
Department of State

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request
for Grant Proposals:** FY 2014 Professional Fellows Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-039

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: April 8, 2014

Executive Summary: The Professional Fellows Division in the Office of Citizen Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational Affairs (ECA) invites proposal submissions for the Professional Fellows Program (PFP) in the regions of Africa (AF), East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), the Middle East and North Africa (NEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and the Western Hemisphere (WHA). The Professional Fellows Program is a two-way, global exchange program designed to promote mutual understanding, enhance leadership and professional skills, and build lasting and sustainable partnerships between mid-level emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States. The defining element of the program for foreign participants is a substantive five- to six-week fellowship placement in a U.S.

workplace complemented by a collaborative project in their home country.

It is the Bureau's intent to award multiple cooperative agreements for an estimated total amount of \$5,000,000. For additional details on awards, please see "Section II. Award Information" below. It is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

I.1. Authority

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and

achievements of the people of the United States and other nations... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

I.2. Purpose and Program Description

The Professional Fellows Program supports the following broad goals:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between mid-level emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States;
2. Provide opportunities for foreign and American emerging leaders to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies regarding pressing challenges;
3. Promote enhanced leadership and professional skills for both foreign and American fellows so that they will be more able to effect positive change in their workplaces and communities; and
4. Build a global network of like-minded professionals.

All proposals must be two-way exchange programs that comply with the country and theme requirements referenced at Section I.6. "Themes and Eligible Countries." Important: Proposals that target themes and/or countries not specifically mentioned in this Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) or are not two-way in program design will be considered technically ineligible and receive no further consideration under this competition.

The foreign fellows will travel to the United States for a professional fellowship, which will be five- to six-weeks in length. The fellowship will include an individually tailored working placement, "the fellowship placement," that is a minimum of four weeks in length. The U.S.-based exchange component will then end with a capstone three-day Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., attended by other Professional Fellows from all over the world. After the foreign fellows complete the U.S.-based fellowship component, the American fellows will later travel overseas on an outbound program that is approximately two weeks in length and directly supports follow-on projects and long-term collaboration.

Program Participants (Professional Fellows)

“Program participants” are defined as those individuals who travel under award funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country. For this RFGP, program participants are also referred to as “Professional Fellows” (Fellows). Proposals must include approximately three foreign participants for every one American participant. Employees of the award recipient and any sub-grantees are not eligible to participate in the Professional Fellows Program and should not be included as program participants.

Partner Organizations

Applicant organizations without an existing organizational presence in the target country must identify a foreign-based partner (“in-country partner”) with whom they propose to collaborate. In addition, proposals must demonstrate capacity in the United States to secure effective and appropriate host placements for the participants.

I.3. Project Outputs

Proposals should fully demonstrate capacity to provide the following project outputs:

Recruit and Select Fellows

In collaboration with ECA, the award recipient will recruit and select two cohorts of foreign fellows and two cohorts of American fellows. The award recipient must develop an online Program Announcement and Program Application in order that all eligible foreign professionals are able to submit an application.

Foreign Fellows

Foreign fellows must be selected through an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA and the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the respective U.S. Embassy. While PAS should be involved in participant selection, full responsibility for project coordination and implementation lies with the award recipient.

Foreign fellows should be recruited in accordance with the specific guidance included at Section I.6, "Themes and Eligible Countries." Award recipients must demonstrate how diversity (in the broadest sense) will be integrated into all aspects of the program, and include an appropriate balance of women, minorities, and marginalized populations, including individuals with disabilities, etc.

At a minimum, the participant selection criteria for foreign fellows for the Professional Fellows Program must include the below:

- emerging leaders in either government, civil society, or the private sector who have demonstrated expertise pertaining to the respective theme of each proposal;
- mid-level professionals in the approximate age range of 25 to 40 years old who, at a minimum, have two or more years of professional work experience;
- demonstrated proficiency in both written and oral English that qualifies him or her to have "working-level knowledge of English" that has been verified by each award recipient;
- self-directed and able to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting; and
- genuinely interested in developing an individual project of their own selection in their home workplace or community.

American Fellows

American fellows will be selected in an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA, and will be primarily selected from those individuals who serve as

hosts/supervisors/mentors to the foreign fellows at the U.S. fellowship placement organizations. Additionally, American fellows should have demonstrated expertise pertaining to the theme of the program and should have had significant engagement with the foreign fellows during the U.S. fellowship component.

