Department of State

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0006693
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Executive Summary:
The Office of Global Educational Programs in the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), announces an open competition for the FY 2021 Survey of International Educational Exchange Activity in the United States. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct a comprehensive statistical survey (census) of foreign nationals enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions, foreign scholars at U.S. institutions, and U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit; to collaborate with national agencies, country representatives, and academic mobility researchers from around the world to collect and report accurate, timely and comprehensive data on global student mobility.

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.

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.

International educational exchange activity remains at the intersection of diplomacy, education, innovation, and industry. Contributing nearly $45 billion to the U.S. economy annually, international students also contribute to U.S. classrooms and communities and support future business, scientific, cultural, and diplomatic ties with the United States. American students who study abroad build intercultural personal and professional skills and networks, positioning themselves to be future leaders in an increasingly interconnected global world. In order to assess and analyze international educational exchange to and from the United States, the recipient organization, in consultation with
ECA, will administer a series of sequential surveys to accredited U.S. higher education institutions focusing on four main sectors: 1) foreign students, 2) foreign scholars, 3) U.S. students studying overseas in credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs, and 4) foreign enrollees in intensive English language programs in the United States. The recipient should also include data on numbers of foreign students enrolled at minority serving institutions and community colleges. The recipient may partner with relevant national agencies and/or academic mobility researchers to collect and report accurate and timely data on global student mobility, providing an important comparison point for U.S.-focused educational exchange activity.

A requirement for the execution of this survey is collaborating, under ECA’s guidance, with the U.S. Department of State’s EducationUSA network, which promotes U.S. higher education in countries around the world. This includes sharing of data to include numbers of students enrolled at U.S. institutions by state, academic level and field of study, with EducationUSA Program Officers, Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and EducationUSA advising centers. EducationUSA representatives may provide feedback and verification on country specific mobility data and support collection of data on foreign student perceptions of study abroad. EducationUSA centers exist in a variety of locations including U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright commissions, binational centers, non-governmental organizations, universities and libraries. A complete list of centers is located at http://educationusa.state.gov. The recipient should similarly collaborate with the U.S. Department of State’s USA Study Abroad programs and initiatives as relevant. More information is available at http://studyabroad.state.gov.

In a cooperative agreement, the Department’s Office of Global Educational Programs is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

The program office’s activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:
1. Provide policy guidance and direction to the award recipient, including, but not limited to joint presentation of survey findings;
2. Facilitate communications with EducationUSA Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and advisers, U.S. embassies, and offices within the U.S. Department of State, related to the annual dissemination of related data and reports;
3. Review and approve the recipient’s public presentations and materials before dissemination;
4. Consult with recipient organization staff regarding substantive data collection plans and issues; and
5. Participate in meetings with relevant exchange organizations on international educational exchange activity.

