

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):** FY 2017 Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Comparative Public Policymaking

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAAE-17-014

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.009

**Key Dates/Application Deadline:** May 23, 2017

**Executive Summary:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), invites proposal submissions for the design and implementation of one (1) Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Comparative Public Policymaking to take place in summer 2018.

Taking place over the course of six weeks at a U.S. academic institution, the Institute should be organized for a group of approximately 30 undergraduate students from Pakistan on the theme of Comparative Public Policymaking. The Institute will take place in summer 2018; further information on the scheduling of the Institute can be found in section A.2. The Institute should include four weeks of academic residency followed by a two week integrated educational travel component that will expose participants to a different region of the United States. This component should conclude with a minimum of three days in Washington, D.C.

ECA plans to issue one cooperative agreement for the implementation of one Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders from Pakistan and welcomes applications from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations and accredited post-secondary education institutions, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3). (see Eligibility Information, section C.).

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. The awarding of the non-competitive continuations in FY 2018 and FY 2019 is contingent on the availability of funding and successful performance.

Support for this program is being provided from FY2016/2017 Economic Support Funds (ESF) that are being transferred to ECA for obligation. It is ECA's intent to award one cooperative agreement in the amount of \$545,000 for the base year, pending the availability of FY 2016/FY 2017 ESF. It is unknown whether additional funding will be made available to support additional programs in FY 2018 and FY 2019. However, pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funding in subsequent fiscal years, ECA reserves the right to exercise non-competitive continuations (formerly called option years) for an estimated combined total amount of \$1,635,000. Please see section B. Federal Award Information below for additional details. **In the event that the levels of Economic Support Funds (ESF) change, ECA reserves the right to amend or modify the composition of the final award, as well as the final funding levels, based upon the quality of proposals submitted, the availability of funds, and other factors related to long-term foreign policy objectives.**

## **A. Program Description:**

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.” The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation. Support for this program is being provided from FY2016/2017 Economic Support Funds (ESF) that are being transferred to ECA for obligation.

**A.1. Purpose:** The Study of the U.S. Institutes for Student Leaders are intensive academic programs that provide groups of foreign undergraduate students with a deeper understanding of U.S. society, culture, and institutions. Institute activities include community service, leadership development, and opportunities to interact with U.S. peers. The Institutes address the influence of principles and values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual rights, freedom of expression, equality, diversity, and tolerance, and also incorporate a focus on contemporary American life. Local site visits and educational travel directly complement the academic program and provide opportunities to observe varied aspects of American life and to discuss lessons learned in the academic program. This Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders from Pakistan is six weeks in length. Participants spend approximately four weeks at an academic institution and approximately two weeks on an integrated educational travel component, including a minimum of three days in Washington, D.C. typically at the conclusion of the Institute.

The academic program includes group discussions, experiential learning activities, and exercises that focus on the theme. It also includes a leadership development component with sessions on topics such as teambuilding, collective problem-solving skills, effective communication, and management skills. Institutes incorporate community service activities in which the participants experience firsthand how not-for-profit organizations and volunteerism play a key role in American civil society.

All Institutes foster ECA’s mission to promote mutual understanding between citizens of the United States and other countries. Thus, the programs include robust opportunities for participants to meet Americans from a variety of backgrounds, to interact with their U.S. peers, and to speak to appropriate student and civic groups about their experiences and life in their home countries. **Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for more information.**

## **A.2. Institute Theme**

The Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Comparative Public Policymaking should provide approximately 30 Pakistani undergraduates with an overview of U.S. history and government; the core of the course should engage Pakistani students and approximately 20 American students in a comparative analysis of governments and policies in the two countries. Please note that ECA will not fund the participation of these American students in the coursework, integrated educational travel component, or enrichment activities. The Institute will also examine how organizations, the media, and the private sector influence government policy. Within the broader frame of the public policy process, participants will be exposed to specific public policy questions on topics such as public finance, rule of law, education, healthcare, environment, economic issues, social welfare, and foreign policy. To the greatest extent possible, the Institute should offer a hands-on approach to public policymaking. The class should be crafted to maximize interaction and cross-cultural study between Pakistani and American students in order to allow them to share experiences and viewpoints. In addition, the Institute should allow participants to gain practical skills used in the analysis of public policy. The expected dates of the Institute are June and July, 2018. ECA reserves the right to change these dates based on the needs of the program.

**A.3. Program Administration:** ECA is seeking detailed proposals from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations and accredited post-secondary higher education institutions (community colleges, liberal arts colleges, public and private universities) with established reputations in a field or discipline related to the specific program theme and meeting the eligibility requirements outlined under section C. below.

All proposals should demonstrate thematic expertise, as well as any Pakistan-specific expertise. **ECA reserves the right to amend or modify the number of participants, as well as the final funding levels based upon the availability of funds and other factors related to long-term foreign policy objectives.**

**A.4. Participants:** Participants in the Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Comparative Public Policymaking will be highly motivated undergraduate students from Pakistan with proficient English language skills.

The award recipient will not participate in the selection of candidates. Participants will be identified and nominated by the U.S. embassy and consulates in Pakistan with final selection made by ECA. The Institute will host approximately 30 participants.

Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for more information on participants.

**A.5. Program Dates:** Pending availability of funds, the anticipated award dates for the cooperative agreements will be on or about September 1, 2017 and end on or around

March 30, 2021. The Institute should be approximately 42 days in length; this should include participant arrival and departure days. The Institute will take place in summer 2018.

**A.6. Program Guidelines:** The award recipient is responsible for the conception and structure of the Institute and its agenda. Proposals must provide a detailed and comprehensive narrative describing the objectives of the Institute; the title, scope, and content of each session; planned site visits, and how each session relates to the overall Institute theme. Proposals must include a syllabus that indicates the subject matter for each lecture, panel discussion, group presentation, or other activity. The syllabus also should confirm or provisionally identify proposed speakers, trainers, and session leaders, and clearly show how assigned readings will advance the goals of each session.

