![American Spaces logo]

American Spaces

MANAGING AMERICAN SPACES
A HANDBOOK FOR ALL PRACTITIONERS

"TO SUCCEED, JUMP AS QUICKLY AT OPPORTUNITIES AS YOU DO AT CONCLUSIONS."

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Version History

Date	Version	Revised By	Change
06/17/2024	2.0	Grant Phillipp	Initial Revised Version
09/30/2024	2.0.1	Christopher Zammarelli	• Updated Office of American Spaces symbol to ECA/P/M. • In-Person Training: updated to correct course names. • Safety and Security: additional planning guidance.
9/30/2024	2.0.2	Doug Johnston	• Updated grand totals of spaces, pulled from OASIS

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Introduction

The Managing American Spaces Handbook provides comprehensive guidance about the operation of American Spaces to practitioners around the world. It serves as the starting point for understanding the role and function of American Spaces for American Spaces staff members, U.S. embassy and consulate staff, Regional Public Engagement Specialists (REPS), employees of the Office of American Spaces – and all those with responsibility for American Spaces program implementation and success. This Handbook includes information that applies to all types of American Spaces.

When American Spaces practitioners need information that goes beyond what is available in this guide, they should reach out to their REPS, and may also reach out to the Office of American Spaces at AmericanSpaces@state.gov. The Office of American Spaces Training and Acquisitions Unit based in Vienna, Austria, can provide information about training programs and opportunities and can be contacted at training@amspaces.state.gov.

Recognizing that most of the sources of guidance are accessible online and to avoid the financial and environmental costs of printing and shipping Handbooks around the world, this Handbook is a digital-only document. This allows for regular updates to incorporate new or changed guidance. Please report broken links to AmericanSpaces@state.gov.

American Spaces' purpose and mission

The purpose of [American Spaces](#) is reflected in the vision and mission statement:

<u>The Vision for American Spaces</u>

American Spaces connect the world with the United States.

<u>American Spaces' Mission</u>

American Spaces are cultural and information centers around the world that provide free and open access for the public to learn more about the United States, develop skills, and access a wide range of resources.

American Spaces are the U.S. government's primary public cultural and information centers for communities worldwide interested in learning more about the United States. Through people-to-people connections and welcoming environments, American Spaces serve as the initial experience that millions of global visitors have with the United States, building mutual understanding.

The U.S. Department of State supports some 684 American Spaces that are linked to over 176 U.S. embassies and consulates in over 147 countries. These Spaces offer programs and events that foster learning, discussion, and civic engagement around democratic principles.

American Spaces provide a collaborative, experiential environment in which citizens, alumni, mission agencies, private and public partners and others can explore and be inspired by new ideas and opportunities. Visitors can access information, develop practical professional skills, and participate in programs that foster critical thinking and encourage lifelong learning. American Spaces offer a wide range of resources and programs, including:

- Expert speakers and films.
- English language courses.
- Professional skills training.
- U.S. higher education information and advising.
- Makerspaces, eSports, and virtual reality activities.
- Cultural events and performances.
- Internet access.
- Reference materials and library collections.

What is an American Space?

Definition of an American Space

An American Space is a platform that provides regular opportunities for public engagement. For the most part, this means they are cultural centers in fixed locations, primarily engaging in-person audiences, but American Spaces can include independent mobile, pop-up, and virtual Spaces, as well as virtual programs and hybrid programs managed by fixed location cultural centers. Public engagement frequently takes the form of programming for key audiences, but also includes a variety of information services and resources such as multimedia collections that are available for public use.

Because these platforms provide *regular* opportunities for public engagement, they develop an *ongoing* relationship with audiences and a *known* brand among host nation communities – and they need adequate staff to accomplish these outcomes. While Spaces differ widely in the kinds of programs they offer, they all reflect American values, for example by ensuring free and open access; providing information that is accurate, current, and audience-appropriate; maintaining a visibly American aesthetic environment; and cultivating a strong and reciprocal relationship with U.S. embassies and consulates ("posts"). All Spaces that offer programs do so across the full range of the six American Spaces Pillars described below.

To foster this relationship, post staff and Spaces staff regularly discuss strategic direction, programming priorities, and refresh the multimedia collections and information services provided. Spaces provide required data and reporting to posts, and posts and the Office of American Spaces in turn provide a variety of resources to Spaces, such as training, funding for aspects of Spaces' operations and programs, operational guidance, programming packages and resources, and peer-to-peer networking.

American Spaces Pillars

To achieve their strategic objectives, American Spaces conduct programs that fall within the following six core programming pillars.

Information about the United States: As gateways for host nation audiences to learn about American society, culture, and values, posts should expect their American Spaces to present information that is accurate and balanced, current, and audience-appropriate, and which helps posts shape the narrative about the United States, especially when faced with foreign disinformation or propaganda. This Pillar focuses on ensuring that the information presented by American Spaces meets this expectation. American Spaces offer multimedia collections of books, films, newspapers, and more. American Spaces also provide WiFi and internet access, as well as access to eLibraryUSA (eLibraryUSA.state.gov), video streaming services, online newspapers and magazines, research databases, and other information services. These resources may be used dynamically in programs or made available for individual viewing and

circulation – or both. These information resources may be presented in English and/or host nation languages and should be refreshed regularly so that they remain up to date.

English Language Teaching and Learning: This programming Pillar encourages posts and their American Spaces to offer a wide range of programs free of charge that build the skills of English language teachers and promote English language learning in all demographic sectors, including among underserved audiences. American Spaces may offer English language classes for students of all ages as part of this pillar, however for these to count as American Spaces programs, they must be free of charge. Programming in this Pillar may include clubs, teacher training workshops, and activities led by Fulbright English Teaching Assistants, English Language Fellows, Peace Corps Volunteers, and other facilitators. Posts and American Spaces develop English language programming that conforms with host country regulations about education and teaching, taking into consideration any relevant sensitivities in this area. PD sections, REPS, and American Spaces are encouraged to work with Regional English Language Officers (RELOs) to seek advice on how to present effective, relevant English language programming and take advantage of the many instructional and professional development/teacher training resources provided by the State Department.

Skills Building: Programming in the Skills Building Pillar empowers young and professional audiences to develop skills in a wide array of areas that will help them meet local and global challenges and support inclusive, sustainable economic growth and opportunity in their communities. This programming Pillar encourages posts and their American Spaces to draw on a wide range of expertise and resources, including Department public-facing resources the private sector, and local experts, to teach critical skills relevant to the local economy and community. Beyond the English language skill-building, cultural, and educational growth opportunities presented through programs in the English Language Teaching and Learning Pillar, Strategic Cultural Programs Pillar, and the Educational Advising Pillar, American Spaces programming in the Skills Building Pillar may include activities of any duration, with the goal of teaching host nation audiences skills they wish to develop further, but without the requirements or financial cost of formal education.

Educational Advising: Whether by hosting an EducationUSA Advising Center and activities or providing public access to EducationUSA educational advising reference materials, American Spaces conduct a variety of educational advising services (see 10 FAM 227.8-4(e) for information on levels of advising) that promote higher education in the United States. This programming Pillar encourages posts and their American Spaces to promote the availability of self-advising materials, engage with post educational advising staff and Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs), and feature the EducationUSA logo alongside the American Spaces logo to amplify branding. Such programs also utilize webinars, social media platforms, alumni of U.S. educational institutions, and current and past participants in educational exchange programs to encourage foreign students to study in the United States. REPS should work with posts and/or REACs (depending on location and activity) to facilitate programming in this Pillar and coordinate appropriately with other partner organizations. Questions about EducationUSA policy can be directed to Office of Global of Educational Programs.

Strategic Cultural Programs: American Spaces offer cultural and other types of programs that represent the full range of American culture and society, engage many different local audiences, provide opportunities for foreign audiences to interact with Americans, and reflect U.S. foreign policy priorities. Cultural programs may focus on a wide variety of areas related to American society, such as the visual and plastic arts, film, performing arts, literature, health, food culture/cuisine, sports, science and technology, U.S. policy and values (such as democracy, rule of law, civil rights, the free market, and good governance), elections, volunteerism, makerspace activities, environment, civil society, and entrepreneurship – introducing host nation audiences to virtually any aspect of culture, from an American perspective. American Spaces offer cultural programs through a wide array of cultural programming formats, including performances, roundtables, virtual viewing parties, webchats, summer camps, and competitions. This programming Pillar encourages posts and their American Spaces to take advantage of the full scope of cultural programming resources offered by the State Department, including arts, sports, and science envoys; speaker programs; films; debate activities such as Model UN programs; and resources of the U.S Government including the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution.

Alumni Engagement: American Spaces frequently engage alumni of U.S. exchange programs and cultural enrichment programs – both U.S. government-sponsored and privately funded (J-1). Whether they lead programs serve as volunteers or participate as members of a larger audience by sharing their U.S. experience relevant to the program theme, alumni consistently enhance the quality and effectiveness of programming in American Spaces. Some American Spaces programs are designed to engage and benefit alumni themselves, e.g., by hosting alumni association activities, or offering professional development opportunities. Often leading experts in their fields, alumni understand both American and local culture and language, which enables them to present American perspectives in a way that resonates with local audiences. For all these reasons, this programming Pillar encourages posts to work with their American Spaces on engaging alumni as often as possible. Decisions about which types of alumni groups to engage should be made in alignment with post's strategic goals. PD sections should also review information available at alumni.state.gov and from the Office of Alumni Affairs to explore options for alumni engagement.

Types of American Spaces

There are four main **types** of American Spaces:

> **American Centers**: Directly operated by a U.S. embassy or consulate. They operate as U.S. government properties, whether through ownership or leasing, and are staffed by USG employees or contractors. Programming by an American Center is distinct from other programming offered by Public Diplomacy Sections in one or both of the following ways:
>
> - American Center programs take place in the American Center, and/or

- American Center programs, if offered offsite or virtually, are *branded as* programs of the American Center.

American Corners: Operate within (physically and/or administratively) a larger independent organization (such as a university or library). American Corners are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. embassy or consulate and the host-country institution. Staff are employed by the host institution and/or the implementing partner(s).

Binational Centers (BNCs): Partner with posts to offer the same types of programs that are offered by American Centers and American Corners, all free and open to the public. Because they are independent, stand-alone organizations, they primarily sustain themselves either through offering paid English language classes (mostly in the western hemisphere region – WHA) or through host nation government funding (Germany). Beginning in late 2024, American Spaces at BNCs will be governed by a MOU between the U.S. embassy or consulate and BNC. Classes or programs for which participants have to pay, though important for institutional sustainability, are not considered American Spaces programs, as the latter must be free of charge for participants.

Affiliate American Spaces: More limited, fully post-driven and managed relationships to provide resources and engagement with partner institutions. They benefit from an ongoing relationship with a post to offer resources to the public in support of the programming pillars and provide a flexible model for reaching audiences to which posts may not otherwise have access.

In addition, some posts have established Mobile, Virtual, and/or Pop-up (MVP) Spaces to expand or supplement their audience engagement. They can exist as independent American Spaces or act as extensions of a fixed-location Space.

- A Mobile American Space typically utilizes a vehicle to transport resources and/or programming to engage audiences in remote locations.
- A Virtual Space operates in an online environment to provide programming to audiences that do not have regular access to fixed Spaces.
- A Pop-up American Space is typically a collection of resources and/or programming established in a temporary location to engage target audiences.

Classifications of American Spaces

There are also various **classifications** of American Spaces, based on the type of Space as well as the range and volume of services that they provide. The classifications serve to establish expectations about the range and volume of services offered but are not to be used as a rating

system. Performance and assessment should instead be based on monitoring, evaluation, and strategic planning.

Classifications of American Centers:

Comprehensive American Centers: Offer at least eight in-person, virtual, or hybrid programs per month, on average, include an EducationUSA Advising Center at any service level, and have more than one full-time staff person. The Center acts as a hub for the American Spaces network in country, leading on programming offered by partner Spaces.

Standard American Centers: Offer at least four in-person, virtual, or hybrid programs per month, on average, and have at least one staff member dedicated full time to operating the Space.

Classifications of American Corners and BNCs:

Comprehensive American Corners and BNCs: Offer at least eight in-person, virtual, or hybrid American Spaces programs per month, on average, and have at least one full-time staff person.