U.S.-Based Fellowship Components for Foreign Fellows

The award recipient will design and implement two U.S.-based fellowship components for foreign fellows that are each five- to six-weeks in length. Key program elements of the U.S.-based fellowship component must include:

1. A "pre-departure orientation" (PDO) in the home country before departure for the United States;
2. A "program orientation" upon arrival in the United States;
3. A substantive fellowship placement that is tailored to each foreign fellow's work/interests;
4. An individual project for each foreign fellow;
5. Upon conclusion of the fellowship placement, participation at the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C.;

6. A debrief with U.S. Embassy representatives upon return to home country;
7. A plan for post-fellowship engagement with the foreign fellows; and
8. A program evaluation.

Program activities in the United States for foreign fellows should also, if possible, include a volunteer/community service element. Also, every effort should be made for the foreign fellows to engage with a range of American citizens regarding their work and their home country, such as through community/school presentations, media interviews, etc.

Fellowship Placements

The award recipient must secure, preferably, at least three weeks in advance of the foreign fellows arriving in the United States, a substantive and appropriately-tailored fellowship placement that is a minimum of four weeks in length. The purpose of the fellowship placement is to provide foreign fellows with a professional development program that includes direct experience with the day-to-day workings of a U.S. workplace and the opportunity to form

professional relationships with American colleagues. Some previous examples of fellowship placements for foreign fellows include various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), legislative/government offices at the national, state, and local levels, and private businesses.

Proposals should discuss how the award recipient will recruit and select U.S. fellowship placement organizations. To ensure that each foreign fellow has a substantive professional experience, each fellowship placement should involve the commitment of a designated host/supervisor/mentor who understands the goals and objectives of the Professional Fellows Program. Proposals that secure one fellowship placement during the exchange rather than multiple, short-term placements with different U.S. organizations will be deemed more competitive under the Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives criterion. While some group activities may be appropriate, site visits where the foreign fellows have only a brief glimpse of a variety of organizations should be kept to a minimum.

Proposals should describe how the award recipient will work, throughout the life of the award, with each foreign fellow on the development and implementation of the foreign fellows' individual projects upon return to his/her home country. Proposals should include a timeline for the foreign fellows to create drafts and final versions of the "Action Plan" for their "Individual Project", as well as a process and deadlines for the fellows to update the award recipient on his/her progress implementing the individual project.

Professional Fellows Congress

At the conclusion of the U.S. fellowship placement, the foreign fellows will participate in the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. There will be a Professional Fellows Congress in spring 2015 (tentatively scheduled for June 2-4, 2015) and a Professional Fellows Congress in fall 2015 (tentatively scheduled for November 3-5, 2015).

The Congress will provide the fellows:

- the opportunity to network with colleagues from around the world, share their U.S. experiences, and learn from the experiences of other Professional Fellows;

- a contextual framework for the broader fellowship experience and exchange program;
- an opportunity to examine ways an individual, organization, or interest group can generate change for the common good; and
- a greater understanding of public diplomacy in the global community.

The Congress will be implemented by a designated Congress planning organization (selected through a separate award competition), with the assistance of ECA's Professional Fellows Division and the collaboration of all Professional Fellows Program award recipients. Proposals must demonstrate a willingness and ability to proactively participate in regularly scheduled planning meetings for the Congresses via teleconference and/or on-line forum. In addition, all PFP award recipients will be expected to assist with identifying possible speakers and facilitating break-out sessions at the Congress, etc. This collaboration is critical to making each Congress a success. Please see Section IV.3e.2p for allowable costs associated with the Professional Fellows Congress.

Outbound Programs for American Fellows ("American Outbound Programs")

The award recipient will design and implement outbound programs, that are approximately two weeks in length, for American Fellows to travel to the target foreign countries.

American outbound programs should be substantive, build on the U.S. fellowship component, allow the American fellows to conduct joint programming with the foreign fellows and their colleagues, and directly support U.S. public diplomacy objectives and the Professional Fellows Program goals of building sustainable and lasting professional partnerships. Proposals should describe how the American outbound components, to the degree possible, will support the foreign fellows' individual projects.

Proposals should clearly describe the type of American outbound programs that will be implemented by the award recipient.