Please see section D. Application and Submission Information for application submission requirements. Proposals will be reviewed on the basis of their responsiveness to the six review criteria listed in this NOFO. The accompanying POGI provides program-specific guidelines that all proposals must address fully.

**Please note:** In a cooperative agreement, the Study of the U.S. Branch (ECA/A/E/USS) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA/A/E/USS may request that the recipient make modifications to the academic residency and/or educational travel components of the program. The award recipient will be required to obtain approval of significant program changes in advance of their implementation. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and the recipient are outlined in the attached POGI.

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

## **B. Federal Award Information:**

**Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement.** ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under section A. Program Description above and in the attached POGI.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2017 base year, \$545,000, pending the availability of FY 2016/FY 2017 ESF; FY 2018 – non-competitive continuation year-one, \$545,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funding; FY 2019 – non-

competitive continuation year-two, \$545,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funding.

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$1,635,000 - This figure represents the funding for one Institute for the base year plus two non-competitive continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The Institute is funded at up to \$545,000 per year, pending the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** One

**Floor of Award Range:** None.

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$545,000 for one Institute, pending the availability of ESF (for the base year only)

**Approximate Average Award:** \$545,000 for one Institute, pending the availability of ESF (for the base year only)

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 1, 2017, pending the availability of ESF funds

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** March 30, 2021. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

**Additional Information:** Cooperative agreements will be awarded for a period of 12 months (base year) with non-competitive continuations (formerly referred to as option years) for a second and third period of 12 and 18 months, respectively, to ensure adequate time for post-Institute follow-on activities. At this time, it is unknown whether additional funding will be made available to support additional programs in FY 2018 and FY 2019. However, pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, ECA reserves the right to exercise non-competitive continuations (formerly called option years) for an estimated combined total amount of \$1,635,000. ECA will notify the recipient of its intention to exercise or not to exercise a non-competitive continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a non-competitive continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

### **C. Eligibility Information:**

**C.1. Eligible applicants:** Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations and accredited post-secondary higher education institutions (community colleges, liberal arts colleges, public and private universities), meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

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

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For

accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

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

**1. Experience in Conducting International Exchanges:** ECA grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in ECA funding. ECA anticipates making one award in the amount of up to \$545,000, pending the availability of FY 2016/FY 2017 ESF transfer funding, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

**2. Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process. It is ECA's intent to fund one Institute as a result of this solicitation. ECA anticipates funding this Institute with Economic Support Funds (ESF). **In the event that supplemental funding for this competition becomes available from ESF or other funding sources, ECA reserves the right to increase or modify the final funding levels and participant numbers based upon the availability of funds and other factors related to long-term foreign policy objectives .**

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.

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

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

**D.1. Contact Information to Request an Application Package:** In the event an applicant cannot obtain an electronic application package from Grants.gov, please contact Macon Barrow, Program Officer, The Study of the U.S. Branch, at

BarrowME@state.gov, (202) 632-9435 to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the title of this NOFO when making your request.

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

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition. ECA/A/E/USS also provides a sample budget in Microsoft Excel format. You may request that template in editable format by contacting Program Officer Macon Barrow at BarrowME@state.gov.

Please specify Macon Barrow 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 ECA'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 section D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission below.

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

**D.3b. Required Proposal Elements:** 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 and the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) for additional formatting and technical requirements.

**D.3c. Required Registrations:** All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and

reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

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

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

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



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

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

**D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the 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 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

**D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines:** Pursuant to ECA's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," ECA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate

influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**D.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 must provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

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

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

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

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

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

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

perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to carry forward the unobligated balance.

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

- i. The request to carry forward an unobligated balance must include:
  - a. A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,
  - b. A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

**D.3o. Allowable Costs:** Please refer to section F.2. of this document for information on allowable costs. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

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

Application Deadline Date: **Tuesday, May 23, 2017, 11:59pm Washington, DC time**

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](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, D.C. 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:**

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

**E.1. Review Criteria:** Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

**1. Quality of Program Plan and Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:**

Proposals should exhibit originality and clearly demonstrate how the Institute will meet the objectives laid out in this solicitation. A detailed itinerary and staff work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Activities should be reasonable, feasible, and form a coherent program for participant exploration of the topic. Competitive proposals will clearly promote ECA's mission: to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations.

**2. Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of ECA's diversity policy. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program design and implementation, and how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity. Proposals should also indicate how reasonable accommodations for participant needs, including disability accommodations, will be implemented.

**3. Project Evaluation:** As explained in section D.3j., proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives are recommended.

**4. Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support, as well as

institutional direct funding contributions.

- 5. Institutional Track Record/Ability:** Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs (past exchange programs need not have been ECA funded). ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by the ECA Grants Staff. ECA will consider the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be fully qualified to achieve the project's goals.
- 6. Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should discuss provisions made for follow-up with returned participants as a means of establishing longer-term individual and institutional linkages. Proposals also should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without ECA support) ensuring that ECA supported programs are not isolated events. Please refer to the POGI for additional information on follow-on activities.

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

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

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

**F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:** Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:  
Office of Management and Budget Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov) website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

<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 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](http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov). The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once the Department has approved a financial report, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [GrantSolutions.gov](http://www.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](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
4. Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of non-competitive continuations (formerly referred to as option years), applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grants Officer and Program Officer.

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

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

**G. Agency Contacts:**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Macon Barrow at, tel: 202-632-9435 and email: BarrowME@state.gov.

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

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

**H. Other Information:**

**Notice:**

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

Mark Taplin  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

March 23, 2017

