governors, and a total of 179 parliamentary, judicial, and election commission staffers.

Other participants occupied important positions in the media, the nonprofit sector, and the corporate sphere. With an average age of 38, the visitors were drawn from the new generation of Russians that the program seeks to target. The 2000 program also succeeded in achieving broad geographic and ethnic representation, selecting participants from 88 of Russia's 89 regions (all except Chechnya, from which no applications were received) and 43 ethnic groups. Women made up 34 percent of the RLP visitors.

Programming Overview

The RLP's activities and structure are designed to give participants the opportunity to experience America's political, economic, and social system at work. As part of the RLP, the Russian visitors learn about and observe how the different levels and branches of government interrelate, and they see up close the roles played by the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in meeting social and civic needs.

The "Open World 2000" exchange featured a number of programming improvements introduced in response to evaluations solicited from 1999 participants and host organizations. Delegations were organized by theme; timelier notice was given to participants about hosting arrangements and program schedules; and an initial stay was arranged in Washington, D.C., or Atlanta, Georgia, to expose participants to a major U.S. city and to provide for orientation sessions on American government, culture, and family life. The Library also required host organizations to provide professional-level interpreters to accompany delegations.



RLP participants hosted by Rotary International take in San Francisco's Chinatown (above); at left, Peace Links-hosted RLP visitors inspect a public works project in Boston.



Themes

The programmatic themes that served as the focal points for nonparliamentary RLP delegations were: rule of law, public works, education, public safety and security, banking/financial services/economic development, executive management/public administration, environment/energy/natural resources, federalism/representative

government, budget issues, agriculture/fisheries/forestry, and public health. Organizing delegations by theme helped maximize the usefulness of site visits and facilitated professional ties between Russians and their American counterparts and among the delegation members themselves, who typically came from different regions of Russia. The two topics that drew the most interest from Russian participants were federalism/representative government and the rule of law.



A delegation focused on federalism/representative government meets

U.S. Orientation

The U.S.-based orientation introduced in RLP 2000 was designed to provide participants with a basic understanding of American political, legal, and social institutions in order to make their local program activities more meaningful. These sessions also prepared the Russian visitors for their homestay experience by acquainting them in advance with American home life, cultural practices, and social behaviors. Orientations took place upon arrival in either Washington, D.C., or Atlanta. The Friendship Force ran the Atlanta orientations; the International Institute of the USDA Graduate School and Meridian International handled those in Washington, D.C. An orientation program with a special focus on church-state issues was conducted in Washington, D.C., by the International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief for participants in its RLP-sponsored program on religious freedom.

Local Hosting Partners

In 2000 the Library awarded grants to nine organizations to host nonparliamentary RLP participants. The Library's hosting partners all had a wealth of experience in conducting foreign visitation programs, and most had specific expertise in hosting citizens of the New Independent States. Grantee organizations recruited and selected local host communities and families, prepared community profiles for the Library and its contractor (to optimize the placement of the Russian

participants), and oversaw the development and implementation of individual programs, among other tasks. Two of the nine partner organizations were new to the program: the International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief and the International Institute of the Graduate School, USDA. The Library also partnered with the Friendship Force, Meridian International Center, the Russia Initiative of the United Methodist Church, Peace Links, Rotary International, the Vermont Karelia Rule of Law Project, and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Activities

The RLP introduces Russian leaders to America's democratic and free enterprise system by emphasizing direct observation and experience at the grass-roots level.

The host organizations arranged for their Russian guests to campaign door-to-door with political candidates; visit police stations, firehouses, and hospitals; tour businesses, farms, soup kitchens, and medical clinics; and interact with students at all educational levels. The Russian participants had working meetings and round tables with mayors of municipalities large and small, state agency officials, newspaper editors, prominent businesspeople, civic leaders, and non-profit heads. They attended hearings, county commission and city council meetings, and other governmental proceedings. The large contingent of Russian judges and judicial staff who came to the United States under RLP 2000 observed arraignments and jury selection, visited prisons and sheriff's departments, and received briefings by court officers on alternative dispute resolution, small claims court procedures, and many other aspects of the U.S. legal system. Most local programs offered opportunities for two-way exchanges, with the Russian guests sharing their approaches to common issues and problems with their American counterparts, or speaking to schoolchildren, university students, and others about developments in Russia.