Collaboration with the Public Affairs Section of the Respective Embassy(ies)

Award recipients will need to work closely with the Public Affairs Section of the respective Embassy(ies) to develop

plans for project implementation, including for the selection of foreign fellows and for inviting PAS staff to participate in various in-country program activities. It is important that all American outbound program schedules are shared in a timely manner with PAS. Many American fellows will be subject matter experts on issues pertinent to various U.S. foreign policy objectives in the respective country. The expertise and willingness of the American fellows to take part in public diplomacy outreach can greatly complement in-country PAS programs, thereby enhancing the impact of the exchange and its value to our PAS colleagues. The proposal should address plans for maintaining a close working relationship with the Public Affairs Section throughout the life of the award.

Pre-Departure Orientation and Arrival Orientation

For both foreign and American fellows, the award recipient will be responsible for conducting a pre-departure orientation (prior to departing their home country) and an arrival orientation (upon arriving in the destination country). For foreign fellows, the PDO and arrival orientation should cover, at a minimum:

- travel logistics, including arrival information and J-1 visa regulations;
- project goals, programmatic expectations, performance measurement;
- a detailed Program Schedule, including specific information about the community where each fellow will be located; and
- cross-cultural issues and day-to-day considerations of living and working in the United States, including standards of conduct.

Debrief with Embassy Representatives upon Return to Home Country

Proposals should include a plan for a scheduled debrief with Embassy representatives after the foreign fellows return to their home country.

Post-Fellowship Engagement

Proposals should include concrete plans for developing innovative and sustainable enhancement activities that reinforce project goals after the foreign fellows return to their home country. Proposals should clearly articulate how the award recipient will provide ECA with regular

updates on the foreign fellows' individual projects as well as professional successes resulting from their participation in the Professional Fellows Program.

Alumni Programming

The proposal should include a defined strategy for alumni engagement that supports the goals of the Professional Fellows Program and ECA. The proposal must include:

- an outline of proposed activities for alumni engagement;
- strategies to connect newly minted alumni with past program participants, if applicable; and
- how long-term linkages within the alumni community will be encouraged, coordinated, and integrated into existing Bureau initiatives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

For detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation, please refer to: 1) Section IV.3d.3. "Program Monitoring and Evaluation"; and 2) Section V.2. "Review Criteria", specifically for the criterion entitled "Program Monitoring and Evaluation."

Award recipients may employ a professional evaluator not associated with the award recipient to collect and analyze data, draw conclusions, and make recommendations when warranted. Award recipients will also be expected to assist with administering ECA-generated pre- and post-surveys to all fellows.

Web-Based Technology

Proposals should explain how the program model will use the internet and other web-based tools to enhance and support key goals and objectives. These include but are not limited to networking among program participants, encouraging professional resource sharing, and supporting continued professional development. Special emphasis should be placed on the ways in which technology will facilitate communication among selected foreign fellows and their fellowship placement organizations before departing for the United States, strengthen group identity, and streamline key administrative and programmatic processes such as recruitment and follow-on/alumni activities.

Public Outreach Efforts and Social Media

"Telling the story" is a vital element of successful public diplomacy programs. Proposals should provide a clearly articulated public outreach and social media strategy in order to strengthen the identity of the Professional Fellows Program, increase the program's visibility within local communities in the United States and abroad, and raise awareness of the importance and impact of educational exchanges.

Proposals should identify ways to engage with foreign and American fellows, relevant U.S. Embassies, ECA, and other key stakeholders through social media. Plans may include, but are not limited to, using social media for recruitment and outreach efforts, engaging with ECA or U.S. Department of State social media sites, tweeting program updates, and using blogs or other platforms to document and share participant experiences and success stories, etc.

Proposals should also explain how social media will be used to engage program alumni.

Proposals should also indicate agreement to follow guidance in the PSI entitled "Acknowledgment of ECA's Financial Support and Use of the Department Seal."

I.4. Key Administrative Elements

Visas for Entry into the United States and Foreign Countries

To procure U.S. visas for the foreign fellows, the award recipients will work with ECA and PAS at the respective U.S. Embassy. Award recipients will need to collect and submit to ECA all required biographical information on the foreign fellows that is necessary to complete the DS-2019 form required for their J-1 visas. To procure foreign visas for the American fellows, if necessary, the award recipients will work directly with the respective foreign embassy in the United States.

International Air Travel

Award recipients must comply with all federal regulations regarding the use of U.S. government funds including the Fly America Act. These regulations apply to both U.S. and foreign travelers.

