

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2015 Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program Organizational Components

Funding Opportunity Number ECA-ECAPEC-15-019

Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division for the FY 2015 FLEX Organizational Components. Proposals must conform to the NOFO, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the programs mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in their PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying NOFO, the NOFO is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

A. Overview

The FLEX program addresses U.S. foreign policy goals and provides secondary schools students from Europe and Eurasia the opportunity to experience life first-hand in American host communities by living with an American family and attending an accredited American high school. The Organizational Components award includes managing a broad range of administrative program details, including recruitment, selection, communication with natural parents, and arranging for alumni activities for the participants for the 2016-17 academic year. Information on the programs and the office is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us>.

Program participants are 15 to 18 years old. Participants are from countries that currently include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine. Recruitment for 2016-17 will include additional countries and proposals should address plans to recruit in countries that may include, but are not limited to, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In addition, Russia, Belarus and Uzbekistan (previous FLEX countries) may return to the program in the future and your organization must demonstrate the willingness and ability to also recruit in these countries should it become possible to do so. Under the terms of the program, all participants must return to their home countries following the conclusion of their exchange programs in the United States. The award recipient organization is expected to assist the State Department in adhering to all requirements and regulations of the J-1 Secondary School Student visa program.

The Department of State seeks to include students of diverse national, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, and students with disabilities. Participants will be selected for the program on the basis of merit and personal character. Finalists also undergo rigorous medical screening. Applicants undergo a series of exams and are interviewed in person for evaluation of their ability to adjust to new cultures and their English language proficiency.

Activities covered in this Organizational Components award will be conducted in direct coordination with the Placement Organizations (POs) that implement separate placement awards. It is imperative for the success of the participants and the programs that your organization work efficiently and openly with ECA and the POs throughout the duration of the award. While you will be responsible for the coordination of many overarching activities involved in the implementation of the FLEX program, the POs will recruit, screen, and select U.S. host families for participants; select schools and secure school enrollments for participants; conduct in-person host family and student community-based orientations; monitor and support students throughout the school year; and organize enhancement activities for students. Each PO is provided Operational Guidelines, a manual that gives instructions that the POs must follow for the smooth coordination of tasks.

Program Timetable

The proposal should be planned in accordance with the dates and deadlines set by the needs of the programs. The recruitment and selection process must be completed by the end of February 2016, so that finalist applications can be disseminated for placing the students in host families and schools. Travel to the United States is expected to take place in August 2016. Return travel will occur in May-June 2017.

Recruitment Targets

The recruitment targets for each country are tentative and represent recruitment goals only. Recruitment targets are not to be confused with finalist allocations. Finalist allocations are ultimately dependent on the availability of funding, legislative mandate, policy considerations, applicant pools, and PO placement commitments. For planning purposes, the following country targets for FY 2015 (Academic Year 2016-17) should be used; these targets are based on approximately 920 total academic year participants and are subject to change. The proposal should demonstrate current capacity to recruit these target numbers in these countries or a plan to achieve recruitment targets in countries without current capacity.

Current Countries

Armenia	43
Azerbaijan	28
Georgia	60
Kazakhstan	127
Kyrgyzstan	91
Moldova	49
Montenegro	16
Serbia	46
Tajikistan	36
Turkmenistan	15
Ukraine	319
<hr/> TOTAL	830

Additional Countries

Czech Republic	10
Estonia	10
Hungary	10
Latvia	10

Lithuania	10
Poland	10
Romania	10
Slovakia	10
<u>Slovenia</u>	<u>10</u>
TOTAL	90

Total 920

Note: The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposed project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the program’s needs and availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust and/or add additional countries should conditions change in a partner country and/or if other countries and/or regions are identified as viable alternatives and/or Department priorities. You must propose how to recruit the target number in each of the countries listed, assuming each country will allow recruitment, and you may not deviate from the recruitment targets without prior written approval from the Program Office.

Responsibilities of the Award Recipient

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State is the designated Exchange Visitor Program (J-visa) sponsor with ultimate responsibility for the FLEX program. All organizations receiving awards including their employees, officers, agents, and third parties involved in the administration of the these programs will be considered under the terms of such grants to be third parties: “an entity cooperating with or assisting the sponsor [*i.e.*, the Office of Citizen Exchanges] in the conduct of the sponsor’s program” (22 CFR Section 62.2).

This solicitation covers multiple administrative components that will result in one award covering all components for all participating countries.

