Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO):　　**FY 2016** *Communities Connecting Heritage Program*
Announcement Type:　　*New Cooperative Agreement*
Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-16-047
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: *19.415*
Key Date/Application Deadline: *May 27, 2016*

Executive Summary:
In support of U.S. Department of State foreign policy objectives, the FY 2016
Communities Connecting Heritage program is an international people-to-people
exchange program that engages communities and empowers people through the
exploration of cultural heritage issues. The program brings together U.S. and
international communities, especially youth, women, ethnic minorities and other
underserved groups, through collaborative exchange projects that focus on cultural
heritage and may also include social issues, such as social inclusion, interfaith tolerance,
women's empowerment, and/or youth development. The program will include six to
eight international exchange projects that develop and showcase new partnerships
between U.S. and foreign cultural organizations and the communities they serve, while
advancing cultural heritage through community outreach and public education.

Communities Connecting Heritage is a new initiative. Bureau grant guidelines require
that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international
exchanges be limited to $130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one
cooperative agreement, in the amount of $800,000, 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
under this competition. Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition.
If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be
declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

A.   Program Purpose:

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.

Cultural diplomacy, an essential facet of America's foreign policy, enhances cross-
cultural understanding and opens new avenues of dialogue and collaboration between

individuals and nations. In support of U.S. Department of State foreign policy objectives, the FY 2016 Communities Connecting Heritage is an international people-to-people exchange program that engages communities and empowers youth through the exploration of cultural heritage issues. It creates partnerships that incorporate artistic collaboration, community engagement, and educational programming in order to enrich both the international and American participants. Programs are implemented in close coordination with U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad. The goals of the Communities Connecting Heritage are to:

- Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries;
- Showcase the role of cultural organizations as vibrant, engaged and influential institutions in contemporary society and convey the importance of tangible and intangible cultural heritage to community and national identity;
- Increase awareness and understanding of American art, culture, values and society for international participants and audiences;
- Foster opportunities for educational outreach and community engagement with diverse and underserved communities, especially youth (ages 12-25), women, ethnic minorities, and refugees;
- Provide unique opportunities for artistic collaboration, engagement and/or public exhibition between American and international participants;
- Create opportunities for sustaining relationships and collaboration between U.S. and international participants and institutions that endure beyond the exchanges.

A.1   Program Description:

ECA invites proposal submissions from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) to administer the FY 2016 Communities Connecting Heritage program. Applicants should demonstrate expertise and experience in managing and implementing international educational and cultural exchange programs, particularly in the arts and/or cultural heritage preservation. Furthermore, Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to $130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one cooperative agreement, in the amount of $800,000, 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 under this competition.

The Communities Connecting Heritage program brings together U.S. and international communities, especially youth, women, ethnic minorities and other underserved groups, through collaborative exchange projects that focus on cultural heritage and may also include social issues, such as social inclusion, interfaith tolerance, women's empowerment, and/or youth development. The program will connect a community in the United States and a community overseas through partnerships between cultural

organizations (including, but not limited to, art centers, cultural associations, historical sites, museums, libraries, and universities) that work together to execute exchange projects that engage participants, primarily youth, while focusing on a particular cultural heritage site or element of intangible cultural heritage.

For the purposes of this award, the meaning of cultural heritage is based on the UNESCO definition of the term and includes the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. For this award, tangible cultural heritage includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts, etc., which are considered worthy of preservation for the future. These include objects significant to the archaeology, architecture, science or technology of a specific culture. For this award, intangible cultural heritage involves traditions or living expressions inherited from ancestors and passed on to descendants, including oral traditions, traditional performing arts, festive events, and the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

The program will include six to eight exchange projects that develop and showcase these new partnerships between U.S. and foreign cultural organizations and the communities they serve, while preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage, reinforcing positive narratives, and advancing cultural heritage through community outreach and public education. Following are examples of *possible* project types:

- high school students in two different countries learning computer skills to document and share their traditional folk music with one another while working together to collaboratively develop new performance pieces based on the similarities and differences in their musical heritage;
- teenage girls studying the textile collections of one another's museums in order to compare and contrast the history of their communities and develop new garments expressing their individual and collective identities;
- university students working with underserved community members to capture significant local sites, collect oral histories, and document objects for an interactive website designed to give voice to the community while also preserving its history;
- at-risk students learning photography skills to explore themes central to their identities, such as family, tradition, and migration, in order to develop a public exhibition that showcases their cultural heritage.