I.5. Projected Program Timeline

ECA envisions the Professional Fellows Program calendar as follows:

- October 1, 2014 - November 30, 2014: Recruitment of foreign fellows for the spring 2015 Professional Fellows Program in the United States;
- December 2014 - April 2015: Selection and securing fellowship placements for foreign fellows for the spring program;
- February 1 - March 30, 2015: Recruitment of the foreign fellows for the fall 2015 Professional Fellows Program in the United States;
- April - July 2015: Selection and securing placements for foreign fellows for the fall program;
- April 2015 - June 2015: Travel by the first cohort of foreign fellows for the spring 2015 Professional Fellows Program in the United States. Travel should be carefully planned around the spring 2015 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., tentatively scheduled for June 2-4, 2015;
- Spring 2015: Begin planning for the first cohort of American fellows to travel abroad as a continuation of the spring 2015 Professional Fellows Program;
- Summer 2015: Travel by the first cohort of American fellows as continuation of the spring Professional

Fellows Program. Continue planning for the foreign fellows to travel to the United States for the fall 2015 Professional Fellows Program;

- Sept. 2015 - Nov. 2015: Travel by the second cohort of foreign fellows for the fall 2015 Professional Fellows Program in the United States. Travel should be carefully planned around the fall 2015 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., tentatively scheduled for November 3-5, 2015;
- Late Fall / Winter 2015: Begin planning for the second cohort of American fellows to travel abroad as a continuation of the fall 2015 Professional Fellows Program; and
- Winter 2015 / Spring 2016: Travel by the second cohort of American fellows abroad as a continuation of the fall 2015 Professional Fellows Program.

I.6. Themes and Eligible Countries

All proposals must carefully incorporate the specific requirements noted below, especially those that are unique to a particular region. ECA reserves the right to modify the final list of participating countries and the scope of any resulting cooperative agreement.

The below information pertains to all of the themes listed below:

Approximate Award Amount: \$300,000 to \$500,000

Approximate Number of Participants: 30 to 50 total, including both foreign and U.S. participants

Note: Proposals for all geographic regions except SCA that include a minimum of five countries will be considered at a funding level up to, but not exceeding, \$750,000. SCA proposals that include Pakistan will also be considered at a funding level up to, but not exceeding, \$750,000.

1. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND GOVERNANCE

Proposals submitted under the Legislative Process and Governance theme should engage a combination of professionals actively involved in the legislative process, governance, the legal field, policy making, journalism, and/or social innovation through their work in government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as civic education organizations, citizen advocacy groups, watchdog organizations; or political campaigns/political parties.

Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on legislative/governance processes; rule of law; elements of good governance; open government, transparency/accountability, and anti-corruption; participatory democracy; social innovation; and citizen engagement and advocacy.

Fellowship placements may be in legislative/government offices at the national, state, or local level, or in advocacy-related organizations or other organizations that seek to influence the legislative/governance process.

AF Eligible Countries:

Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda,
(countries of the Great Lakes region)

- AF proposals must include at least two of the above countries. Proposals that include three countries will be deemed more competitive under the "Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives" criterion. Proposals should include an emphasis, if possible, on the rule of law in general including transparency, accountability, and good governance. Participants may include NGO leaders, prosecutors, investigators,

judges, police, border security, legislators, ethics professionals, auditors, inspectors general, advocates for legal reform and services, and other oversight, regulatory, and law enforcement officials.

EAP Eligible Countries:

Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam (countries comprising the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)), Timor Leste

- EAP proposals should strive to include all ten ASEAN countries. It is optional to include Timor Leste.

EUR Eligible Countries:

Group 1: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

Group 2: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

- Proposals must include at least four of the countries in Group 1 or at least four of the countries in Group 2.

SCA Eligible Countries:

India, Pakistan

- SCA proposals must include both countries. Proposals should strive to pair one Indian fellow and one Pakistani fellow together at each fellowship placement organization in the United States.

WHA Eligible Countries:

Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Panama,

- WHA proposals must include at least three of the above countries.

2. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Proposals submitted under the Economic Empowerment theme should engage a combination of professionals actively working in small or start-up business ventures, business administration, government, NGOs, business education, incubation hubs, community training programs, or social entrepreneurship.

Proposals might include an emphasis on entrepreneurship/social entrepreneurship; best practices in creating and managing small businesses; social and business innovation; the role of government in spurring economic

growth; community-based and educational training programs; employment readiness; global competency and readiness; transparency and accountability in business; the promotion of sustainable and inclusive economic development; and economic empowerment of women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized populations.

