
Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY 2017 Professional Fellows Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-17-025

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: May 1, 2017

Executive Summary: The Professional Fellows Division in the Office of Citizen Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposal submissions for the FY 2017 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 non-U.S. participants is a substantive five- to six-week Fellowship program, including a four-week individually tailored working placement with a U.S. organization.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

It is the Bureau's intent to award approximately 12-14 cooperative agreements for an estimated total amount of \$6,150,000 pending the availability of FY 2017 funds. Supplemental funding for this program may be provided from Economic Support Fund (ESF) transfers to support legislative programming focused on Pakistan under the Governance and Society theme, pending the availability of funds. ECA reserves the right to modify the composition of final awards and their funding levels based upon the quality of proposals submitted, the availability of funds, and other factors impacting long-term foreign policy objectives.

For additional details on awards, please see section II. "Award Information" below.

Please see section B.) "Federal Award Information" for additional details.

A. Program Description

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.

Purpose

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 non-U.S. and American emerging leaders to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies regarding pressing challenges;
3. Enhance leadership and professional skills for both non-U.S. and American Fellows to encourage 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 guidance referenced in Section A.5. “Themes and Eligible Countries.”

The non-U.S. 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 conclude with a capstone three-day Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., attended by participating Professional Fellows from all over the world. **Please see the FY 2017 Professional Fellows Congress NOFO for additional information (ECA-ECAPEC-17-023).** Several months after the non-U.S. Fellows complete the U.S.-based Fellowship component, the American Fellows will 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,” referred to as “Professional Fellows” in this program, are defined as those individuals who travel under award funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country. Proposals must include approximately two to three non-U.S. participants for every one American participant. **Employees of the award recipient or any sub-award recipients are not eligible to participate in the Professional Fellows Program and cannot be included as program participants.**

Applicant organizations without an existing organizational presence in the target country must identify an overseas partner (“in-country partner”) with whom they propose to collaborate. ECA and participating Public Affairs Sections at U.S. embassies reserve the right to approve in-country partners. In addition, proposals must demonstrate capacity in the United States to secure effective and appropriate host placements for the participants.

A.1 Project Outputs

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

A.1.1 Recruit and Select Fellows

In collaboration with ECA, each award recipient will recruit and select two cohorts of non-U.S. Fellows and two cohorts of American Fellows. The award recipient must develop an online Program Announcement and Program Application in order that all eligible non-U.S. professionals are able to submit an application.

Non-U.S. Fellows

Recruitment. Non-U.S. Fellows should be recruited in accordance with the specific guidance included in Section A.5., “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.

Selection Process. Non-U.S. 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.

At a minimum, the participant selection criteria for non-U.S. Fellows for the Professional Fellows Program must include the below:

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

U.S.-Based Fellowship Components for Non-U.S. Fellows. Each award recipient will design and implement two U.S.-based Fellowship components for non-U.S. 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. An orientation upon arrival in the United States;
3. A substantive 4-week Fellowship placement that is tailored to each non-U.S. Fellow’s work/interests;
4. Homestays for non-U.S. participants with an American family at least one week (or four weekends) in duration;
4. An individual plan for the working placement and follow-on project for each non-U.S. Fellow;
5. Participation in the concluding Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. and Congress-related activities including online leadership training;

6. A plan for post-Fellowship engagement with the non-U.S. Fellows; and
7. A debrief with U.S. Embassy representatives upon return to home country;

Program activities in the United States for non-U.S. Fellows should also include a volunteer/community service element. Also, every effort should be made for the non-U.S. 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. “**Fellowship Placements**” refers to the program component where the Fellow is working in an office or organization relevant to his or her professional experience and interest. Each award recipient must secure, preferably, at least three weeks in advance of the non-U.S. Fellows’ arrival in the United States, a substantive and appropriately tailored Fellowship placement that is a minimum of four weeks (20 weekdays) in length. The purpose of the Fellowship placement is to provide non-U.S. 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 non-U.S. Fellows include 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 non-U.S. Fellow has a substantive professional experience, each Fellowship placement should involve the commitment of a designated placement host who understands the goals and objectives of the Professional Fellows Program. Applications that propose to 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 review criterion. Supplementary programming activities, in person or online, may be built into the four-week working placement period, such as group workshops or other enrichment activities, if it makes sense to do so within the context of the overall program design.