Standard American Corners and BNCs: Offer at least at least four in-person, virtual, or hybrid American Spaces programs per month, on average, and have at least one person dedicated half time to operating the Space.

There are no classifications for Affiliate American Spaces. All Mobile, Virtual, and Pop-up Spaces are classified as Standard Spaces.

Who supports American Spaces?

U.S. Department of State

The United States Department of State is the United States' federal executive agency responsible for international relations. It is the equivalent to the foreign ministry of other countries. The Secretary of State is the head of the Department and principal foreign policy adviser to the President of the United States.

The Department's mission is to "lead America's foreign policy through diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance by advancing the interests of the American people, their safety and economic prosperity."

The U.S. Department of State operates U.S. embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions around the world. It is organized into several bureaus that support the Department's mission. The Department's organization chart shows these various bureaus and several additional offices.

Public diplomacy, or people-to-people diplomacy, is an important part of the mission of the U.S. Department of State. Public diplomacy strengthens American national security and prosperity by informing and influencing foreign publics and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world, including through programs for American citizens to engage internationally. American Spaces play an important role in promoting the public diplomacy goals of the Department by connecting people abroad with opportunities to learn more about the United States.

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Within the U.S. Department of State, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supports cultural and education-related public diplomacy. ECA's mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchange and engagement. ECA works to build friendly, peaceful relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges, through in-country engagement including through American Spaces, and through public-private partnerships. To learn more about ECA, visit ECA's website.

Office of American Spaces

As part of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Office of American Spaces (ECA/P/M) provides guidance, funding, training, and support for American Spaces' management, operations, program implementation and evaluation, and related strategic planning. The Office of American Spaces staff in Washington and in Vienna, Austria, provide

services and support to American Spaces and advocate for them across the State Department, and throughout the U.S. government. The Office leads efforts to encourage cooperation with like-minded countries' cultural center networks, such as the British Council, Goethe Institut, Institut Français and Alliance Française. More information about these services is available at the [Managing American Spaces website](#).

Regional Public Engagement Specialists

Regional Public Engagement Specialists (REPS) are U.S. Foreign Service specialists stationed around the world who are overseen by the Office of American Spaces. They are experts on providing public access to reliable, correct, and timely information and related programming and communications. They possess a wide range of programming, management, and training skills. They provide guidance to U.S. embassies/consulates and American Spaces staff and link American Spaces, embassies, and consulates with experts in Washington. They also assist embassies and American Spaces in navigating the processes involved with establishing or redesigning American Spaces.

U.S. Embassies and Consulates

American Spaces are directly managed or supported by the Public Diplomacy Sections (PDS) of U.S. embassies and consulates, and these sections have the lead responsibility for overseeing many aspects of Spaces' operations. Public Diplomacy Sections provide guidance on country-specific policy and programming priorities, funding, and professional development opportunities. Public Diplomacy Sections work with sections and agencies within the mission to facilitate activities in American Spaces.

The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) at the U.S. embassy is responsible for the success and ultimate oversight of American Spaces in the country. PAOs ensure that Public Diplomacy Section staff are involved with the Spaces, visit them on a regular basis, and that the rest of the mission (an umbrella term for embassies and consulates) participates in programs. In Public Diplomacy Sections with more than one Public Diplomacy Officer (PDO), PAOs may designate a PDO within their staff to oversee post's American Spaces. PDOs are usually assisted by one or more Locally Employed Staff (LE Staff) who liaise directly with their Spaces.

American Spaces Staff

Directors and staff of American Spaces operate Spaces in a manner that achieves the vision and mission of American Spaces.

There are several **staffing models** for American Spaces:
- USG on-compound American Centers with USG-employed staff.
- USG off-compound American Centers in USG-owned or leased buildings with USG-employed staff.

- USG off-compound American Centers in leased buildings with non-USG staff who are employed by implementing partners.
- American Corners operating rent-free in host institutions with staff who work for the host institution.
- American Corners operating rent-free in host institutions with staff who are employed by implementing partners.
- American Corners that are fully operated by implementing partners, who rent the space and hire the staff.
- BNCs, which are independent organizations with their own locations and staff.
- Affiliate American Spaces are not required to have dedicated staff.

Host Institutions

American Corners, Binational Centers, and Affiliate American Spaces operate as partnerships between an Embassy's Public Diplomacy Section and host country institutions. The host-country partner provides the physical space and staff, while the embassy's Public Diplomacy Section provides equipment and multimedia materials about the United States. The embassy also provides training for American Corner and Binational Center staff.

Programming Partners

American Spaces are encouraged to seek partnerships with a wide range of partners including international organizations, local civil society groups, schools, and universities to enhance program offerings. Programming partners can enrich what Spaces staff can offer by adding specialized capabilities, tapping into connections of credibility within their communities, and providing flexible resources.

Public Private Partnerships

A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a collaborative working relationship between an entity of the U.S. government and a non-governmental partner, most commonly in the private sector, that mutually determines goals, structure, governance, roles, and responsibilities for the following purposes:

- Advance a shared objective.
- Enhance impact through resource sharing.
- Improve programmatic reputation/visibility.
- Achieve mutual programmatic goals.

PPPs rely on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes expectations, but which remains a non-legally binding document.

U.S. Government Exchange Program Alumni

Alumni, which include all who have participated in and completed a U.S. government-funded or sponsored exchange program, can be excellent program leaders at American Spaces because of their expertise and their insight into both host-nation culture and American culture. Alumni also may become skilled American Space directors.

Volunteers

Many American Spaces rely on volunteers and interns to initiate, facilitate, and support programs. Volunteers can create an open and affirming community at Spaces. They also learn important skills like public speaking and critical thinking. American Spaces can engage volunteers by providing training and allowing them to lead or create programs.

Engaging volunteers works best when they have written position descriptions. Below are several ideas:

> **Receptionist**: Greet American Space visitors, introduce and direct visitors to correct resources, answer questions, maintain the reception area, and provide general administrative support.

> **Program Support and Outreach Organizer***:* Participate in all American Space programs and activities before, during, and after events. Develop and lead innovative programming, depending upon interest and expertise.

> **Library Support Assistant**: Assist with multimedia collection operations, including shelving, cataloging, and helping users find the information they need.

> **Tech Support Assistant**: Assist with monitoring and maintaining American Space electronic hardware and software.

> **Artist/Designer**: Create and design artwork for American Space events, including invitations, website advertisements, event decorations, social media content, etc.

> **Maker Dojo (Makerspace Coordinator)***:* Develop and lead programming that teaches makerspace skills.

What resources are available for American Spaces?

American Spaces Support Funds

The U.S. government provides funding for American Spaces through a variety of funding mechanisms. The most prominent is American Spaces Support Funds (ASSF) coordinated and sent from the Office of American Spaces. Every year, the Office of American Spaces sends information about ASSF to U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide. Public Diplomacy Sections work with their American Spaces to identify needs that could be addressed with funding to support strategic programming. The PDS then submits an ASSF proposal to the Office of American Spaces on behalf of its network of American Spaces. Office of American Spaces staff and other Department colleagues review the requests and determine funding for the year. Public Diplomacy Sections also dedicate funding for American Spaces operations.

Other Funding and In-Kind Resources

In addition to ASSF, other funding is sometimes available through different offices and bureaus within the State Department. Posts and Spaces should contact their REPS and/or the Office of American Spaces at AmericanSpaces@state.gov for more information. Embassies hosting American Centers may enroll in the Public Diplomacy and Educational Program Fee Recycling program, which allows American Centers to charge and retain funds generated for certain public diplomacy and educational programs. Funds collected must be used in support of the American Center.

In-kind support is another important way for American Spaces to seek resources. In-kind support includes things such as services, supplies, or free help. American Spaces are encouraged to look for in-kind support from members (regular contacts) and within their local community. In-kind support helps build community support for an American Space; Spaces that receive in-kind support also generate goodwill, build credibility and respect in the community, and develop new allies. In some jurisdictions, donations of cash to an American Space could raise attention from the local tax authorities. Posts should consider the implications under local laws of soliciting cash donations. Types of in-kind donations include:

- Volunteers.
- Tangible items including equipment, furniture, books, space (including maintenance and utilities), and food for meetings or events.
- Services including construction and renovation, printing, public relations, or promotional activities.

American Spaces may also be allowed to participate in fundraising. Please see the section below on fundraising for further information.

Training

The most vital element of a strong, dynamic American Space is the staff that manages, advises, conducts programming, and engages visitors. The Office of American Spaces is committed to training American Spaces staff, including non-U.S. government partner staff, LE Staff, and Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) in management, creative and policy-relevant programming, and innovative technologies.

The Office of American Spaces Vienna Training Unit leads the American Spaces training program. The training program strengthens the capacity of American Spaces to develop engaging programming that advances U.S. foreign policy objectives and benefits local audiences. The curriculum focuses on strategic planning, programming resources, program evaluation, and digital engagement. Regional Public Engagement Specialists (REPS) facilitate training at the single country, sub-regional, regional, and global levels with support and involvement from Office of American Spaces leadership and key personnel. FSOs, LE Staff, and non-U.S. government Spaces staff are eligible to participate in both in-person and virtual training.

Virtual Training

The American Spaces virtual training program offers a cost-effective approach combining self-paced learning with live virtual sessions. Virtual training allows many more American Spaces managers and staff to receive training early in their professional engagement with Spaces, or as a refresher on new resources, priorities, and trends; and also serves as a prerequisite for all in-person training. The virtual training program includes the following courses:

> **Introduction to American Spaces Virtual Training**: This online course consists of six modules that take approximately 15 hours to complete. Modules cover strategic programming, ECA resources, and audience engagement. Each module includes readings, videos, discussions, polls, and quizzes. The self-paced modules are accompanied by live video conferences to share best practices and review the course topics. This online course is a prerequisite for any in-person and supplemental online training.

> **Virtual Programming for American Spaces**: This online course is designed to help American Spaces managers and staff advance their knowledge of virtual programming by introducing technical and programmatic resources and innovative best practices from across the American Spaces global network.

> **Media Literacy for American Spaces**: This online course introduces American Spaces managers and staff to media literacy concepts and provides resources to support media literacy programming and activities in American Spaces.

Managing American Spaces Website

The [Managing American Spaces website](#) provides guidance and resources for American Spaces practitioners, including:

- Program resources.
- Information about training opportunities.
- Information about managing Spaces.
- Links to policy and documents and the American Spaces Directory.
- Other information about who we are and what we do.

Policy Support

The Office of American Spaces Policy Unit provides a wide variety of operating guidance to posts and their American Spaces, including this Handbook, the American Spaces Standards, systems and standards related to monitoring and evaluation including the Office of American Spaces Information System (OASIS), and other operational policies. For additional materials relevant to policies presented in this Handbook, or for guidance about operational issues not addressed here, please contact the Office of American Spaces at AmericanSpaces@state.gov.

State Department Artificial Intelligence Initiatives

The State Department focuses on artificial intelligence (AI) because it is at the center of the global technological revolution. Advances in AI technology present both great opportunities and challenges. Together with allies and partners, the State Department promotes an international policy environment and works to build partnerships that further our capabilities in AI technologies, protect our national and economic security, and promote our values. Additional information is available on the State Department's [Artificial Intelligence page](#) on the [state.gov](#) website.

American Spaces Collections

[American Spaces Collections](#) provides current, curated, authoritative collections of books and technology tools (including equipment for maker spaces and virtual reality programming) that support U.S. foreign policy initiatives. The resources supporting U.S. foreign policy initiatives align with the six American Spaces' pillars.

Additionally, American Spaces Collections includes design resources that facilitate American Spaces as flexible, innovative physical venues. American Spaces Collections graphics promote the American Spaces brand through attractive, universally recognized imagery. A gallery and floor plan collection provide design guidance and inspiration for American Spaces.

TinyCat by LibraryThing

LibraryThing is an online service to help people catalog their books easily. American Spaces can receive free lifetime membership to LibraryThing for organizations. Spaces staff should go to https://www.librarything.com/ and click on Join Now, then select Organization as type of account. Once registered, Spaces staff should email AmericanSpaces@state.gov to request a free lifetime membership.