Fellowship placements may be in businesses, government offices, NGOs, innovation hubs, or economic/business-related organizations.

EAP Eligible Countries:

Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam (Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) nations)

- EAP proposals must include all five countries.

EUR Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least four of the countries in Group 1 or all of the countries in Group 2.

Group 1: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia

Group 2: Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain

NEA Eligible Countries:

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories,
Syria

- NEA proposals must include at least three of the above countries/territories. Proposals should also include an emphasis on economic empowerment of youth; skills development; entrepreneurship; and small business development. Proposals should engage entrepreneurs and small business owners.

SCA Eligible Countries:

SCA proposals can include either all of the countries in Group 1 or all of the countries in Group 2.

Group 1: India, Pakistan

- SCA proposals must include both countries. Proposals should include an emphasis, if possible, on professionals who have business interests across borders. Proposals should strive to pair one Indian fellow and one Pakistani fellow together at each fellowship placement organization in the United States.

Group 2: India, Bangladesh, Burma

- SCA proposals must include all three countries. Proposals should include, if possible, some consideration for content related to cross-border cooperation and the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor, which aspires to link India and the rest of South Asia to Southeast Asia through emerging linkages. Proposals should strive to pair fellows of the different nationalities together in each fellowship placement organization in the United States

WHA Eligible Countries:

Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua

- WHA proposals must include at least three of the above countries. WHA proposals should include a strong emphasis on economic empowerment and social inclusion, and should include participants from diverse racial and ethnic groups such as indigenous and African-descendant communities.

3. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) DEVELOPMENT

Proposals submitted under the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Development theme should engage professionals actively working on issues that may include: free and open media/journalism, legal reform, community development, social change and political activism, education reform, arts and culture, and the rights of women, children, minorities, and other marginalized groups including, among others, persons with disabilities and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on expanding the effectiveness of nascent grassroots and local NGOs (not international NGOs) in engaging with policy makers and government officials; laws and regulations pertaining to NGOs; creating strategic partnerships; conducting community outreach and public relations; and developing organizational capacity (including NGO management, staff training and development, advocacy, fundraising, marketing, social media, human resource management, and volunteer management).

Fellowship placements may be in NGOs, advocacy-related organizations, or with organizations whose work involves collaboration with NGOs.

EAP Eligible Countries:

EAP proposals can include all of the countries in Group 1 or all of the countries in Group 2:

Group 1: China, Mongolia (participation should be weighted more toward China; applicants should be in contact with ECA for additional guidance)

Group 2: Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam (Lower Mekong Initiative nations)

NEA Eligible Countries:

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia

- NEA proposals must include at least three of the above countries.

SCA Eligible Countries:

India, Pakistan

- SCA proposals must include both countries. Proposals should strive to pair one Indian fellow and one Pakistani fellow together at each fellowship placement organization in the United States.

4. CROSS-SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Proposals submitted under the Cross-Sector Development theme should engage a combination of professionals in the government, non-governmental, educational, and private sectors actively working on pressing challenges through collaborative alliances and/or cross-sector partnerships. For the purposes of this RFGP, participants must be focused on issues directly related to environmental sustainability (WHA region), tolerance and conflict resolution (AF region), and public health challenges (NEA region) as described in more detail below.

In addition to the emphases noted below under each geographic designation, proposals for all regions might also include a focus on coalition and partnership building, negotiation, strategic planning, public relations, leading teams, organizational change, agenda setting, and crisis management.

Unless otherwise noted below, fellowship placements may be in NGOs, legislative/government offices at the national, state, or local level, and private businesses.

AF Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least two countries in either Group 1 or at least two countries in Group 2. Proposals that include three countries in one of the below groups will be deemed more competitive under the "Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives" criterion.

Group 1: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda (countries of the Great Lakes region)

Group 2: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal (countries in the Trans-Sahara region)

- AF proposals must address tolerance and conflict resolution, including an emphasis on multi-culturalism, negotiation skills, discrimination and fair treatment of minority populations, civil rights and responsibilities, supporting peace-building, and countering radicalization and extremist behavior among youth. Participants may include NGO leaders, legal professionals, legislators, religious leaders, government/elected officials, media professionals, and academics.

