

About Tech Youth

An Initiative of the U.S. Department of State administered by Legacy International

A New Generation of Technology Leaders

Tech Youth is an international exchange program that brings together young people from the United States and 12 countries to explore technology, entrepreneurship, leadership, and the systems that help ideas move from possibility to practice. The program is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and is administered by Legacy International in partnership with Virginia Tech's Center for Engineering Excellence and Discovery and four Global Ties organizations across the United States.

Each annual cycle serves approximately 90 participants: 66 international participants and 24 U.S. participants. Over 15 months, they move through recruitment and selection, virtual preparation, an intensive 20-day U.S.-based exchange, locally based Community Action Projects, mentorship, and continued alumni engagement. The result is more than a summer program- it is a sustained learning experience designed to build practical skills, professional networks, and a clearer understanding of how American innovation contributes to economic competitiveness and opportunity.

90 participants each year	12 international partner countries	20 days of intensive U.S. exchange	7 months Virtual programming pre and post US based exchange
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What Participants Experience

The U.S.-based exchange combines structured learning with direct exposure to the people, places, and institutions that shape American technology and innovation. Participants do not simply hear about new ideas; they test them, discuss them with professionals, and consider how they can be applied in their own schools and communities.

- **Phase 1: Virtual Preparation (Spring)**
Participants connect online before traveling to build cohort cohesion, establish digital collaboration skills, and explore foundational concepts in artificial intelligence (AI), technology ethics, and digital safety.
- **Phase 2: 20-Day U.S. Exchange (Summer)**
 - **Washington, D.C. Arrival:** Participants gather in the nation's capital for orientation, safety briefings, and initial team building.
 - **Virginia Tech Technology Camp (11 Days):** Living on campus, participants engage in faculty-led instruction, hands-on lab work, and innovation workshops covering subjects such as AI, robotics, data science, and aerospace technologies.
 - **Community Immersion & Job Shadowing (5 Days):** Subgroups travel to one of four U.S. cities (Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, or Seattle) for homestays with local host families, cross-cultural activities, and structured job-shadowing experiences at leading U.S. technology companies.
 - **D.C. Capstone (3 Days):** The full cohort regathers in Washington, D.C., to share project concepts, meet with Department of State representatives, visit national institutions, and celebrate program achievements.

Learning That Continues After the Exchange

After returning home, participants put their learning into action through Community Action Projects. With guidance from Legacy staff and Local Engagement Coordinators, they identify a realistic need, develop a

plan, engage partners, and carry out a project that applies technology, leadership, or entrepreneurial thinking in a practical setting. This phase gives participants experience turning an idea into organized action while building skills in teamwork, communication, budgeting, adaptation, and follow-through. Mentorship, progress check-ins, evaluation, and alumni engagement extend the value of the exchange. Participants remain connected to a wider international network and gain opportunities to share results, learn from one another, and continue relationships developed in the United States.

The Team Behind Tech Youth

Delivering Tech Youth requires a collaborative team that can manage a complex international program while creating a supportive, well-organized experience for teenagers. Year-round staff work across participant recruitment and selection, Embassy and partner coordination, curriculum, communications, monitoring and evaluation, budgeting, travel, risk management, and follow-on programming. Seasonal staff join the team during the intensive U.S. exchange to support residential life, participant supervision, daily logistics, and group learning.

Throughout most of the year, team members work remotely from locations across the United States, collaborating primarily during Eastern Time business hours. Regular virtual meetings, shared systems, and proactive communication keep the team connected and coordinated. Each summer, the team comes together in person to transform months of planning into a youth-centered, high-impact exchange experience.

The work changes across the program cycle. At some points, staff are developing systems, preparing materials, coordinating virtually across time zones, or tracking hundreds of details. During the U.S.-based exchange, the pace becomes highly active and in person, with extended days, participant movement, partner coordination, and real-time problem-solving. After participants return home, the focus shifts to mentorship, project progress, results, stories, and program learning.

What It Is Like to Work on the Program

Tech Youth is a strong fit for professionals who enjoy both thoughtful planning and practical implementation. Team members need to communicate proactively, maintain reliable systems, notice emerging needs, and work comfortably with colleagues and participants from different cultural and professional backgrounds. The program values people who bring sound judgment, curiosity, and flexibility when plans change.

- Mission-centered work with visible results for young people, U.S. communities, and international partners.
- Close collaboration with ECA, U.S. Embassies, Virginia Tech, Global Ties organizations, vendors, trainers, and seasonal staff.
- A combination of remote or hybrid work and intensive travel during the summer exchange.
- Opportunities to contribute expertise in project management, youth development, technology learning, training, communications, logistics, evaluation, or international exchange.
- A team culture that emphasizes respect, personal responsibility, continuous learning, constructive problem-solving, and high-quality work.

About Legacy International

Legacy International is a nonprofit organization with more than 40 years of experience delivering leadership, professional, and youth exchange programs. Based in Bedford, Virginia, with a presence in Washington, D.C., Legacy works with partners and participants around the world. Tech Youth offers job seekers the opportunity to help shape a significant new program within an experienced organization and a broad network of U.S. and international partners. Individual position descriptions provide role-specific details.