C. Detailed Guidance on the Responsibilities of the Award Recipient for the Organizational Components

1. U.S. Embassy Liaison and Consultation

Your organization should meet with Office of Public Affairs/Public Affairs Section (OPA/PAS) at the U.S. Embassies within 30 days of the awarding of the cooperative agreement to discuss the geographic and other priorities for student recruitment in each country. You should summarize the results of this meeting, and subsequent similar meetings, for submission to the ECA program office. OPA/PAS involvement in recruitment, selection, orientations, and alumni activities will be determined through joint discussions between your organization and OPA/PAS.

You should maintain an open consultative relationship with OPA/PAS, as well as with the ECA Program Office. Your organization must have at least monthly contact with OPA/PAS personnel regarding recruitment and selection, security, travel, student issues, and/or other matters that may be of concern. This includes informing them of student successes. In countries where your organization does not have a physical presence to conduct program activities, you must coordinate with the Bureau’s Program Office and with the relevant OPA/PAS wherever possible in order to plan for recruitment and other award activities. In

situations where the political situation prevents your organization from conducting program activities within a particular country, you will need to make special provisions to conduct program functions. Your organization should seek to conduct all of these functions efficiently and cost-effectively.

Ensure that American Embassy personnel are not encumbered by the programs' day-to-day functioning of the programs. If the political situation in any country results in the need for the Embassy to assume more responsibility, your organization should provide assistance in whatever ways are possible. In all cases, field staff in each country should encourage OPA/PAS staff to participate in program events where appropriate, especially as pertains to alumni.

2. Overseas Infrastructure and Communications

Your organization must maintain the appropriate infrastructure in participant countries to carry out the in-country functions of a youth exchange program. The ongoing communications with natural parents, follow-on activities with alumni, and relations with foreign government officials all require that your organization maintain a year-round presence in participant countries. A staff person with U.S. citizenship must head each permanent office with program responsibilities.

3. Program and Promotional Materials

Program Materials

Your organization will design and develop materials that support all components of the program and inform and orient program constituents overseas and in the United States (*i.e.*, participant, host family, and school administrator handbooks, operational guidelines, pre-departure orientation materials, etc.).

Your organization will develop, design, amend, and/or arrange for the publication of new or current program materials. Relevant materials may include support for orientation programming and for the concerns of natural and host parents of program participants, PO local staff, and U.S. school administrators. ECA may request that new program materials be developed. In such situations, the Program Office will usually produce the text and request that your organization provide assistance with the layout and publication. Whenever possible, current materials should be amended to fit changing needs and circumstances overseas and in the United States.

Promotional Materials

All official documents and materials developed for promotional purposes must acknowledge the U.S. Department of State's role as the program sponsor. Materials must be made available for approval by ECA's Program Office prior to publication and distribution. Where appropriate, documents will include the American flag and the State Department seal. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and may distribute materials related to these programs. Your organization must also communicate with POs and ECA to coordinate information for program websites. Please reference D.3I. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients in the NOFO for more information.

4. Online Presence

Social Media, Mobile Technologies, and Department of State Online Communities

Your organization will dedicate staff to coordinate information for program websites and maintain online program webpages that serve to market the program; disseminate information to U.S. and foreign publics; serve as a secure participant application and resource tool for students; and develop and implement strategies

for the effective use of mobile technologies and other social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and platforms for blogging, to promote the programs.

Virtual Exchanges

Your proposal should include a plan to build capacity for virtual exchanges in 3-5 locations; one location per country. The locations should be chosen for accessibility to the Internet and a pool of English-speaking students. It should also aim to reach underserved communities. Your plan should include setting up contacts in these communities, as well as providing computers if necessary. Virtual exchanges should be done in coordination with POs, who will identify appropriate U.S. communities to partner for the exchanges. Please reference D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component in the NOFO for more information.

Department of State Web Resources

Outreach Resources: Your organization is expected to support ECA promotional campaigns by providing information to ECA and updating promotional materials as needed, including the C2C hosting statistics.

In consultation with ECA's Program Office and in coordination with its Alumni Affairs and Web and Social Media teams, as appropriate, develop and implement a strategy to leverage mobile and online technologies and networks, and the Department's digital properties. These may include the International Exchange Alumni website, Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms that are key resources to promote the program, augment the impact of the in-person exchange, and engage program alumni.

