

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals: FY 2014 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)**

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAPEC-14-042

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

**Application Deadline:** April 1, 2014

**Executive Summary:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for one cooperative agreement for the FY 2014 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y), which provides overseas foreign language instruction for American high school students and those recently graduated. Public and private non-profit organizations, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3), may submit proposals to cooperate with ECA in the overall administration of NSLI-Y organizational responsibilities and the implementation of overseas summer and academic year language programs for approximately 630 individual participant scholarships according to the guidance detailed in the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI). NSLI-Y programs funded by this award will take place during summer 2015 and

academic year 2015-2016 in countries and locations where Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Korean, Persian (Tajiki or Farsi), Russian, and Turkish are widely spoken. The Bureau anticipates that the single award recipient will manage the comprehensive organizational and administrative responsibilities of this program, and will identify qualified sub-award recipients to implement many of the overseas language programs.

**I. Funding Opportunity Description:**

**Authority:** Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

**Purpose:** ECA supports the participation of American high school students and recent high school graduates in intensive, overseas foreign language study to increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and using critical-need foreign languages throughout their academic and professional lives.

For additional information about NSLI-Y, please visit

<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/national-security-language-initiative-youth-nsli-y>

NSLI-Y Program Goals:

- 1) To develop a cadre of Americans with advanced linguistic skills and related cultural understanding who are able to advance international dialogue, compete effectively in the global economy, and promote mutual understanding;
- 2) To provide a tangible incentive for the learning and use of foreign languages by providing overseas language study opportunities for American high school students; and
- 3) To spark a lifetime interest in foreign languages and cultures among American youth.

Expected Program Outcomes:

- 1) Participants will demonstrate a substantive, measurable increase in language proficiency (oral comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing), as verified through pre- and post-program assessment utilizing a standardized language assessment tool.
- 2) Participants will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the host country's society, institutions and culture.
- 3) Participants will share American culture with their overseas peers, and alumni will share their overseas experiences with others in their U.S. schools and communities.
- 4) Alumni will continue their language learning, apply their linguistic skills in their academic, career, and volunteer activities, and/or participate in other exchanges and educational activities to further language learning.

The total amount of anticipated funding available to support the overall program administration and the overseas language program implementation is \$9,000,000. This amount is intended to support approximately 630 scholarships, including all administrative and program costs.

ECA is seeking one organization to

- 1) provide overall administration and management of the NSLI-Y overseas language immersion programs;
- 2) directly implement overseas programs for approximately 25% of the program participants; and
- 3) engage sub-award implementing organizations with relevant expertise to implement overseas language programs for approximately 75% of program participants.

Organizations applying for this award must demonstrate their and their proposed sub-awardees' competencies in the administration and oversight of international youth exchange programs, language instruction and related cultural activities, and language and program assessment.

**Department of State Responsibilities:**

In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State, vis-à-vis both the Public Affairs Sections of the U.S.

embassies/consulates and ECA, is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

Department of State activities and responsibilities for this program include the following:

- 1) Provide guidance in the execution of major program components, providing concurrence as necessary.

- 2) Review all recruitment and publicity materials prior to publication, including application forms, the program website, and brochures.
- 3) Review and approve all participant award documentation, NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions, Operational Guidelines, and other key program documents.
- 4) Collaborate on publicizing the program.
- 5) Review and approve the participant recruitment strategy and selection process.
- 6) Advise on outreach and programming for students with disabilities.
- 7) Provide ECA-specific eligibility guidelines for use in the application process.
- 8) Concur on participant finalists and alternates.
- 9) If a sub-award competition is proposed, concur on the solicitation documents and the selection of sub-award recipients.
- 10) Review implementing organizations' program descriptions and program plans/schedules including language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, community service projects, peer tutoring, and excursions.
- 11) Concur on general program location, host family/housing location, and host language institution or school.

