



## **Call for Applications: FY2021 TechGirls Program**

### **Application Deadline: January 15, 2021**

The Palestinian Affairs Unit in Jerusalem and The Youth Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) are pleased to announce the 2021 TechGirls program. TechGirls is an intensive, four-week exchange program designed to empower young women (ages 15-17) from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the United States to pursue higher education and careers in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields through hands-on skills development training with American technology experts. The program directly supports the U.S. foreign policy goal of advancing the status of women and girls around the world; promotes STEM education; and fosters connections and deepens understanding among the youth of the United States and the countries and territories of the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. Due to the global pandemic-related postponement of the summer 2020 in-person exchange, the selected 2020 TechGirls finalists who successfully completed the three-week virtual camp in July 2020 will be provided the opportunity to travel to the United States in July 2021, joining a smaller cohort of 2021 participants.

The 2021 TechGirls exchange will occur concurrently from July 3–30, 2021. The TechGirls exchange's centerpiece will be a two-week program at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, VA that will include coding instruction in Java, cyber security classes, and interactive labs. Additional activities will include site visits to Washington D.C.-based technology companies, leadership clinics, action planning workshops, community service opportunities, job shadowing, intercultural collaboration, and weekend homestays with American families in Southwest Virginia. Twenty competitively selected American students (ten per exchange) will join the TechGirls participants in the Virginia Tech programming.

During the U.S.-based exchange, participants will create action plans for community-based projects that they will be required to implement upon their return to their home communities. Projects will be designed to reinforce and support the skills and linkages acquired during the U.S. program.

**Note:** Should the pandemic continue into 2021 and logistical or health conditions make the exchange unfeasible, we would plan for virtual programming for the summer 2021 program.

## Participant Qualifications:

Candidates should:

- Be between the ages (15-17);
- Be Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, the West Bank, or Gaza Strip;
- Be Fluent in English;
- Demonstrate advanced skills and a serious interest in technology, engineering, and/or math in their academic studies and through her current course work and extra-curricular activities.
- Exhibit enthusiasm and intent to pursue continued studies and possibly a future career in applied technology.
- Be adaptable, attentive, mature, thoughtful, curious, good-natured, articulate, respectful of peers. The program prizes applicants who have good social skills and an ability to get along with her peers.
- Be committed to completing a follow-on project upon their return home.

A candidate's skill and interest in technology may be assessed through her previous work on technology-focused projects, involvement in technology clubs at school or other technology camps, and/or active participation in relevant class work.

Candidates also must demonstrate a general knowledge/understanding of key technology-focused topics such as coding, web design and development, and/or mobile communications technology and applications.

## Important Notes:

- Participation in the program is contingent upon the applicant qualifying for a J-1 visa to travel to the United States.
- Holders of U.S. passports or green cards are **not eligible to participate** in this program.

**Application deadline and inquiries:** The online application will be available through the following link from November 18, 2020: <https://www.legacyintl.org/techgirls/online-application/>

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## Inquires:

**Jerusalem and West Bank Applicants:** Please send an email to [Jerusalemexchanges@state.gov](mailto:Jerusalemexchanges@state.gov) or call 02-622-7107 for more information.

**Gaza Applicants:** Please send an email [JRSgazaexchanges@state.gov](mailto:JRSgazaexchanges@state.gov)