Online Communities: All organization staff, program personnel, and regional and local volunteers associated with the FLEX program are expected to be knowledgeable of the Department of State's resources such as but not limited to connect.state.gov and alumni.state.gov, and to register as members or guest members of the websites. Awardee staff must include presentations and demonstrations on these resources at coordinator training and student and host family orientations.

Recipients should effectively promote Department of State resource sites to participants, and participants are expected to become active members at these sites. While organizations may provide their own resources and on-line opportunities, these additional online resources may not replace involvement with Department of State online communities.

5. Student Recruitment, Screening, and Selection

Recruitment and selection must be merit-based and free of the appearance or perception of political influence and corruption. The recruitment process must be open and transparent, making it possible for any student who meets the eligibility criteria to apply. To accomplish this, the process must be under the direct control of Americans at all times. The finalist pool must reflect the cultural, gender, ethnic, national and geographic diversity of each program, and you must maintain recruitment statistics at each stage by country, region, and gender. It is not necessary or even possible, given budget constraints and areas of civil unrest, to conduct recruitment activities in all regions of each country. Recruitment should focus on major population areas, while keeping the process open to applicants from all areas. Contingency plans should be devised for recruitment in countries where host governments may impede the standard process. In all circumstances, geographic diversity should be as broad as conditions allow and include as many underserved communities as possible.

Special pre-program English language enhancement activities may be provided to a small group of selected students to ensure that weaker language qualifications of certain students with disabilities or from more underserved regions are not an excluding factor in their selection. You are encouraged to re-test finalists with low initial English test scores as needed prior to their departure to the United States. This additional language and cultural support enhances the student's ability to adjust to the U.S. host environment and assists in the school placement process.

The last round of finalist selection must be conducted in the United States. The program aims to select students who have personal qualities, motivation, and the academic, language, and social skills to be successful on the exchange. Selection also includes the selection of and training for the application reviewers. All application materials and accompanying documentation must be kept strictly confidential and may not be shared with any organizations, groups, or individuals not directly involved with the FLEX program. Your proposal should describe how you will ensure the security and confidentiality of all applicant documentation.

6. Medical Screening

Arrange in-country medical screenings and clearances to ensure that students are healthy and have immunizations necessary for admission to American schools prior to leaving their home countries when possible. Review medical screening documents in the United States to confirm that all requirements have been met. Perform a special review, carried out by a medical doctor, to confirm that applicants with disabilities are able to travel and complete the program successfully. Provide support for students with disabilities.

7. Students with Disabilities and English Language Needs

Support for Students with Disabilities

In addition to the support liaison(s), one staff member must be identified and have a sufficient amount of his/her time devoted specifically to working with students with disabilities. This person's responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, development of staff expertise in recruiting and supporting students and alumni with disabilities, providing resources and overseeing identification and procurement of reasonable accommodations (equipment, materials and services), providing training opportunities for program implementers, eligibility and placement needs assessments, and preparation of students upon arrival.

Your organization must recruit and provide necessary support and accommodation for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must meet the same standards as all other applicants, but they may receive reasonable accommodations for testing. The recipient must implement a review process carried out by a medical doctor to adequately assess the unique needs of each student and confirm that applicants with disabilities are able to travel and complete the program successfully; ensure that interviews, orientations, and other pre- and post-program activities include reasonable accommodations; coordinate student assignments with each PO to ensure that they have the resources and capacity to place and support the student(s); provide each PO with written, detailed, and accurate support and accommodation needs assessment results for each student prior to student travel; and provide funds for reasonable accommodations as necessary for students with disabilities to POs for the course of the exchange program.

Arrival Orientation(s) for Students with Disabilities

Your organization must coordinate dates with ECA and POs to conduct a pre-program workshop and

assessment event(s) that will include further professional review of each student to confirm and refine a support plan to be coordinated with each respective PO. The workshop will take place after selected participants have arrived in the United States; it will present the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and resources available to people with disabilities in America, and provide independence training and tools for these students. Your organization will serve as a resource through the year by providing funds for reasonable accommodations, guidance, and assistance to POs in meeting the needs of these students.

Support for Students who Need English Language Programming

Your organization must work with and provide funds to POs as appropriate for students who will be identified as needing additional English language support, or students who are not initially identified but whose PO feels like the student would greatly benefit from additional language support. The Language Program should be individualized to meet each student's specific needs, and curriculum should focus on oral/aural proficiency, including conversation practice, comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary development, and sentence patterns. Less emphasis should be placed on grammar, as the English curriculum of schools in Eurasia is primarily grammar-based. In general, language program tutoring should be continued as long as the student and tutor feel it is necessary for the student to succeed on the program. In most cases, students who will be identified as needing additional English language support should be offered a minimum of four hours of intensive instruction each day for no fewer than 15 days.