The recipient’s activities and responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:
1. Development of surveys and other analytical tools/methods to collect data on four main sectors: 1) foreign students in the U.S., 2) foreign scholars in the U.S., 3) U.S. students studying overseas in credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs, and 4) foreign enrollees in intensive English language programs in the United States;
2. Preparation and submission of a comprehensive project timeline to the program office for approval;
3. Collection, analysis and presentation of data on international students and scholars and on U.S. study abroad participants;
4. Produce a publication and present data survey results clearly and succinctly in print and electronic media; scholarly analyses of survey data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included, taking into consideration a wide range of prospective readers and policy-makers in government, academia, and private and nonprofit sectors;
5. Implement the collection and analysis of detailed individual-level data on international students studying in the United States to allow for cross-tabulations by place of origin, field of study, academic level, and other relevant variables;
6. Enhance data analysis by using SEVIS data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security if available, to conduct policy-relevant analysis of emerging issues in consultation with ECA and to provide trend data pertaining to international students in the United States;
7. Report on foreign students’ use of opportunities such as Optional Practical Training;
8. Report on trends in Intensive English Language program enrollments by foreign students in the United States;
9. Report on participation rates by U.S. students with disabilities in study abroad;
10. Report on higher education trends overseas on a regional basis, following U.S. Department of State-defined overseas regional breakdowns, in addition to individual country data, and on country-by-country rankings according to academic level and type of institution, in consultation with ECA;
11. Propose suggestions for additional data collection and research for ECA approval, including on particular countries or regions, sub-populations of students, academic fields, unique challenges or opportunities, or other topics of current importance to one or more of the four surveys and related reporting;
12. Monitor and report on trends in global student mobility and how these trends affect student and scholar mobility to and from the United States, and utilize the results of the four surveys to contribute to broader reporting on global student and scholar mobility data and trends, including, but not limited to, Project Atlas, a partnership of public and private national level higher education data collection agencies, with the Institute of International Education serving as the secretariat;
13. Convene, in consultation with ECA, an Advisory Board consisting of ECA representatives and appropriate educational organizations to identify and frame policy issues that may need to be addressed by policymakers or that may have ramifications for the survey;
14. Ensure the utility and accessibility of data and reports for use by U.S. Department of State staff and EducationUSA partners;
15. Conduct expanded domestic and media outreach to ensure that data and reports are broadly accessible to key stakeholders and the public;
16. Propose actions to maximize engagement with U.S. higher education institutions to enhance the total number of institutions submitting data for analysis and reporting;
17. Conduct a public event, in coordination with ECA, to announce survey results timed to coincide with the opening of International Education Week in November 2021;
18. Develop a communications plan specific to International Education Week, in close consultation with the ECA program office and public affairs team, that addresses press engagement before, during, and after the data release;
19. Ensure program branding and attribution for all presentations and on all websites, social media, and press according to ECA’s Communications Guidance, and
20. After consultation with ECA, deliver an agreed upon number of the printed survey reports to ECA for distribution and use as the Bureau deems appropriate by January 31, 2022.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES
Proposals should include a careful description of the methodology to be used to obtain the data called for in this solicitation. Applicant organizations should include in their proposals an efficient and economical approach to gathering data, and how they will ensure an adequate response rate from institutions surveyed.

Applicants should propose a detailed approach to ensure that relevant data is publicly accessible to U.S. and foreign government stakeholders, U.S. higher education partners, international education researchers, and the press. Since the surveys are publicly funded, primary data and associated analyses must be made available to the public at no charge with as wide a distribution as possible and must carry all relevant branding and association with the U.S. Government as described in ECA’s Communications Guidance. Applicants should outline and provide a reasonable justification for any data that will not be made freely and widely available in its proposal.

Under the course of the award, the recipient organization should consult with ECA prior to data publication regarding the survey’s varying accessibility to the general public in electronic and print media. Applicant organizations may charge reasonable fees for distribution of printed reports and access to detailed and individualized reports that require time-intensive research responses. Fees may also be charged to cover costs associated with convening conferences or workshops on student mobility. Any fees charged for providing this information and proceeds from sales of electronic or print materials, as well as registration fees, should be considered program income.
Applicant organizations are also encouraged to include in their proposals information about their capacity to carry out, at the request of ECA, electronic surveys that would focus on specific critical issues in international educational exchange that may arise during the period in which census data is being conducted for the larger survey. ECA reserves the right to determine the focus of reporting based on U.S. foreign policy goals.

ECA seeks a clear presentation and rigorous analysis of the data collected that will draw conclusions about trends in foreign student enrollments, numbers of foreign scholars on U.S. campuses and U.S. students studying abroad that can be used to guide policy discussions for both government and the educational community.

Collection of data regarding U.S. study abroad participation should address the demographic composition in a detailed manner, and should include participation by program length, student demographics, destination, home institution, field of study and academic level. The recipient must include in its report data about the number of U.S. students studying abroad in non-credit-bearing programs and credit-bearing programs of all types during 2019/2020 by academic year (fall 2019 through summer 2020), semester (fall 2019 or spring 2020), short-term (dates in fall 2019 through summer 2020) and summer (2020). To the extent possible, reporting on the composition of U.S. study abroad should include breakdowns by program length, student profile, destination, home institution, field of study and academic level. Proposals should describe the methodology that will be used to collect the data and how the material will be analyzed and presented to the public. The recipient should consult with ECA’s USA Study Abroad Branch on potential special topics to highlight for reporting the data on U.S. study abroad participation rates.

To provide for a more detailed analysis and cross tabulation of the characteristics of foreign students and scholars studying in the United States, individual student and scholar profile data should also be collected. The survey should identify the number of foreign students and scholars studying, conducting research, and/or teaching at all accredited universities and colleges in the United States during the 2020/2021 academic year (fall 2020 through summer 2021). This data should include country-specific aggregate information that should list the numbers of foreign students from a given country enrolled for academic credit in individual U.S. institutions and foreign scholars affiliated with U.S. institutions, which should include scholars conducting research and/or lecturing. The report should specifically include information about first-time enrollments or newly enrolled international students to facilitate the analysis of enrollment trends.

