

Fact Sheet

Public Diplomacy Field Operations

185 Public Diplomacy Sections (est.) at U.S. missions and consulates
700 Foreign Service and 2600 Locally Employed Staff (est.)
Overseas operating costs in Fiscal Year 2019: \$391.2 million
Cost as a portion of the total international affairs budget (FY2019): .01 percent*

Embassy staff members at missions overseas span the final link with people who matter for the United States. The United States maintains missions in close to 200 nations around the globe.

In nearly all embassies and consulates, Public Diplomacy (PD) Sections engage with local residents through media relations, educational and cultural exchanges, and special events. Most PD professionals consider this to be the heart of public diplomacy.

Drawing on products and programs created in Washington by about 850 employees, PD sections overseas translate and personalize America's message for their local audiences. Each mission focuses its activities on goals and objectives that are set in a formal planning process.

Specifically, overseas operations advance U.S. interests through:

- **Engaging** with local and international media, in collaboration with the State Department's [Bureau of Global Public Affairs](https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/bureau-of-global-public-affairs/) at <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/bureau-of-global-public-affairs/>
- **Organizing** speaker programs and cultural events that support U.S. foreign policy and build relationships
- **Implementing** U.S. exchange programs that involve about 55,000 participants per year including 15,000 American citizens at a cost of \$700 million
- **Mobilizing** local partner organizations to conduct programs in the interest of the United States through tens of thousands of small grants

Public diplomacy field operations make a notable contribution to the United States' influence around the world. Here are some facts about what American taxpayers receive for their investment.

- **One in four world leaders has participated in a U.S. Government exchange program.** Many program alumni stay in touch with American counterparts they met during their programs, and collaborate actively with the embassy or consulate years after their return.
- **Nearly 200 mission websites in 59 languages** drew more than 74 million visitors in the 2019 fiscal year. Information about international travel is the top draw, appealing to American viewers as well as international ones. To find embassy websites, you can visit <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.
- **Social media** accounts generated dialogue with countless millions. Every mission overseas maintains a presence on social media. To find social media accounts you can go to <https://www.state.gov/social>.
- **The nearly 1.1 million international students** who studied in the United States in 2018-19 contributed \$46.54 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 458,000 U.S. jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. While the number of students declined during the pandemic, U.S. missions are working to restore the level of study in the U.S.
- **More than 400 [Education USA centers](#) in 175 countries** recruit international students.
- **More than 10 million teachers and learners of English make use of U.S.-sponsored programs.** English is the gateway to understanding American culture, government and foreign policy. See more at <https://educationusa.state.gov/about-educationusa>.
- **In 2018-2019, 66 million visited an [American Space cultural center](#).** There are 630 of these centers in 169 countries. You can read about how they work at <https://americanspaces.state.gov/> and view their [latest report](#) for examples of programs at https://americanspaces.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/292/LORES_AmSpaces2019Report.pdf.

To see some of the editorial products that public diplomacy sections translate and adapt for their audiences, go to <https://share.america.gov/>.

Our sister organization, the Public Diplomacy Council of America, bestows awards for outstanding public diplomacy initiatives each year. To read about the 2021 awardees, go to [PDAA's article](#) at <https://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/?p=3116>.

Figures are drawn from the 2020 Annual Report by the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, which drew on statistics mainly from 2018-2019. You can find this report at <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/united-states-advisory-commission-on-public-diplomacy/>

* Cost figure includes Diplomatic Program Funding plus American salaries.