LibraryThing also has an integrated library system called TinyCat. TinyCat can be used to catalog and circulate materials and manage patron requests. If an American Space wants to upgrade from free LibraryThing membership to the TinyCat integrated library system (https://www.librarycat.org/), the cost is $500 for a lifetime membership. Post may request technology support funds to cover the cost. Posts and Spaces may reach out with additional questions to tinycat@librarything.com. It is a good idea to copy AmericanSpaces@state.gov on such emails in case assistance is also needed from the Office of American Spaces.

American Spaces Facebook Group

The Office of American Spaces administers a closed Facebook group for American Spaces managers. The Facebook group serves as venue to connect with colleagues managing American Spaces around the world, share best practices, get the latest programming resources, and tap into the expertise of other American Spaces practitioners by asking questions. All American Spaces staff are encouraged to join.

How do American Spaces function?

Open Access

American Spaces should conform to the American Spaces Open Access Principles.

- **Open public access**: Visitors should be allowed to come into the American Space without an appointment during regular and consistent public hours established by post for the Space. No prior appointment should be necessary; no prior security access request should be required; and visitors should not have to be badged.
- **Unescorted access**: After passing any applicable security screening, visitors should be allowed to proceed to the American Space unescorted.
- **Separate security screening**: At Spaces with a high volume of visitors and where an initial security screening is required (primarily applies to American Centers), separate security screening should be provided for American Spaces visitors so that they do not have to wait in long lines (such as those used for visitors to consular operations).
- **Personal electronic devices allowed:** Visitors to the American Space should be allowed to bring their own personal electronic devices (laptops, smart phones, tablets, etc.) into the Space and to use them there.
- **Wireless internet access**: American Spaces visitors need to be able to connect their own personal electronic devices to a Wi-Fi network in the Space, and the network needs to provide the best-available bandwidth.

Support for Equity

Goals and Resources

American Spaces play an important role in advancing the State Department's Equity goals, including:

- Diversifying public diplomacy and communications strategies.
- Expanding recruitment for programming and exchange opportunities to focus on underserved communities.
- Promoting inclusive, equitable messaging to combat disinformation.
- Building global support for the advancement of racial equity and support for underserved communities through partnerships and public diplomacy.

The State Department's [Equity Action Plan](#) provides a roadmap for the U.S. Department of State to generate better-informed policies, programs, and processes to address barriers to equity worldwide and achieve foreign policy goals.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The United States of America is a world leader in recognizing and upholding the rights of people with disabilities. Supported by landmark laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the United States strives to create an inclusive society in which all its citizens – including people with disabilities – are able to access, participate in, and enjoy public programs, resources and activities. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability just as other civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. The ADA guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to enjoy employment opportunities, purchase goods and services, and participate in state and local government programs. As places representing American values and culture abroad, American Spaces should strive to do the same, whenever possible. More information about the Americans with Disabilities Act is available at https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada.

International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United States, along with more than 160 other countries, is a signatory to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). It sets forth globally accepted legal standards on disability rights and clarifies the application of human rights principles to persons with disabilities. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the body of independent experts which monitors implementation of the Convention.

What American Spaces Can Do

American Spaces can promote a welcoming environment by offering a host of accommodations and paying broad attention to accessibility so that people with disabilities may still be able to use Spaces resources and participate in programs without necessarily having to disclose their disability. At the same time, Spaces should communicate clearly that they welcome disclosure, so that they can strive to do whatever they can to facilitate access and participation. The American Spaces Standards specify the goal of establishing accessibility in American Spaces worldwide. The Physical Space and Access Standards specify that all American Centers are required to comply with the ADA. Though the ADA does not apply to American Corners or BNCs, these partner Spaces should strive to make their Spaces as accessible as possible to people with disabilities. The CRPD may be a helpful resource in countries that are signatories. Making American Spaces accessible requires much more than modification of physical space. Making American Spaces accessible to people with disabilities requires three things: 1) access to service, 2) active outreach, 3) and access to physical spaces as well as to information and collections.

Access to service: Providing service to people with disabilities that is equivalent to service provided to all audiences requires respect and good communication. Respect for the needs of people with disabilities includes all staff:

- Treat people with disabilities with respect and consideration.
- Focus on what the individual needs, not what the individual "is." Refer to a disability only if it is pertinent to the conversation or provision of services, and respect individuals' preferences regarding how they self-identify.
- Learn about people with disabilities and how to ensure that all users, including people with disabilities, can use the Space's services, public areas, and resources.
- Involve people with disabilities and their representative organizations in the planning process for specific programs and general remodeling efforts.

Identify one staff member to coordinate services to people with disabilities, monitor developments in adaptive technology, respond to requests for accommodation, and develop policies related to accessibility.

Active outreach: Staff must actively reach out to people with disabilities – making them aware that the Space exists and that they are welcome to use its services, public areas, and resources. Outreach options include:
- Contact people with disabilities, NGOs, and networks that support people with disabilities to raise awareness of the Space and its accessibility.
- Provide guided tours and handouts that illustrate how people with disabilities can use and get involved with the American Space.
- Develop a handout or webpage explaining alternative format materials and services available to people with disabilities.
- Include information in program advertisements on what accommodations are provided (e.g., location of accessible entrances, sign language interpreters) and information on who to contact to request specific accommodations. Include how far in advance such requests must be made.
- When possible, ensure that sign language interpreters, Computer Aided Realtime Translation (CART) providers, and assistive listening devices are available to facilitate participation of people who are deaf or have hearing disabilities. Arrange seating to facilitate line of sight access to those services.
- Conduct programming related to the rights and abilities of people with disabilities.
- Establish off-site hours where representatives of the Space go into the community and provide services and resources for people unable to visit the American Space in person.

Access to physical spaces: Ensure that people with disabilities can enter, access, and utilize all areas of the American Space independently, safely and with dignity. In the United States, the right of people with disabilities to physically access public services is codified in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (http://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm). Some physical improvements to promote accessibility may require special funding; others do not. Spaces are encouraged to consider the following physical access issues:

Accessible Parking and Pathway: Design and designate reserved parking for people with disabilities, as close to the American Space's entrance as possible. Ensure there is an unobstructed pedestrian route from the lot to the entrance.

Entrance: Clearly identify the entrance of the American Space and offer a step-free route for people with mobility disabilities to enter. Doorway openings should be at least 32 inches (81.28cm) wide and have thresholds no higher than 1/4 inch or .6 centimeters. Ramps with slopes no steeper than 1.12 inches or 2.8 centimeters and/or elevators should be provided as alternatives to stairs.

Internal Movement: Design clear pathways (36 to 48 inches or 91 to 122 centimeters wide) for people to follow within the American Space allowing them to enter all public areas of the Space.

Signage: Identify, in large, bold sans serif print with high color contrast (such as black and white) different sections of the Space, as well as paths to enter them. Signage should be posted from the entrance gate to the entrance of the American Space, and throughout its interiors.

Furniture: Where possible, use accessible, adjustable furniture. For people with mobility disabilities, options in furniture are important. Chairs, sofas, and benches should have a seat that is 17 to 18 inches (43.1 to 45.7 centimeters) from the ground and have a back and arms. Offer high and low options for tables: tables should be high enough for a wheelchair user to get their legs under, or low enough for an easy reach when seated.

Restroom Facilities: It is recommended that every American Space have at least one restroom facility adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. The designated restroom facility must offer adequately sized doors, ample space to accommodate wheelchairs, and properly placed sanitary fixtures (toilet, handlebars, sink).

Information and Circulation Desks: Ensure that staff desks can facilitate easy sightlines and face-to-face interactions between employees and people in wheelchairs. An assistive listening device will enhance communication with some people with hearing disabilities. Offer book returns at accessible heights.

Emergencies and Evacuations: Use alarm systems that are both audible and visual and ensure that evacuation routes are accessible. Hold periodic evacuation drills for practice and designate a staff member to assist people with disabilities in the event of an evacuation.

Access to Information and Collections: Making collections accessible is important for people who are blind, have low vision, dyslexia or other print-related disabilities, and for the elderly. Ensure that staff members are aware of the needs of persons with disabilities, familiar with

available resources, and able to operate the adaptive technologies in the American Space. Spaces are encouraged to consider the following issues related to accessing information and collections:

Formats: Provide materials in a variety of formats. Easy to access formats include Braille, large print, audio recordings and electronic resources, including digital publications whose text can be converted to speech.

Magnification Tools: From handheld to large closed-circuit television (CCTV) magnifiers, magnification tools make a wide variety of physical resources accessible.

Developing Alternative Formats: In-house development of alternative formats may be allowed by local copyright law and is supported by the [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled](#). Many countries have developed copyright laws that permit information centers to convert books into accessible formats free of cost and without the burden of securing permission from publishers. These laws often guarantee services to people with disabilities.

Volunteers: Establish a corps of volunteers who will read and provide research assistance to people requiring it.

Universal Design: Practice the principles of universal design, which guarantees that electronic resources can be accessed by people with a broad range of abilities and disabilities, without the need for adaptive technologies or tools. The leading resource on web content accessibility, providing the most up-to-date guidelines and instructions, is the [World Wide Web Consortium](#).

Assistive Technologies: Provide assistive technologies to enhance access to existing resources. The American Space is not likely to have specialized equipment to support every type of disability, but the Space can anticipate commonly requested adaptive technologies and acquire additional technologies as requested. Common adaptive technologies include:

- Large monitors of at least 17 inches (43.18cm).
- Wrist rests and keyguards for people with mobility disabilities.
- Screen readers and screen magnification supports.
- Alternative input devices (adaptive keyboards, adaptive mouse or switches).
- Speech output systems.
- Speech synthesis software.
- Assistive listening system for communication.

Safety and Security

It is important that U.S. embassies and consulates create emergency action plans to help prepare Spaces staff and their workplaces for emergencies. These plans take various scenarios into account that may disrupt normal operations, and detail what actions to take, such as in the case of a weather emergency, natural disaster, fire or security incidents.

In any case, American Spaces should take part in emergency preparedness activities, and engage host institutions on related planning. In the case of American Centers located at U.S. embassies, staff should be trained on how to respond, and how to direct Center program participants and visitors in the case of a drill or an actual emergency. For other types of American Spaces, directors and partner institutions should consult with their embassy or consulate Public Diplomacy Section, which can provide guidance on best practices. Below are some important considerations that may factor into emergency planning for American Spaces.

Accountability: In case of an emergency, it is important to be able to reach personnel to account for their safety and to communicate important information. Accountability checks can be done over the phone or via social media groups. WhatsApp groups can be very effective for staying in touch with colleagues in case of an emergency.

Communication: It is important to keep the channels of communication open between a PDS and an American Space. In case of any change in status, American Spaces staff should notify their PDS contact.

Plans: There are excellent resources available as guides for developing emergency plans. Many of these examples include planning for preservation of cultural heritage, caring for personnel, and considerations for resuming operations. Please consult with your contact at post to review these resources and coordinate on a plan for your American Space.

Criteria for Suspending Operations: American Spaces should work closely with their PDS colleagues to determine the criteria for closure or suspension of services. Some general considerations include:
- Operating status of the host institution (if applicable)
- Safety of the American Spaces staff and visitors
- Circumstances on the ground at the city/regional/country levels.

Programming Resources

American Spaces offer a welcoming and inspiring environment, trained staff, and modern technologies to connect with foreign audiences—in person and virtually—in support of U.S. national interests and the Department of State's mission. Spaces offer dynamic and interesting programming to attract and engage target audiences in discussion and activities about U.S. foreign policy interests and the goals of the U.S. mission in the host country. American Spaces build bridges between the people of the United States and the host country, increasing

collaboration and partnership. American Spaces promote free-flowing and open dialogue, showcasing the breadth and depth of American values, ideals, and opinions.

American Spaces promote critical thinking and thoughtful discussion of issues important to the U.S. relationship with the host country, and U.S. global interests. Spaces serve as developmental platforms for people, projects, and products, offering room to contemplate, coordinate and fabricate. The kinds of training and developmental opportunities provided through programming are specifically aligned with the public diplomacy goals and integrated country strategy of the mission. The staff and relevant U.S. mission work together to define target audiences, tailor programming, strategically allocate resources, evaluate programming, and report on outcomes.