8. Documentation

You will provide assistance to ECA with regard to collecting, verifying, and entering participant data in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and preparation of DS-2019 forms for finalists and alternates.

9. Coordination of Student Information and Assignment

Develop and implement a plan for the equitable, transparent, and timely distribution of finalist documentation to the POs, taking into consideration such factors as gender, age, country of origin, need for English language enhancement activities, and disability.

10. Student Likeness (Photos and Video) Usage

Request permission from each student's natural family to have photographic or video images of the student taken and reproduced in ECA-approved printed and web-based promotional materials.

11. Pre-Departure Orientation

Your organization must provide uniform pre-departure orientation (PDO) programming to prepare students for life in the United States. Uniformity is essential because it reinforces participants' identity as participants in a U.S. government scholarship program and enables the dissemination of information, policies, and procedures critical to the students' success.

Field staff should encourage the participation of U.S. Embassy personnel in pre-departure orientations whenever possible. In countries where your organization cannot conduct pre-departure orientation sessions, you should make provisions for these orientations to be conducted by U.S. Embassy staff, in a neighboring country, or with the agreement of the program office, in the United States immediately after the students arrive. Your organization also will provide orientations for the natural parents prior to the students' departure for the United States.

Students identified to participate in the pre-program workshop for students with disabilities must have their in-country PDO programming at a time that takes into account their earlier departure from their home countries.

POs must prepare materials specific to their organization for students to be distributed during the PDO. POs will send their materials to your organization by May 1, 2016 for distribution at PDO. Your organization should ensure that all materials provided in this manner identify students as U.S. Department of State sponsored students.

Alternative special provisions (as appropriate) may be made for orienting students from countries where the political situation does not permit an in-country, pre-departure orientation. The information required by regulation to be provided before departure (placement info etc.) must be provided before departure from the home country regardless of where the PDO takes place.

12. Travel

Your organization will arrange for round-trip international tickets, assist with passports and visas, originating from students' home communities in all participating countries to students' host communities. Regular communication and productive collaboration with POs are required to ensure effective coordination of student travel. In consultation with POs, Your organization will develop standard travel procedures for all program participants, will recruit and train student escorts (flight leaders), and will coordinate travel for students who are for any reason unable to travel with an escorted group, including those who are voluntarily or involuntarily repatriated before the end of the exchange.

Travel should be arranged in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible in accordance with the Fly America Act and all other USG travel regulations. All students with disabilities should depart their home countries in time to attend the pre-program workshop coordinated by your organization. Standard travel procedures should be developed – incorporating PO input – that spell out how group flights are scheduled, how individual students are assigned to a flight, how date-change requests from POs should be made, and how and when itineraries will be provided to POs. These procedures should also explain PO travel obligations, including the deadline by which arrival airport codes are due from the POs. A detailed description of the support that will be provided to students while they are in route to the United States should be presented, including airport staffing and emergency communication procedures.

Your organization must recruit and train escorts (flight leaders) for the students and coordinate travel for students who are for any reason unable to travel with an escorted group, including those who are voluntarily or involuntarily repatriated before the end of the exchange. Flight escorts should be selected primarily on their ability to manage a group of teenage travelers. They should be adequately trained to ensure their competence and independence while traveling.

Student Travel Documents

POs must obtain (and retain for three years) copies of the following documents for each program participant:

- Name/photo page of international passport;
- J-1 visa page in passport; and
- DS-2019 with stamp issued at U.S. port of entry.

13. Student Highlights

Your organization will regularly provide timely reports of significant alumni accomplishments throughout the exchange.

14. Communication of Student Concerns

Your organization must provide on-program support for students, their natural parents, and the staff and volunteers of the POs. Efforts must correspond to the Federal Regulations as outlined in 22 CFR 62 and should be closely coordinated with ECA's Program Office. You must report immediately to the ECA Program Office any situation that affects the safety, health, or well-being of a participant, or any student disciplinary action at the second warning/probation level that could ultimately result in the student's repatriation. Only the ECA Youth Programs Division Office can make the decision to terminate the program and repatriate a student; under no circumstances will the organization, its employees, volunteers, or third parties acting on its behalf inform participants that their program will terminate and they will be repatriated without specific directions from the ECA Program Office.

