Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO): FY 2019 Study of the U.S. Institutes for Student Leaders
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0005475
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.009
Application Deadline: January 11, 2019

Executive Summary: The Study of the U. S. Branch (ECA/A/E/USS), Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), invites proposal submissions from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations and accredited U.S. post-secondary educational institutions (community colleges, liberal arts colleges, public and private universities) meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) (see section C. Eligibility Information) to design and implement Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSIs) for Student Leaders, pending the availability of FY 2019 funds. Applicants should propose to administer either option A: SUSIs for Student Leaders (Global) which includes seven Institutes, or option B: SUSIs for Student Leaders from Europe, which includes four Institutes.

Each Institute should be five weeks in duration, including an approximately four-week academic residency at an academic institution and approximately one week on an integrated educational study tour. The academic residency should take place on a U.S. university or college campus, and should include academic coursework as well as weekly community service activities, weekly leadership development sessions, and opportunities for interaction with American peers that showcases a balanced view of the diversity of demographics, institutions, and perspectives within the United States. The study tour to another region of the United States should complement the academic residency. All programs should conclude in Washington, D.C., with a stay of two to four days. The programs should include opportunities for continued follow-on engagement once participants return home.

Option A: The Study of the U.S. Institutes for Student Leaders (Global)
The award recipient will be responsible for planning, implementing, and overseeing seven (7) Institutes, and the oversight and management of performance of all sub-award recipients under the award.

Each Institute should be organized for 20 undergraduate students from underserved communities for a total of 140 participants. Institutes should focus on the following themes: Civic Engagement (2); Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (2); Religious Freedom and Pluralism (1); Youth, Education, and Closing the Skills Gap (1); and the Rule of Law and Public Service (1). More information on the themes and participants can be found in **A.2. Institute Themes** and **A.4. Participants**.

Option B: The Study of the U.S. Institutes for Student Leaders from Europe
The award recipient will be responsible for planning, implementing, and overseeing four (4) Institutes and the oversight and management of performance of all sub-award recipients under the award.

Each Institute should be organized for 20 undergraduate students from underserved communities in Europe for a total of 80 participants. Institutes should focus on the following themes: Civic Engagement (1); Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (1); Journalism and Media (1); and Youth, Education, and Closing the Skills Gap (1). The program should also include a one or two-day event that brings together all participants during the Washington, D.C. portion of the Institutes. More information on the themes and participants can be found in **A.2. Institute Themes** and **A.4. Participants**.

Applicants may apply for either Option A or Option B, and 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. See details in section **A.3. Program Administration.**

ECA intends to award two (2) Cooperative Agreements (one base year plus two non-competitive continuations) for an estimated total amount of $12,150,000, pending availability of funds and successful performance. One Cooperative Agreement of up to $2,600,000 will support Option A (seven Institutes for 140 Student Leaders (Global)) and one Cooperative Agreement of up to $1,450,000 will support Option B (four Institutes for 80 Student Leaders from Europe) in the FY 2019 base year. The awarding of Cooperative Agreements for these programs is contingent upon the availability of FY 2019 funds. The awarding of the non-competitive continuations in FY 2020 and FY 2021 is contingent on the availability of funding and successful performance. Please see **Section B. Federal Award Information** below for additional details. **ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets, participant numbers, and the number of Institutes based on program needs and the availability of U.S. government funding.**

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.

A.1. Purpose: 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. The principal objective of the program is to provide foreign student leaders an in-depth examination of a theme in U.S. studies, while also heightening their awareness of the history and evolution of U.S. society, culture, values, and institutions, broadly defined. The Institutes should address the influence of principles and values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual rights, freedom of expression, equality, diversity, and tolerance, and should also incorporate a focus on contemporary American life.

A.2. Overview of the Institutes and Themes: Each Institute should be five weeks in length; participants should spend approximately four weeks at an academic institution and approximately seven days on an integrated educational study tour, including two to four days in Washington, D.C. Once participants return home, the program should include opportunities for follow-on engagement to continue building on the five-week SUSI experience.