NEA Eligible Countries:

Eligible Countries: Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen

- NEA proposals must address strategies for responding to current public health challenges in these countries such as obesity, diabetes, breast cancer, and heart disease. Proposals must include at least three of the above countries. Proposals should engage a mix of educators, healthcare professionals, and NGO professionals working in the health policy field. Fellowship placements may be in public health NGOs, research institutions and universities with a focus on international health policy, epidemiology, and healthy lifestyles/disease prevention.

WHA Eligible Countries:

Eligible Countries: Barbados, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay

- WHA proposals must address environmental sustainability, including an emphasis on climate change, sustainable energy, and environmental justice. Proposals must include at least three of the above countries. Participants should include a combination

of non-governmental organization (NGO) and community leaders, government officials, educators, and environmental experts. Participants should include those from diverse racial and ethnic groups such as indigenous and African descendant communities.

Contact Information by Region

The program officers noted below are available to answer questions on programs in the various regions:

AF Rosemarie Rauer
(202) 632-6560
RauerRN@state.gov

NEA Inga Litvinsky
(202) 632-9372
LitvinskyI@state.gov

EAP Adam Meier
(202) 632-6067
MeierAW2@state.gov

SCA Karin Brandenburg
(202) 632-9368
BrandenburgKL@state.gov

EUR Linnéa Allison
(202) 632-6060
AllisonLE@state.gov

WHA Carol Herrera
(202) 632-6054
HerreraCA1@state.gov

I.7. ECA Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, ECA is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

1. Participating and providing guidance in the design, direction, and execution of all program activities;
2. Approving key personnel;
3. Approve all international travel of award recipient staff;
4. Approving and providing input on program timelines and agendas;
5. Approving partner organizations and fellowship placement organizations;
6. Approving the final selection of all foreign fellows;
7. Involvement, to the extent possible, in the final selection of American fellows;
8. Approving decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout the duration of program, including assisting with participant emergencies;
9. Assisting with SEVIS-related issues;
10. Issuing participant DS-2019 forms;

11. Enrolling fellows in the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program, issuing health benefits identifications cards, and providing instructions on host claim forms;
12. Liaising with relevant U.S. Embassies and country desk officers at the State Department particularly in terms of recruitment, selection, web-based publicity efforts, and DC-based opening and closing events;
13. Working with award recipients to publicize the program through various media outlets (such as the social media platforms of ECA and PAS), including approving all program publicity, outreach efforts, and other materials;
14. Assisting in the coordination of the DC-based Professional Fellows Congress; and
15. Monitoring and evaluating the program through site visits or debriefing sessions.

I.8. What to Include in Your Proposal

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should be one page in length and include: the project title (a descriptive title that describes the type of fellows and countries involved), the goals of the project, the names of all partner organizations responsible for project implementation, the numbers of fellows (both foreign and American), and the number of proposed exchanges and approximate dates and placement sites in both the U.S. and foreign countries. Proposals must also clearly state for each exchange component the number of days fellows will spend in-country excluding international travel days.

Proposal Narrative

In 20, double-spaced pages, the proposal narrative should include/address all items specifically referenced in this RFGP, in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), and those items noted below:

- **Project Goals, Objectives, Anticipated Outcomes**

Proposals should include a clear, succinct statement of project goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes that expand upon the Professional Fellows Program's goals as stated in Section I of this RFGP. Objectives should be described in specific, measurable, and

realistic terms that are achievable within the scope of the project, both in terms of time and funding.

- **Background Information on the applicant organization and all partner organizations (both U.S.-based organizations and foreign-based organizations)**

For each organization, the mission, the date of establishment, relevant expertise, past programmatic work, and ongoing programmatic work should be described. Previous awards from the Bureau since 2004 (especially those involving the exchange of young professionals), including both grants and cooperative agreements, should be listed by office (Citizen Exchanges, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges, etc.), project name, countries, year, and amount. Proposals should describe previous collaboration with proposed partner organizations, as well as clearly delineate a division of responsibilities between all organizations that will be involved in the project.

- **A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**

Proposals should describe in detail the applicant organization's proposed approach for monitoring and evaluation. For further guidance, please see Section IV.3d.3. "Program Monitoring and Evaluation."

Detailed evaluation plans that put the narrative over the 20-page limit and sample evaluation surveys or other evaluation tools may be included as an attachment.

- **Budget**

For more budget information including specific allowable costs, refer to both Section IV.3e.2., as well as the PSI. Proposals should describe how the award recipient will conduct budget oversight as it relates to project management. In addition, proposals must include a detailed budget narrative.