American Spaces offer different types of programs:

- **One-time Program**: a program that has one session and is not directly connected to other programs. Examples include an alumni networking lunch or a single performance for youth by an American Music Abroad band.
- **Series/Variable Audience Program**: programs with multiple sessions, but where the program design readily allows for an entirely new audience at each session. Examples include a film series or a book club series.
- **Series/Fixed Audience Program**: programs with multiples sessions, but where program design has a common theme or arc throughout the sessions, requiring the audience to attend every event. Examples include training programs or master classes.

Through a whole-of-mission approach and high capability and quality, American Spaces are a strategic tool to engage key foreign audiences in dialogue on the issues that matter most. To support such high-quality programming, American Spaces make use of the following guidance and resources.

Programming Packages

The Office of American Spaces offers programming toolkits tailored for American Spaces, such as debate kits, virtual programming, media literacy materials, information about U.S. higher education, and film screening guidance. The programming kits encourage free expression of ideas and foster discussion in English conversation groups. Kits also may include discussion questions, activity suggestions, and links to videos and other resources. The programming kits are available on the Managing American Spaces website.

Planning and Marketing Programs

The Managing American Spaces website offers resources to help Spaces deliver successful programs. These include program planning tools such as the model Program Planner and the

[Simple Program Checklist](). Good program planning covers audience, marketing, registration, evaluation, and reporting.

During program design, American Spaces should consider drawing from the expertise and talent of officers and staff members at the U.S. embassy or consulate. These are some of the best voices for providing the latest and most reliable information about the United States.

Planning begins with ensuring that the program addresses the goals and objectives found in the U.S. mission's Integrated Country Strategy and the Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan.

Once a Space had decided on a program, here are five steps to crafting effective marketing messages for American Spaces programs:

Step 1: Define the purpose of the message.

Step 2: Know the target audience.

Step 3: Define the call-to-action. Some examples of intended actions include:

- RSVP to or attend an event.
- Apply for a grant or program.
- Learn more about a topic or read the entire story.
- Provide feedback to the Space or answer survey questions.

Step 4: Determine the platform for delivering the message.

Step 5: Draft and polish the message.

Public events and invitation-only events are promoted differently.

Strategies for marketing public events:
- Focus on where general audiences are most likely to receive the information. Examples include radio, social media, flyers at the American Space, or other channels.
- Press releases from the Space or the U.S. mission can amplify marketing, when appropriate.
- Public marketing can also ask social media followers or visitors with especially large or unique networks to spread the message about the program to their networks. Youth volunteers may be especially helpful with such marketing.
- When marketing events, it is important to use consistent branding for American Spaces events. Any unique branding for specific programs should in any case incorporate standard American Spaces branding.
- Finally, the events themselves can be used as marketing tools for other American Spaces programs.

Regardless of the program's primary focus, Spaces should regularly promote their multimedia collections, EducationUSA information, and future events to all audiences. Displays, QR codes, or opening and closing remarks can all achieve this kind of marketing.

Strategies for marketing invitation-only events:
- When the audience is limited only to those who receive invitations, Spaces should seek U.S. mission expertise and colleagues' contacts when creating a guest list. For instance, if the event is related to marine plastics and the U.S. embassy has an ESTH (Environment, Science, Technology, and Health) officer, the officer may have connections to a particularly interested audience.

Registration: Requiring visitors to register or RSVP helps ensure a successful event for both staff and visitors. Types of registration or RSVP may include social media or email (or for invitation-only events, via private channels on social media), sign-up sheets in the American Space, if appropriate for use, and personal follow-up reminders. Registration or RSVP empowers American Spaces to:

- Invite the target audience (if the event is invitation-only).
- End registration once the maximum number of attendees have registered.
- Budget the appropriate amount of seating, refreshments, microphones, and other supplies.
- Ensure adequate security staff and other support staff are on hand.
- Personalize the visitor experience by preparing name tags and/or table tents.
- Send audiences pre-event content, such as presenter bios, slide decks, or video clips.
- Identify VIPs or other potential contacts so that staff can alert mission colleagues to attend and meet contacts during the event.
- Notify visitors if the event must be postponed or cancelled.
- Request contact information during registration and use it to populate or update contact management databases.
- Match the number of invitations to the number of attendees desired. For example, if half the Space's invitations are usually accepted, then the Space can invite twice as many people as it wants to attend. If half the people who register actually attend events, the Space can allow twice as many registrations.

Security: Depending on the Space, visitors undergo various levels of security screening. Although Open Access Principles encourage the admission and use of personal electronic devices at American Spaces, depending on security considerations visitors may be asked to leave phones, laptops, or other belongings at the facility's visitors' entrance, and to present identification. To ensure events run smoothly for both staff and visitors, Spaces staff should consider these items when planning events:

- Inform visitors of security screenings and ID requirements before the event, including how early they should arrive for security screening and whether they will be allowed to bring personal electronic devices into the American Space.
- Security staff are often visitors' first impression of an American Space. Security staff should be trained in how to provide a welcoming experience while still meeting necessary security requirements.
- Security staff should be informed well ahead of the event date of the expected attendance so they can adjust schedules accordingly. Ahead of the event, ensure there will be enough security staff on hand through the entirety of the program. The length and size of the event may impact the security staff overtime budget.

If security screening is adversely impacting the visitor experience, Spaces staff should work with the PDS and REPS to ensure American Spaces Open Access principles are being upheld.

Reporting: Reporting on American Spaces and their activities is done through several channels. Spaces staff play a vital role by providing the data, summaries, analyses, images, and recordings to their posts, who then use them to submit information through State Department internal channels.

Monthly statistics are reported through the Office of American Spaces Information System (OASIS), either by the Space directly or by the embassy or consulate. Additional information about OASIS is available in the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Standards section, below.

Good qualitative reporting cites statistics and addresses the following subjects:

- "Five Ws:" Who, What, Where, When, Why (and How, and So What?).
- Mission foreign policy goals.
- Audience feedback.
- Social media engagement and press coverage, if applicable.
- Eye-catching photos, showing audiences in action and candid, unrehearsed interactions; good photos are tightly cropped and avoid podiums, handshakes, and posed shots.

Virtual Programs

Virtual programming allows connections with audiences who are not able to visit American Spaces, in addition to interactions pre- and post-program. The Office of American Spaces provides resources to support virtual programming, including a toolkit and a regular newsletter with programming resources. Information about accessing these resources can be found on the [Managing American Spaces website](#) or by emailing [AmericanSpaces@state.gov](#).

Spaces may work alone or together to engage audiences virtually:

- **Outward**: an American Space provides programs to a virtual audience, either via livestream, text-based Q&A, or other means.
- **Joint**: links audiences at two or more American Spaces virtually, either via videoconference or teleconference.
- **Hybrid**: combines in-person audience with a virtual audience.
- **Pre-recorded**: created in advance and available for audiences and/or American Spaces to use at their convenience, such as American English MOOCs. These should be used within the context of interactive programs, because an American Spaces program involves interaction with the participants.

Below are some suggested virtual programs run by American Spaces, including types of technology used. The Office of American Spaces encourages Spaces to research the various platforms to determine the best way to conduct programming online in their locations.

Live Streaming: To reach a wide audience, American Spaces stream live video onto social media platforms. Software commonly used to host these programs includes Zoom, Google Meet/Hangout, Facebook, Instagram, StreamYard, Microsoft Teams, and Open Broadcast Software.

Virtual Clubs and Courses: Serial programs, such as clubs and courses, can effect long-term behavioral change. Some American Spaces offer such events online to continue to connect with their communities and reach new communities. Many Spaces post webinars and host clubs online through conferencing platforms such as Teams, Zoom, and Webex, and through lower bandwidth mobile apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.   Many Spaces host discussion sessions of specialized English classes for entrepreneurs, STEM professionals, and journalists developed by ECA's Office of English Language Programs. Finally, we strongly encourage American Spaces to work with their local EducationUSA advising centers to host virtual advising hours.

Live Text-Based Chats: Text-based, real-time engagement allows audiences with lower bandwidth to participate. Examples include discussions of books or videos on mobile apps, quizzes on social media platforms, or explorations of how to spot fake news.

Various resources can help American Spaces get started through using ready-made virtual programs. Examples include:

Virtual Programs Offered by ECA: American Spaces are encouraged to hold watch parties for virtual programs offered from Washington, D.C. If the timing of the programs is not be right for the audience, promote them on social media so audiences can either watch the live programs at home or view the recorded versions later.

ECA American English MOOCs and Webinars: ECA provides [American English MOOCs](#) for English language learners, English language teachers, and specific professions. These are sustained, intensive courses lasting weeks or months and participants can learn at

their own pace. Topics include English for media literacy, STEM fields, business and entrepreneurship, journalism, career development, and more. ECA also provides American English Webinars for English language teachers. These webinars cover a range of topics, such as how to use audiobooks, comics, Voice of America, and art to teach English. They usually last about an hour.

MentorTalks: MentorTalks allow exchange alumni to hear from extraordinary mentors on a wide variety of topics. This ECA series runs on Facebook at @internationalexchangealumni and is usually offered once a month. Mentors speak about their careers, then answer questions from the audience, all in about 30 minutes. Although the target audience is alumni of exchange programs, anyone can watch and participate.

Presenters and Moderators:
- Select enthusiastic presenters and moderators. Interview them if necessary to ensure the best fit.
- Peer-to-peer advocacy: Virtual programs don't always require USG presenters or moderators. Local experts, exchange alumni, or in-country Americans provide diverse viewpoints in authentic voices.

Branding:
- Use consistent logos and design elements when advertising the program.
- Include branding during the program, such as with a screen overlay or backdrop.
- If the program platform allows virtual backgrounds (i.e. Zoom), these American Spaces backgrounds can be downloaded and used.

Technology:
- Choose a platform that works in the local environment. Many basic platforms are free, but Spaces can add functionality and increase participant volume by subscribing to a more advanced version. This article Zoom security: Your meetings will be safe and secure if you do these 10 things provides tips for running secure Zoom meetings.
- Practice the technology before the program. Even for experienced online presenters, new software updates or equipment malfunctions can derail any program.
- Test the Space's bandwidth and the audience's bandwidth. Will WiFi or mobile connections be sufficient, or should the program delivery use a cable?
- Will cameras be stationary or mobile? Handheld or on a tripod?
- Decide whether presenters will need mics and lighting. How noisy and well-lit will the surroundings be during the program?
- Decide how presenters will view and field online questions. During live events, use multiple screens or a whiteboard to help the presenter read questions easily.

- If technical difficulties arise during the program, be ready to direct the audience to a previous virtual program or other resources on the same topic.

Makerspaces

Makerspaces are places where individuals or groups take part in hands-on, self-paced learning. They are innovative spaces for collaboration and experimentation. Makerspaces embrace failure (learning from mistakes) and celebrate critical thinking. Activities range from coding and robotics to sewing and 3D printing.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs– often implemented in makerspaces – provide experiential learning that supports innovation and critical thinking. These programs may also support foreign policy goals ranging from social entrepreneurship to wildlife conservation.

Makerspaces are excellent platforms for entrepreneurs. They can create product prototypes before making large investments. Young women are also ideal makerspace audiences – especially in countries where female empowerment or women's economic independence are U.S. foreign policy objectives. This link provides access to webinars about how to effectively manage makerspaces in American Spaces. Each webinar is less than one hour long and includes Q&A.

American Spaces' staff should communicate to visitors and program participants that, as long as they use legally licensed software and either their own original designs or designs that they have the legal right to use (either because they have obtained permission from the rights holder or because the design is provided for free on open source platforms), then the items they may create by using makerspace equipment are their own intellectual property (IP). This IP would not be owned by the Space or the U.S. government.

eLibraryUSA

eLibraryUSA is a digital collection of trusted information resources from the United States, exclusively available through American Spaces. eLibraryUSA offers access to newspapers, magazines, journals, digital books, and films. The Office of American Spaces manages these resources, which are similar to what U.S. universities offer their students and faculty. Each American Space should have an eLibraryUSA account.

American Spaces should advertise eLibraryUSA, emphasizing that it is cost-free. Though brochures may be helpful, Spaces are encouraged to go beyond offering brochures to promote eLibraryUSA, for example by making an attractive sign and holding regular introductory sessions that appeal to host-nation audiences, and actively engaging academic institutions and audiences on this resource.