Proposals should describe how the award recipient will work with each non-U.S. Fellow on the development of the foreign Fellows’ individual projects and implementation of these projects upon return to his/her home country. It is recommended that time be devoted during the orientation program to focus on individual follow-on projects. Proposals should include a timeline for the non-U.S. Fellows to create drafts and final versions of the “Action Plan” for their “Individual Follow-on Project,” as well as a process and deadlines for the Fellows to update the award recipient on his/her progress implementing the individual project.

A.1.2. Professional Fellows Congress

At the conclusion of the U.S. Fellowship placement, the non-U.S. Fellows will participate in the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. There will be a Professional Fellows Congress in spring 2018 (tentatively scheduled for May 29-31, 2018) and a

Professional Fellows Congress in fall 2018 (tentatively scheduled for November 13-15, 2018).

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 Congresses will be implemented by a designated award recipient (**selected through a separate award competition, see Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-17-023 for the FY 2017 Professional Fellows Congresses NOFO on Grants.gov and ECA’s public website**), 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 participate collaboratively 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, facilitating break-out sessions at the Congress, supporting Congress-related “products” or activities, integrating online leadership training into the Fellowship period, preparing Fellows for active participation during the Congress, etc. This collaboration is critical to making each Congress a success. Please see Section **D.3.o**. Allowable Costs for the Professional Fellows Congress for additional information.

A.1.3. Outbound Programs for American Fellows (“American Outbound Programs”)

American Fellows

The outbound programs should be approximately two- to three-weeks in length for American Fellows to travel to the participating countries. American Fellows will be selected in an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with the Professional Fellows Division. American Fellows will be primarily selected from those individuals who serve as placement hosts to the non-U.S. Fellows at the U.S. Fellowship placement organizations and who had significant engagement with the non-U.S. Fellow placed in their organization during the U.S. Fellowship period. Americans can apply individually or collaboratively with the non-U.S. Fellow they hosted. The non-U.S. Fellow should be deeply involved in the development of the outbound phase of the program, including the conceptualization, scheduling and implementation of the program. Ideally, American Fellows would have experience pertaining to the non-U.S. Fellow’s individual outbound project and could contribute to the achievement of the goals of the non-U.S. Fellows’ projects. While there is no set age range for the American participants, the same 25-40 age range is preferred.

American outbound programs should be substantive. They must build on the U.S. Fellowship component, allow the American Fellows to conduct joint programming with the non-U.S. Fellows and their colleagues, directly support U.S. public diplomacy

objectives, and advance the Professional Fellows Program goals of building sustainable and lasting professional partnerships. Proposals should describe the selection process for the American outbound components and how it will support the non-U.S. Fellows' individual projects.

Upon completion of the selection process, the proposed slates of American outbound participants with summary information including biographical information, proposed destination cities, country, and timeframe, must be submitted to the appropriate Program Officer in the Professional Fellows Division within approximately six-weeks of the conclusion of the spring and fall Professional Fellows Program.

A.1.4. Collaboration with the Public Affairs Section of the Respective Embassy(--ies)

Award recipients must work closely with the Public Affairs Section of the respective Embassy(ies) to develop plans for project implementation, including the recruitment and selection of non-U.S. Fellows, follow-on projects, and other in-country program activities. It is important that all proposed American outbound program schedules are reviewed by the Professional Fellows Division and PAS at a minimum of one month prior to the start of any outbound travel. Since many American Fellows will be experts on issues pertinent to various U.S. foreign policy objectives in the respective country, the 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 PAS throughout the life of the award.

A.1.5. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) and Arrival Orientation

For both non-U.S. and American Fellows, the award recipient will be responsible for conducting a pre-departure orientation through coordination with PAS (prior to departing their home country) and an arrival orientation through coordination with ECA (upon arriving in the United States). For non-U.S. 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;
- proposed U.S. placements;
- a detailed Program Schedule including program activities and deadlines, information about the community where each Fellow will be located, the concluding Professional Fellows Congress; and,
- a briefing on cross-cultural issues including day-to-day considerations of living and working in the United States including professional standards of conduct.