Attachments

The items below should be included as attachments. Please label each attachment in a clear and concise manner (i.e. Program Management Plan; Letters of Support, etc.).

- A Project Management Plan for the entire life of the project that lists, in table format, outputs (major tasks that will be implemented by the award recipient and partner organizations), dates, and the organization/staff responsible;
- Letters of commitment and/or letters of support from:
 - 1) proposed partner organizations (both U.S.-based and foreign-based);
 - 2) proposed or past fellowship

placement organizations; and 3) preferably, from past exchange program participants;

- Resumes (no more than two pages in length) of proposed key staff at the applicant organization and all partner organizations that will be involved in the implementation of the project; and
- Draft program implementation materials such as the U.S. program schedule, the American Outbound program schedule, the program announcement, the program application, the agenda for the pre-departure orientation and the arrival orientation, and materials on any other key program elements.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under number I above.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2014

Approximate Total Funding: \$5,000,000

Approximate Number of Awards: 12-14

Approximate Average Award: \$400,000.

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2014

Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2016

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible applicants. Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code Section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds. There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to

be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements

- a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. Because ECA anticipates that the approximate average award will be \$400,000, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in the proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process:
- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one

proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

- All proposals must be two-way exchange programs that comply with the detailed and specific guidance included in Section 1.6., "Themes and Eligible Countries." Important: Proposals that target themes and/or countries not specifically mentioned in this Request for Grant Proposals or are not two-way in program design will be considered technically ineligible and receive no further consideration under this competition.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1. Contact Information to Request an Application**Package:**

Please contact David Gustafson in the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, phone: (202) 632-6083, fax: (202) 632-9355, email: gustafsondp@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

On all other inquiries and correspondence, please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number and contact the appropriate program officer who is listed under "Contact Information By Region" under Section I.6. Themes and Eligible Countries.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational->

[funding](#) or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>. Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that the applicant's DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget. Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (SAM) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please note: Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit

information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure

to do so will cause the proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. **All ECA awards recipient organizations** must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started- Request a User Account" at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/>. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM - 6 PM EST, Monday - Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1. **Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa**
The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program

sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the

administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of its Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://jlvisa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-44, Suite 668
301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

IV.3d.2. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and represent the diversity of political, social, and cultural life in the United States and abroad.

"Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Proposals should provide a clearly articulated plan for incorporating diversity into all aspects of the program and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section of this document, as well as the DIVERSITY FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into proposal submissions.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose

people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should

include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives are linked to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in

contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.

4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their

regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3d.4. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated

with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs. Allowable costs for the project include the following:

IV.3e.2a. Travel. International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in Bureau-sponsored projects.

IV.3e.2b. Per Diem. For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates

may be accessed at:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at:

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78

IV.3e.2c. Book and Cultural Allowances. Participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50. Interpreters should be reimbursed up to \$150 for expenses when they escort participants to cultural events. U.S. project staff, trainers or participants are not eligible to receive these benefits.

IV.3e.2d. Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day per session. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that figure. Subcontracting organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and sub-grantee should be included in the proposal. Such sub-grants should detail the

division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.

IV.3e.2e. Room Rental. The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.

IV.3e.2f. Materials. Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for fellows. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget.

IV.3e.2g. Supplies. Applicants may propose to use award funds to purchase supplies, such as computers and printers; supply costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.

IV.3e.2h. Working Meal. One working meal may be provided during U.S.-based and foreign-based components. Per capita costs for working meals may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental and other overhead charges. The number of invited guests may not exceed fellows by more than a factor of two-to-one.

IV.3e.2i. Return Travel Allowance. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each foreign participant may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

IV.3e.2j. Re-Entry Seminars. Costs related to providing foreign fellows a re-entry seminar may include per diem, hotel accommodations, material development, and other related expenses.

IV.3e.2k. Health and Travel Insurance. The award recipient will be responsible for working with ECA to ensure that both foreign and American fellows are enrolled in the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the proposal budget. Applicants may include costs for travel insurance for both foreign and American fellows in the budget.

IV.3e.2l. Wire Transfer Fees. When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to foreign-based partner organizations. Award recipients are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

IV.3e.2m. In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes. Visas for foreign fellows are provided by DOS and should not be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including

travel for interviews, delivering or picking up passports, etc.