Scholarly analyses of survey data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included in the final report, which will be read by policy-makers in government, the higher education community, and the private and nonprofit sectors, as well as practitioners in the field of international educational exchange. The proposal should include a thorough plan to make data and analyses available widely on-line and through national and educational media organizations. The report should include a narrative on the mechanics and uses of
data analysis, highlighting how conclusions can be drawn from the data collected, the limitations of the data, and how the data can be of benefit to the educational institutions that supply it; for example, as a campus advocacy or recruiting tool. Applicants should include with the proposal a complete list of proposed chapter headings and sample analyses.

Proposals must include plans to establish an advisory board to provide assistance in identifying and framing policy issues that may need to be addressed by policy makers. Board members would likely be drawn from a broad range of educational associations and organizations and would be appointed in consultation with ECA. Members should meet at least once a year and would be expected to provide perspectives on topics that are related to the internationalization of higher education. ECA representatives should be invited to attend advisory board meetings.

The proposal should explain the survey’s counting methodology, the benefits of the chosen methodology versus other methods, and what potential gaps or discrepancies might be expected; it should also describe how the methodology will be explained to institutions invited to respond to the survey. Proposals should also include how proposed methodology will build on previously available analyses of longitudinal data and should show how proposed methodology can be included in a comparison of data over time. Proposals should reflect established policies, procedures, and standards regarding data collection, security and privacy protection, data inventories, data quality control, data access, and data sharing and dissemination.

Proposals should explain how institutions should respond to the survey regarding international students and scholars who are enrolled or affiliated but are not sponsored by the respective institutions. Proposals should also explain how institutions should respond to the survey regarding students whom they sponsor but who have employment authorization (such as F-1 Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training, and J-1 Academic Training) and who are not currently enrolled. In addition, proposals should explain how fields of study will be defined to ensure, to the extent possible, consistent reporting by responding institutions.

ECA welcomes innovative approaches to the presentation of the survey material, including possible breakdowns for minority-serving institutions and community colleges.

ECA also encourages applicants to consider reporting on other topics of current interest in the final report, to be determined in coordination with ECA, such as:

1) How efforts of other countries to attract foreign students may have affected student flows to the United States;
2) How political and economic trends in other countries are reflected in student flows to the United States;
3) How economic trends in the United States, including tuition levels, the cost of living, or the relative strength of the U.S. dollar may have affected student flows to the United States;
4) The impact of international students and scholars and/or of U.S. study abroad on the academic offerings of U.S. institutions and departments;
5) The number of international students participating in non-degree, exchange or inbound study-abroad programs on U.S. campuses as full-time, non-matriculated undergraduate or graduate students while continuing to be enrolled in their home institution;
6) The number of international students taking part in U.S. study abroad programs overseas;
7) Current trends in study abroad programming, for example including length, destination, student profile, academic level, and/or field of study of program;
8) The percentage of graduating students who have participated in short-term or long-term study abroad programs, broken down by state, region, institution type or other factors;
9) U.S. institutions’ activities to educate foreign students outside of the United States, through overseas campuses or distance education programs or other avenues, as these activities should not be counted or rolled up in the total figures of international students enrolled at U.S. higher education institutions described above;
10) The numbers of foreign students studying in intensive English language programs in the United States;
11) The geographic distribution of international students in the United States in comparison with the distribution of U.S. student and overall student populations;
12) The number of U.S. students directly enrolling and pursuing degree programs in institutions of higher education outside of the United States, in selected countries.

In addition to the above, proposals should explain how the following activities might be undertaken:

- Use SEVIS data (if available) to conduct policy-relevant analysis of emerging issues in consultation with ECA and to provide trend data pertaining to international students in the United States (for example, key places of origin, including countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East).
- Monitor secondary source material and reporting and/or conduct ad hoc surveys to provide context on global student mobility trends and international students’ attitudes toward U.S. higher education. Topics might include a study of international students from key places of origin to determine their attitudes toward the United States and their perceptions of study in the United States, or an overseas survey of the attitudes and perceptions of international
students enrolled in U.S. branch campuses in selected countries. Consult with the Department of State’s network of EducationUSA centers as relevant in coordination with ECA.

