

**Department of State****Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**(NOFO):** FY 2018 (Academic Year 2019-2020) Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange and (2019) Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SFOP0004983

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.415

**Key Date/Application Deadline:** June 7, 2018

**Program Description/Executive Summary:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division (ECA/PE/C/PY), of the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the FY 2018 (Academic Year 2019-2020) Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) program and (2019) outbound Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange (CBBSX). U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501 (c) (3) may submit a proposal to facilitate educational exchanges between Americans and Germans who participate in three CBYX components: Secondary School, Vocational Studies, and Young Professionals. CBBSX participants will be supported by the organization that facilitates the Young Professional exchanges. The CBYX and CBBSX programs support the exchange of American and German young people to sustain and strengthen the American-German friendship based on the common value of democracy. The program also builds lasting personal and institutional relationships.

It is the ECA's intent to award up to seven cooperative agreements (each having one base year plus two non-competitive continuations) – up to five for the Secondary School Component, up to one for the Vocational Studies component, and up to one for the Young Professionals component, including CBBSX – totaling approximately \$12,520,000 (base year plus two non-competitive continuations). This includes an additional \$40,000 in the base year for the summer 2020 CBYX triennial meeting (details in the POGI). Please see section B.) Federal Award Information below 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 primary objective of the program is to encourage American and German youth to learn about each other's society and culture through educational exchange while promoting American-German friendship based on the common value of democracy. In addition, the program seeks to promote the participants' roles as young ambassadors with influence on future American-German relations, and to promote and strengthen linkages between members of Congress and their Bundestag counterparts. The CBYX program provides a scholarship for an academic year experience of living and studying in the host country. The outbound CBBSX program provides round-trip airfare and related expenses for the participation of 10 American Congressional Staffers to participate in a two-week parliamentary exchange in Germany.

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs administers the CBBSX and CBYX program in the United States. The CBYX program is known in Germany as the Parlamentarisches-Patenschafts Programm (PPP), and is administered by the German Bundestag Administrative Office.

The CBYX program was inaugurated in 1983 through a bilateral agreement between the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. Each government provides funding to exchange organizations through assistance awards for the costs of home country participant recruitment and selection, international airfare, orientation and debriefing, and hosting and monitoring support for the respective exchange participants.

The German Bundestag Administration Office holds an open competition every four years to select the German counterpart organizations that will manage the program in Germany. Up to five U.S. organizations will be partnered with up to five German organizations to administer the secondary school exchange program. One U.S. and one German organization will be paired to administer the Vocational component. One U.S. and one German organization will be paired to administer the Young Professionals component. Within the proposal narrative, applicants must demonstrate the ability to cooperate with foreign partners in implementing exchanges and, if possible, have a partner agreement in place with a German organization that has been selected by the German Bundestag Administration Office to implement CBYX. Please contact the ECA program officer if you require more information about the German organizations involved in the implementation of CBYX.

The actual number of participants exchanged each year is dependent on the amount of funding made available by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. For program year 2019-2020 ECA anticipates approximately 250 American and 285 German high school students (divided into five regional groups of 50 Americans and 57 Germans each), 75 American and 75 German young professionals, and 25 American high school graduates interested in vocational studies. Throughout the program cycle, representatives of both governments and the respective program organizations will hold annual discussions to determine the final participant numbers for each academic year. Participants are chosen according to procedures and criteria established by each government.

For all program components, applicants must submit the health and accident insurance plans that they and/or their German partners (if known) intend to use for the American and German participants of this program. ECA offers the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) plan for participants at no cost to award recipients. Applicants are encouraged to use ASPE but may choose to use their own plan instead. Plans must meet requirements of 22 CFR 62.14.

In the United States, the CBYX program has three components:

1. **Secondary School Component:** In the 2019-20 academic year, this component will provide a maximum of 250 scholarships (approximately 50 per region) for an academic year educational and cultural homestay experience in Germany for American secondary school students ages 15 to 18 years and 6 months on August 1, 2019, and a maximum of 285 German secondary students (approximately 57 per organization) hosted in the United States, also ages 15 to 18 years and 6 months at the start of the program. In an effort to further develop relationships between partners and schools in their recruiting regions, a minimum of fifty percent of German students should be placed in host homes and schools throughout the region that the partner is responsible for.