The exchange projects should each last approximately five to six months and should include a variety of activities that continuously connect the communities, such as virtual video chats, simultaneous field trips to local sites, online discussion boards, and the physical exchange of project materials and products. In addition, each project must include an in-person exchange for approximately five to ten U.S. participants and five to ten foreign participants at separate times for approximately two to four weeks each. The in-person exchange portion of each project should include diverse opportunities for the travelers to engage with the community they are visiting, such as visits to local schools,

meetings with local government representatives, participation in volunteer activities, and excursions to sites and organizations involved in cultural heritage issues and activities. Participants selected to travel must be actively engaged in the exchange project and could include students at least fourteen years old, teachers, community leaders, members of the participating cultural organizations and/or professionals in the cultural heritage field, among others.

The collaborative exchange projects must focus on the role of communities and cultural organizations in preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage, strengthening community and cultural identity, reinforcing positive narratives, and countering the destruction of cultural heritage. Projects may also choose to address the role of communities and cultural organizations in encouraging civic participation and social inclusion by representing the interests of all community members, including young people, immigrants, women and girls, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and other underserved groups, thereby ensuring their active engagement and equal contribution to society.

Targeted regions for the projects include Europe and Eurasia, the Near East and North Africa, and South and Central Asia. ECA will determine specific countries within the regions. 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 the availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust and/or add additional countries and/or regions should conditions change in a partner country and/or if other countries and/or regions are identified as viable alternatives and/or Department priorities. The final roster of projects will be approved by ECA, based on the Department's overall strategic priorities, in consultation with U.S. Embassies and the award recipient.

A.2   Program Design: The program design must contain a detailed and achievable plan for the award recipient to engage American and foreign participants through programming that connects U.S. and foreign cultural institutions and their communities, especially youth, women, ethnic minorities and other underserved groups, through collaborative exchange projects focused on cultural heritage. A secondary focus of the projects may be on social issues, such as social inclusion, interfaith tolerance, women's empowerment, and/or youth development.

A proposal for funding under this competition should include a plan for a) identifying and recruiting U.S. and foreign cultural organizations and/or exchange participants to participate in projects, b) reviewing and recommending projects for support, c) ensuring embassy support and involvement through the program planning and implementation phases, and d) effectively implementing and monitoring the exchange activities. A proposal should also include the following elements:

- Dynamic public outreach and public programming, both in the United States and overseas, with a special emphasis on reaching non-traditional audiences;

- A description of how American and foreign cultural organizations and the communities they serve will benefit from participating in the projects;
- Travel, at separate times, for approximately five to ten U.S. participants and five to ten foreign participants for approximately two to four weeks each per project;
- Activities that may be successfully completed within the second year of this cooperative agreement;
- Activities that directly address the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and focus on involving young and diverse audiences within the local communities;
- Opportunities for alumni, including travelers and exchange participants who were actively engaged in the projects, to reconnect them with the program and/or expand upon past projects.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and the award recipient organization are outlined below.

ECA's activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

1. Determine eligible countries and regions;
2. Facilitate communication within the U.S. Department of State, including the regional bureaus, and overseas missions, as appropriate;
3. Advise and provide approval on the suitability of projects;
4. Provide advice and assistance regarding the execution of all program components;
5. Review and approve program schedules and materials;
6. Review and approve media and outreach plans;
7. Facilitate the J-1 visa process;
8. Represent the U.S. Government at exchange events, including opening and closing events, such as orientations and debriefings;
9. Monitor and evaluate the program through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits;

The responsibilities of the award recipient are as follows:

Administration:
1. Generate interest among the cultural heritage field in order to identify potential partner cultural organizations abroad and in the United States and to recruit appropriate candidates for participation in the program;
2. Prepare and submit to ECA program staff programmatic and communication timelines for all program activities;
3. Ensure that U.S. Embassies and Consulates are consulted during major elements of program planning, including, but not limited to, the site and

location of project activities, project and participant selection process, orientations, and travel itineraries;

4. Maintain liaison with ECA and program participants to ensure the program schedule is compatible with the program's needs and objectives;

5. Contact participants before the exchange activities to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to solicit information regarding specific requirements (dietary, medical, travel etc.);

6. Assist participants with passport, visa, immunizations, and other pre-project preparations;

7. Cover the cost of and arrange all international and domestic travel (complying with the Fly America Act) and lodging for the participants;

8. Enroll the participants in a health insurance plan for the period of the exchange. Fellows can be enrolled in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) with no charge to the cooperative agreement. Alternatively, you may use your own plan as long as it offers the same or better coverage- and costs no more than $50 per person per month; premiums may be included in the agreement request;

9. Make arrangements for interpreters for both the American participants abroad and foreign travelers to the United States, if necessary. Coordinate and identify escorts and/or interpreter involvement, including airport meet and greet;

10. Ensure that information on program websites and social media outlets is current and accurate;

11. Develop and implement a media and marketing plan in coordination with ECA and its Public Affairs and Strategic Communications section that includes, but is not limited to, program branding, press strategy, press/media packets, program website and social media plan;

12. Prepare necessary educational and promotional materials that support the program. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain ownership rights of the name, copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program, as it sees fit.