- Provide analysis on higher education trends in key regions as supported by survey data.
- Share survey data and reports as contributions to broader global mobility reports such as, but not limited to, Project Atlas.

The proposal should include a strategic communications plan for the launch of the report data during International Education Week. The recipient is charged with conducting a large public event to highlight the survey findings, underscore the value of international student mobility, and the benefits of U.S. study abroad programming. Through substantive collaboration with ECA, the recipient will conduct an event that shares key survey findings, highlighting the data, while underscoring the value of international educational exchange research, and the data’s practical use in light of increased global competition.

In addition to launching the survey data, the strategic communications plan should outline how the applicant will conduct domestic outreach to U.S. higher education institutions to maximize the number of institutions receiving and completing the surveys. The applicant may wish to include engagement with ECA’s EducationUSA and U.S. StudyAbroad Branches to expand its domestic outreach efforts to institutions currently not receiving or reporting on the relevant populations. The proposal appendices may include a list of suggested domestic and international outreach events and conferences to broaden the network of survey recipients.

B. Federal Award Information:
Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA’s level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.
Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2021
Approximate Total Funding: $500,000 pending the availability of FY 2021 funds
Approximate Number of Awards: 1
Approximate Average Award: $500,000 pending the availability of FY 2021 funds
Floor of Award Range: none
Ceiling of Award Range: $500,000 pending the availability of FY 2021 funds
Anticipated Award Date: October 1, 2020
Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2022
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 grant or cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.
The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

C.) Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D.3a and D.3c below).

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to $130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one cooperative agreement, in an amount of $500,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

c.) 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.

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing 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 Guidance 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 may be reduced in like proportion.

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 Jamie K. Sharp in the Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S, SA-5, 4th Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-9446, sharpj2@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

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

Please specify Jamie K. Sharp and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding or from the Grants.gov website at https://www.grants.gov.

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

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You 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 UEI 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 (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html
D.3b. **Required Proposal Elements:** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

D.3c. **Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM):** 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 a current registration 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 is completed on any issued award. 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.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

D.3d. **Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS):** Prior to making a Federal Assistance award over $250,000, the Federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIIS, they can comment on any information about its organization that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant’s integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

D.3e. **Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Report:** 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 award 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 program 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.3f. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State’s SAMS Domestic by accessing https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com and clicking the “create an account” link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State’s grants management system and is supported by the Department’s Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

D.3g. FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY - ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. 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
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3h. Diversity, Freedom, and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of 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. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program’s goals and objectives and the participants’ exchange experience. Please refer to the review
criteria under the 'Support of 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 the total proposal.

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.3i. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Please note: The Bureau plans to add standardized indicators and corresponding data collection questions for performance monitoring during the period of performance of this award. Therefore, proposed performance monitoring plans and data collections instruments should be sufficiently flexible to incorporate those once established. 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 link 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.

**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.

**D.3k. 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.3l. Budget Format:** 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. The below budget format is provided as an aid in organizing the budget, it is suggested but not required as a submission format for your proposal budget.

**D.3m. Key Personnel**

ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department’s Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/).

**D.3n. Allowable costs for the program include the following:**

1) Salaries and fringe benefits; travel and per diem;
2) Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, etc.;
3) Overhead expenses and auditing costs

**D.3o. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:**

Application Deadline Date: Monday, June 8, 2020

Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Search Grants” portion of the system.

**D.3p. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures**

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

**How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov**

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html
How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov
For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues
Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues 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

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission
Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, DC 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 the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

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

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring
during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

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 "Applicant FAQs" 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. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**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. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html).

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.3r. 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 U.S. 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. **Quality of the program idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. **Program planning and Ability to achieve program objectives:** A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

3. **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

4. **Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

5. **Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports.

6. **Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:** 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. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

**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 transmitted to the recipient’s responsible officer as identified in the application.

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

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 Guidance 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 Guidance 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:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb
https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the cooperative agreement 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 complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a Post Award Activity under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State’s SAMS Domestic.

2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ 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 SAMS Domestic, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.
In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

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 D.3j. 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.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Jamie K. Sharp, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S, SA-5, 4th Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-632-9446, sharpj2@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed 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 will be subject to periodic programmatic and financial reporting and evaluation requirements as outlined in the NOFO.

Marie Royce  
April 10, 2020  
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State