The academic program in the U.S. should include group discussions, experiential learning activities, and exercises that focus on the theme and include aspects of leadership, teambuilding, collective problem-solving skills, effective communication, and management skills. Therefore, participants should gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Institutes should also include a community service component in which the students participate in weekly volunteer activities and experience firsthand how not-for-profit organizations and volunteerism play a key role in U.S. civil society.

Institutes should ensure a balance of speakers and perspectives throughout the program schedule, representing diverse U.S. political viewpoints, as well as other aspects of diversity. The program should provide participants with an in-depth examination of one of the themes outlined below (under Institutes Themes) in addition to developing participants' leadership skills. Institutes should foster ECA's mission to promote mutual understanding between citizens of other countries and citizens of the United States. Thus, the programs should 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.**

Institute Themes:
All Institutes should aim to enhance participants' knowledge of U.S. history, government, institutions, society, and culture. In this context, the Institutes should incorporate a focus on American historical events as well as contemporary American life including current political, social, and economic debates in a pluralistic society.

a) The Study of the U.S. Institutes on Civic Engagement should provide participants with an overview of how citizens have shaped U.S. history, government, and society both

as individuals and groups. The academic program should define civic engagement, examine its development in the United States, and explore topics such as citizenship, community building, economic development, grassroots activism, political leadership, and volunteerism. In order to define the content of the Institute and enhance the academic experience, proposals may choose to focus on a specific theme or sub-themes such as civil rights and protections, public health, education, entrepreneurship, ethics, leadership, or media. To the extent possible, academic sessions should be complemented with hands-on sessions or workshops designed to build skills in the topics mentioned above. The Institutes should encourage participants to develop innovative and practical plans to become engaged citizens in their own communities. See **Section A. 4** for more details on participants and countries.

b) **The Study of the U.S. Institutes on Entrepreneurship and Economic Development** should provide participants with an overview of entrepreneurial approaches by reviewing the development, history, challenges, and successes of U.S. entrepreneurial enterprises, including social enterprises, business leadership and women's economic empowerment, in the United States and globally. Topics may include, but are not limited to, trade, investment, financial literacy, banking, microfinance, organizational development and management, innovation, emerging markets and risk analysis, strategic business planning, corporate social responsibility, and minorities in entrepreneurship. To the extent possible, academic sessions should be complemented with hands-on sessions or workshops designed to build skills in the topics mentioned above. See **Section A.4.** for more details on participants and countries.

c) **The Study of the U.S. Institute on Journalism and Media** should provide participants with a deeper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a free press in U.S. society. The Institute should emphasize examining the role of journalists in preventing disinformation and explore strategies for media literacy such as critical thinking to counter disinformation. Academic sessions should examine First Amendment rights, technology's impact on journalism, editorial independence, journalistic ethics, legal constraints, civic journalism, digital and social media. Finally, the Institute should include the basics of journalism tradecraft: researching, reporting, writing, and editing. See **Section A.4.** for more details on participants and countries.

d) **The Study of the U.S. Institute on Religious Freedom and Pluralism** should explore U.S. history, society, and institutions within the context of religious freedom, pluralism, and interfaith dialogue. Topics should include, but are not limited to, early religious traditions in the United States, freedom of religion as a fundamental human right and source of stability, the introduction of new religions in the United States, protection and representation of minority groups and religions, the separation of church and state, and interfaith dialogue and cooperation in a diverse and rapidly changing world. Participants should have opportunities to meet with U.S. community leaders of different faiths who advocate for collaboration and tolerance among religious groups. Participants should also examine the leadership role that religious officials play in their own societies and develop ideas for how they can work with leaders, of similar or

different faiths, on shared goals for their societies. See **Section A. 4** for more details on participants and countries.