Showing Films

Films are often regularly scheduled in American Spaces, where they can be entertaining tools for delivering information about the United States and its culture. Before deciding to screen a film, it is important to evaluate the purpose of each film screening and ensure all film programs support specific mission objectives. American Spaces should consider the following when planning a film screening:

- Is this a compelling tool for conveying post's message?
- If yes, is it more effective to screen all of the film or some of it?
- Will the film be appropriate in context of the audience's local culture?
- Many audiences around the world have access to thousands of American films at home or on their mobile devices. How will watching a film in an American Space be different from watching it at home? Here are some ways to enhance the viewing experience:
  - Feature the film's creators or subjects at the event, either in person or virtually
  - Ask U.S. mission experts or exchange alumni to introduce the film and lead a discussion or debate afterward.
- Can the film be used to promote U.S. travel and study abroad?
- Can the film advance English language skills, not simply by screening it to English language learners, but through relevant curriculum?

The Office of American Spaces offers movie discussion guides to help facilitate film showings in American Spaces. A list of movie guides by topic is available on the [Managing American Spaces website](#).

Due to the changing nature of film screening policies, a [link](#) to the most recent film guidance is included and should be consulted.

Collection Development and Curation

Many American Spaces offer collections of print and digital materials to support programming and engagement. Collection management starts with a clear policy that outlines intended audience, how resources will be selected and procured, how American Spaces will deal with donations, a plan for deselecting materials, and an overview of borrowing privileges. In some cases, if American Spaces are located in libraries, they may adopt (and modify, if needed) the host institution's collection development policy. The Outagamie Waupaca Library System's [Materials Selection/Collection Development Policy](#) is one of many examples.

A simple policy should include the following elements:

Audience: American Spaces provide information about the U.S. to a variety of target audiences depending on the strategic goals of the U.S. embassy and the Department of State. At the local level, American Spaces match their collection development priorities

to the needs of their target audiences and seek to engage with a diverse range of people on issues that are of shared interest.

Resource Selection: Resources for American Spaces collections are selected at U.S. embassies, based on local understanding of what is appropriate for the target audience. The Public Diplomacy Section at post, in consultation with Spaces staff, decide what information will address current U.S. policy goals and what will resonate with local audiences. Regional Public Engagement Specialists (REPS) frequently suggest collections on specific topics based on their experience in the region as well as their professional skills.

Subjects Covered: American Spaces collections typically cover a broad range of subjects in support of priority programming themes and the six American Spaces Pillars. American Spaces may wish to include materials that local audiences lack access to due to censorship or affordability, as well as materials that are not locally available in English.

Procurement: The American Spaces Collections (https://amspaces.state.gov/collections/home) is a great resource to help American Spaces select materials. American Spaces should work with the U.S. embassy or consulate to procure materials. Spaces in Africa and Haiti, including the Maghreb, also have access to French, Portuguese, and English language speakers and French and Portuguese books and digital resources through the Bureau of African Affairs' Africa Regional Services.

Donations: American Spaces may accept donations and gifts. However, American Spaces, in consultation with posts, REPS, and the host institution (if applicable), reserve the right to add donations to the collection or to dispose of the donated material in an appropriate manner.

De-selection (Weeding): On an annual basis, American Spaces should "weed" their collections to maintain high standards in providing relevant materials about the United States that are accurate, balanced, current, and audience-appropriate. Staff, in consultation with post, REPS, and host institutions (if applicable), should use the following criteria to de-select print materials and dispose of them in an appropriate manner:

- Appearance (items in need of repair).
- Scope (items do not support one of the six American Spaces Pillars).
- Content (items are not factual or current or have been superseded by another edition).
- Usage (items have not circulated or been used to support a program in the last three years).

- Duplications (multiple copies of items that are not in active use).

What to do with de-accessioned or weeded books and materials:
- Think carefully before donating weeded books. Do not give away something that is shabby or past its usefulness. For example, don't give outdated test prep materials to a school. If you have donations that are still in good condition and usable, consider schools or NGOs.
- Donations of periodicals may be helpful for school groups or NGOs to use for various crafting or reading purposes.
- If you donate periodicals or books, be transparent and fair when selecting recipients.
- American Corners are generally not good places to send books weeded from an American Center.

Visual Diplomacy

Visual Diplomacy is the use of photography and visuals to communicate, capture and visually tell the story of programs and activities held in American Spaces. Great photos share one or more of these three elements: **action, engagement, and/or emotion**. Good lighting and focus are equally important. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but the aim of using visual diplomacy throughout a Space and in programs is to communicate a message. Posts and Spaces are encouraged to reach out to their REPS for more information about no-cost design tools and resources that can help with creating high-quality content and advertising events, including tools such as Canva, Vectr, Pixler, and Piktochart. Visual diplomacy should consider the following:

- **Action**: A picture with action should display the act of program participants doing something, typically achieving a task or outcome. A few examples might be a group activity, DIY projects or planting a tree.

- **Engagement**: A picture with engagement generally shows program participants engaged with one another or with a speaker. Participants may or may not be engaged in an action, but they should be listening or interacting with one another. Capturing engagement is capturing participation with proper body language.

- **Emotion**: Most good pictures feature positive emotions. Smiles and laughter will always communicate American Spaces' positive atmosphere. Serious and thoughtful expressions are appropriate for other topics.

Public Domain Images: Posts and Spaces seeking images to use in digital engagement should start with free, public domain images available from sources such as those presented below. Posts and Spaces should remember to always comply with copyright regulations and to provide photo credits. Questions about copyright should be addressed to the U.S. embassy or consulate, REPS, and, if need be, the Office of American Spaces at AmericanSpaces@state.gov.

GPA Photo Archive: The GPA Photo Archive provides public access photos intended for use by U.S. missions overseas and other State Department entities. Use is permitted by staff of U.S. embassies, consulates, American Spaces, and may be distributed as warranted for use by non-USG organizations approved by the embassy. Only non-commercial use is permitted. When used, the credit line for photos from this archive should read: GPA Photo Archive / photographer's name / original source.

Share America: The Share America website includes articles, infographics and videos produced by the U.S. State Department.

Content Commons: The Content Commons website provides a compilation of U.S. government-produced content that is organized by theme.

Smithsonian Open Access: The Smithsonian Open Access website provides access to nearly 3 million 2D and 3D digital items from the Smithsonian Institution, including images and data from across the Smithsonian's 19 museums, nine research centers, libraries, archives, and the National Zoo.

Wikimedia Commons: The Wikimedia Commons website provides the Worldwide Web's largest repository of freely downloadable imagery. There is much high-quality photography to be found here on every imaginable subject, although it takes some searching to find it. The National Archives (NARA) is making their historical image collections more accessible through this site; large holdings of Department of Defense and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) imagery can also be found here. Posts and Spaces should follow the photographers' attribution requirements and avoid the use of photos for which little or no self-documentation is provided.

Visual Diplomacy Design Tools

Canva

- Free.
- Upload own images.
- Best for building social media graphics.
- Easy to make templates.

Vectr

- Free.
- Similar to Illustrator.
- Upload own images.
- Best for making vector files and saving portable network graphics (png) files with transparent backgrounds.

[Pixlr](#)

- Free.
- Similar to Photoshop.
- Best for editing photos.
- Can save work without making an account.

[Piktochart](#)

- Free.
- Best for building infographics.
- Includes preset icons and images.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Standards

Strategic planning provides direction and measurable outcomes that inform decisions and evaluate progress. While strategic planning takes a small investment of time, it makes American Spaces programs and networks more successful. This section presents several tools and important guidance that can help American Spaces practitioners conduct successful monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning, and strategic planning.

All U.S. embassies and consulates develop goals and objectives that govern the work of the U.S. mission. These goals tie directly to the [U.S. National Security Strategy](#), a document prepared by the executive branch of the U.S. government. U.S. embassies base their goals on the U.S. National Security Strategy. Each U.S. embassy develops an Integrated Country Strategy that identifies goals and objectives related to promoting U.S. values, bolstering economic growth and supporting democratic principles. These strategies can be found on the [U.S. Department of State website](#), and these goals inform each U.S. mission's goals for its network of American Spaces as well as for individual programs conducted by American Spaces.

Good monitoring, evaluation, learning, and strategic planning also require good reporting. Reporting keeps the U.S. embassy, the Office of American Spaces, and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs informed about the work taking place in American Spaces, which is in turn important to justify the expenditure of federal resources and so that Department offices and bureaus can respond effectively to requests for information or reporting from the Executive branch, the U.S. Congress and the public.

Program Strategic Planning

SMART Goals

Every good American Spaces program should be planned using a "SMART" goal. SMART goals are frequently used to support strategic planning. SMART goals are:

- **Specific** (Audience and Behavior)

- ○ WHO is involved? Especially important for group projects.
- ○ WHAT exactly is the program expected to accomplish?
- ○ WHERE – relevant if project/goal is off-site or hybrid.
- **Measurable** (Outcome) – makes a goal more tangible. What does success look like?
- **Attainable** – Is the goal realistically achievable? Does the Space have the tools, funds, and skills needed?
- **Relevant** – answers the "why" question. Focuses on whether the goal supports embassy and foreign policy goals. Also addresses whether the goal makes sense in local context.
- **Time-bound** – answers the "when" question. Provides target date for deliverables. Creates a sense of commitment and aids evaluation.

The simple formula for a well-written SMART goal is as follows: "By [timeframe], [audience] will [behavior], as evidenced by [outcome - key indicator]." Here are examples of well-written SMART goals:

By the end of the program, participants will increase their capacity to start or improve their small business, as evidenced by the number of reported small business begun or reported development of existing businesses.

By August 2023, participants in the American Center's "World Affairs in Theory and Practice" program will expand their knowledge of pressing foreign policy issues of the day as well as their understanding of American systems of higher education, as evidenced by their successful completion of one or more blended learning courses.

A-F Strategic Planning Model

Every good American Spaces program should also be planned according to the A-F strategic planning model, which consists of the following elements:

- Audience.
- Behavior.
- Content.
- Delivery.
- Engagement.
- Follow-Up and Evaluation.

Audience: American Spaces work with diverse audiences. Strategic planning includes thinking about audiences in terms of existing audiences, potential audiences, and who the Space would like to engage with.

Audiences should be chosen according to the best fit for reaching a program's SMART goal. The more specific the audience the better. The Department of State divides audiences for public diplomacy programs into three general categories:

Established Opinion Leaders – individuals whose positions in influential institutions such as think tanks, professional associations, civil society organizations, academia, professional training institutes, and host country governments enable them to shape public attitudes, either as individuals or through the policy priorities they adopt for those institutions.

Emerging Voices – youth, individuals, communities, and organizations that may wield significant influence on host-country attitudes through digital communication and/or informal, evolving networks. These are the future leaders.

Press and Media –reporters, editors, and commentators who influence discourse on the full range of critical issues through print, broadcast, and online media. Press and media audiences can include those who are emerging in influence, such as social media influencers, as well as those more established in influence.

Audience Personas

Creating and using marketing personas can be an excellent way for American Spaces staff to put themselves in the shoes of target audiences. Marketing personas help program planners strategically cater to target audiences by helping staff relate to those audiences as human beings. A marketing persona is a fictional, generalized representation of a target audience that can help illustrate how to tailor programs to their specific needs, behaviors, and concerns. By creating a marketing persona, Spaces staff can better understand visitors and program attendees and more effectively target opportunities to their needs. Marketing personas can help identify key characteristics about visitors – their interests, likes, dislikes, how they prefer to spend their time, their needs and preferences. By keeping these marketing personas in mind when developing new programs, Spaces staff can better ensure that programs achieve the intended goals.

Example of a Persona Development Table:

	Persona Bio Name & Demographics Age: Gender: Socioeconomic status: Location: Education level: Family: Type of job/line of work: Level of contact with the US:
replace with photo or avatar of learner	

Goals & Values What is important to them and what motivates them?	Challenges, Obstacles & Fears What might hold them back?	Policy Views - Attitude toward US Tied to ICS Goals and Mission Objectives
Communications Preferences Preferred information sources	Influencers Who and what influences this person?	What Can We Do (So they take action toward our ICS Goal) How do we help our persona achieve their goals and overcome challenges so they take action toward our ICS goal?