Secondary school exchange organizations are invited to bid to conduct merit-based selection among American secondary school students in one or more of five designated regions of the United States. While ECA reserves the right to change these regions after partner strengths have been identified, the anticipated regions are:

**Region 1:** Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

**Region 2:** District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia

**Region 3:** Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Wisconsin

**Region 4:** Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Wyoming

**Region 5:** Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington

American secondary school exchange organizations may bid on more than one region, indicating the most preferred region(s) in priority order. Organizations bidding on more than one region should include an addendum with a maximum of two pages which describes their unique capabilities in the regions they are interested in beyond the first ranked. It is anticipated that unique regional capabilities for the

region ranked first will be included in the body of the proposal. ECA anticipates that up to five organizations will be selected to conduct all aspects of the recruitment and selection of American, and placement of German, secondary school participants.

Organizations that are awarded a cooperative agreement to recruit American secondary school participants in their assigned U.S. regions will conduct advertising, recruitment, processing of applications (using a CBYX specific application, either the one maintained by the Administrative partner as detailed below in the section about the administrative supplement OR a similar application approved in advance by ECA), screening, selection, management of administrative and travel logistics, and pre-departure orientations. They will work with their German partner to ensure that arrival and re-entry orientations are conducted for American secondary school participants. These organizations will also provide arrival and re-entry orientations for German secondary school students and place them in host families and schools.

The U.S. recipient organizations will screen (including conducting criminal background checks), select, and orient host families, and provide participant monitoring, supervision and counseling to students and host families per the Exchange Visitor (J-1 visa) regulations at 22 CFR Part 62. The U.S. organization will also arrange program enrichment activities throughout the year for the German secondary school students, and will manage all administrative and logistical matters related to their program. U.S. recipient organizations' partners in Germany will be responsible for recruiting, orienting, and arranging international travel for German secondary school students, and will provide logistics and program arrangements, including host family screening, school placement, participant monitoring and support to students and host families for U.S. students paralleling to the extent possible the arrangements that the U.S. partners provide for German students. The German partner organization will also arrange enrichment activities for the students throughout the year and an internship or hands-on work experience in the participants' field of study, and will manage all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel and the provision of health and accident insurance.

- 2. Vocational Component:** This component provides scholarships to graduating American secondary school seniors with a vocational interest and/or specialization for a one-year professional study and training experience in their fields of interest in Germany. One U.S. organization will be selected to conduct all aspects of the nationwide selection competition in the United States for 25 U.S. participants, including advertising, recruitment, processing of applications (using a CBYX specific application, either the one maintained by the Administrative partner as detailed below in the section about the administrative supplement OR a similar application approved in advance by ECA), screening, selection and pre-departure orientations, and management of all administrative and logistical matters including domestic and international travel. During the selection process, the program organization is encouraged to work with vocational educational offices at the state level, as well as administrators of secondary schools with vocational education curriculum.

The German partner organization chosen by the Bundestag Administrative Office will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientation for the U.S. participants and will place them in host families and schools. The German partner organization will screen, select, and orient host families as well as provide participant monitoring, supervision and support to participants and host families. The German partner organization will also arrange enrichment activities for the participants throughout the year and an internship or hands-on work experience in the participants' field of study, and will manage all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel and the provision of health and accident insurance.

- 3. Young Professionals Component:** This component provides scholarships for a one-year professional study and training experience in the host country in business, professional, technical, vocational, and agricultural fields to young Americans and Germans ages 18.5-24. This component will also provide administrative support for the Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange (CBBSX). One U.S. organization will be selected to conduct programming for approximately 75 American and 75 German Young Professionals as part of CBYX and travel and logistical support for 10 American Congressional Staffers as part of CBBSX.