A.1.6. Debrief with Embassy Representatives upon Return to Home Country

Proposals should include a plan for a scheduled debrief with Embassy representatives after the non-U.S. Fellows return to their home country.

A.1.7. Post-Fellowship Engagement

Proposals should include concrete plans for developing innovative and sustainable enhancement activities that reinforce project goals after the non-U.S. Fellows return to their home country. Proposals should clearly articulate how the award recipient will

provide ECA with regular updates on the non-U.S. Fellows' individual follow-on projects as well as professional successes resulting from their participation in the Professional Fellows Program.

A.1.8. 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 should include:

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

A.1.9. Monitoring and Evaluation

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

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

A.1.10. 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 non-U.S. Fellows and their Fellowship placement organizations before, during, and after the Fellowship program, strengthen group identity, and streamline key administrative and programmatic processes such as recruitment and follow-on/alumni activities.

A.1.11. 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 non-U.S. 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.”

A.2 Key Administrative Elements

A.2.1. Visas for Entry into the United States and Foreign Countries

To procure U.S. visas for the non-U.S. 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 non-U.S. 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. Please see section D.3h. Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J Visa for further information.

A.2.2. 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 non-U.S. travelers.

A.2.3. Projected Program Timeline

ECA envisions the Professional Fellows Program calendar as follows:

Spring 2018 Professional Fellows Cohort

- October 16, 2017 – November 30, 2017: Recruitment of non-U.S. Fellows for the spring 2018 Professional Fellows Program in the United States;
- December 2017 – April 2018: Selection of participants and securing Fellowship placements for non-U.S. Fellows for the spring program;
- April 2018 – June 2018: Travel by the spring cohort of non-U.S. Fellows for the spring 2018 Professional Fellows Program in the United States. Travel should be carefully planned around **the spring 2018 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., tentatively scheduled for May 29-31, 2018;**
- Spring 2018: Begin planning for the spring cohort of American outbound Fellows to travel abroad as a continuation of the spring 2018 Professional Fellows Program;
- Summer 2018: Travel by the first cohort of American outbound Fellows as continuation of the spring Professional Fellows Program.

Fall 2018 Professional Fellows Cohort

- February 12 – March 30, 2018: Recruitment of the non-U.S. Fellows for the fall 2018 Professional Fellows Program in the United States;
- April – July 2018: Selection of participants and securing placements for non-U.S. Fellows for the fall program;
- September – November 2018: Travel by the second cohort of non-U.S. Fellows for the fall 2018 Professional Fellows Program in the United States. Travel should be carefully planned around **the fall 2018 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., tentatively scheduled for November 13-15, 2018;**

- Late Fall / Winter 2018: Begin planning for the second cohort of American outbound Fellows to travel abroad as a continuation of the fall 2018 Professional Fellows Program; and
- Winter/ Spring 2019: Travel by the second cohort of American outbound Fellows abroad as a continuation of the fall 2018 Professional Fellows Program.

A.3. Themes and Eligible Countries

All proposals should 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 regions and the scope of any resulting cooperative agreement and the list of participating countries and regions with subsequent renewal solicitations.

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

Approximate Award Amount: \$400,000 to \$500,000

Approximate Number of Participants: 20-30 non-U.S. participants and 8-12 U.S. participants

Note: Proposals for all geographic regions that include a minimum of five or more countries will be considered for projects of a larger participant scope and may request funding levels above \$500,000, up to, but not exceeding, \$750,000. Proposals for South and Central Asia that include Pakistan will also be considered at a funding level up to, but not exceeding, \$750,000.

A.3.1. GOVERNANCE AND SOCIETY

Proposals submitted under the Governance and Society theme can include professionals involved in the legislative process; governance; public administration; policy making; political campaigns/political parties; the legal field; journalism; non-governmental organizations; innovation and technology; or the empowering women, children, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on legislative/governance processes; citizen engagement and advocacy on various topics, including climate change and sustainable development; open government; rule of law; access to justice; anti-corruption; transparency and accountability; social innovation; women's empowerment; disability rights; education to employment; or building resilient communities.