Behavior: Once the target audience is identified, the next step is to determine what they should do as a result of the program or project. This outcome is the "Behavior" part of the A-F planning model. The behavior should be specific, actionable, and measurable and tied to the SMART Goal of the project. Here are a few examples:

- Created a small business.
- Mentored a small group of girls interested in STEM subjects.
- Applied for admission at a U.S. university.
- Expressed support for a U.S. policy in a social media post.

Content: Program content should advance the SMART goal and appeal to the target audience. Programs should offer an overall "message" that is persuasive to the target audience and leads them to the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the program seeks to impart.

Delivery: Delivery in the A-F planning model is how the American Space packages and conveys the content to the intended audience. Considering the following questions helps develop an effective plan for delivering the content.

- How will the content be delivered?
- Where will the content be delivered?
- Who will deliver the content?
- When will the content be delivered?
- Does the delivery plan match the target audience?

Engagement: Engagement in the A-F planning model is essential to delivery. In the current communications landscape, audiences expect – even demand – to be a part of the conversation. American Spaces staff should consider how they will encourage a two-way conversation between the Space and the audience. For example, the Space can start a conversation on social media about the topic before and after the event.

<u>Follow-Up</u>: Although Follow-Up and Evaluation are at the end of the A-F model, American Spaces should be planning for evaluation when developing the SMART goal and determining which behaviors are sought from the audience. Effective SMART goals and follow-up both consider the following:

- How will the American Space continue the conversation and build upon the impact of this engagement through future outreach?
- Are there any follow-on events, activities, or messages?
- How will the American Space report on results and share lessons learned with key stakeholders?
- How will the American Space measure short, medium, and long-term success? Focus on measuring the desired behavior. The M&E Toolkit surveys are tools for follow-up and evaluation.

Examples of follow-up may include:

- Creating a Facebook or WhatsApp group to help participants stay connected.
- Engaging the audience on social media through Instagram stories or Facebook polls after the event to continue the conversation.
- Featuring selected participants as speakers in upcoming events, particularly if they completed a project or participated in an exchange program.

Program Content Categories

The Office of American Spaces has developed Program Content Categories for American Spaces to use in their program design and reporting. The categories encompass a wide variety of American Spaces and Department of State programming themes and priorities. By incorporating the Program Content Categories into all aspects of American Spaces' operations – strategic planning, funding requests, program design, and evaluation – Spaces help demonstrate the impact of their programming in a measurable way.

There are ten content categories (including "Other"). For programs or funding requests that are more specific, four of the categories include sub-categories that may be used. When using the Program Content Categories, you should select either one main category or one sub-category. If your program or funding request fits under more than one category or sub-category, select the one that best represents the primary focus or desired learning outcome. The Program Content Categories definitions are available on the Managing American Spaces website on the Programming page.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are important parts of program success, whether at the level of individual programs, the overall operation of the American Space, or the performance of a network of American Spaces.

Monitoring is a continual process surveying progress in meeting goals and indicators of performance. It tracks progress and implementation, accountability and performance, and the details of what happened in a program. Monitoring encompasses the statistical reporting done by Spaces.

Evaluation is a systematic, objective assessment of an ongoing or completed activity, project, program, or policy. It goes beyond what immediately happened to understand and document larger processes or outcomes. Surveys are an evaluation tool commonly used by Spaces.

Generally, there are three types of evaluations:

1. **Needs assessment** is undertaken prior to the development of a program to identify a gap between what is the desired state and what is the current state and to suggest options for closing that gap.
2. **Formative evaluation** is conducted to assess an existing program to identify needed improvements.
3. **Summative evaluation** is usually conducted after a program is completed and helps determine the success of the program.

Before conducting an evaluation, it is important to understand what the American Space is trying to accomplish. Here are some goals that could be considered when evaluating a program:

- Justify funding and support for the program.
- Determine what went well and what could be improved.
- Determine whether the program met the SMART goals.
- Determine the influence or impact of the program on the target audience.

Reporting

Office of American Spaces Information System (OASIS)

OASIS is the Office of American Space's platform to submit basic metrics and for stakeholders to access data and reports about American Spaces. OASIS also contains extensive identifying information about American Spaces, including name, type of Space, managing post, location, contact information, social media links, and operating status.

Mission employees who work on American Spaces and Washington-based personnel who need access to data about American Spaces can request an OASIS account directly by going to

oasis.state.gov, clicking on New Account Request, and then filling in the requested information. Mission personnel may request accounts for staff at American Spaces hosted by partner institutions and may choose to allow partner staff to input their American Corner or Binational Center data directly. Alternatively, mission staff can collect the information from Spaces in their network and enter data into OASIS themselves. Either way, monthly statistics must be entered be the end of the following month, i.e. June statistics must be entered by the end of July.

OASIS provides stakeholders with access to timely information about American Spaces and standard reports using OASIS data. Standard reports include regional, country, and Space profiles, country statistics reports, and global statistics reports. Users may also create custom reports based on criteria such as location or month. Access to information in OASIS is governed by the user's role, for example Locally Engaged Staff or partner staff.

For assistance with OASIS technical issues such as logging in, entering data, or creating reports, please email ITServiceCenter@state.gov with "OASIS Support" in the subject line. Questions about data reporting policies or procedures should be addressed to the Office of American Spaces at AmericanSpaces@state.gov.

Basic Metrics

Reporting Basic Metrics (numbers of programs, participants, and visits) to the Office of American Spaces helps us secure funding and enhance the operations and influence of American Spaces. Reporting Basic Metrics is **required** to qualify for ASSF support.

All American Spaces programs take place in one of three mediums:

- In-Person Programs.
- Virtual Programs.
- Hybrid Programs.

In-Person Programs:

- Held on-site at an American Space or organized by an American Space at an off-site location.
- Do not have a virtual interactive component (meaning there is not interaction with online participants).
- Program speakers can be virtual, the audience must be in-person.

How to count in-person participants and programs: In-person program participants are the number of people that attend the program at the American Space or at the off-site location by physically entering the program location. For a series that has the same audience across a

number of activities, count each session as a program and the audience as individual in-person program participants.

Examples:

The American Corner screens the documentary Women in Space and holds a discussion group with 58 participants.

Number of In-Person Participants	Number of In-Person Programs
58	1

A Washington-based program, or a program from another American Corner is live-streamed with opportunities for questions from the field. The American Center hosts an in-person viewing party with 50 participants in the Space. For the American Center, this is counted as an in-person program, not a hybrid nor a virtual program, and the Space would report 50 in-person participants and one in-person program. This is because the American Center did not set up or share the livestream.

Number of In-Person Participants	Number of In-Person Programs
50	1

Virtual Programs**:**

- Must be hosted or co-hosted by the American Space via an online platform.
- Do not have an in-person audience.
- Must include engagement online during the live program moderated by the American Space, usually through social media (such as FB Live), web chat platforms such as WhatsApp and WeChat, or video conferencing platforms such as Zoom.
- Videos posted to social media (with no interactive component from the American Space during the live program) do not count as virtual programs, but instead as social media engagement.

How to count virtual participants and programs: As virtual programs are meant to be interactive, a participant must attend a virtual event live. For video conferencing, use the number of participants during the session. For live stream videos, use the number of views at the conclusion of the event. Posts or Spaces using a text-based app for programmatic efforts are requested to reach out to the Office of American Spaces for detailed guidance on measurement. Examples:

The American Center runs a leadership class for 150 virtual students via Google Classroom.

Number of Virtual Participants	Number of Virtual Programs
150	1

The American Corner hosts a Facebook Live session on women's empowerment with 200 online participants. At the end of the month, the Corner rechecks the views and finds that a total of 250 people viewed the program. However, the additional views came after the live, interactive event.

Number of Virtual Participants	Number of Virtual Programs
200	1

Hybrid Programs:

- Must be hosted by the American Space or have a local in-person facilitator.
- Have an in-person audience at the American Space or at an off-site location.
- Must also include a virtual element, meaning that an online audience outside the in-person audience engages with the live program, usually through social media, messaging apps, or video conferencing platforms.

How to count Hybrid participants and programs: Use the same methods described above to count the in-person participants. Separately, use the same methods described above to count the virtual participants, then add these two numbers together, to calculate the total number of participants in the Hybrid program. Examples:

The American Center streams a panel discussion on-site in front of a live audience of 45 participants. The stream receives 350 live views.

Number of Hybrid Participants	Number of Hybrid Programs
45 + 350 = 395	1

The American Corner hosts a speaker event at a nearby auditorium with 100 in-person program participants. It is also broadcast via Facebook Live with 450 views.

Number of Hybrid Participants	Number of Hybrid Programs
100 + 450 = 550	1

Visits:

There are a number of ways to obtain reasonably good data about visits to an American Space. The choice of method should be decided through consultation between posts and Spaces, taking into account local conditions of physical layout, privacy laws, security expectations, and available funding. REPS can provide significant operational expertise to assist with these decisions. Options for counting visits include the following methods, with examples to follow:

- **Foot counters:** Foot counters can be expensive, and some models are more reliable than others. Because foot counters are an imprecise and often unreliable way to count visitors, they are recommended only for spaces with extremely heavy foot traffic.
- **Head counts:** Count the number of people using the Space at set times during the day. The Space may calculate a daily total based on a limited snapshot, as long as the method of calculation has been reviewed by post and the REPS and they consider it reasonable. Best practice shows that if head counts are used to report the Visits metric, then they should be conducted at least once per day.
- **Logbooks or spreadsheets:** As long as the Space has little or no privacy or security concerns, then Spaces staff may ask visitors to sign in as they enter the Space, counting the number of sign-ins at the end of the day.
- **Online check-in system:** As long as the Space has little or no privacy or security concerns, then Spaces staff may ask visitors to check in with a computer- or tablet-based sign-in system as they enter the Space.
- **Paper ticket dispenser:** A paper ticket dispenser can be used to track visits by noting the starting ticket number at the start of the Space's operating hours and the ending ticket number at the closing time.

Examples of Reporting Visits

The American Center's foot counter counted a total of 293 visits last month, including the in-person participants. The American Center knows by some other means that 110 people participated in in-person programs that month.

Number of In-Person Program Participants	Number of Visits COUNTED	Number of Visits REPORTED

110	293	293 − 110 = 183

The American Corner takes daily head counts at 2 PM, their peak visiting hour and a time when the Corner usually does not conduct programs. From experience, the Corner knows that a small number of people usually visit at other times of the day. By agreement with post and the REPS, the Corner adds up the number of daily head counts for the month, then increases that by 5 percent to account for people who visit at some other time of day. Last month, the Corner's head counts totaled 200 visits. The Corner also offers programs, usually at some other time of the day, and does not count these participants when they do their head counts. Last month, the Corner held five (5) in-person programs with a total of 100 in-person participants.

Number of In-Person Program Participants	Number of Visits COUNTED	Number of Visits REPORTED
100	200	200 + 200*0.05 = 210

The American Corner uses a paper ticket dispenser and asks each visitor to take one ticket, only once, on any given day. The Corner notes the ticket number at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day and calculates the difference to know how many visits they had. This Corner asks in-person participants to take a ticket too, because it would be difficult to give different instructions to different people. Last month they conducted 14 in-person programs with a total of 280 in-person participants (counted through some other means, such as a registration check-in form), and three (3) virtual programs with a total of 500 virtual participants. At the end of the month, the Corner adds up all the daily visits numbers based on the ticket dispensers, and found 340 visits, total.

Number of In-Person Program Participants	Number of Visits COUNTED	Number of Visits REPORTED
280	340	340 − 280 = 60

Reporting Guidance Specifically for BNCs

Beginning with October 2023 statistics, Binational Centers should on a monthly basis report the number of programs, program attendees, and visitors, as defined below.

What to Count as American Spaces Programs

- Programs are activities funded by the U.S. government or carried out in support of U.S. government policy objectives that are organized by the Binational Center, open to target audiences at no cost, and are branded as American Spaces programs.
- Programs may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid.
- If the same program is done three times for three different audiences, that counts as three separate programs.
- Activities offered by Binational Centers that do not support the American Spaces Six Pillars or that require tuition or entry fees should not be counted as programs in your reporting. This includes fee-based English language courses taught at Binational Centers.

