

CULTURAL EXCHANGES THROUGH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Appropriate \$110 million to the Office of Citizen Exchanges at the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs within the FY 2017 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill.
- Direct the State Department to dedicate increased resources to, and increase operational capacity within, the Cultural Programs Division to strengthen its ability to oversee grants and programs. Despite increases overall for the Office of Citizen Exchanges, this division is funded at lower levels now than five years ago. This funding includes the competitively awarded programs run by the division and those run by the State Department.
- Encourage the State Department to evaluate and publicly report on the impact, value, and success of arts diplomacy as part of its smart power strategies to build cross-cultural understanding.

Office of Citizen Exchanges Annual Appropriations, FY 2010 to present (in millions of dollars)*

FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
\$102	\$95.4	\$99.4	\$96	\$101	\$100	\$102

**These amounts represent the total funding for the Office of Citizen Exchanges, which includes a variety of exchange programs, including sports and youth programs. Federal budgets do not indicate totals for these individual programs.*

BACKGROUND

Support for cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy has never fully recovered since the elimination of the United States Information Agency (USIA) and its Arts America Program in 1999. USIA had administered educational and cultural exchanges; international radio, television, and film broadcasting; and extensive information programs.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the State Department is responsible for the public diplomacy activities of the United States, including international cultural exchange programs. Within ECA, the Cultural Programs Division focuses on cultural diplomacy, exchange, and collaboration by sharing the rich artistic traditions of the United States. The Division provides grant opportunities to U.S. nonprofits for cultural exchange activities; residencies, mentoring, and training programs; programs operated or sponsored by U.S. Embassy public diplomacy offices; and presentations at major international visual arts exhibitions and cultural centers.

In 2013, the State Department facilitated 327 arts diplomacy projects in 132 countries and territories, reaching 9 million foreign participants. An additional 102 Arts Envoy programs were completed in 73 countries.

TALKING POINTS

- **Policymakers agree that cultural exchange enhances international understanding.**
 - Secretary of State John Kerry, at the Kennedy Center Honors Dinner in 2014, said, "People make connections in lots of ways, and sometimes that connection is quicker to take hold through music, dance, theater, film, more so than the words of a diplomat...the connection of this endeavor of the arts connects, it touches, really, something deep in every human spirit. And whether it's the pianists or the dobro players, Zydeco bands, jazz singers, filmmakers, dance companies, and artists that we send to every corner of the globe, this is about citizen diplomats who go to remote and troubled communities and open doors for conversations with the young, with the poor, and the too-often overlooked."
 - At South by Southwest in 2014, U.S. House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX), said, "I think Western music could have an influence in countries where people otherwise don't want to listen to us. We need a combination of hard and soft power, and I think the music piece goes to that soft power idea."

- **Increased funding and operational capacity for the Cultural Programs Division will strengthen exchange and collaboration in the arts and culture fields, which builds bridges among people of different countries, cultures, and faiths.**
 - A review of 29 studies on public diplomacy in 2005 identified that the most popular recommendation for public diplomacy reform was to increase U.S. exchange programs. The studies were compiled by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.
 - An October 2009 report by the New York University Brademas Center called for America to have a renewed role in cultural exchange and diplomacy, recommending that "...international arts and cultural exchanges be integrated into the planning strategies of U.S. policymakers as a key element of public diplomacy. History has proven that robust public diplomacy is essential to U.S. national security and the promotion of American interests around the globe. The arts community has observed first-hand the value of international artistic exchanges in promoting moderation and tolerance among widely diverse religious and cultural groups."
 - The Cultural Programs Division should simplify the application process and provide ample time for artists to apply for projects, and make information on funded projects readily available to the public.
- **Cultural exchange supports U.S. industry and employment.**
 - According to the National Governors Association's report, How States Are Using Arts & Culture to Strengthen Their Global Trade Development, state governments find that including artistic and cultural exchanges in their international trade and business development serves to expand trading relationships with other nations and open markets abroad as a complement to more traditional efforts to generate exports.
 - International exchange prepares Americans for success in the global economy. Seventy-three percent of U.S. employers put significant value on international experience when hiring, according to a study from the British Council and NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
 - Exchanges bring resources to U.S. communities. Virtually the entire State Department exchanges budget is spent on American participants or in the United States.

Cultural Exchange Program Highlights

Museums Connect: We, the People: Afghanistan, America & the Minority Imprint

"This has been one of the single greatest and most poignant projects I've been involved in. Meeting the Afghan students has taught me volumes of things that I didn't know about Afghanistan, Islam, and the Muslim world in general. I have regained faith, not only in humanity, but especially in my own generation, my global brothers and sisters." Ian McShea, National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA

DanceMotion USA: CONTRA-TIEMPO

"In an increasingly complex world, this program reminds us of our humanity. Through movement, cultural realities are shared, explored, and embodied. In touring and sharing our work with DanceMotion USA, we were able to learn more about our own humanity and discover an authentic connection between our reality as North Americans to the countries where we traveled. Dance is powerful, dance is real, dance is full of expression of self—and through it we can discover how deeply we are all connected." Ana Maria Alvarez, CONTRA-TIEMPO, Los Angeles, CA

Arts Envoy Program: Bond Street Theatre

"The arts are about communication, and young people here [in Afghanistan] are so motivated and ready to be voices for positive change. Creative exchanges, such as our Youth Engagement Project, give young people a chance to speak out and take positive steps toward improving their community and influencing others around them toward peace." Joanna Sherman, Bond Street Theatre, New York, NY

For a complete listing of programs, please visit: <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/special-focus-areas>