Fellowship placements may be in legislative/government offices at the national, state, or local level; non-governmental organizations; or other relevant organizations.

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Eligible Countries:

EAP proposals must include all of the following ten ASEAN countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, and Singapore

Europe and Eurasia (EUR) Eligible Countries:

EUR proposals must include at least four countries in Group 1 or at least four of the countries in Group 2.

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

Group 2: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Middle East and North Africa (NEA) Eligible Countries:

NEA proposals should include at least four countries AND must include one or more countries from each group listed below.

Group 1: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya

Group 2: Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestinian Territories

NEA proposals should include an emphasis on promoting citizen participation in governance and in their community; amplifying citizen voices and partnership with government at all levels; promoting cooperation between government and citizens in reaching common goals; promoting rule of law; conducting community outreach and public relations; creating partnerships and opportunities for collaboration and inclusive practices between citizens and government.

South and Central Asia (SCA) Eligible Countries:

SCA proposals must include India, Pakistan, and Nepal

Western Hemisphere (WHA) Eligible Countries:

WHA proposals should include at least five eligible WHA countries (listed following) and span at least three of the following five sub-regions (bolded): **Andes** (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia); **Brazil and Southern Cone** (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay); **Caribbean** (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago); **Central America** (Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua); and, **Mexico**. Please note that Canada and Cuba are not included as eligible countries for this exchange program.

A.3.2. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Proposals submitted under the Economic Empowerment theme can include professionals involved in entrepreneurship; small and medium enterprises; start-ups; incubators/accelerators; social entrepreneurship; business administration; business education; community training programs; non-governmental organizations; or government.

Proposals might include an emphasis on starting or growing small and medium enterprises; social and business innovation; community-based and educational training programs; global competency and employment readiness; transparency and accountability; the role of government in spurring economic growth; sustainable development; education to employment; or the empowering of women, children,

minorities (to include indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations).

Fellowship placements may be in businesses; non-governmental organizations; technology hubs; economic/business-related organizations; or government offices.

Africa (AF) Eligible Countries

AF proposals should include Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Eligible Countries:

EAP proposals should include at least four of the following countries: Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru, Kiribati, Samoa, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia.

Europe and Eurasia (EUR) Eligible Countries:

EUR proposals must include at least four countries in Group 1 or at least four of the countries in Group 2.

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

Group 2: Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain

EUR proposals involving countries in Group 2 should focus on empowering marginalized populations.

Middle East and North Africa (NEA) Eligible Countries:

NEA proposals should include at least four countries and must include one or more countries from each group listed

Group 1: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya

Group 2: Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestinian Territories

NEA proposals submitted under this theme should include a focus on education to employment, skills development and enhancing the ability of youth to find work, and employment readiness.

South and Central Asia (SCA) Eligible Countries:

SCA proposals must include India, Pakistan, Nepal and Kazakhstan

Western Hemisphere (WHA) Eligible Countries:

WHA proposals should include at least five eligible WHA countries (listed following) and span at least three of the following five sub-regions (bolded): **Andes** (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia); **Brazil and Southern Cone** (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay); **Caribbean** (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago); **Central America** (Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua); and, **Mexico**. Please note that Canada and Cuba are not included as eligible countries for this exchange program.

WHA proposals should include an emphasis on education to employment by engaging professionals who are actively involved in teaching, mentoring, and influencing youth by providing them the guidance, education, training, and skills to find gainful employment.

A.3.3. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Proposals submitted under the Civic Engagement theme can include professionals involved in non-governmental administration; community development; advocacy; education; journalism; law; youth initiatives; strengthening resilient communities; or the empowering women, children, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on NGO management; staff training and development; volunteer management; conducting community outreach and public relations; creating strategic partnerships and coalition building; conflict resolution and tolerance; or education programs.

Fellowship placements may be in non-governmental organizations; community-based organizations; civic education organizations; advocacy organizations; government offices; or relevant organizations.

Africa (AF) Eligible Countries:

AF proposals should focus on one of the groups of countries clustered below. AF proposals under the theme of civic engagement that target countries in **Group 2** should also include an emphasis on women's empowerment.