Program Attendees

- Program attendees are the number of people that attend a program as defined above. Attendance may be in-person or virtual. Audiences attending programs that require tuition or entry fees should not be reported as program attendees.
- Scholarship recipients, including for USG-funded scholarships, do not count as program attendees. This is because the programs they received the scholarship for are tuition-based, and our focus is on programs that are funded by or carried out in support of U.S. government policies free of charge.

Visits

- Visitors are only those people who enter the BNC in order to use resources that are funded by the U.S. government or provided in support of U.S. government policy objectives, including library and resource collections. Therefore, not everyone who walks through the doors of the BNC headquarters or branches should be counted as a visitor for American Spaces purposes. BNCs should use a counting system, or reasonable estimates of visits to areas that are open to the general public at no cost and that have a connection to American Space programs or resources.
- Visitors should not be counted more than once on a given day. If a visitor enters and departs the BNC four times on one day, they should only count as one visitor.
- If students receive a USG-funded scholarship to a tuition-based programs they may be counted as visitors due to the link to U.S. government funding, but as outlined above, they should not be counted as program attendees.

American Spaces Standards

The Office of American Spaces introduced updated [American Spaces Standards](#) in 2024. The Standards differentiate among the three types of American Spaces and established classifications for each type of American Space (Comprehensive and Standard). The classifications describe the levels of programming and service. Classifications are meant to be

descriptive, not evaluative. Spaces classifications should be determined by the Space and post in consultation with the Regional Public Engagement Specialist.

Spaces' Operations

Membership and Access Policies

American Spaces should be accessible for all to the greatest extent possible. An access policy can help visitors to the American Space understand their rights and protect their safety. At the same time, an access policy can also protect the safety of the American Space's staff and volunteers, equipment, materials, and facilities.

Clear access policies are especially important to U.S. government-owned or operated American Centers since they often have very specific access requirements.

For more information, we recommend consulting with local and regional library associations in addition to reviewing guidance from the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The ALA's Library Bill of Rights champions intellectual freedom and affirms that "all libraries are forums for information and ideas." The principles in the Library Bill of Rights can serve as guidance in developing access policies for American Spaces. Similarly, IFLA champions access to information in their Principles on Public Access in Libraries.

Some American Spaces register frequent visitors as members.

- **Audience analysis**: A membership system that invites visitors to register with the American Space can provide important demographic information to aid in planning targeted programs. It can also greatly facilitate administration of all of the surveys included in the M&E Toolkit.
- **Communication**: American Spaces can send newsletters and targeted email campaigns to members to encourage their participation in events, invite them to complete surveys, and continue to engage with the American Space even when they are not physically present.
- **Member Benefits**: Members can borrow materials and equipment and the American Space can have greater accountability over these items. In addition, exclusive events or opportunities open only to members can help to increase loyalty to the American Space.

Safeguarding members' privacy is important. IFLA's statement on Privacy in the Library Environment and the Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers identify respect for personal privacy, protection of personal data, and confidentiality in the relationship between the user and library or information service as core principles.

Guidelines for Circulating Materials

If an American Space has a print collection, it is important that the materials be open-access and that they may be borrowed by registered members. The Outagamie Waupaca Library System provides this sample circulation policy. Spaces should develop circulation policies that cover the following:

Borrowing Privileges: It is recommended that individuals interested in borrowing materials become registered members of the American Space and/or host institution. Individuals can become members by filling out a registration form (either in an online system or on paper). American Spaces should minimize the amount of personal data collected in order to provide a service or meet a specific operational need. American Spaces should also follow local privacy laws on the collection and retention of user data. For more information, please see the ALA's Library Privacy Guidelines for Library Management Systems.

Loan Periods for Materials: Loan periods for circulating materials may vary from a few hours for equipment borrowed in the American Space to several weeks for print materials. American Corners and Binational Centers should defer to existing library loan periods or consult with their REPS on appropriate loan periods.

Overdue Items: No fines should be charged for overdue materials. If an item is overdue, a notice should be sent to the email address on file. Members who have overdue materials will be denied borrowing privileges until the materials are returned or accounted for.

Lost or Damaged Items: Print materials and equipment are subject to normal wear and tear with use. However, if an item is damaged beyond further use when it is returned to the American Space, the staff member should discuss the reasons for such damage, and consequences with the borrower. At this time, borrowing privileges may be suspended for a period of time. The same applies to materials that are lost.

Replacement of Lost or Damaged Items: The replacement of lost items is not the responsibility of the American Space staff. The Space should maintain a list of lost and damaged items and request replacement of the item from the U.S. embassy.

Internet and Technology Policies

American Spaces strive to offer the best available Internet service to visitors to enhance their experience and offer access to state-of-the-art digital and technology resources. However, to make effective use of technology and Wi-Fi, it is best to have clear usage policies in place. This can help protect equipment and ensure equitable access to Spaces' technology resources. The Computer and Internet Usage Policy from the Stowe Free Library in Vermont offers a comprehensive approach, including guidance on the use of personal as well as library equipment, time limits, Internet use, printing, and acceptable use of technology. Some American Spaces share their technology access policies on their websites. The following examples can serve as models for other Spaces to use:

- American Corner Pristina: [Borrowing – Printing and Photocopying – Use of Computers and Technology](#).
- America House Kyiv: [Co-Working Policy](#).
- America House Kyiv: [Makerspace Equipment Use Policy](#).

As makerspace and computer technologies develop and change, they can also offer great potential for economic and social development. They may also allow for the possibility of uses inconsistent with the open, welcoming atmosphere expected in American Spaces. To ensure that the equipment and technology available in American Spaces, including makerspaces, is not misused, it is important that Spaces staff ensure the following:

- That visitors and program participants are informed that using equipment for gambling, illegal or malicious activities, bullying, harassment, threatening, accessing sexually explicit material, violating copyright laws or illegally copying intellectual property, communicating abusive or objectionable language, or even otherwise legal but for-profit or partisan activities such as advertising, lobbying, or commercial purposes, is prohibited.
- That visitors and program participants are further informed that they are prohibited from bringing in any explosive devices, flammable liquids, guns, edged weapons, pepper spray, and other hazardous or dangerous materials, and that they are also not allowed to use equipment available in the Space for the purpose of producing such items, in whole or in part.
- That staff conduct sufficient due diligence of visitors' and program participants' use of the Space's equipment to ensure that visitors and program participants are not violating these rules, and if violations are suspected or detected, then procedures outlined in the security section of this document are followed.

Intellectual Property Rights

As a general rule, the U.S. government must adhere to all applicable federal laws governing intellectual property ("IP") and can be held liable for violating those laws. Additionally, as a matter of policy, the State Department strives in its operations to model respect for IP rights (IPR) and other proprietary rights, even when such rights do not arise under federal law. As such, post and Spaces' staff should always strive to model respect for and the protection of IPR. The following guidelines can help posts and Spaces adhere to this standard.

- Placing a copyrighted text or image on a Space's Website without permission violates U.S. copyright law.
- In contrast, links to a copyrighted text or images on another website does not violate U.S. copyright law.

- With very few exceptions, works of the U.S. government are not copyrightable under U.S. law. This means, for example, that photographs taken by U.S. government staff at an American Spaces program are not subject to copyright.
- Statements by USG officials who are writing or speaking in their capacity as government officials are considered to be material in the public domain and may be freely reproduced.

The U.S. Government engages in a wide array of activities that are designed to encourage protection of IPR, an issue strongly emphasized in U.S. foreign policy. Respecting third-party IPR in Spaces operations is critical to the Department's advocacy for protection of IPR around the world and is a matter of both law and policy. Post and Spaces staff may find it helpful to become familiar with the following terms, to better understand IPR protection.

IPR Definitions and Resources

What is the "right of publicity"? The right of publicity is the right—recognized in certain jurisdictions around the world—of a person to control the commercial use of her identity or persona (as manifested in her personal attributes/identifiers, e.g., her name, likeness, voice, etc.). In the United States, no federal right of publicity presently exists; rights of publicity arise only under state law and can vary widely among states. Licensing rights of publicity is one way in which individuals—oftentimes public figures with commercially 'valuable' identities—can seek to prevent unauthorized use of their identity by others.

What is a copyright? According to the U.S. Copyright Office, "[c]opyright is a form of protection grounded in the U.S. Constitution and granted by law for original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium of expression. Copyright covers both published and unpublished works. Copyright… protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, such as poetry, novels, movies, songs, computer software, and architecture. Copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems, or methods of operation, although it may protect the way these things are expressed." Generally, a copyright covers tangible things and exists for a fixed period of time, though it can be renewed by the rights holder. Artwork depicting a person's name and/or likeness, for example, can be copyrighted.

What is a trademark? According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), "[a] trademark is a word, phrase, symbol, and/or design that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods of one party from those of others…. Unlike patents and copyrights, trademarks do not expire after a set term of years. Trademark rights come from actual 'use'…. Therefore, a trademark can last forever - so long as you continue to use the mark in commerce to indicate the source of goods and services. A trademark registration can also last forever – so long as you file specific documents and pay fees at regular intervals." Generally, a trademark transcends physical things. A person's name, for example, may carry the trademark of that individual's reputation.

What is a registered trademark? A registered trademark is one that has been formally registered with the USPTO. In the United States, registered trademarks enjoy considerably stronger legal protections than unregistered trademarks, but unregistered trademarks still hold limited legal protections.

What is "public domain"? According to the U.S. Copyright Office, "[a] work of authorship is in the 'public domain' if it is no longer under copyright protection or if it failed to meet the requirements for copyright protection. Works in the public domain may be used freely without the permission of the former copyright owner." The duration of copyright protection in a work can last for a long time and is based on a number of factors, though works by Americans who have long been deceased – generally for more than 100 years – are likely in the public domain. Derivative works (e.g., translations) of such works, and depictions of the likenesses such persons may, however, still be subject to intellectual property protections today, particularly if they were created more recently.

What is "fair use"? According to the U.S. Copyright Office's Fair Use Index, "[f]air use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of uses – such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research – as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use." **Please note**: Fair use is a highly complex doctrine and does **not** generally permit the unauthorized use of third-party IP in American Space operations.

What is a "derivative work"? According to the U.S. Copyright Office's Circular #14, "Copyright Registration for Derivative Works", "[a] derivative work is a work based on or derived from one or more already existing works. Common derivative works include translations, musical arrangements, motion picture versions of literary material or plays, art reproductions, abridgments, and condensations of preexisting works. Another common type of derivative work is a 'new edition' of a preexisting work in which the editorial revisions, annotations, elaborations, or other modifications represent, as a whole, an original work."

Various offices of the State Department commonly work with rights holders to produce derivative works, such as translations of books or subtitling/dubbing of videos, and sometimes those rights holders are the same rights holders as entities holding the rights to the copyright or trademark of a distinguished American's name or likeness. Because multiple offices of the Department may approach the same rights holder on behalf of several posts and projects, it is imperative that proposals for American Spaces to use copyrighted material, including to give an American Space a non-standard name involving IP be communicated to the Office of American Spaces at least 30 calendar days in advance of post's communications with any rights holder(s).

Photo Permissions

Obtaining permission from program participants for use of photos or videos taken of them is an important part of American Spaces program planning, and necessary to effective visual diplomacy. There may also be specific legal requirements in each country.

The Managing American Spaces website includes standard Video/Photo Release forms, one for adults and one to be signed by legal guardians on behalf of minors. Beyond the release forms, however, American Corners and Bi-national Centers should consult with the embassy or consulate Public Diplomacy Section on their photo/video consent policies. This is especially important with respect to depictions of persons under age 18, and to a situation where there is an expectation of privacy. American Spaces should post their photo release policies in a visible location and make announcements about photography/videography before any American Spaces program is held.

Working with Volunteers

As discussed above, working with volunteers to help with the operation of American Spaces can bring various benefits to both the volunteers and the Space. Please keep in mind that each country's context is unique – local labor laws may make it more challenging to work with volunteers in certain countries.

In working with volunteers, Spaces should consider the following issues.