RLP delegations learn about U.S. voting procedures

Highlights of the local programs include the following:

- Participants in the USDA-hosted program in Syracuse, New York, attended back-to-back Republican and Democratic party rallies and went to a "Candidates' Night" for state government and congressional candidates that was held at a local middle school.

- The Vermont Karelia Rule of Law Project arranged for a delegation of Russian judges visiting Burlington, Vermont, to observe a relief-from-abuse hearing, a contested divorce hearing, and a jury trial.
- Friendship Force-hosted participants in Sarasota, Florida, joined a *Herald-Tribune* weekly editorial staff meeting and observed a city council meeting.
- The International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief scheduled an RLP delegation to discuss church-state issues with the president of the Utah State Senate and a justice of the Utah Supreme Court; delegates also participated in a workshop on religious freedom at the Brigham Young University Law School.
- A delegation of Russian judges hosted by Rotary International in Virginia sat in on a patent law class at the University of Virginia Law School and went on evening ride-along patrols with the Annandale, Virginia, police.

Homestay

As in 1999, the homestay was a central component of the RLP experience. Placing participants in private homes for some or most of their local visit enabled them to observe firsthand American-style family dynamics and household

management, participate in typically American social, community, religious, and recreational events, and develop personal and professional ties with their hosts. Though many Russians initially had reservations about staying in private homes, the Library's host organizations report that most ultimately found the experience worthwhile and enjoyable. Host families benefitted in turn from the opportunity to learn about Russian geography, history, culture, and politics from some of the country's most promising future leaders. A total of 547 host families in 46 states welcomed RLP participants into their homes in 2000. (See Attachment C for a list of the host communities.)



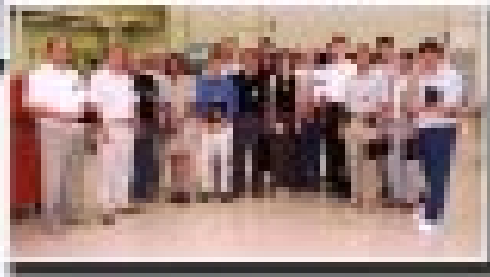
RLP visitors to Homer, Alaska, enjoy a potluck dinner.

Parliamentary Program

RLP 2000 placed special emphasis on inviting members of the Federation Council and the State Duma—the upper and lower houses, respectively, of Russia’s Federal Assembly. A total of 14 Federation Council members, 92 State Duma deputies, 39 parliamentary aides, and 4 ministry-level officials traveled to the United States under the RLP’s parliamentary program. The parliamentary delegations typically consisted of 5 to 8 Federal Assembly members, 2 aides, and 1 facilitator. (Attachment D lists the Russian parliamentarians who participated in RLP 2000.)



Above, members of the Duma Agriculture delegation join their congressional host, Representative Roger Wicker. At right, State Duma deputies hosted by Representative Bud



Nearly all the parliamentary groups were hosted by a member of Congress or a governor. Representatives Bud Cramer (D-Ala.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) took the lead in recruiting their fellow House members to serve as congressional hosts. A total of 21 congressmen, 4 senators, and 5 governors hosted parliamentary delegations in their constituencies. (See Attachment E for a list of congressional and gubernatorial hosts.) Active participation in program activities by members of Congress, governors, and their staffs greatly contributed to the

parliamentarians’ RLP experience and strengthened the Russian leaders’ interest in democratization and improved U.S.-Russian relations.

Four organizations experienced in conducting high-level programs with Russia partnered with the Library to carry out the parliamentary exchange: the American Foreign Policy Council and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, which had both participated in RLP 1999, and two organizations new to RLP, the Center for Democracy and the International Republican Institute. The parliamentary host organizations recruited members of Congress to serve as sponsors, developed and scheduled program activities, and arranged participants’ accommodations, meals, and ground transportation.