For CBYX, in the United States the U.S. recipient organization will conduct nationwide advertising and recruitment; process applications (using a CBYX specific application, either the one maintained by the Administrative partner as detailed below in the section about the administrative supplement OR a similar application approved in advance by ECA), screen and select U.S. participants; provide pre-departure orientations; manage all administrative and logistical matters; and arrange domestic and international travel. The award recipient will also coordinate arrival and re-entry orientations for German participants, place them with host families or arrange other suitable housing, place them in colleges or universities, arrange internships in the participants' field of study, and arrange program enrichment activities. The U.S. recipient organization will conduct the recruitment, screening, selection, and orientation of host families; provide participant monitoring, supervision, and support to participants and host families; and manage all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel arrangements. The partner organization in Germany will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientations for U.S. participants, place them with host families or arrange other suitable housing, place them in colleges or universities, arrange internships in the participants' field of study, and arrange program enrichment activities.

For CBBSX, the U.S. recipient organization should arrange and pay for travel (roundtrip economy class airfare, economy plus upgrades where allowed by the Fly America Act, and local transportation costs to and from Washington D.C.-area airports) and insurance coverage (through ASPE) for ten American Congressional Staffers to participate in CBBSX in calendar year 2019. Selection is handled by the U.S. Congress and funding for the activities in Germany is provided by the German Bundestag and Bundesrat.

**Administrative Supplemental:**

The administrative supplemental will provide additional funds to one organization to:

- a. Produce and distribute CBYX secondary school scholarship and program-wide promotional materials,
- b. Maintain a CBYX program-wide scholarship application website,
- c. Coordinate program-wide promotional activities,
- d. Work with ECA and other CBYX Program Organizations to coordinate the logistics for the summer program wide American re-entry workshop, and
- e. Manage the logistics for the triennial meeting with American and German CBYX Partners.

Applicants interested in applying to implement the administrative supplemental should include an addendum of up to ten pages narrating proposed activities and the organization's experience with similar activities. Administrative supplemental applicants should submit a separate budget of up to \$80,000 to support these ongoing activities as well as a separate budget of up to \$40,000 for the triennial meeting, which will only be funded in the base year of the award. Additional information regarding this supplemental activity is provided in the Program Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document included in this solicitation.

For all components, ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/PE/C/PY is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and program organizations are outlined in the attached POGI.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two non-competitive continuations are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a non-competitive continuation will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuations.

**B. Federal Award Information:****Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement**

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2018 – \$4,200,000 (includes \$4,165,000 for CBYX (\$40,000 of which will be for the triennial meeting), and \$35,000 for CBBSX (base year)); FY 2019 –

non-competitive continuation year-one \$4,125,000 for CBYX and \$35,000 for CBBSX; FY 2020 – non-competitive continuation year-two \$4,125,000 for CBYX and \$35,000 for CBBSX pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$12,520,000 – This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** up to 7

**Floor of Award Range:** \$125,000

**Anticipated Award Amounts:** For each Secondary School region approximately \$594,000 in funding is available; for the Young Professional component approximately \$950,000 in funding is available for CBYX and \$35,000 for CBBSX; for the Vocational component approximately \$125,000 in funding is available; for the Administrative supplemental approximately \$80,000 in funding is available with an additional \$40,000 in the base year for the triennial meeting.

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 1, 2018.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** August 31, 2022 - This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

**Additional Information:** ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

A Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of approximately 24 months (base year) with Non-Competitive Continuations for two additional 12 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

### 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, ECA 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 will be reduced in like proportion.

**C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

a.) Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$130,000.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI, 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. Minimum technical requirements are: an executive summary of no more than one page; a program narrative of 20 pages; budget; and non-profit status confirmation as detailed in part D of this document. Organizations who need assistance locating the instructions for these documents should contact the ECA program officer listed in D.1. of this document.

**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 the ECA Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3 L-17, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Because physical mail takes time to process through to our office, you are encourage to reach out using email at [LathamEJ@state.gov](mailto:LathamEJ@state.gov) or phone at 202-632-3338 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. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please address questions to CBYX Program Officer Elizabeth Latham 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.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 Method of Submission” section below.

### **D.3. Required Information**

**D.3.a. 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.3.b. Required Proposal Elements:** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget (including a summary budget, detailed budget, and budget narrative).