- 12) Participate in pre-departure orientations and re-entry orientations when possible.
- 13) Provide a security briefing at the arrival orientation when possible.
- 14) Support the award recipient's pre- and post-program standardized testing of participants' language proficiency.
- 15) Consult on participant support issues and concur on all participant early returns from the program.
- 16) Provide coordination for the inclusion of NSLI-Y participants in appropriate embassy/consulate activities.
- 17) Assist in liaison with appropriate Department of State offices, including the regional bureaus and overseas posts.
- 18) Concur on the Scope of Work and resumes for consultants hired to perform key program functions, such as evaluation, curriculum development, or overseas site visits.
- 19) Review and approve modifications to program locations, placement numbers, implementing organizations, or program structure.
- 20) Facilitate cooperation with other federally-supported programs aimed at critical language learning.
- 21) Collaborate on and participate in the annual NSLI-Y planning meeting.

- 22) Coordinate the distribution of the ECA evaluation surveys (E-Goals) to participants. Provide survey results to the award recipient for the purposes of program management.
- 23) Consult on alumni activities and follow-up events.
- 24) Facilitate access to the Department of State's international travel registration system (Smart Travel Enrollment Program or STEP) and to relevant consular forms.

**D. Award Recipient Responsibilities:**

Key responsibilities of the award recipient include the following:

- 1) Provide overall management and coordination for the NSLI-Y program.
- 2) Identify qualified organizations to implement NSLI-Y overseas programs and provide oversight.
- 3) Conduct a sub-award competition for implementing organizations, if proposed.
- 4) Work with implementing organizations to develop quality language immersion programs.
- 5) Conduct a nationwide marketing and recruitment plan to attract diverse applicants.
- 6) Manage a nationwide, merit-based application process.
- 7) Manage the selection of NSLI-Y participants.

- 8) Develop a plan for outreach and placement of students with disabilities.
- 9) Maintain, and regularly update, a database of participant information, protecting personally identifiable information.
- 10) Place participants in appropriate language programs.
- 11) Monitor participant safety and well-being, and ensure on-program support for participants.
- 12) Ensure that all participants receive the required hours of language instruction.
- 13) Assess participant language acquisition using standardized language assessment tools.
- 14) Ensure that all implementing organizations coordinate with the respective U.S. Embassies/Consulates as appropriate.
- 15) Organize and facilitate a planning meeting for all NSLI-Y implementing organizations, overseas partners, and ECA staff.
- 16) Evaluate the overall program, and its various components.
- 17) Manage all sub-awards, both programmatically and financially.
- 18) Facilitate the development and activities of an alumni association, including alumni from all NSLI-Y program years.

19) Submit all reports and requested program information to ECA in a timely manner.

**II. Award Information:**

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

**Fiscal Year Funds:** 2014 **Approximate Total Funding:** \$9,000,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** 1

**Approximate Average Award:** \$9,000,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** July 1, 2014

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2017

**Additional Information:**

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

**III. Eligibility Information:**

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

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

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

**III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

Bureau cooperative agreement/grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting

international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount up to \$9,000,000, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply to ECA under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

#### **IV. Application and Submission Information:**

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

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

Please contact the Youth Programs Office, ECA/PE/C/PY, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 3-H17, 2200 C St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone: 202-632-9354 or [RadomskiCA@state.gov](mailto:RadomskiCA@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. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation document which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Bureau Program Officer Carol Radomski and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all inquiries and correspondence.

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

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

Please read all information before downloading.

**IV.3. Content and Form of Submission:** Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f.

"Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

**IV.3a.** You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or

cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access

<http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF-424 which is part of the formal application package.

**IV.3b.** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

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

**IV.3c.** All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (SAM) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](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. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

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

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to quarterly and final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients,

the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit that 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.

**IV.3d.** All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing [www.GrantSolutions.gov](http://www.GrantSolutions.gov). To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer->

[support/getting-started/](#). Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

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

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

#### **IV.3d.1. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA:**

The 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. While outbound American program participants do not receive J visas and are, therefore, not governed by J visa regulations, ECA monitors the award recipient's compliance with established standards that parallel J visa regulations for inbound academic

year participants. These regulations are found in 22 CFR 62.25. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate and explicitly state in writing the applicant's capacity and willingness to meet all relevant requirements that **parallel** the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the 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.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://jlvisa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
SA-44, Suite 668  
301 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

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

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and 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.

