Exchange programs connect, engage, and inspire people.

U.S. Department of State Exchange Programs directly contribute to both America’s prosperity and security by building mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Barriers that often divide us, like politics, language, ethnicity, religion, and geography, break down when people share ideas in person. Through exchanges, Americans and people of other countries develop new skills, explore ways to create positive change in our communities, and establish the trust we need to create a more secure, prosperous, and democratic world.

TIMELINE/BY THE NUMBER

1940
Dr. Aurelio Espinosa Polit, S.J. Ecuadorian professor, visits the United States as the first official exchange participant

1961
Fulbright-Hays Act solidified the role of the U.S. government in implementing exchange programs

2018
ECA sponsors 300,000 participants on the Exchange Visitor Program

- 40,000 international participants visit communities in all 50 states, supporting the local economy during their stay
- 15,000 Americans travel to 170 countries
- 2,500 American students learn critical languages abroad on ECA programs
- 1,500 U.S. private sector organizations host exchange participants

ALUMNI

There are more than 1,000,000 alumni of ECA exchange programs

- of those alumni:
  - 84 are Nobel Laureates
  - 583 are current or former heads of state and government
  - 1 in 3 current world leaders are alumni of exchange programs

450,000 jobs for Americans are supported through hosting international students on U.S. campuses
- bringing $42 billion to the U.S. economy

90+ percent of the exchange programs budget goes to American organizations, businesses and individuals

125,000 hours of community service performed by youth exchange participants

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