
FY 2018 Department of State Exchange Program Funding

LEGISLATIVE GOAL

- **Fund Department of State educational and cultural exchanges in FY2018 at \$627.8 million.**

RATIONALE

This appropriations request will fund State Department exchanges with unique capacities to adapt rapidly and effectively to foreign policy priorities, building relationships with strategic audiences in key countries.

IMPACT

International exchange programs are cost-effective public diplomacy: smart power tools that support U.S. national security, foreign policy priorities, and economic growth.

- **Exchanges benefit American citizens:** International engagement, cultural learning, and language study prepare Americans to succeed in a globalized economy, making the United States and its people more prosperous and secure.
- **Exchanges bring resources to U.S. communities:** Virtually the entire State Department exchanges budget is spent on American participants or in the United States. International students and exchange visitors who come on USG funds also spend substantial personal funds while in the U.S. In addition, the exchange appropriation leverages important contributions, including tuition support from U.S. universities for academic grantees and extensive volunteer activity by Americans in host communities.
- **Exchanges change minds:** State Department evaluations repeatedly show that international exchange participants complete their programs with a better impression of the United States and its people. U.S. ambassadors consistently rank exchange programs among the most useful catalysts for long-term political change and mutual understanding. A Congressional Research Service review of 29 reports on public diplomacy revealed that the most common recommendation of these reports was to increase exchange funding.

STUDENT, SCHOLAR, AND TEACHER EXCHANGE

- In its 70 years as the flagship U.S. government exchange program, the **Fulbright Program** has provided scholarships for nearly 360,000 U.S. and international students, scholars, and teachers, chosen for outstanding academic achievement and leadership potential. The program has demonstrated its unique capacity to adapt quickly to address new global challenges, while engaging diverse audiences in the U.S. and 160 nations around the world. Applications from American students to the **U.S. Student Program** remain at historic highs, sending 1,900 students abroad annually. The **U.S. Scholar Program** annually sends 800 U.S. faculty and professionals abroad who bring back new global perspectives to their classrooms and colleges. Fulbrighters come from the full range of U.S. institutions and diverse backgrounds. Fulbright alumni contribute their global insights throughout their professional careers in science, education, the arts, business, finance, government, and public service.
- **EducationUSA Student Advising Centers** provide local counselors for international students, helping them to apply independently to U.S. universities and colleges. Our modest investment in advising resources supports the robust flow of international students to the U.S., which fosters lifelong global connections and generates approximately \$30.5 billion annually for the U.S. economy.
- The **Gilman International Scholarship Program** expands study abroad and international internship opportunities for American undergraduate students receiving Pell grants, who otherwise could not afford an international exchange experience. Students submitted more than 10,750 applications for 2,855 awards. **Gilman** and programs such as **Fulbright** and **Critical Language Scholarship** have increased U.S. capacity in Arabic, Persian, Indic languages, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Turkish, and Azerbaijani.
- **The portfolio of Global Undergraduate Exchange Programs** provides semester and one-year U.S. study opportunities for young leaders from underserved populations in Eurasia, Near East, Tunisia, Central Asia,



South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and the Western hemisphere, advancing leadership skills critical to their future professions and fostering a positive outlook on the U.S.

- **The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders**, part of the government-wide Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI), received 30,000 applications from across sub-Saharan Africa in 2015 for just 500 slots (from all 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa). The program seeks to develop the leadership skills and solidify long-term relationships between Americans and the next generation of African leaders in government, business, and civil society.
- **American overseas research centers** maintain a permanent presence in countries of critical interest to the United States. Each year these centers serve thousands of American students and scholars, building global expertise in American universities and colleges and throughout the public and private sectors.
- **Teacher exchanges** prepare educators to shape young people into agents of positive change. A typical teacher exchange participant can be expected to influence at least 1,000 students and 50 colleagues during his or her career, creating a powerful multiplier effect.

PROFESSIONAL AND CITIZEN EXCHANGE

- The **International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)** has brought more than 200,000 key business, political, and civil society leaders from around the world to meet with counterparts and citizens across the United States. IVLP alumni include Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, and more than 395 other current and former chiefs of state.
- **Sister Cities International** fosters 2,200 city connections worldwide, including 560 U.S. communities in 48 states, 145 countries, and over 130 connections between the U.S. and Muslim-majority communities. The Sister Cities citizen network boosts local industry and development, builds avenues for trade and company expansion, and develops the personal relationships that open doors for private sector investment.
- The **Professional Fellows Program (PFP)** provides opportunities annually for more than 200 mid-level professionals to participate in substantive development and cultural activities in the U.S. while working closely with U.S. counterparts. PFP has three overarching components each year, such as **Legislative Fellows**, and **Innovation & Entrepreneurship Fellows**. Reciprocal components allow American hosts a venue to increase their understanding of the Fellows' host countries, cultures, and work settings through travel abroad.
- The **Community Solutions Program (CSP)** identifies grassroots community leaders in more than 45 countries for leadership training and development of partnerships with American community leaders on initiatives related to conflict resolution, environmental and gender issues, and transparency and accountability. Examples of their work include: development of job skills for former child soldiers in Uganda, advocating for persons with disabilities in Nepal, and working for girls' safety and empowerment in Zimbabwe.

YOUTH EXCHANGE

- High school exchanges have a consistent record of success in fostering attitudinal change, lifelong relationships, and leadership aspirations. The **Kennedy-Lugar YES Program** (Muslim-majority countries), as well as the **FLEX** (Europe and Eurasia), and **CBYX** (Germany) programs bring high school students to live with American families and attend American schools for an academic year, building deep impressions and life-long friendships. Students are chosen through a rigorous, competitive selection process. Students who have participated in these programs return home with a better understanding of American people and culture.
- **The National Security Language Initiative for Youth** sends U.S. high school students overseas for summer or academic year programs to learn critical languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and Russian. NSLI-Y alumni routinely place into second- or third-year university language study.
- **Youth Ambassadors** and **Youth Leadership programs** provide meaningful opportunities for young people from key countries, such as Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Burma, Egypt, Iraq, and Mexico, to interact and exchange ideas with American youth.