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

**D.3.c. 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 current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://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.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.3.d. Non-Profit Status:** You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** 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. 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 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. Verifying Non-Profit Status:** 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 your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

**D.3.g. SAMS Domestic:** All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). SAMS Domestic will utilize three ILMS modules to support the Federal Financial Assistance Award process including the SAMS Domestic portal a.k.a. Service Now; Ariba; and Status Tracking a.k.a. the Federal Award File. To register as a SAMS Domestic user, please click the "create an account" link at <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. Organizations that have previously used SAMS Domestic 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 Grantee Organizations 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.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

In the event you are having difficulty registering, please email [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

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 their 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 as sponsor will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to German participants in this program. The J-1 visa category for German secondary school students is the U.S. Secondary School Program; the J-1 visa category for German Young Professionals participants is International Visitor. The Office may assign, under its J-1 program designation, Assistant Responsible Officer (ARO) duties to one or more recipient organization staff members to assist the Office in preparation of DS-2019 forms and in maintenance of SEVIS records. For the 2019-20 program year, the Office will request such assistance from the organization chosen to implement the Young Professionals component, for that component's participants; applicants for that component should include appropriate staff time in their budget request.

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.3.i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines:** Pursuant to ECA'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," ECA "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. ECA 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. ECA 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. Partners should further plan on incorporating indicator questions from ECA's Evaluation Division into their evaluation plans, and commit to providing data from these question back to the Division on a regular basis. Detailed instructions on these questions and data submission have been included as an attachment to this solicitation (please see the attached ECA Evaluation Division Indicator Questions and the ECA Evaluation Division Indicator Questions Data Submission instructions).

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; 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups); and 5) articulates a clear plan for incorporating the Evaluation Division's Indicator Questions and data submission requirements. (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 ECA 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 ECA 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. Budget Information:** 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 which include breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

**For competitions that will be renewed through a Non-Competitive Continuation (formerly referred to as Option Years) applicants must submit:**

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuation years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two non-competitive continuation years).

**To exercise the Non-Competitive Continuation (formerly referred to as Option Years) mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:**

1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year;
3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested non-competitive continuation year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

**The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:**

- 1.) closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)
- 2.) review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;
  - All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
  - Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
  - The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent non-competitive continuations.
- 3.) Prior Grants Officer approval is required to carry forward an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to carry forward the unobligated balance.

The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to carry forward funds. A final determination and approval to carry forward any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

- i. The request to carry forward an unobligated balance must include:
  - a. A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,

- b. A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

**D.3.o.** Allowable costs for the program and additional budget guidance are outlined in detail in the POGI document. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions. Questions may be directed to the program office identified in D.1. of this document.

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

Application Deadline Date: Thursday, June 7, 2018

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.3.q. 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](mailto:support@grants.gov)



**Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission**

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.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 midnight of the application deadline date 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 and acknowledges the download of submissions, 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.

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.

**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.3.r. Intergovernmental Review of Applications:** Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

ECA 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 ECA regulations and guidelines and forwarded to ECA 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 ECA 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/Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity, including compliance with relevant regulations pertaining to administration of J-1 exchange programs. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
2. *Institution's Record/Ability:* 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 the Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
3. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's diversity policy. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program design and implementation, including grantee/participant selection and placement, and how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives, including the exchange

experience. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan, and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

4. *Participant Monitoring:* The proposal must include a plan for ensuring and monitoring the safety and well-being of participants.
5. *Program 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 proposals include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives.
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. ECA encourages applicants to propose new cost-saving measures in programming. All items should be necessary and appropriate.

## **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 ECA procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from ECA'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 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.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](http://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:

*Mandatory:*

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The 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](#). SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). For assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Help Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for US callers) or through the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>. 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 [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](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

- 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](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USAspending.gov](http://USAspending.gov) website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 4.) Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC), applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3.j. 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.

**F.4. 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. This data must, at a minimum, include:

1. Name, address, contact information, emergency contact information, and application information 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. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

ECA will provide successful applicants with more detailed information on the required database format after the award is made.

#### **G. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Elizabeth Latham, U.S. Department of State, ECA Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3 L-17, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, [LathamEJ@state.gov](mailto:LathamEJ@state.gov), (202) 632-3338.

All correspondence with ECA 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, ECA 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 ECA representative. Explanatory information provided by ECA that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. ECA 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 F.3. Reporting Requirements above.

Marie Royce  
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

April 25, 2018