15. Communication with Natural Families

Your organization will communicate and serve as liaison with the students' natural families during the program year and provide on-program support for students, staff, and volunteers in dealing with natural parents about student problems that arise during the program.

16. On-Program Student Support Liaison

Your organization will designate a staff member(s) as a "Student Support Liaison" to serve as a point of contact for ECA on all student support issues, and will regularly collect on-program support updates from POs and report them on a routine basis to the ECA Program Office.

17. Civic Education Workshop (CEW) and Other Events

Your organization will be responsible for developing and conducting a Civic Education Workshop (CEW) for approximately 115 students during the 2016-17 academic year in Washington, D.C. Your organization will coordinate a competitive application and essay contest to select the students, and will collaborate with POs to make final selections and arrange roundtrip transportation from the host communities to Washington, D.C., and for providing room and board for students during their time in Washington, D.C. Ground transportation should be provided for participants in the Washington, D.C. area, including to and from area airports.

The CEW should be arranged for seven days, including arrival and departure, during a time when Congress is in session. This program component should include sessions on U.S. domestic and foreign policy, the role of the media in a civil society, citizen empowerment, volunteerism and community activism, and federalism. The workshop may also provide opportunities to attend cultural events and visit museums and monuments. Your proposal should include a description of the ways in which all students will be encouraged to share what they have learned, both in their U.S. host communities and when they return to their home countries. You should plan to include the participation of several alumni to enhance the students' experience. Also, provide a mechanism for evaluation of CEW in terms of its impact on the students and in fulfilling objectives. The budget narrative should include a separate explanation of costs associated with this component.

Other Events

Your organization may be asked to plan and conduct special events, such as an end-of-year celebration. The end-of-year celebration will include a group of students who are traveling home with an extra day stop in Washington, D.C. The event will include a visit to the Department of State and a reception on Capitol Hill.

18. ECA Academic Year Programs Annual Meeting

Your organization should plan to participate with approximately two representatives per program in the annual ECA academic year programs meeting, to be held for two days in Washington, D.C. (Meeting dates to be determined by ECA.) One representative per program must be from your organization's financial office.

19. Alumni

What happens to participants once they return home is critically important to ensuring the program's success in fulfilling the objectives and in reinforcing the program experience to participants' home countries. Your proposal must provide a clear, systematic plan for alumni tracking. Data must be maintained in a way that will enable the organization to provide information on participants, including their name, address, host school, and host family name and address, in a format compatible with ECA's database systems. ECA will expect reports on alumni to include dates of re-entry into Europe and Eurasia, current places of residence, and current educational/professional activities. There is an existing network of alumni associations throughout Europe and Eurasia, and regular reporting is required on these alumni associations' activities. In addition, you must provide a specific plan for using alumni in outreach efforts to rural areas.

Your organization will be required to organize and conduct special events throughout the regions to celebrate major milestones, like anniversaries or other occasions of note.

Your organization will be required to conduct separate competitions for program alumni as an important way of keeping them involved in the program and their American experience. You also should conduct an alumni photo and video contest as a way of building a reserve of useful program-related photos. Alumni may submit photos they have taken of others involved in program-related alumni activities. Other suggestions for creative and cost-effective alumni competitions are welcomed.

An effort must be made to publicize these competitions widely throughout participant countries to reach as many alumni as possible. Your organization should collaborate with U.S.-based organizations that conduct activities such as the *Global Village for Future Leaders of Business and Industry*. The alumni network should be used to the greatest extent possible to ensure widespread publicity for Department of State-sponsored activities such as the alumni grants competition and the alumni photo contest.

20. Information Management

Your organization must maintain a student placement information database compatible with ECA's Eureka database for quick uploading of information; track applicants through the initial stages of recruitment and through their selection as finalists, placement, and alumni; and prepare and electronically transmit data needed for the Bureau program office to issue DS-2019 forms, allowing ample time for visa processing. The database should be regularly maintained and updated, in order that reports generated contain accurate information. Data should be kept in a format that can be shared with ECA for its alumni database.

21. Financial Management

Your organization must manage fiscal data and accounting for award funding, as required by federal law, including cost-sharing and any funds provided to approved sub-awardees.

