

FY2024 Funding for International Education and Exchange Programs

Ask: We urge support for robust funding of international education programs as part of FY2024 appropriations. **We request Congress provide \$855 million for the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and \$173.6 million for the Education Department’s Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs.**

Federal funding for U.S. international education and exchange programs is critical. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted global activity at U.S. colleges and universities during the Fall 2020-2021 academic year, with new international student enrollment dropping 46 percent and U.S. study abroad participation plummeting 91 percent. However, as travel restrictions lifted and vaccines became more widely available, U.S. higher education institutions returned to offering in-person learning. Due to pent up demand, new international student enrollment shot up 80 percent in Fall 2021, and a further seven percent in Fall 2022. Meanwhile, 65 percent of U.S. higher education institutions reported offering in-person study abroad programming for Fall 2022.

While the numbers are higher, they are not yet back at their peak levels. In fact, new international student enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities had been in a steady decline before the pandemic, declining more than 11 percent from Fall 2016 through Fall 2019. During this same timeframe, growth in U.S. participation in study abroad slowed, averaging 2.2 percent per year which is down from averaging 3.5 percent the prior four years. Robust funding increases from Congress are needed to help fully restore international education at U.S. colleges and universities following the pandemic. Specifically, we request the following amounts for FY2024:

- **U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA): \$855 million**

For FY 2024, we urge Congress to provide \$855 million in overall funding for the U.S. State Department’s educational and cultural exchange programs, such as the Fulbright and Gilman scholarship programs. ECA programs are essential for helping U.S. colleges and universities recruit the best and brightest students from around the world and produce U.S. college graduates with the global skills necessary for future workforce success. Additional programs supported by increased funding include:

- **EducationUSA:** A network of over 430 international student advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories that promotes the value of U.S. higher education to students around the world. Robust funding of **at least \$50 million** for the network would go a long way to not only restoring but also further growing and diversifying international student enrollment post pandemic.
- **Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Grant Program:** For FY2024, we urge Congress to provide **\$5 million** in funding for this grant program. Increasing institutional capacity for study abroad programming is essential if we are to grow and diversify the number of

- U.S. college students who complete a study abroad program prior to graduation. Additional funding opportunities provided by institutional grant programs like IDEAS are key to achieving this objective.
 - **Virtual exchange program offerings, such as the Stevens Initiative:** Increasing funding for virtual exchange would allow higher education institutions to continue to offer intercultural exchange programs for their students while there may still be travel restrictions or a general hesitancy to travel by students, faculty, and staff.
- **U.S. Education Department’s Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs: \$173.6 million.** For FY 2024, we urge Congress to provide \$173.6 million in funding for the Department of Education’s Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs. Success in navigating increasingly complex global challenges requires many more Americans understand and engage with diverse cultures at home and abroad. These programs experienced a \$53 million cut in funding in FY 2011 followed by a decade of flat funding, all due to budgetary restrictions. **The requested dollar amount seeks to bring the funding back to pre-2011 levels, adjusted for inflation.** Specifically, we request:
 - **For Title VI programs: \$152.1 million**
Higher Education Act Title VI programs support foreign language, area, and international studies programs at U.S. colleges and universities, ensuring U.S. college students graduate with global expertise, especially in less commonly taught foreign languages and critical world areas. For FY2023, the enacted omnibus set funding at \$75.4 million.
 - **For Fulbright Hays programs: \$21.5 million**
Authorized under Section 102(b)(6) of the Fulbright-Hays Act, these programs strengthen foreign language and area studies expertise for current and prospective educators (K-12 and higher education). For FY2023, the enacted omnibus set funding at \$10.3 million.

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