Exchange Activities:

1. Devise innovative and multi-faceted plans for the overseas and U.S.-based portions of the projects with detailed timelines for accomplishing each project activity;

2. Devise strategies for partnering the U.S. and foreign communities.

3. Provide ECA program staff and program participants with final program schedules no later than two weeks prior to the start of each exchange;

4. Orient organizations involved in hosting participants or supporting program activities and their staff to the goals of the program;

5. Arrange for pre-departure orientation sessions and/or opening events for each group of travellers to provide cultural, programmatic, and logistical information;

6. Arrange for closing events at the end of each project to publicly showcase the results and impact of the exchange;
7. Encourage follow-on projects (not supported by funding from this award) in order to continue and deepen the relationships developed through the projects;

Project Management:
1. Provide day-to-day monitoring of the program to prevent and/or manage any issues or complications that may arise;
2. Work in consultation with ECA program staff on the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements;
3. Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of each project, as well as the overall program;
4. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of any sub-grant relationships with partner organizations. Your proposal should clearly outline all duties and responsibilities of any organizations with which you plan to partner; describe work requirements and provide representative budgets. You must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget, as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets.

Projects that include innovative programmatic activities, the use of new technologies, substantial travel, and concrete follow-on plans will be considered more competitive under Quality of the Program Idea and Program Planning Review Criterion. Program models should strive to incorporate innovative uses for video and/or other media as a program element and/or to document project activities. Examples include, but may not be limited to, digital video conferencing, short films, interactive websites and social media.

A.2.c Program Dates: This cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2016 and close on or about August 31, 2018. It is anticipated that the first nine months of the program will be spent on identifying and solidifying the six to eight international projects. Each project should be executed within a five to six month timeframe during the second year of the award period, with the travel components imbedded within that timeframe. Each of the two to four week travel components may begin at a time that is mutually agreed upon by ECA, the award recipient and the U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Proposals will need to contain a detailed timeline proposing dates of each program element.

B.   Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A.2 Program Design.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2016

Approximate Total Funding: $800,000

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Approximate Average Award: $800,000

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: $800,000

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2016

Anticipated Project Completion Date: August 31, 2018

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

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/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
    a. Number and description of participants
    b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
    c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
    d. Fields covered
    e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

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. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

-   Detailed Budget (See Budget section for additional info.)
-   Calendar of activities/itinerary, if applicable
-   Letters of endorsement
-   Resumes and CVs (resumes of all new staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
-   First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

Please note: All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation).

In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 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, 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.

C. Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3). Applicants should demonstrate expertise and experience in managing and implementing international educational and cultural exchange programs, particularly in the arts and/or cultural heritage preservation.

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

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum

amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.)   Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to $130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in the amount of $800,000, 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 under this competition.

b.)   Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements and guidelines listed herein or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

–   Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note**: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package.

The collaborative exchange projects must focus on the role of communities and cultural organizations in preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage, strengthening community and cultural identity, reinforcing positive narratives, and countering the destruction of cultural heritage. Proposals that do not directly address this topic will be deemed technically ineligible.

Projects may also choose to address the role of communities and cultural organizations in encouraging civic participation and social inclusion by representing the interests of all community members, including young people, immigrants, women and girls, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and other underserved groups, thereby ensuring their active engagement and equal contribution to society. Proposals that incorporate this theme will be deemed more competitive. Please see the Review Process section for more information.

D. Application and Submission Information:

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

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:
Please contact the Cultural Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/CU, SA-5, 3rd floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-2834 or 202-632-6415 or PeregrinMS@state.gov and BlissA@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

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

Please specify Michele Peregrin and Amy Bliss and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

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

Please read all information before downloading.

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

D.3a.   You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access http://www.dnb.com or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

D.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 (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

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

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must

review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

D.3d.   You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

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

D.3e.   In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f.   If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g.   **All ECA awards recipient organizations** must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

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

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

D.3h. **ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this NOFO, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this NOFO will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA 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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i.   **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j.   **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 NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program <u>outputs</u> and <u>outcomes</u>. <u>Outputs</u> are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount.

Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

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

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

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

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

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

D.3k. **Virtual Exchange Component:** ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more

virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

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

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

D.3n.   Applicants must submit SF-424A – "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

BUDGET
All budget guidelines must be followed. The budget should indicate any cost sharing in the form of in-kind or cash contributions to the program from sources other than the Department of State. See standard guidelines (PSI) in the Solicitation Package for information on cost sharing and the cost of audits.