22. Subaward Management

If sub-award recipients are involved, ensure that sub-recipients have received a copy of the NOFO and POGI and are versed in all requirements of this POGI, your organization's expectations, J-1 visa regulations, and OMB Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600. Provide oversight to subrecipients that ensures the quality of their performance of duties for the programs under your organization's agreement.

23. Performance Reports

Quarterly Performance Reports: Your organization is responsible for implementing mechanisms to monitor participants and report to the ECA Grants Office and the Program Office success and impact on a quarterly basis. The recipient must submit quarterly performance reports that address, at a minimum, the following topics: past and planned program activities, financial expenditures and status (*i.e.* identify financial variations from original budgets), and the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's overall experience with the programs as well as with individual participants. Such program descriptions should be supported by a qualitative narrative and quantitative data. Your organization should conduct an ongoing evaluation of program success in achieving stated objectives.

Your organization must submit to the Program and Grants Offices an electronic copy of all quarterly performance reports no more than 30 days after the reporting period end dates via GrantSolutions. An SF-PPR "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all performance reports. Quarterly program and financial reports should include both quantitative and qualitative data.

Final Performance Report: Your organization must submit to the Program Office and Grants Office an electronic copy of a final performance report via GrantSolutions. This report must include a program and financial report and should include both qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate impact, strengths, and weaknesses of the exchanges. An SF-PPR "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with the final performance report.

Report Summary Document: In addition to the Final Performance Report identified above, your organization is required to submit a concise one-page document summarizing performance reports, and listing and describing award activities, along with a list of its directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees) via GrantSolutions. The Grants Office will transmit these documents to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA). As required by FFATA reporting requirements, this information will be available to the public via OMB's USASpending.gov website.

24. Evaluation

Your organization must develop and implement a program evaluation plan to monitor and assess the success, effectiveness, and impact of the programs. See the NOFO for more information on developing an evaluation plan.

II.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions Application Checklist. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs"
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of the organization submitting the proposal, and participating organizations, if applicable
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Scope of the project, including the following:
 - a) Number and description of participants
 - b) Main locations of program offices overseas
 - c) General Nature of activities
 - d) Funding level requested from the Bureau
 - e) Total program cost
 - f) Total administrative cost
 - g) Total per-student cost

Narrative

In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. **Vision** (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. **Organizational Structure and Capacity**
 - Describe your organization's infrastructure. Be specific about number of offices, their location, and how they are/will be staffed and equipped, keeping in mind the requirement for American oversight of the whole recruitment/selection process.
 - Include a description of your arrangements with local government authorities that will enable you to function and work with local educational institutions. Address how these arrangements will be made in countries where recruitment does not currently take place.
 - Describe your alternative strategies for recruitment and staffing in areas or countries where challenges may impede standard recruitment procedures.
3. **Participating Organizations**
 - Describe your organization's staffing to oversee the FLEX program.
 - Include sub-recipients if applicable.
 - List individuals by name and position, and provide a brief description of each person's responsibilities.
4. **Program Activities**
 - Recruitment Process – Briefly describe the recruitment process, including your plan for advertising the competition and for scheduling the various stages of application and their locations. Explain your plan to begin recruitment in countries new to your organization and how the branding will change. Describe any particular strategies for addressing situations where the political situation may affect the recruitment process. Explain how your application materials will ensure selection of the most qualified students and ensure the integrity of the merit-based process. Describe your plans for recruiting students with significant disabilities, including methods for increasing the applicant pool of qualified students with disabilities. Explain how you will amend recruitment materials to make them accessible to applicants with visual, auditory, or motor disabilities. A copy of the participant application should be included as an attachment. Provide your work plan/timeframe for recruitment/selection activities.
 - Selection Process – Briefly describe the selection process, including your plan for recruitment and training of application evaluators. Explain how you will ensure that finalists represent a diverse cross-section with regard to country of origin, gender, age, etc. In your work plan, include your arrangement (timeframe and

method) for distributing finalist documentation to the POs.

- **Travel** – Describe how your organization will efficiently and effectively arrange round-trip domestic travel and ticketing of finalists from their home communities to the gateway cities in Eurasia where they will depart for the United States. Provide your plan for the participants’ international and U.S. domestic travel to their host communities and for their return. Describe situations where unusual travel plans must be put into effect because of challenging political conditions. Explain how you will ensure thorough and appropriate communication with POs regarding travel, and how you will incorporate their input into the procedures for travel.
- **Orientations** – Describe your plan for participant orientations prior to their departure.
- **The Civic Education Workshop** – Briefly describe the CEW format and provide a sample itinerary.