The Library RLP staff, working in concert with the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, finalized invitations and delegations. Most delegations were organized around a specific area of interest that corresponded to the Russian parliamentarians' committee assignments. The topics for the parliamentary groups included agriculture, banking, budget, defense, ecology, e-commerce, education, elections, energy, federalism, international relations, land reform, the rule of law, science, security, social issues, taxation, and women's issues.



Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.) greets members of the Federation Council Defense/Security delegation.

The parliamentarians typically spent three days in Washington, D.C., and three days in their congressional or gubernatorial host's home state or district. The Washington segment of their programs featured substantive meetings with current and former senior administration officials, agency administrators and experts, members of Congress and their staffs, corporate leaders, and association heads; observation of congressional committee meetings and floor debate; and tours of the Capitol and other historic and cultural sites. In-state activities included briefings by high-ranking state and local officials, university representatives, journalists, and business leaders; visits to clinics, factories, military bases, research centers, and other sites; and attendance at political fundraisers and community events.

“Every meeting was interesting and useful....it was very interesting for me to see how the [Democratic] convention was organized, to see its backstage. We found ourselves right in the middle of preparations for this grandiose event and saw how they are putting it together.”

Member, State Duma delegation

Samplings of the agendas for two Duma delegations—one focused on the environment and the other on education—illustrate the parliamentary program's depth and reach. The environmental delegation's activities included meeting with their congressional host, Senate Environment Committee Chairman Bob Smith (R-N.H.); participating in round-table discussions in New Hampshire and Washington, D.C., with leading environmental advocates; visiting a New Hampshire wildlife refuge and state park; and attending the Senate Environment Committee's markup of the Florida

Everglades bill. The program for an education-themed delegation hosted by Representative John W. Olver (D-Mass.) included touring a Massachusetts technical high school, the University of Massachusetts, and Amherst College (where one of the delegates delivered a lecture on education in Russia); meeting in Washington, D.C., with Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley; and taking part in two education round tables, one at Gallaudet University and the other at the Library of Congress, where participants were joined by Representative Olver and Representative Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.). The American Foreign Policy Council acted as the host organization for the delegation on education, the Center for Democracy for the environmental delegation.

Human Interest Stories

The RLP seeks not only to increase Russian leaders' practical understanding of American democratic and social institutions, but also to foster personal understanding between these leaders and their American counterparts. A key premise of the program is that emphasizing face-to-face encounters will help dispel the negative, Cold War-era stereotypes

that many Russians and Americans hold. Virtually every community that participated in RLP 2000 can provide multiple examples of how the program fostered improved understanding, goodwill, and friendship. In Pensacola, Florida, for example, RLP participants helped construct a Habitat for Humanity home for a local resident. One of the trip highlights for members of a Russian delegation sponsored by Rotary International in Vincennes, Indiana, was the standing ovation they received while attending a high school football game. Reports from the RLP host organizations and accounts from the alumni conferences contain numerous examples of ongoing relationships between RLP participants and their hosts, with many staying in regular e-mail contact or making plans for visits by the hosts to Russia.



An RLP participant plays hockey with his host's grandson.



Russian and U.S. flags decorate tables at a backyard

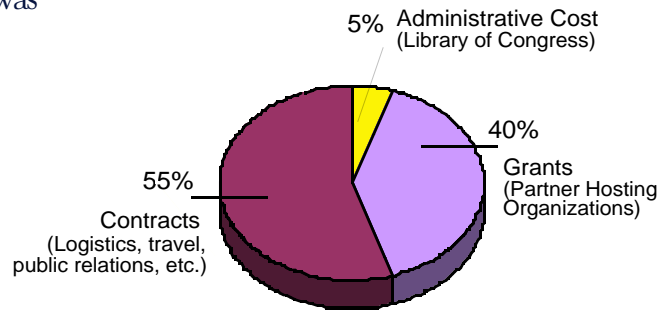
“By the end of the visit we all became close friends and it was hard then for all of us not to cry at the farewell moment...now we are a new international family.”