e) The Study of the U.S. Institute on Youth, Education, and Closing the Skills Gap should explore how advances in technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, and robotics are shaping how we work, where we work, and the skills and education required to work. The Institute will expose participants to global issues in the context of the future of work by examining educational, social and economic trends. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the academic program should examine the role of U.S. educational institutions, particularly community colleges, in preparing Americans with the skills needed to succeed in multiple industries and sectors including business, technology, science, higher education, the creative arts and other fields. Topics may include, but are not limited to, communication, entrepreneurship and the gig economy, globalization and urbanization, innovation and technology, organizational development and management, skills development, and reskilling and retraining. The Institutes should also provide opportunities for participants to engage with educational and industry leaders, policy makers, trade associations and other key actors. See **Section A. 4** for more details on participants and countries.

f) The John McCain Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on the Rule of Law and Public Service should provide twenty undergraduate students from military academies in selected countries with an overview of the U.S. system of government and the ways in which the rule of law and public service support effective democracies. The Institute should also highlight the role of non-governmental institutions such as civic organizations, the media, and the private sector in the creation of U.S. public policy. Discussions should explore the responsibilities of local and state government as they pertain to the rule of law, as well as the three branches of the U.S. government and the U.S. Constitution. Topics such as civilian control of the military, human rights and democracy, rule of law and democratic governance, active citizenry, national security, and foreign policy may be included. Participants should also have opportunities to develop their leadership skills to prepare them for future public service. This Institute should recognize the leadership of the late Senator John McCain of Arizona and the values and principles he upheld in his lifetime commitment to public service. See **Section A.4.** for more details on participants and countries.

A.3. Program Administration: ECA is seeking detailed proposals from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations and accredited post-secondary U.S. higher education institutions (community colleges, liberal arts colleges, public and private universities) meeting the eligibility requirements outlined under section C. below.

ECA intends to issue two Cooperative Agreements, one for the administration and implementation of Option A and one for the administration and implementation of Option B.

For Option A, the applicant may propose to administer all seven Institutes through sub-

awards or may propose to implement up to two of the seven Institutes, provided one of these is the Institute on Civic Engagement for Africa which should take place over a five-week period between January through early March, 2020. Sub-recipients also may host two Institutes, provided one of these is the Institute on Civic Engagement for Africa taking place in winter/spring 2020. Please see **Section A.5. Program Dates** for more information.

For Option B, the recipient may propose to administer all four Institutes through sub-awards or may propose to implement one of the four Institutes and administer sub-awards to up to three host institutions to conduct the remaining three Institutes. Under Option B, no institution will be permitted to host more than one Institute in one fiscal year.

All proposals should demonstrate the institution's administrative and program management capacities as well as host universities' thematic expertise, as well as any regional expertise, if applicable. Participating countries and regions will be determined by ECA, in coordination with Fulbright Commissions, the Public Affairs Sections at U.S. embassies abroad and Department of State regional bureaus.

A.4. Participants: ECA anticipates that participation in Option A and Option B will be organized as follows:

Option A – Study of the U.S. Institutes for Student Leaders (Global):
1) **Civic Engagement**: One Institute for Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe; One Institute for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, and Turkey.
2) **Entrepreneurship and Economic Development**: One Institute for Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal; One Institute for Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia.
3) **Religious Freedom and Pluralism:** One Institute for Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, and Lebanon.
4) **Youth, Education, and Closing the Skills Gap**: Multi-regional – Countries to be determined
5) **Rule of Law and Public Service:** Countries to be determined

Option B – Institutes for Student Leaders from Europe:
1) **Civic Engagement**: Countries from across Europe.
2) **Entrepreneurship and Economic Development**: Countries from across Europe.
3) **Journalism and Media**: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.
4) **Youth, Education, and Closing the Skills Gap**: Countries from across Europe.