5. **Diversity** – Describe how you will proactively seek to maximize diversity, both in program participants and program content (*e.g.*, in orientation and alumni programming).
6. **Multiplier Effect** – Provide a plan for continued contact with alumni to ensure that they are tracked over time, utilized and/or organized as alumni.
7. **Program Evaluation** – Describe the ways in which your organization will evaluate success in achieving its objectives and those of the program. Focus on methods that will be used to assess problem situations and develop plans to address these. Include specific materials that will be used for the purpose of assessment and evaluation.
8. **Follow-on/Alumni** – Describe how your organization will maintain alumni programming and special events, including provisions for countries where circumstances may prevent you from conducting regular alumni activities. Include details on any special alumni projects that are planned. Emphasize the plan for using alumni to do outreach to remote regions both for increasing alumni participation and for attracting potential applicants from those regions. Indicate how your organization plans to make use of alumni in the selection process, orientation, and other program components. Describe the plan for conducting the alumni grants competition, the alumni photo contest, and any other alumni competitions you anticipate conducting. Explain how your organization will assist alumni who participated in special program components in the United States to implement what they learned after they return home. If using other alumni resources, such as an alumni newsletter, your proposal must include information on how and how often the newsletter will be used, advertised and distributed.
9. **Program Management** – Describe how your organization will maintain communication between and among the OPA/PAS at the U.S. Embassies,

the natural families, POs, ECA, and other organizations administering components of the programs, including any special provisions you will make in new countries or where challenging situations present obstacles to normal procedures.

10. **Information Management** – Describe how you will maintain a database on applicants and their progression to either selection or rejection, participants on program, and alumni following their return home. Explain how you will update data on current participants in a timely fashion. Demonstrate that you have the ability to use the data to provide custom reports based on reporting requirements and ECA’s needs. List the reports you will provide to ECA at the start of the academic year, based on the data collected.

Calendar of Activities/Itinerary

The Calendar of Activities/Itinerary is a monthly plan of action or timetable that demonstrates the timing and organization of all responsibilities for the award. These should include, but not be limited to, monitoring local staff, students, and families; training events; submission of quarterly reports; and dispersal of funds and information. This is not part of the 20-page limit on the Program Narrative.

Budget Submission

Applicants must submit a Form SF-424A along with a comprehensive line item budget. The budget must include and distinguish between funds requested under the letter of solicitation and funds applicants acquire through cost-sharing or from other sources. You must submit a Program Activity Cost Summary. Include an explanatory budget narrative and submit per participant and total costs. Per participant costs are calculated as the total grant funds requested divided by the number of participants.

All budgets will be reviewed for cost-efficiency, including the percentage of the grant that will be used for administrative expenses. Your organization will be responsible for managing fiscal data and accounting for funding, as required by federal law, including cost-sharing and funds provided to approved sub-recipient organization(s).

An accident and sickness health benefit plan or insurance for participants while they are in the U.S. is provided by the POs under separate grants.

Each budget must include the following costs:

- Overseas infrastructure costs
- Overseas recruitment costs
- International travel costs
- Selection costs
- Staff travel (*i.e.*, expenses for one person per program, including sub-award recipients, to Washington, D.C. to attend a two-day ECA Youth Programs Division annual meeting)

- Civic Education Workshop costs for 115 students during the 2016-17 academic year
- Alumni costs

Budgets also typically include but are not necessarily limited to the following items:

- Stipends and honoraria for non-salaried staff and volunteers
- Program materials (including an explanation of how materials will be used)
- Administrative costs (salaries, communication, and supplies)
- Promotional materials, including social media and website development and maintenance (Proposals must offer examples and provide substantive justification for promotional requests and how the funds will advance marketing needs specific to the programs. General, ongoing promotion and marketing expenses of the organization may not be requested as a direct cost.)

ECA requested budget should not include excess baggage fees for international travel, which may be cost-shared.

Additional Information to be Submitted

- Letters of endorsement
- Resumes and CVs (resumes of all new staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)

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:

- 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.
- Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

As part of final program reporting requirements, your organization also will 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.

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 Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of 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.

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://J1visa.state.gov> or from:

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

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The NOFO indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the competition, contact Callie Ward at (202) 632-6431, wardca@state.gov or Amy Schulz at (202) 632-6052, schulzaj@state.gov.