Group 1: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia

Group 2 – Nigeria, Ghana, and Liberia

Group 3 – Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Eligible Countries:

EAP proposals must focus on the countries in Group 1, 2, or 3. EAP proposals under the theme of civic engagement that target countries in **Group 2** should also include an emphasis on women's empowerment.

Group 1: Must include all of the following ten ASEAN countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, and Singapore.

Group 2: Must include the following five Lower Mekong Initiative countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and could also include one or more of the following additional ASEAN countries: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore

Group 3: Must include China, Mongolia and also any of the following additional countries/territories: Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

South and Central Asia (SCA) Eligible Countries:

SCA proposals must include Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka

Western Hemisphere (WHA) Eligible Countries:

WHA proposals should include at least five eligible WHA countries (listed following) and span at least three of the following five sub-regions (bolded): **Andes** (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia); **Brazil and Southern Cone** (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay); **Caribbean** (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago); **Central America** (Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua); and, **Mexico**. Please note that Canada and Cuba are not included as eligible countries for this exchange program.

A.4 Contact Information by Region

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

<p>AF Carmelia Macfoy (202) 632-6424 MacfoyC@state.gov</p>	<p>NEA Carmelia MacFoy (202) 632-6424 <u>MacfoyC@state.gov</u></p>
<p>EAP Sheila Shamber (202) 632-9372 ShamberST@state.gov</p>	<p>SCA Karin Brandenburg (202)632-9368 BrandenburgKL@state.gov</p>
<p>EUR Linnéa Allison (202) 632-6060 AllisonLE@state.gov</p>	<p>WHA Elise Wilson (202)632-6054 WilsonE@state.gov</p>

A.5. ECA Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, the Professional Fellows Division is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

Responsibilities of the Professional Fellows Division include:

1. Participate and provide guidance in the design and execution of all program activities and program timelines, including approving the selection of all Fellows, the U.S. placement organizations for the foreign Fellows, and program agendas;
2. Approve key personnel changes at the implementing partner organization who will work on the program. Additionally, the Professional Fellows Division will approve, in advance, all international travel paid for using funds of the ECA award;
3. Approve changes to partner organizations, including in-country partner organizations and sub-award recipients;
4. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or complex matters that arise throughout the duration of program, including assisting with participant emergencies;
5. Issue participant DS-2019 forms and assist with SEVIS-related issues;

6. Enroll both foreign and U.S. Fellows in the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program and issue health benefits identifications cards;
7. Liaise with relevant PAS staff at the respective 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 so that the overall program better aligns with mission priorities;
8. Work 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;
9. Assist in the coordination of the DC-based Professional Fellows Congress; and
10. Monitor and evaluate the program through site visits or debriefing sessions.

Responsibilities of award recipients under the FY 2017 Professional Fellows Program cooperative agreements are as follows:

1. For foreign Fellows, develop and implement a minimum five to six-week U.S. program that includes: an in-person or virtual pre-departure orientation (PDO); a comprehensive arrival orientation; a minimum four-week individually-tailored placement with a U.S. organization (preferably selected by an open competition); participation in the three-day Professional Fellows Congress and Congress related planning activities; thorough monitoring of Fellows and the placement experience; a short or long-term homestay experience in the U.S. and cultural activities that promote direct engagement with average Americans, such as meeting with student or community groups, and meals with an American household, etc.
2. For U.S. Fellows, develop and implement an approximate two to three-week American outbound program that includes: coordination with the Fellow(s) from the respective foreign country, an in-person or virtual PDO, a substantive American outbound program, a comprehensive arrival orientation, and engagement with the PAS, as possible, that may include presentations/lectures by any of the U.S. Fellows on their respective professional expertise;
3. Participate in a “group organizational meeting” that will be held in Washington, D.C. for all award recipients of the Professional Fellows Program. The meeting will be held on a mutually agreed upon date. Award recipients who will need to travel to DC for this meeting should budget appropriately for travel, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses;
4. For both foreign and U.S. Fellows, arrange and cover the cost of all appropriate program-related travel such as transportation, lodging, and meals and incidental expenses, etc.
5. Provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities who may be selected for participation in the program as a foreign Fellow or as a U.S. Fellow. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose;
6. In collaboration with Professional Fellows Division and PAS, develop a clearly articulated strategy to incorporate PAS in all aspects of the program, including, but not limited to: recruitment, selection, PDOs, post exchange program debriefs