United Methodist Church RLP host

Program Budget

Congress funded RLP 2000 at \$10 million, the same level that was provided for RLP 1999. As reflected in the chart below, \$5.5 million of the RLP program budget was allocated for cost elements such as logistics, travel, and public relations. The single largest cost factor within this part of the budget was \$2,975,000, or 54.5 percent, for international, U.S., and Russian domestic air travel for RLP participants. The chart further reflects that \$4 million was budgeted for direct grants to the Library's partner hosting organizations (four of which also provided U.S.-based orientations for nonparliamentary participants). The three largest cost factors for these organizations

**Russian Leadership Program Profile
FY 2000 - P.L. 106-113 - \$10 million**



From The Friendship Force of Sarasota, FL:
 "Uncle Sam has never made a better investment. He got a dollar return on every dollar spent, and more. It's impossible to measure the true investment."

were local transportation, budgeted at \$552,000, or 13.8 percent, food and lodging¹ at \$1,248,000, or 31.2 percent, and translation services at \$604,000, or 15.1 percent. In summary, of the \$9.5 million budgeted for direct program support, \$5,379,000, or 56.6 percent, was allocated to pay for the essentials of travel, food, lodging, and interpretation. Thanks to the generosity of individual hosts, who made substantial cash and in-kind contributions to participants' transport, food, housing, and entertainment, the government did not bear the full cost of program activities and support. (A breakdown by category of the program's 2000 budget is included as Attachment F.)

The following table lists the grant awards made to the Library's partner organizations, the number of participants each organization hosted, and the number of participants served by those organizations that also provided orientation sessions.

Organization	# Hosted	# Oriented	Grant in \$
Friendship Force	273	273	355,780
International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief	30	30	58,650
International Institute, USDA Graduate School	78	508	587,954
Meridian International Center	263	495	974,290
American Foreign Policy Council	141		1,068,147
Center for Democracy	9		67,691
International Republican Institute	8		64,458
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs	18		153,959
Peace Links	141		268,101
Rotary International	305		235,575
Russia Initiative, United Methodist Church	289		345,900
Vermont Karelia Rule of Law Project	50		75,228

¹Participants stayed in hotels during the U.S. orientation sessions, and, in some cases, during a portion of their local visit. Participants in the parliamentary program stayed in hotels throughout their visit.

Grant awards varied substantially on a per capita basis because of such factors as geographical location, the extent of volunteer support received by the hosting organization, and the type of housing arrangements provided.

Alumni Conferences

Beginning in April and continuing through September, 2000, the RLP sponsored ten regional conferences in cities across the Russian Federation for alumni of “Open World 1999” and “Open World 2000.” The conferences took place in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Ulan Ude, Rostov, Samara, Nizhni Novgorod, and Vladivostok.

Joining the RLP alumni at the conferences were members of the media; university officials; representatives of Russian regional and municipal administrations, the U.S. Embassy, the Library of Congress, and Russian NGOs; and other special guests, including Representative Charles H. Taylor (R-N.C.), the chairman of the House Appropriations Legislative Subcommittee and the host of two Duma delegations.



Representative Charles H. Taylor (second from left) addresses the Moscow alumni conference. Joining him are Ambassador James F. Collins (far left), Dr. Billington, Deputy Minister of Economics A. V.

and the American Councils are included as Attachment G.)

The Library’s main goals in sponsoring the alumni conferences were to learn directly from RLP participants how to strengthen the program, and to promote the development of local and regional networks of RLP alumni interested in collaborating on projects and reforms. The conferences also provided an occasion for alumni to compare notes on their impressions of the United States, share



Attendees at the Moscow RLP alumni conference listen to a speaker.



