

# 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 2009 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: 1) make readily available to the public information on projects funded through these programs; 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.**

### TALKING POINTS

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- ***Policymakers agree that cultural exchange is critical to our security efforts around the world. It is time we dedicate increased funding to international cultural exchange.***
  - As Thomas Kean, Chairman of the 9/11 Commission noted, "The United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange, and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope."
  - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in congressional testimony, "We need to do much more to confront hateful propaganda, dispel dangerous myths, and get out the truth. We will increase our exchanges with the rest of the world."
  - Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joe Biden has stated, "Cultural exchanges can help erase borders of hostility and build a stronger foundation of broader and deeper understanding among peoples."
- ***Increased funding 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.
- ***A Congressional Research Service report declares exchanges are a key public diplomacy tool.***
  - In a September 2005 review of 29 studies on public diplomacy compiled by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, the most popular recommendation for public diplomacy reform was to increase U.S. exchange programs.
- ***International cultural exchange carries an economic benefit.***
  - According to a 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.
  - For mayors, cultural exchange carries a significant economic benefit. The U.S. Conference of Mayors 10-point plan for 2008, *Strong Cities, Strong Families, for a Strong America*, calls for "the creation of a Cabinet level Secretary of Culture and Tourism charged with forming a national policy for arts, culture, and tourism."

(continued)

## BACKGROUND

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Funding for cultural exchange has never recovered from the elimination of the former United States Information Agency (USIA) and the USIA's Arts America Program. State Department cultural exchange program funds are climbing from a low point of only \$2 million a few years ago, to an estimated \$11 million in FY 2008. An increased appropriation would expand the State Department's ability to foster mutual understanding between the United States and other countries.

The president's FY 2009 budget requests an increase of \$17.4 million for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the State Department, for a total of \$522.4 million. However, the State Department plans to decrease funding for Professional and Cultural Exchange Programs by nearly \$2 million in FY 2009. Therefore, we ask Congress to direct an increase of \$10 million to the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges, and substantially increase funding for the Professional Exchanges and Cultural Grant Program and the Performing Arts Initiative.

The ECA Bureau is 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.

### Recipients of Professional Exchanges and Cultural Grants, 2004–2007

Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, Michigan 2007	Film Foundation, Los Angeles, CA 2006	Bond Street Theater, New York, NY 2005
New York Hall of Science, Queens, NY 2007	University of Iowa Writing Program, Iowa City, IA 2005, 2006	Ohio Arts Council, Columbus, OH 2005
Museo de las Americas of Denver, Denver, CO 2007	Tribeca Film Institute, New York, NY 2005	The Aja Project, San Diego, CA 2006
Black Pine Animal Park, Ft. Wayne, Indiana 2007	Pegasus Players, Chicago, IL 2006	Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 2005
The Council for International Programs, Cleveland, OH 2007	Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY 2005	Institute for Training & Development, Amherst, MA 2005, 2007
The George Washington University's Documentary Center, Washington, DC 2007	UCLA Center for Intercultural Performance, Los Angeles, CA 2004, 2005	Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services, Dearborn, MI 2006
My Hero Project, Laguna Beach, CA 2006	Quest: Arts for Everyone, Lanham, MD 2006	CEC Arts Link, New York, NY 2004, 2005
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC 2006	Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music, Sullivan, NH 2004, 2005	Jazz at Lincoln Center, New York, NY 2006
The Silk Road Project, Providence, RI 2005	Intl. Visitors Council, Raleigh, NC 2004	Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts, Flushing, NY 2005
	Arts for Change, New York, NY 2006	

### Recent Programs Supported by the Performing Arts Initiative

Hubbard Street Dance Company, Chicago IL; Preservation Hall Jazz Band, New Orleans, LA; Native Deen, Sterling, VA; Battery Dance Company, New York, NY; The Yellow Bird Dancers, Mesa, AZ ; Strasberg Theater, New York, NY; The Dina Preston Country and Western Band, Phoenix, AZ; Fisk Jubilee Singers, Nashville, TN; Ozomatli, Los Angeles, CA.