IV.3e.2n. Administrative Costs. Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to project costs, proposals in which the administrative costs do not exceed 28% of the total requested ECA funds will be deemed more competitive under the cost effectiveness and cost sharing criterion at Section V.2 below. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources. Award recipient staff travel should NOT be included in the exchange participant numbers.

IV. 3e.2o. Reasonable Accommodations. Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of participating individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose.

IV.3e.2p. Professional Fellows Congresses. Allowable costs associated with the spring and fall Professional Fellows Congresses in Washington, D.C. are:

1. Travel to/from Washington, D.C.: Domestic travel to Washington, D.C., for the spring and fall Professional Fellows Congresses, including ground transportation to and from the airport to the conference hotel. ECA strongly encourages program plans that conclude with the D.C.-based Congress and sends foreign fellows home directly from the Washington area at the conclusion of the Professional Fellows Congress.

2. Non-Congress related activities: ECA strongly encourages award recipients to incorporate additional programmatic time in the D.C. metro area (before or after the Congress), using the opportunity to arrange meetings with government agencies, national organizations, and other key stakeholders. Costs for ground transportation, lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses for all additional days/nights in the D.C. area should be included in individual proposal budgets.

Note: Food and lodging for foreign fellows and award recipient staff (limited to two staff per organization) attending the Congress will be covered by the Congress planning organization and should NOT be included in individual proposal budgets for this competition. Please

refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3e.2g. Alumni Activities. Reasonable costs related to alumni activities may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on activities. Proposals should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively utilize technology and online networking sites to enhance and amplify alumni programming.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2014

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend the applicant not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an

extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800-518-4726
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays
Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, D.C. time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site.

There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation

of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the applicant not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications:

Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Review Process

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional

bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

V.2. Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank-ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve

Objectives: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, direct linkage to the goals of the Professional Fellows Program, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Proposals should demonstrate a realistic and achievable scope that fits within the budgetary and time parameters set forth in the RFGP. Proposals that secure one fellowship placement during the exchange rather than

multiple, short-term placements with different U.S. organizations will be deemed more competitive under the Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives criterion. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how project objectives and key project elements, especially the development of individual projects by the foreign fellows, will be achieved through programmatic activities.

2. Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity and describe how that policy will be integrated into all aspects of the program including but not limited to selection of fellows, fellowship placements, program materials, training methodology, etc. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate fellows with physical disabilities. Applicants should refer to the Bureau's "Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines" in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI).

3. Institutional Capacity and Track Record: Proposals should include (1) the institution's mission and date of establishment; (2) detailed information about proposed partners including a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities; (3) an outline of prior awards, U.S. government and/or private support received, for programs of

a similar nature; and (4) descriptions and resumes of key staff who will implement the program. The proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

4. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. Proposals should include draft evaluation instruments, such as surveys and questionnaires, plus a description of a methodology that will be used to link outcomes to original project objectives.

5. Cost Effectiveness and Cost Sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost sharing through other private sector support as well as

institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1a. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.1b. The following additional requirements apply to this project:

Assistance awards involving Iran. A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact Inga Litvinsky at (202) 632-9372 or LitvinskyI@state.gov for additional information.

Additional Requirements for the Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza. All awards made under this competition

must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Inga Litvinsky at (202) 632-9372 or LitvinskyI@state.gov for additional information.

Special Provision for Performance in a Designated Combat Area (Currently Iraq and Afghanistan) (December 2008). All Recipient personnel deploying to areas of combat operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), under assistance awards over \$100,000 or performance over 30 days must register in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register in SPOT before deployment, or if already in the designated operational area, register upon becoming an employee under

the assistance award, and maintain current data in SPOT. Information on how to register in SPOT will be available from your Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative during the final negotiation and approval stages in the federal assistance awards process. Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to this policy and procedure will be a requirement of all final federal assistance awards issued by ECA.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, grantees are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

- Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."
- Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

- OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments."
- OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), "Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations."
- OMB Circular No. A-102, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments."
- OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations."

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements:

You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90

calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. Please refer to Section IV. "Application and Submission Instructions" (IV.3d.3.) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

VI.4. Additional Program Data Requirements:

Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place, including Final Program Schedules for in-country and U.S. exchange components.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: David Gustafson, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division, SA-5. 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, phone: (202) 632-6083, fax: (202) 632-9355, email: gustafsondp@state.gov

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the title (FY 2014 Professional Fellows Program) and the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Kelly Keiderling _____ Date
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State