



BUSINESS FOR DIPLOMATIC ACTION
Building New Bridges to The World

Arab and American Business Fellowship Program

Background: The Arab & American Business Fellowship (AABF) program brings high-potential young executives from leading Middle Eastern companies to the United States to learn about American business, society and culture, and sends young American executives to the Middle East for the same purpose. It's the only private sector-led exchange program to focus on the business leaders of tomorrow, helping to create relationships that will foster corporate success as well as cross-cultural understanding. Created by Business for Diplomatic Action and launched in 2007 in partnership with the Young Arab Leaders, the AABF has provided transformative experiences to 55 Arab and American fellows, 23 U.S. and Middle Eastern corporate sponsors, and 61 supporting organizations to date.

How the 2010 program works:

- U.S. companies sponsor one or more visiting Arab fellows, and can nominate one or more of their employees to be fellows traveling to the Middle East. Sponsoring companies from the Middle East do the same.
- The Arab and American fellows begin their three-week fellowship together in New York in mid-October, with a two-day orientation session on cross-cultural understanding and business protocol. Led by experts from the Thunderbird School of Global Management and the Protocol School of Washington, the orientation seminars are open to executives from the sponsoring companies.
- The Arab fellows spend three weeks in three U.S. cities, being mentored by executives from the sponsoring U.S. companies, meeting with employee groups, and engaging in social and cultural activities. Sponsoring companies host groups of fellows for between one day and one week, depending on schedules. Partner organizations such as the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy and the National Council for International Visitors help plan the events in local cities.
- The American fellows spend three weeks in Dubai and two other Middle Eastern countries—from among Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, or Palestine—being mentored by executives from the sponsoring Arab companies and attending meetings and events organized by the national chapters of the Young Arab Leaders.
- At the end of the program, all of the fellows—both Arab and American—will meet in a location in the Middle East (to be determined) for a closing conference to share their insights and discuss the key lessons from their experiences, with representatives from the sponsoring Arab and American companies, the Middle East business community, and the media.

About the fellows: All Arab and American fellows will be aged 25 to 45 and established in a career with a minimum five years of experience, a track record of excellence and achievement, and the prospect of becoming a leader in their chosen field. They will be committed to contributing to the development of greater cross-cultural understanding in their country through implementing new skills and knowledge acquired from the program. *For Arab fellows:* Fluency in spoken English is required. *For American fellows:* Minimal direct personal experience with the Arab world is preferred.

2010 AABF sponsorship budget: The budget for sponsoring one Arab fellow is \$15,000, which covers all expenses for the three-week program except airfare (which is the responsibility of the fellow's employer). The budget for the U.S. fellows' portion of the program in the Middle Eastern countries is being raised from host Arab companies. BDA's target for 2009 is to fund 20 Arab fellows.