- at PAS, American outbound programs, and alumni engagement;
7. Develop a comprehensive recruitment strategy for foreign Fellows that includes two recruitment cycles, clearly delineates the participation selection criteria for the exchange program, and adheres to ECA's goals for a merit-based open competition;
 8. Develop a comprehensive application review and selection process for Fellows, and keep Professional Fellows Division informed while the process is underway. The review and selection process should include virtual or in-person English language interviews for semi-finalists during the second round of the selection process to ensure that all applicants selected as foreign Fellows will be able to communicate effectively in their U.S. placements;
 9. Design and launch a web-based application tool that can collect and share program applicant information with Professional Fellows Division. The application link should be shared with Professional Fellows Division in advance of the recruitment periods;
 10. Utilize the Web and other outreach tools to facilitate pre-program communication among Fellows once selected, the implementing partner organization, the in-country partner, the U.S. placement organization, and home-stay families. The type of information envisioned to be communicated to Fellows before the actual exchange program begins includes important program-related information, community resources for the respective U.S. placement cities, pre-program assignments, individual project expectations, Congress-related information, and personal travel logs;
 11. Conduct a substantive orientation for U.S. placement organizations that includes the provision of programmatic guidelines and materials including a delineation of roles and responsibilities. Award recipients should help facilitate direct communication between the Professional Fellows Division and placement organizations;
 12. Integrate the Professional Fellows Congress leadership development training module into the program,
 13. Consult closely with Professional Fellows Division on developing a comprehensive outreach strategy for highlighting participant achievements both while in the United States and after their return home including the use of online and other social media platforms;
 14. In coordination with Professional Fellows Division and the Congress-implementing organization, support the planning of the spring 2018 and fall 2018 Professional Fellows Congresses in Washington, D.C. **Note: For each Congress, four nights lodging expenses will be paid for by the Professional Fellow Congress' award recipient. Organizations interested in additional nights before or after the Congress will need to be covered by the award recipient;**
 15. Evaluate, in close consultation with Professional Fellows Division, the program and its impact on foreign and U.S. Fellows during their Fellowship program and after they return to their home countries. Evaluation plans should include how the award recipient will capture results of the foreign Fellows' individual small projects and how and when those results will be reported to Professional Fellows Division;
 16. Manage financial aspects of the program (including timely disbursement of

- participant stipends, housing allowances, accident and sickness benefits, hosting agreements, and other activity costs) and promptly report any irregularities in the budget or spending to Professional Fellows Division;
17. Participate in a mid-program review with Professional Fellows Division in person or by telephone that identifies early any programmatic concerns and/or budget concerns;
 18. Report programmatic, financial, and statistical information to Professional Fellows Division including a brief monthly email update and/or phone call outlining general programmatic activities conducted during the past month and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted the following month;
 19. Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from Professional Fellows Division; and,
 20. Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, including, but not limited to, submitting timely financial and program reports and proper budget oversight.

A.6. What to Include in Your Proposal

A.6.1. 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 theme under which the proposal is being submitted, the goals of the project, the names of all sub-award recipient organizations responsible for project implementation, the numbers of Fellows (both non-U.S. 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.

A.6.2. Proposal Narrative

In 20, double-spaced pages, the proposal narrative should include/address all items specifically referenced in this NOFO, 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 A of this NOFO. 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 sub-award recipient 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 D.3j.. "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 D.3.o., 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 may 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 sub-recipient 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.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under "**A.7. ECA Responsibilities.**"

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2017

Approximate Total Funding: \$6,150,000, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds

Approximate Number of Awards: 12-14

Approximate Average Award: \$400,000 - \$500,000, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds. Note that proposals for all geographic regions that include a minimum of five or more countries will be considered for projects of a larger participant scope and may request funding levels about \$500,000, up to, but not exceeding \$750,000.

Proposals for South and Central Asia that include Pakistan will be considered at a funding level up to, but not exceeding \$750,000.