Recruitment and Retention: To recruit and retain volunteers, Spaces should consider the following:
- Create meaningful written position descriptions that set clear expectations for volunteers and elevate their professional experience.
- Create a recruitment video that illustrates why volunteering would be of interest to potential volunteers.
- Conduct targeted recruitment, based on a defined set of necessary skills required for the position, by advertising volunteer positions among the Space's community.
- Establish clear expectations in screening. Approach recruiting volunteers as the Space would approach hiring a new staff person. Develop standard questions to guide the interview process.
- Provide orientation and training to familiarize new volunteers with the American Space. Prepare orientation materials to share with volunteers. Have seasoned volunteers mentor newcomers and consider offering a monthly professional development or training program for volunteers to enhance their experience.
- Provide collaboration and support. Treat volunteers like members of the team, encouraging them to participate in meetings, and inviting them to contribute their creative ideas to program planning.
- Provide recognition and acknowledgement. Recognize volunteers' contributions through certificates, award ceremonies, invitations to the embassy's 4th of July events, and letters of recommendation. Please see additional ideas below.

- Ensure sustainability. Since volunteers are often busy with other projects or available only on a seasonal or temporary basis, consider offering volunteer opportunities within a set timeframe.

Potential Sources of Volunteers: Volunteers can be found through many channels. Posts and Spaces are encouraged to tap into potential resources through any of the following:

- U.S. embassy (interns, seasonal hires, Eligible Family Members, Foreign Service Officers)
- USG exchange program participants and alumni
- Local Institutions – NGOs, universities, schools, etc.
- Established internship programs at universities.
- American Studies, Foreign Affairs, International Relations, and Diplomacy degree programs.
- MIT-initiated [Fab(rication) Labs](#) for makerspace and STEAM programs.
- U.S. exchange students.
- U.S. ex-pats living in the host nation.
- Local community leaders and members.

Motivating and Thanking Volunteers: This is one of the most important actions a Space can take to retain volunteers and build a solid reputation among potential future volunteers. Posts and Spaces should consider doing the following:

- Empower volunteers by delegating responsibility.
- Make them accountable for their hours with sign-up sheets, etc.
- View them and treat them as equal stakeholders. Allow them to create or lead programs.
- Provide T-shirts to help to build cohesion, unity and market the Space.
- Give birthday shout-outs to volunteers on social media accounts.
- Consider having three levels of volunteers, so they feel they are moving up. The sense of progress can be key for motivating people in some cultures. This may work in some American Spaces, but others may want to pursue a less hierarchical structure.
- Offer skills-based training exclusively for volunteers (i.e., digital photography, video).
- Develop a handbook for volunteers.
- Create a video to highlight the work of superstar volunteers.
- Provide certificates and letters of recommendation.
- Host volunteer appreciation events with food, remarks by VIPs, and prizes. Make it fun!
- Invite highly committed volunteers to official embassy events, including those at the Ambassador's residence.
- Seek positive press coverage of volunteers' work.

- Connect volunteers to potential opportunities to apply to become interns, grantees, or nominees for U.S. government-sponsored exchange program participation.

Hosting VIPs and High-Level Events

As important elements of a U.S. embassy's public diplomacy efforts, American Spaces sometimes host high-level visitors from the United States, e.g., U.S. officials from the Department of State and other government offices and agencies, or high-profile cultural celebrities. These visitors often like to see – and be seen – at American Spaces. Often, they enjoy taking part in an activity. Here are some tips for hosting important visitors at a Space:

- Communicate with the PAO and other PDS staff. They will help plan the visit and assist with any special requirements to make the visitors comfortable and to facilitate a positive experience at the Space.
- Plan to have the Space and other places the visitors will visit (e.g., exhibit space, lecture hall, bathrooms) cleaned just before the visit.
- Display examples of artwork, essays, photography, poetry, or other items created by Space contacts to demonstrate the type of activities that take place in the Space.
- Prepare a short list of things to share about the Space and community, focusing on the positive impacts the Space has brought to the partnership and in the community. Consider:
  - Who uses the Space and why?
  - How does the Space promote mutual understanding between the U.S. and its community?
  - What are some of the most popular programs that are held at the Space?
  - What are the professional and personal benefits to working in the Space?

On the day of the visit:

- The Space should be neat and tidy, easy to navigate, and showcase books, magazines, posters, or information technology equipment, products from Space activities. Items not in use should be put away.
- Display flags (U.S. and host country) and American Space banners or signage.
- Expect media coverage and dress appropriately – lots of photos or video may be taken.
- If the visitor will attend a program or otherwise interact with the public, inform those in attendance about what to expect, for example questions about their use of the Space or American customs.
- Be honest about challenges the Space faces; focus on the big picture but don't complain. Routine or operational problems are best resolved with the PAO.

Fundraising

Fundraising offers many benefits, including increasing the resources available to run an American Space and broadening a sense of community investment in the Space's success. Many programs and services offered in American Spaces – such as English language learning, STEAM skills-building, and entrepreneurship training – are high priorities for countries around the world, and conversations about shared support for American Spaces provide opportunities to strengthen partnerships. Fundraising provides opportunities to raise the visibility of American Spaces' efforts to foster dialogue and open exchange of ideas, support international education, establish or strengthen sector-driven skill sets among host-nation publics, and develop the next generation of leaders. Spaces should consult with PDS staff before undertaking a fundraising effort to ensure compliance with applicable U.S. and host nation requirements.

Contests

Contests can be an attractive way to promote interest in an American Space and can draw positive attention. Because contests typically also identify winners and may allow people who do not win to feel left out, they should be planned and managed carefully. They can also be labor intensive to administer. Before undertaking a contest, posts and Spaces should consider the potential impact on views of the American Space among contest winners and among those who participate but do not win. Posts may request a limited amount of American Spaces Support Funds (ASSF) for prizes and awards when they are integral to an ASSF-funded program. Spaces should consult with their embassy or consulate Public Diplomacy Section about State Department regulations for holding contests before announcing a contest.

Donation Drives

Especially during holiday seasons, but also in response to natural disasters and other emerging needs, American Spaces are sometimes interested in coordinating donation drives, such as collection bins for donations of items like clothing, toys, or food items for local charities. Post should be consulted on whether to host or support a donation drive, and on ties or cooperation with any outside organization. There are also certain rules that apply to U.S. government organizations and representatives receiving donations. Posts can provide guidance for partners.

If a host country partner hosting or operating an American Corner or the entity operating a Binational Center wishes to organize or run a collection or donation drive on the premises of the American Corner or Binational Center without involvement from, solicitation of, or use of U.S. government funds, equipment, branding, or personnel, then the decision to do so rests with the host country partner or entity and does not require guidance from posts.

Visitor Challenges

Dealing with difficult visitors is sometimes a reality of working in an American Space. A clearly written policy posted on the Space's website, social media channels, and/or at the entrance can

help protect the staff from unwelcome behavior that disturbs other visitors, staff, or puts people's safety at risk. When dealing with difficult visitors, a written policy can help a Space address the behavior in a professional manner and support decision-making. If a visitor seriously or repeatedly violates the Space's access policy, the Space has the right to deny entry or remove borrowing privileges temporarily or permanently, depending on the terms of the policy.

The Warren Public Library in Pennsylvania recommends the following approaches:

1. Create and update policies that reduce problems and protect staff and patrons.
2. Develop communications skills to handle variety of situations.
3. Train all staff in dealing with difficult patrons.

Sometimes participants in virtual and in-person events can become disruptive. Having strategies for dealing with a range of disruptive behaviors can be very useful. This article from *Programming Librarian* outlines strategies for addressing five common behaviors that may come up during an event.

Meeting Room Usage

If the American Space has a meeting room, the Space should have a policy a policy governing its use. A meeting room usage policy helps establish expectations for both users and staff and helps prevent misunderstandings. It should address issues such as the reservation process, acceptable uses of the room, and equitable access. A reservation form should ask users to specify the meeting time, the specific room, the purpose of the meeting, and the group requesting the room. It should also identify who is responsible for the room's reservation, preparation, maintenance, and cleanup. The Massachusetts Library System has links to several sample library meeting room usage policies.

Equipment Usage

If the American Space has equipment available for loan, the Space should have a policy governing the loan process in order to preserve and maintain the equipment and make it available to everyone. An equipment usage policy provides guidelines regarding use of an American Space's equipment: what, by whom, for what purposes, for how long, under what circumstances, and identifies who is responsible for the equipment's care, maintenance, safe return, and cleanup. You can see a sample equipment usage policy here.

Branding, Marketing, American Look and Feel

Though American Spaces may incorporate visual and design elements that honor host nation culture as a sign of the partnership between the United States and the host country, the design, marketing, branding, and look and feel of American Spaces should be visibly American. To support this goal, this section presents several helpful resources.

Branding Resources

Understanding the American Spaces brand helps establish a clear and consistent voice and assists us in creating effective content and materials. The American Spaces Branding Resources can be found on the Managing American Spaces website. These resources include the official American Spaces Program logo, a Branding Guide, a color palette, placement guidelines, and slide deck templates.

Use of American Spaces Logo

The American Spaces logo should be given a prominent position within the Space and also displayed on materials in the multimedia collection. By reinforcing the American Spaces logo, the public will come to know and relate American Spaces with what they represent — creating a successful brand. As the American Spaces Program expands its global reach, it is important that the brand evolve to support its growth. The American Spaces logo and brand are at the heart of everything the American Spaces Program and its partners represent.

The Department has a moratorium on the development of new logos, seals, and markings designed for use with foreign audiences. Spaces networks should not develop their own logos but incorporate the American Spaces logos into their network branding.

American Look and Feel

An important part of the vision of American Spaces is a welcoming and inspiring environment that showcases American culture and society and enables dynamic and meaningful programs. The Office of American Spaces partnered with the Smithsonian Institution to develop design recommendations for small, medium, and large American Spaces. These recommendations are captured in the Idea Book 2.0, which is available on the Office of American Spaces website.

This full-color guide is a branding and design resource for all American Spaces. This digital book provides recommendations for space design, furniture and finish selections, graphics and more to support program goals and engage visitors. American Spaces staff should use these design ideas and concepts to stimulate creativity and help enhance Space design.

The Idea Book 2.0 should be used in conjunction with the Envisioning an American Space book, also designed by the Smithsonian Institution. It explores options for spaces of different sizes and identifies important facility, design, and program capability considerations. Links to the Idea Book 2.0, Envisioning an American Space, and other resources are available on the Managing American Spaces Design Your Space page.

Communication

Social Media Engagement

Social media is the digital place where Spaces interact with their communities. Though social media engagement alone does not constitute an American Spaces program, many American Spaces use social media to engage effectively with their audiences by promoting their programs and resources and by sharing content related to U.S. culture and society.

According to social marketing company [We Are Social](#), the top five most used American-owned social media services are:

- Facebook (3.065 billion monthly active users).
- YouTube (2.504 billion monthly active users).
- WhatsApp (2.0 billion monthly active users).
- Instagram (2.0 billion monthly active users).
- FB Messenger (1.01 billion monthly active users).

The Office of American Spaces recommends focusing on these services both because of the size of the user base and for ease in managing your social media strategy. While services such as WeChat and TikTok have more users than FB Messenger, they are also owned by People's Republic of China-based companies that open Spaces up to security risks.

The EducationUSA team has developed [comprehensive guidance](#) on social media management for the global team of EducationUSA advisers. Though some of this guidance would only apply to EducationUSA and not to American Spaces, it is an excellent model with many good ideas that can easily transfer to American Spaces.

American Spaces are not required to report engagement statistics for social media posts to the Office of American Spaces. Social media posts may involve interaction with social media audiences (followers, reactions, etc.), but they are different from virtual programs in that there is no initial live event featuring Space-moderated interaction with a virtual audience. For this reason, social media statistics should not be added to Basic Metrics reporting. However, posts may ask partner Spaces to report on their social media engagement.

Media Plans and Press Outreach

Developing a relationship with local traditional media outlets can be as important as having a good social media engagement strategy to promote the programs and services offered by American Spaces. Spaces should work in coordination with their host institutions as well as the U.S. mission to develop a media plan for press outreach. Such plans should also align with the Space's social media plan.

In addition to coordinating with the U.S. embassy or consulate, American Corners and Binational Centers should follow their host institution's press/media policy, including whether Space staff are allowed to work directly with the media or need to go through a press office.

American Centers should coordinate any contact with the press through their Public Diplomacy Section. Spaces should not speak on behalf of the U.S. embassy or consulate.