The total Department of State-funded budget (including both program and administrative costs) should not exceed $800,000. Significant cost sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau urges applicant organizations to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant organization and other sources. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets based on the needs of the program and the availability of U.S. Government funding.

Please be sure to include a **Summary Budget** on a separate page before the line-item budget. Following the line-item budget, please include a **Budget Narrative** that concisely explains how costs were calculated and the rationale for including them in the budget.

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

1. Maximum limits on cooperative agreement funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-$100 per Fellow; Conference room rental costs-$250 per day per room; Consultant/interpreters/group coordinators/escorts fees and honoraria-$200/day; Cultural allowance-$150 per participant; honoraria for foreign Fellows-$200/day; per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs- 5% of the cooperative agreement. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share any rates that exceed these amounts;
2. Domestic and international travel for participants and staff, including transit costs if applicable, (American carriers or code-share airlines must be used for overseas travel whenever possible);
3. Airport taxes and country exit fees;
4. Shipping and handling for materials;
5. Excess and overweight baggage fees (excess baggage estimates may be subject to change once actual programs are scheduled);
6. Visa fees;
7. Subaward recipient organizations may be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective award recipient and subaward recipient should be included in the proposal. Subawards must be itemized in the budget under General Program Expenses;
8. Press kits and promotional materials, trip itinerary booklets, educational materials and presentation items;
9. Other justifiable expenses related to program activities including but not limited to translation of outreach and/or educational materials.

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

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:
Application Deadline Date: Friday, May 27, 2016
Method of Submission:
Applications may only be submitted electronically
through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

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

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations

immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

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

Therefore, we strongly recommend 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

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.

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

E.   APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. REVIEW PROCESS
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 and Program Planning: Your proposal for the 2016-2018 Cycle of the FY 2016 Communities Connecting Heritage program should include a program idea that is substantive, relevant to the Bureau's mission, original and creative. Program objectives should be stated clearly and should reflect your organization's experience with cultural heritage, community engagement and an expertise implementing international exchange programs. The program objectives should address the cultural heritage and social inclusion theme; proposals that address both will be deemed more competitive. A timeline and a work plan must clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved in a feasible fashion and should adhere to the program overview and guidelines. The full range of program activities should be considered in this section, including the participant selection process, program orientations, strategies for reaching youth and underserved community members, project implementation, and follow-on activities. Projects that include innovative programmatic activities, the use of new technologies, substantial travel, and concrete follow-on plans will be considered more competitive under Quality of the Program Idea and Program Planning Review Criterion.

2. Institutional Capacity: Your proposal should include your organization's mission statement. The proposal should reflect your expertise in the subject areas and expertise in planning international exchange programs. The Bureau will consider an organization's past performance in previous international exchange projects supported through State Department grant programs. The Bureau strongly encourages you to submit letters of support and commitment from proposed partner organizations.

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 (e.g. selection of participants and partner

organizations) and of program design, content and implementation (e.g. orientations, workshops, follow-on activities). You should refer to the Bureau's Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines in the PSI for guidance.

4. Program Evaluation: Proposals should include a detailed plan to monitor and evaluate the program, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. Competitive evaluation plans describe how you will measure the project's success at meeting program objectives and should include draft data collection instruments, such as surveys and questionnaires. ECA is especially interested in the qualitative and quantitative results of project activities in terms of the impact on audiences as well as on participants. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded, in addition to quarterly reports.

5. Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing: The budget in your proposal must demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

F.   Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. **Award Notices**:
Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

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

For assistance awards involving Iran:

A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact Program Officer Michele Peregrin at (202) 632-2834 or PeregrinMS@state.gov and Amy Bliss at (202) 632-6415 or BlissA@state.gov for additional information.

For assistance awards involving the Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza:

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S**.** laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Program Officer Michele Peregrin at 202-632-2834 or PeregrinMS@state.gov and Amy Bliss at 202-632-6415 or BlissA@state.gov for additional information.

SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA AND FUTURE CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS (CURRENTLY IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN)
(Revised August 2014)

Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over $150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment. The DoS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number". The following information shall be provided:

1. Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:
      a. Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
      b. Total Number Host Country Personnel:
      c. Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The Recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, Recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

F.2   **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**:
Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

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

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants
https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:
   Mandatory:
   1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: http://www.dpm.psc.gov/. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to GrantSolutions.gov, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.
   2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
   3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

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

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

F.4. Program Data Requirements:
  Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.

2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least one week prior to the official opening of the activity.

G.   Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Michele Peregrin and Amy Bliss, U.S. Department of State, Cultural Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/CU, SA-5, 3rd floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-2834, PeregrinMS@state.gov, (202) 632-6415, BlissA@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

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

H. Other Information:

Notice:
The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Evan Ryan   April 21, 2016
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State