Floor of Award Range: \$400,000, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds.
Ceiling of Award Range: \$750,000, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds.
Anticipated Award Date: September 15, 2017
Anticipated Project Completion Date: June 30, 2019

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

Supplemental funding for this program may be provided from Economic Support Fund (ESF) transfers to support legislative programming focused on Pakistan under the Governance and Society theme, pending the availability of funds. ECA reserves the right to modify the composition of final awards and their funding levels based upon the quality of proposals submitted, the availability of funds, and other factors impacting long-term foreign policy objectives. At this time, ECA cannot predict whether additional Economic Support Funds (ESF) or other funding will be made available to support additional programs in FY 2018 and FY 2019. Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, ECA reserves the right to renew the cooperative agreements funded through ESF for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing them again.

C. Eligibility Information

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

C.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 the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. 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.

C.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 and higher, 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 specific guidance included in Section A.5., "Themes and Eligible Countries." Proposals that do not cover one of the three or four (depending on Pakistan ESF) themes outlined in the NOFO and/or that cover countries or regions not covered under the theme will be declared ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

D. Application and Submission Information

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

D.1. Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact Malaika McAdams 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, email: McAdamsM@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 A.5. Themes and Eligible Countries".

D.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.

D.2.a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

D.3.a. Applicant organizations are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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 UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

D.3.b. 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.

D.3.c. All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the 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. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

D.3.d. **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.

D.3.e. 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.

D.3.f. 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.

D.3.g. **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:

D.3.h. 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 NOFO, 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 NOFO 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://j1visa.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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3.i. 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.

D.3.j. 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 NOFO.

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 NOFO (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**, such as 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.

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.

D.3.k. 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.

D.3.l. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in ECA's Communications Guidance on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3.m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3.n. 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.

D.3.o. Allowable costs. Allowable costs for the project include the following:
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.

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

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.

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.

Subaward recipient organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective award recipient and subaward recipient should be included in the proposal. Such subawards should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.

Contractors/contracting organizations may also be employed in which case the written agreement between the award recipient and the contractors/contracting organizations should be included in the proposal.

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.

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.

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.

Working Meal: One working meal may be provided during each U.S.-based and foreign-based component. 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. Please note: inviting speakers to stay for lunch does not constitute a working meal.

Return Travel Allowance: A return travel allowance of \$70 for each non-U.S. participant may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

Re-Entry Seminars: Costs related to providing non-U.S. Fellows a re-entry seminar may include per diem, hotel accommodations, material development, and other related expenses.

Health and Travel Insurance: The award recipient will be responsible for working with ECA to ensure that both non-U.S. 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 non-U.S. and American Fellows in the budget.

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.

In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes: Visas for non-U.S. 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.

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. Proposals are benefitted by 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.

Reasonable Accommodations: Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose, and reflect plans to make the necessary program modifications or participant numbers should these funds be used for reasonable accommodations

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. Program plans that conclude with the D.C.-based Congress and send non-U.S. Fellows home directly from the Washington area at the conclusion of the Professional Fellows Congress.
2. Non-Congress related activities: ECA 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 non-U.S. 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.

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. Organizations can propose small grants or a small grant competition for the Fellows to compete for to encourage their continued work on and implementation of their individual projects.

Organizational meeting in Washington, D.C.: Award recipients who will need to travel to DC for this meeting should budget appropriately for travel, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses;

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Monday, May 1, 2017

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/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>)

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 NOFO 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.

- D.3q. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. 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 resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. 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 NOFO. 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 non-U.S. 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 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 is reasonable. 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.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. 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.

F.1a. The following additional requirements apply to this project:

2. For assistance awards involving 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 Carmelia MacFoy at (202) 632-6424 or MacfoyC@state.gov for additional information.

F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB circular cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

F.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). A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet 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/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to GrantSolutions.gov, in the same manner specified for the programmatic

reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3.) 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.
- 4.) Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. Please refer to Section D.3j **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**.

F.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.
- 3) 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.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Malaika McAdams, 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: McAdamsM@state.gov

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title (FY 2017 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 NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information**Notice**

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO 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 NOFO 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.

Mark Taplin
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

March 1, 2017