

Sponsor/Title: Department of State (DOS) - FY 2026 J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI) Program

External Link: <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/361398>

Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017856

Submission Limitation per Institution: One (1)

Notre Dame Limited Submissions Listing:

<https://research.nd.edu/our-services/funding-opportunities/faculty/limited-submissions-program/>

Internal Expression of Interest Deadline: 2026-03-17

Sponsor Application Deadline: 2026-05-01

Description: The Global Leaders Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposal submissions for a cooperative agreement to design, administer, and implement the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI). The JCSVEI advances U.S. foreign policy priorities by championing American scientific excellence, technological leadership, and innovation, while promoting core U.S. principles—freedom of speech, individual liberty, and the rule of law—as foundations of peace and prosperity. The program achieves these goals through American-led virtual exchanges that connects young leaders in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) with peers across the United States.

Through interactive digital programming, participants will explore U.S. global leadership in science, technology, business, and civic life, while demonstrating how American freedom of speech, rule of law, and individual liberty underpin prosperity and opportunity. They will collaborate virtually with peers overseas to develop digital storytelling projects, podcasts, vlogs, and other media that illustrate the strength of American communities and the nation's commitment to open exchange, innovation, and collaboration. The initiative will also challenge participants to apply American ingenuity to practical solutions that promote economic opportunity, job creation, and digital connectivity—contributing to shared prosperity and regional stability. By reinforcing the spirit of the Abraham Accords and advancing U.S. engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the program will strengthen ties between the United States and key partners in the Middle East while advancing America's vision of a secure, prosperous, and interconnected region.

The JCSVEI will use a range of virtual exchange formats—live dialogues, collaborative digital projects, online trainings, and virtual workshops—to reach approximately 8,000 participants annually. Programming should promote mutual collaboration grounded in U.S. leadership, encouraging youth to view the United States as a trusted partner in science, entrepreneurship, and global problem-solving.

An Alumni Leadership Academy will provide continued engagement for participants who demonstrate strong leadership potential, equipping them to serve as ambassadors of U.S. values and connectors between American and Middle Eastern communities. Follow-on activities should reinforce long-term networks that advance America's economic, security, and diplomatic priorities.

Organizations applying for this award must demonstrate the capacity to recruit, select, and manage up to six partner organizations as sub-award recipients to implement virtual exchange components under the JCSVEI umbrella. The primary award recipient will maintain full oversight of sub-awards, ensuring compliance, accountability, and alignment with ECA's goals, performance measures, and branding standards.

Participating Countries: Activities must be conducted in the United States and in one or more of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Program Themes: Applicants should propose a portfolio of virtual exchange programming that addresses at least three of the following themes:

- **STEM and American Excellence in Science and Technology** – Highlight U.S. leadership in innovation, research, and applied technology as drivers of progress and prosperity.
- **America First Principles** – Promote understanding of freedom of speech, rule of law, civic responsibility, and individual liberty as the foundation of democratic societies.
- **Digital Media and Freedom of Expression** – Encourage responsible communication, storytelling, and digital collaboration that reflect America's commitment to openness and truth in the digital age.
- **Entrepreneurship, Employment, and Career Preparedness** – Showcase American approaches to workforce development, business creation, and skills that power the modern economy.
- **American Excellence and Global Leadership** – Demonstrate how U.S. innovation, enterprise, and civic engagement advance peace, stability, and shared prosperity around the world.

Internal Application Requirements: Upload the following information to the Google Form at <https://forms.gle/oir8mC4LYjf4LH4y8> by the internal deadline:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Project Title
- Select the Objective(s) that apply to your proposal.
- All ND Collaborators:
 - For each ND Collaborator listed, include name, department or unit, and specific role for this project in three sentences (maximum).
- Select at least three (3) program themes that are addressed in your proposal.
- Project Summary: Three (3) pages (maximum) addressing the following Review Criteria as outlined on pages 31-33, in the NOFO.
 - Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives
 - Institutional Capacity and Track Record
 - Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
 - Improved Productivity and Innovation

Questions: Contact Notre Dame Research Limited Submissions at limited@nd.edu.

Unless otherwise noted, all internal applications are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the internal expression of interest deadline.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.