



Virtual Fellows Program Innovative Diplomacy in Action



"Not all the arts of diplomacy are learned solely in its practice. There are other exercise yards."
~~~ Dean Acheson 51<sup>st</sup> U.S. Secretary of State

As Secretary of State John Kerry has remarked, we live in a “vastly more complicated world where changes come at us faster than ever before...” This “requires more nimble institutions and a more agile foreign policy...” at a time when no one has “all the answers.”

The U.S. Department of State (DoS) established the **Virtual Fellows Program** (VFP) in order to expand its access to the knowledge and experience of the American public. The VFP allows Department of State offices in Washington and in the field to tap into a vast pool of knowledge and experience outside of government, and provides qualified U.S. citizens the opportunity to serve our country pro bono and help address the complex challenges we face in the 21st century.

**The Program:** As Virtual Fellows (VFs), experienced U.S. citizen professionals contribute by serving as unpaid virtual consultants on issues, problems or questions faced by the State Department, without needing to relocate physically.

Host offices in Washington and in the field submit project proposals year-round, using a simple template. Projects are posted on the VFP website and DoS social media.

Potential candidates email their resumes to the VFP staff who determine whether they are qualified for the VFP – in essence whether they can provide valuable and pertinent advice drawn from a high degree of administrative, professional, or technical knowledge and experience. A VF will ideally have a minimum of five years of professional experience that is directly applicable to the assigned task. The resumes of all qualified candidates are forwarded to the potential host bureau/post, which selects the candidate(s) best suit(s) its project requirements.

Virtual Fellows are assigned to specific, defined projects or tasked to consult on particular issues, problems, or questions. VFs will not be used to perform managerial or supervisory work, to do work performed by regular DoS employees or to fill in during staff shortages. Fellows serve virtually, on a part-time basis, contributing as unpaid consultants for a minimum of six months with extensions possible. Fellows must understand and agree to comply with federal ethics regulations during and following the fellowship.

Virtual Fellows will not be reimbursed for their service. Candidates should note also that service as a Virtual Fellow is not designed to lead to permanent federal employment, does not convey preference in seeking such employment, and does not convey the ability to convert non-competitively to a competitive service federal position.

**Additional information** about the Virtual Fellows Program can be found at [www.state.gov/vfp](http://www.state.gov/vfp).  
For currently available projects please go to <http://snip.state.gov/vfpprojects>.  
To inquire, propose a project, or submit a resume please email us at: [VFP@state.gov](mailto:VFP@state.gov);