

# High School Exchange Programs at the U.S. State Department

You may already know about youth-focused exchange programs through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). But, did you know that the U.S. Department of State actively promotes and seeks to advance the diverse participation of youth, including those with disabilities, in these different programs?

The full participation of youth with disabilities in international exchange is a critical step in increasing independent living skills, accessing post-secondary education opportunities, and pursuing competitive employment. International exchange also provides an understanding and respect for other peoples and cultures, cross-cultural competencies, including foreign language proficiency, and a true global perspective.

Exchange programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs provide a mechanism for youth with disabilities, whatever their background, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability, to access opportunities they might not have otherwise even dreamed of at a young age. And, their successful participation in a competitive exchange program sets in motion a series of future opportunities to positively impact their communities and world as the next generation of leaders.

The National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange at Mobility International USA is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to advance the full participation of people with disabilities in all types of international exchange. By providing resources and advice on participating in international exchange, we give people with disabilities the tools to open up new worlds for themselves.

Learn more about youth exchange opportunities and disability-related resources in "Online Resources to Get Started" later in this A World Awaits You (AWAY) issue.

## ECA Diversity Statement

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State strives to ensure that its efforts reflect the diversity of U.S. society and societies abroad. The Bureau seeks and encourages the involvement of people from traditionally underrepresented audiences in all its grants, programs and other activities and in its workforce and workplace. Opportunities are open to people regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. The Bureau is committed to fairness, equity and inclusion.

