

# CULTURAL EXCHANGES THROUGH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

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### ACTION NEEDED

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We urge Congress to:

- **Increase funding by \$10 million for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department’s Office of Citizen Exchanges in the FY 2011 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. This increase should be designated for the Professional Exchanges and Cultural Grant Program and the Performing Arts Initiative.**
- **Direct the State Department to increase operational capacity within the Cultural Programs Division to strengthen its ability to process and oversee grants and programs.**
- **Direct the State Department to: 1) make information on projects funded through these programs readily available to the public; 2) encourage broad participation in its grant program in support of artistic and cultural exchanges with an emphasis on simplifying the application process; and 3) recruit applicants widely to represent best the opportunities available for freedom of thought and expression in a democratic society.**

**Annual Budget for Cultural Programs Division in Millions, FY 2003 to present**

Fiscal Year	‘03	‘04	‘05	‘06	‘07	‘08	‘09	‘10
Cultural Programs Division	2.7	3	4.3	4.7	9.3	8.4	9.1	TBD

### TALKING POINTS

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- ***Policymakers agree that cultural exchange is critical to our security efforts around the world.***
  - President Barack Obama’s arts policy platform states: “Opening America’s doors to students and professional artists provides the kind of two-way cultural understanding that can break down the barriers that feed hatred and fear.”
  - Secretary of State Hillary Clinton underscored the power of the arts in public diplomacy in a December 2009 speech by stating “I think that artists both individually and through their works can illustrate better than any speech I can give or any government policy we can promulgate that...the right to think and dream and expand our boundaries is not confined, no matter how hard they try, by any regime anywhere in the world. There is no way that you can deprive people from feeling those stirrings inside their soul. And artists can give voice to that.”
  - U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN) called for increased cultural diplomacy in his February 2009 article in *Foreign Policy*: “As part of a broader overhaul of its public diplomacy effort, the United States should reinvigorate the old American Centers concept...[and] support active cultural programming...America's best players in public diplomacy have always been its people and its ideas.”
  - Public diplomacy is among the Government Accountability Office’s list of 13 urgent issues that require the attention of President Barack Obama.
  - Vice President Joe Biden has stated that “cultural exchanges can help erase borders of hostility and build a stronger foundation of broader and deeper understanding among peoples.”
- ***Increased funding and operational capacity for the Cultural Programs Division will strengthen exchange and collaboration in the arts and cultural fields that build bridges among people of different countries, cultures, and faiths.***
  - A May 2006 evaluation of the State Department’s Jazz Ambassadors Program found that more than 90 percent of embassy staff agreed that the program is effective in extending the reach of traditional diplomacy and providing alternative venues for policy dialogue.
  - A July 2005 assessment of U.S. state-based international exchange programs sponsored by the State Department revealed that among survey respondents, 98 percent of foreign exchange visitors gained a better understanding of the United States and its people. Similarly, 87 percent of foreign exchange hosts reported gaining knowledge about the country and culture of the foreign exchange visitor.
- ***Recent studies make a strong argument for strengthening cultural exchanges and cultural diplomacy efforts.***
  - A review of 29 studies on public diplomacy in 2005 identified 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.

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## TALKING POINTS (CONTINUED)

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- An October 2009 report by the John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress called for America to have a renewed role in cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy. “To these ends, [the] report recommends 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 a 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.”
- ***International cultural exchange carries an economic benefit.***
  - According to the report by the National Governors Association, “How States Are Using Arts and Culture to Strengthen Their Global Trade Development,” state governments find that incorporating arts 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.

## BACKGROUND

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Support for cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy has never recovered from the elimination of the former United States Information Agency (USIA) and the USIA’s Arts America Program. USIA was an independent government agency supporting U.S. foreign policy and interests abroad. Before USIA was dismantled, the agency administered educational and cultural exchanges; international radio, television, and film broadcasting; and extensive information programs.

The Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau at the State Department is currently responsible for the public diplomacy activities of the United States, including international cultural exchange programs. The Cultural Programs Division is the principal Department of State element focused on cultural diplomacy. The Division’s activities include grant opportunities to U.S. nonprofits for cultural exchange activities; residency, mentoring, and training programs; programs that are carried out overseas by or under the sponsorship of U.S. Embassy public diplomacy offices; and presentations at major international visual arts exhibitions and cultural centers. The Professional Exchanges and Cultural Grant Program provides grants to U.S. nonprofit organizations to carry out exchange programs in the arts, arts management, and arts education. The Performing Arts Initiative provides financial support to U.S. Embassies for presentations of American performing art and artists.

### **2009 Grant Recipients**

#### **Academy for Educational Development**

Sports, Cultural and Youth Visitor program

#### **American Association of Museums**

2009 Museums and Community Collaborations Abroad Program

#### **Carnegie Hall Society**

Emerging Cultural Leader Program

#### **George Washington University**

Documentary Filmmaker Fellowship Program

#### **International Relief and Development (IRD)**

2009 Fellowships in the Arts: Iraq Museum Residencies Program

#### **Jazz at Lincoln Center, Inc.**

The Rhythm Road- American Music Abroad Program

#### **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

Cultural Visitor & Fellows Mentoring Programs

#### **Quest: Arts for Everyone, Inc.**

One-Time Competition B-Professional, Cultural and Youth Programs

#### **University Film and Video Association**

American Documentaries Showcase

#### **University of Iowa**

International Writing Program (IWP)