Sites of the RLP alumni conferences held in 2000

The RLP alumni conferences attracted considerable coverage in the Russian press. The Open Society Institute (OSI) and the American Councils organized the conferences on the Library’s behalf. (The Library’s summaries of reports on the conferences prepared by the U.S. Embassy, OSI,

information on projects they had undertaken since their return, and view presentations on Russian-language Internet resources on the U.S. government, the RLP, and other programs of interest.

Small-group discussions formed the conferences' substantive core. These break-out sessions focused on such subjects as legislative reform and public participation, city and regional administration, and the role of the mass media. Round-table participants weighed in on which elements of American-style democracy and free-market economics they would like to see adapted for use in Russia, and they described how they had benefited professionally from being part of RLP. The discussion groups also compared public-private partnerships in Russia and the United States and offered suggestions on future RLP and alumni programming. The round-table sessions were marked by lively debate and broad participation.



A round-table session at the Ekaterinburg RLP alumni conference

In the course of the general and round-table sessions, many RLP alumni reported being struck by the transparency, accessibility, and accountability of local government in the United States.



Vladivostok alumni conference attendees

Many favorably noted the widespread involvement of individual Americans in bettering their communities through volunteerism, philanthropy, and civic activism. The level of U.S. corporate, nonprofit, and church-affiliated support for social services—and the


cooperation between the different entities providing this support—made a particularly strong impression on the Russian delegations. Attendees also cited their positive reaction to the independence of the American press.

At every event, alumni expressed a strong desire to maintain their ties with the program and each other by establishing regional alumni associations (several are already beginning to take shape)

and by establishing links on the Internet. Conference attendees also voiced interest in setting up reciprocal visits to Russia by Americans involved in the 1999 and 2000 “Open World” programs. A number of such visits are now being planned by RLP hosting organizations.

The conferences generated and helped further many promising alumni-initiated projects. For example, RLP alumni who belong to the Moscow chapter of Rotary International plan to mentor program alumni in other Russian cities who want to start Rotary clubs. RLP past participants in Ulan Ude are organizing alumni to provide educational institutions with speakers who will discuss their careers and the RLP experience. An alumna from Chita is developing a project to promote corporate volunteerism; another alumna from Barnaul is founding an association similar to the League of Women Voters. Attendees also proposed holding regional or national conferences to provide training in specific areas to alumni (with participation by U.S. technical experts), and creating a small grants program to support alumni-initiated civic and social services projects.

Program Evaluations



The RLP is one of the most thoroughly and frequently evaluated government-supported U.S. exchange programs with countries of the former Soviet Union. Dr. Susan Lehmann, a sociologist with a decade’s worth of experience in conducting survey research in Russia who serves as the American Councils’ Institutional Research Manager, has undertaken regular assessments of the program since its inception. Dr. Lehmann developed a series of questionnaires that RLP participants completed at various stages of their involvement with the program. The questionnaires were designed in part to measure participants’ satisfaction with key aspects of the program’s design and operations, as well as to assess the impact of the program on their understanding and opinion of American institutions. (For information on program impact, see the next section.)

On the day RLP participants departed from the United States, they completed a detailed post-program questionnaire containing a section on program content and management. Respondents were requested to indicate their level of satisfaction with the orientation sessions, professional meetings, interactions with political and public figures, interpretation services, and other program features. As a follow-up, a questionnaire administered to RLP 1999 and 2000 participants at the alumni conferences asked them to rate the effectiveness of the selection process, the usefulness of program activities, and the helpfulness of the various types of groups with which they interacted, among other factors. Dr. Lehmann’s analysis of the data from both questionnaires will be available in early 2001, in time to help shape the 2001 exchange.

“That trip made a huge impact on me....We saw the workings of the U.S. governmental apparatus on all levels, the experience of defense of religious freedom, and charitable activities. I think that a lot of what we saw and learned we will be mulling over and contemplating for a long time to come.”

