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## Department of State Citizen Exchange programs

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Citizen exchange programs are vital in order to extend the capacity of U.S. public diplomacy efforts. While all exchange programs have a strong cultural component, many citizen exchange programs feature an increased focus on a specific aspect of American culture. These cultural themes include sports diplomacy, dance, music, and theater exchange programs, among others.

Due to the demonstrated ability of culture to bridge differences, supporting citizen exchange programs enables American values, history, and culture to reach broader international audiences and to gain wider appreciation. For example, through non-political, cultural events, the Jazz Ambassador program reports overwhelming success in improving attitudes and beliefs about the U.S. government (94 per cent).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, after participating in sports exchanges, almost all surveyed participants left with moderate or extensive knowledge of the U.S. overall (90 per cent), and gained knowledge and exposure to the vast ethnic and religious diversity of the U.S. (80 per cent).<sup>2</sup> In this way, citizen exchange programs create lasting positive opinions and extend U.S. public diplomacy reach in all sectors.

### DETAILS ON DEPARTMENT OF STATE CITIZEN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS:

- [Sister Cities International](#) fosters 2,200 city connections worldwide, including 560 U.S. cities in 48 states, 145 countries, and 130 connections between the U.S. and Muslim-majority countries. 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.
- [SportsUnited](#) programs use more than 10 different sports to increase dialogue and cultural understanding between people around the world. Through these sports exchanges, international participants learn about American culture and establish links with U.S. sports professionals and peers. In turn, Americans learn about foreign cultures and the challenges young people from other countries face today.
- [DanceMotion USA](#) sends American dance companies overseas to connect with audiences and communities through dance workshops, lecture demonstrations, public performances, and other arts education activities.
- [Museums Connect](#) is designed to strengthen connections between people in the United States and abroad through museum-based exchanges. The program links U.S. and international museums by providing resources for these institutions to focus on local

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<sup>1</sup> Department of State Evaluations (<http://exchanges.state.gov/programevaluations/completed.html>)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

community engagement and increase cross-cultural understanding – resulting in partnerships that reach beyond traditional exhibit-based exchanges.

- [American Music Abroad](#) reaches beyond concert halls to interact with other musicians and citizens around the globe. Through the program, American roots music groups in different genres embark on a month-long, multi-country tour, where they engage with international audiences, particularly younger and underserved audiences, through public concerts, interactive performances with local musicians, lectures and demonstrations, workshops, jam sessions, and media interviews.
- The [American Film Showcase](#) brings award-winning contemporary American documentaries, feature films and animated shorts to audiences around the world, offering a view of American society and culture as seen by independent filmmakers.
- The [Arts Envoy Program](#) shares the best of the U.S. arts community with the world to foster cross-cultural understanding and collaboration and to demonstrate shared values and aspirations. American arts professionals – including performing artists, visual artists, poets, playwrights, theatrical and film directors, curators, and others – travel overseas to conduct workshops, give performances, and mentor young people. Programs seek to connect with international publics who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with American arts professionals.