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

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

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

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

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

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

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term

outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

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

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

The NSLI-Y program uses the Bureau's E-Goals system for evaluation. The POGI provides additional guidance on the use of E-Goals.

Program monitoring includes participant monitoring, which focuses specifically on ensuring participants' health, safety and welfare throughout the duration of the overseas program. Proposals must include a plan to monitor the participants' safety and welfare that parallels the standards for J1 visa regulations for inbound academic year participants found in 22 CFR 62.25.

**IV.3d.4. Virtual Exchange Component:**

ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take

advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

**IV.3d.5.** Describe in your proposal your plans for overall program management, staffing, coordination with ECA and overseas embassies or consulates, and oversight and management of sub-award implementing organizations.

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

**IV.3e.1.** Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed \$9,000,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants must provide separate sub-budgets for each implementing organization. Line items must clearly show costs for each language program in each country. All sub-budgets should be presented in the same

basic format, include similar line items, and utilize similar unit definitions and appropriate timeline.

**IV.3e.2.** Allowable costs for the program are outlined in detail in the POGI document.

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Methods of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>).

Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

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

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

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

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

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

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov

website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

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

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800-518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

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.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will

receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

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

**IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications:**

Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

**V. Application Review Information:**

**V.1. REVIEW PROCESS:**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, as appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

**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, and relevance to the Bureau's mission and the purposes outlined in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate how participants will be

recruited, selected, monitored, tested, and presented with continuing language learning opportunities.

- 2) **Program Planning and Ability to Meet Program Goals and Objectives:** Proposals should clearly indicate how the applicant will meet the program goals and objectives. A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate organizational competency and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program guidelines described in this solicitation. Proposals should include plans for administering and managing the overall program, as well as working with sub-award implementing organizations to carry out overseas programs as outlined in the POGI. The responsibilities, capacity, and expertise of proposed implementing organizations should be clearly delineated.
- 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 sub-grantee and participant recruitment, as well as participant selection and placement. Proposals should clearly

articulate a diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

- 4) **Institution's Record/Institutional Capacity:** The personnel, expertise, experience, and institutional resources of the applicant and each proposed sub-award implementing organization should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful language-focused exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for all past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements). The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- 5) **Participant Monitoring:** Proposals must include a detailed plan for monitoring the safety and well-being of NSLI-Y participants. Given the importance the Bureau places on this criterion, the narrative should include sufficient explanation about how it will achieve the Bureau's goals in regard to participant monitoring, and in accordance with the guidance outlined in the POGI.
- 6) **Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued contact with alumni to ensure that they are

tracked over time, engaged in appropriate alumni activities, and provided opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and skills acquired on the NSLI-Y program. Proposals should provide a strategy for maximizing the opportunities for alumni to further their study of the target language and culture of the host country. Proposals should include plans for follow-on activities that are within the context of the cooperative agreement (with the Bureau financial support) and after its completion (without the Bureau's financial support).

- 7) **Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's successes and challenges, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The evaluation plan should also address the methodology to assess individual participants' language acquisition and show clear linkages between program goals/objectives and expected outcomes. Draft survey instruments should be included in the appendix. A chart describing evaluation objectives, outcomes, indicators, data sources, instruments, and time line is recommended.
- 8) **Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing:** Reviewers will analyze the overall budget and sub-budgets for clarity and cost-effectiveness. They will also assess the rationale of the

proposed budget and whether the allocation of funds is appropriate to complete tasks outlined in the proposal narrative. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. Proposals should demonstrate a quality, cost-effective program.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1. Award Notices:**

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

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

**VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

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

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

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

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments."

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

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

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

Mandatory:

- 1) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly, or less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period.

(Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found at

[http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id](http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id)

=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1-866-577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov). The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: [FFATAECA@state.gov](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 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 IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

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

**VII. Agency Contacts:**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Carol Radomski, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, Room 3-H17, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, Telephone: 202-632-9354; E-mail: [RadomskiCA@state.gov](mailto:RadomskiCA@state.gov)

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP 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 RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**VIII. Other Information:****Notice:**

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

Evan Ryan

February 19, 2014

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State