RLP participant, International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief program

In addition to formal surveys, RLP managers are also using facilitator reports, alumni conference reports, and grantee debriefings and final reports to evaluate the 2000 program's design and operations. RLP staff have reviewed all the reports on the general and round-table sessions held during the alumni conferences and will post much of this information in English- and Russian-language versions on the RLP Web site in 2001. The reports filed by the facilitators who accompanied the RLP delegations contain responses to questions about their own and their groups' RLP experience; for example, facilitators were asked to explain any problems with travel arrangements, to indicate whether the host had scheduled activities appropriate for the group's interests, and to describe any participant requests for schedule changes and the host's response to such requests. According to statistics provided by the American Councils, 90 percent of the facilitators who responded reported that the program agenda was appropriate, 92 percent felt their hosts were well prepared, and 100 percent indicated they would participate in the program again.

The Library obtained feedback from its hosting partners at the conclusion of RLP 2000 by holding local and parliamentary hosting debriefings in Washington, D.C., on December 5-6 and by requesting hosting organizations to assess specific aspects of the program's performance when submitting their mandatory final reports. Attendees at the parliamentary hosting debriefing approved of the RLP's thematic organization and emphasized that participants benefitted most from the give-and-take of informal meetings with question-and-answer sessions. Program managers were encouraged to make more Russian-language materials available to participants in advance of their travel.

Attendees at the local hosting debriefing generally agreed that, despite the inherent challenges, the homestay component of the program worked well, although several attendees recommended involving more young professionals as exchange hosts. Other recommendations included providing hosts with more precise information on the facilitators' role and duties (especially vis-à-vis the interpreters) and on visitors' professional responsibilities (to improve the tailoring of program activities to participants' work-related interests). There was general consensus that RLP 2000 was better administered than RLP 1999, thanks to the longer lead time and the lessons learned during the first year of the pilot.

The RLP's guidelines on submitting comprehensive final reports asked grantees to evaluate the usefulness of the programmatic themes, the effectiveness of the Moscow and U.S.-based orientations, and the responsiveness of Library RLP staff, among other issues. There was almost unanimous agreement among the grantees that the use of programmatic themes for organizing RLP delegations and the two-day, U.S.-based orientations to American government and culture greatly improved the local hosting experience. All grantees reported positively on the accessibility and responsiveness of both American Councils and Library of Congress staff.

All "Open World 2000" host organizations stated that they would like to participate in any future Russian Leadership Program. In their final reports and in remarks made at the Washington, D.C., debriefing sessions, grantee organizations stressed the following reasons for their continued interest in the RLP: 1) the RLP's objective of promoting greater understanding between Russians and Americans meshes well with their own missions and provides opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships; 2) the RLP's emphasis on small-group programming, home hosting, and informal program formats gives their participating members unmatched opportunities to develop personal and professional ties with their Russian guests and to learn about their homeland; and 3) involvement with the RLP increases their contacts and visibility in their local communities and in Russia, and helps attract new members.

“For me, this was a life-changing experience, and I learned more about Russia and the Russian people in one week than I could have through reading a thousand textbooks.”

Rotary RLP host

Program Impact

The survey administered to RLP past participants who attended the alumni conferences held in 2000 was also designed to measure whether the RLP had a lasting and positive impact on their understanding and assessment of America's democratic institutions. A substantial majority of the surveyed alumni did report significant increases in their understanding and positive assessment of the American democratic system as a result of their RLP



Russian judges take part in the annual meeting of the Judicial Conference of Indiana.



Two RLP guests "shadow" police officers in

visit. For example, 83 percent of alumni said their understanding of the role of volunteer organizations in American society had increased, 81 percent reported their understanding of America's legal system had increased, and 78 percent indicated that their understanding of the rule of law in America had increased. One of the aspects of their RLP experience that most surprised 57 percent of the alumni was the openness and hospitality of their American counterparts, a result that suggests that the RLP's emphasis on person-to-person contact helps break down negative, Cold War-era stereotypes. Data from a survey of RLP 2000 participants indicate that 82 percent are more ready to cooperate with American leaders as a result of the exchange.

The Library has received much anecdotal—but no less significant—evidence of the program's effectiveness from 1999 and 2000 alumni who report having initiated a variety of specific reforms or projects as a result of their involvement with the RLP.

- An alumnus from the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk has taken steps to establish public hearings on proposed land-use legislation, a practice that greatly impressed him during his trip to the United States.

- Officials in the Sakhalin Island city of Kholmsk undertook an urban beautification project on their return from their RLP visit.



Program participants from the Russian Far East discuss the RLP experience and their RLP-inspired projects during a round-table

- An RLP 2000 participant from Ufa has established a center to assist State Duma deputies from the Republic of Bashkortostan in researching, developing, and drafting legislation, among other tasks. The inspiration for the center came from a meeting with Representative Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.).
- In the Ural city of Nizhni Tagil, an RLP alumna is working to introduce student government councils in local schools.
- The mayor and vice-mayor of the Siberian city of Usolye, both RLP alumni, teamed up with local businesses and volunteers to clean up the river that flows through the city.
- The head of the Rudninsky district administration publicized the agenda for district council meetings in advance and invited citizen attendance and feedback.

Recommendations for Program Enhancements

In an effort to offer the best program possible, the Library has actively sought suggestions for program enhancements from its grantee organizations and contractors, local hosts, RLP alumni, and congressional hosts and their staffs. The recommendations listed below come from grantee and contractor final reports, reports on the alumni conferences held in Russia in 2000, the December 2000 host organization debrief meetings at the Library, and informal assessments by individuals involved with the program. The planning that will shape the RLP's transition from pilot project to permanent center will consider and address these recommendations:

- revamp applications to elicit more descriptive information about candidates' professional experience in order to improve the accuracy of applicant vetting and the suitability of participant placement and programming
- continue to improve the process of grouping delegations according to common professional backgrounds and interests; match more participants with U.S. hosts of similar professional backgrounds
- provide hosts with more detailed information on the interests, professional backgrounds, job responsibilities, and program goals and expectations of their Russian guests, and make this information available earlier
- conduct pre-hosting briefings for host leaders when possible
- provide Russian visitors well in advance of their departure with more information on their assigned host families, host communities, and proposed schedules
- encourage host families and parliamentary hosting organizations to make personal contact with their Russian guests before they arrive in the United States
- expand the Moscow pre-departure orientation to provide additional focus on cross-cultural issues and the respective roles of the host organization, the logistics contractor, and the Library of Congress
- build more time for recreation, reflection, and relaxation into participants' schedules
- increase the emphasis on job shadowing, in which a Russian guest spends all or part of a workday with an American professional counterpart
- consider longer visits (the program's legislation permits stays of not more than 30 days) and visits tailored to specific interests that may require more flexibility in program length

- group some delegations by region, and focus their programs on providing experiences, tools, and contacts that help participants address a specific, predetermined need in their region
- ensure that the interpreters hired to work with the delegations are qualified in the special vocabulary of the profession stressed by the group

Additional host organization recommendations repeated from last year include allowing these organizations to submit nominations for RLP participants and to arrange domestic air travel. Some host organizations also advocated making changes in per person or per group funding, although the RLP pilot program has allowed for a large degree of flexibility in this area.

Conclusion

Fiscal Year 2001 will offer new challenges to the RLP, as the Library's RLP office not only plans for and oversees another round of exchanges, but also helps the RLP move from a pilot project to a permanent center. Among the tasks that must be undertaken in the months ahead are the appointment of the Center's advisory board, the recruitment of staff, the issuance of bylaws and regulations, and the development of a new administrative framework and a fundraising plan. The Center will benefit from the administrative and programmatic support of the Library, as well as from the reputation the pilot program has enjoyed in the United States and Russia. ☀



A Friendship Force-hosted RLP delegation tours a Nebraska buffalo ranch.



Scenes from RLP 2000: celebrating in Seattle (lower left), visiting the Capitol Grounds (center), and attending the Vladivostok alumni conference (lower right).





Russian Leadership Program • Office of the Librarian • Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue S.E. • Washington, D.C. 20540
www.loc.gov/rfp