Please note: ECA reserves the right to amend or modify the list of participating countries should conditions change in the nominating country or if other countries are identified as U.S. priorities or for other reasons.

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

A.5. Program Dates: Pending the availability of FY 2019 funds, the anticipated award date for the Cooperative Agreements will be on or about April 1, 2019. All Institutes should last approximately 36 days (including arrival and departure days). Institutes should begin no sooner than June 1, 2019, and should conclude no later than August 16, 2019. For Option A, the Institute for Student Leaders on Civic Engagement for participants from Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe should take place over a five-week period between January through early March, winter/spring 2020.

A.6. Program Guidelines: The award recipient is responsible for the conception, structure, and monitoring of all Institutes; seven for Option A and four for Option B. Proposals must provide a detailed and comprehensive narrative describing the goals and objectives of the program; pre-departure preparation and logistics; Institute curricula and activities including academic sessions, site visits, cultural activities, interaction with Americans, and the study tour; plans for monitoring and communicating with sub-recipients; media and outreach plans; budgets; and follow-on activities for, and engagement with, alumni. The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's ability to recruit U.S. colleges and universities that reflect regional and other diversity including public, private, urban, rural, minority serving institutions and/or community colleges.

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 **Section E.1.** in this NOFO. In addition, 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. The Branch may request that the award 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, 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:

Award Information:
Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement: ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under **Section A. Program Description** above.
Fiscal Year Funds: Option A: 2019-base year, up to $2,600,000 pending the availability of funds; 2020-non-competitive continuation year one, up to $2,600,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds; 2021-non-competitive continuation year two, up to $2,600,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. Option B: 2019-base year, up to $1,450,000 pending availability of funds; 2020-non-competitive continuation year one, up to $1,450,000 pending successful performance and the availability of funds; 2021-non-competitive continuation year two, up to $1,450,000 pending successful performance and the availability of funds.
Approximate Total Funding (3 years): Option A: $7,800,000; Option B: $4,350,000. These figures represent base year plus two non-competitive continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.
Approximate Number of Awards: Two
Floor of Award Range: None
Ceiling of Award Range: Option A: $2,600,000 for FY 2019 base year (or $7,800,000 for the base year plus two non-competitive continuation years). Option B: $1,450,000 for the FY 2019 base year (or $4,350,000 for the base year plus two non-competitive continuation years).
Approximate Average Award: Option A: $2,600,000 for FY 2019 base year (or $7,800,000 for the base year plus two non-competitive continuation years). Option B: $1,450,000 for the FY 2019 base year (or $4,350,000 for the base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.)
Anticipated Award Date: April 1, 2019, pending the availability of FY2019 funds
Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2023. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the awards – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.
Additional Information: ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Cooperative Agreements will be awarded for a period of 12 months (base year) with non-competitive continuations for a second and third period of 12 and 24 months, respectively, to ensure adequate time for post-Institute follow-on activities. 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 post-secondary 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's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:
a) Experience in Conducting International Exchange: 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 two awards, in an amount up to $2,600,000 (Option A) and $1,450,000 (Option B) per year to support program and administrative costs required to implement these exchange programs. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b) 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 award two (2) Cooperative Agreement to one applicant organization to administer Option A: a total of seven (7) Institutes and another applicant organization to administer Option B: a total of four (4) Institutes under this competition.

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. An applicant may submit a proposal for one option and be included as a sub-award on a proposal submitted by another organization. **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:
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, Study of the U.S. Branch, ECA/A/E/USS, SA-5, Fourth Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, BarrowME@state.gov, 202-632-9435 to request a Solicitation Package.

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

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition. Note that a minimum of $175,000 must go to each sub-awardee to support robust programming, but applicants are encouraged to allocate more. ECA/A/E/USS also provides a sample Institute budget in Microsoft Excel format. You may request that template in editable format by contacting Program Officers Macon Barrow, BarrowME@state.gov, or Maureen James, JamesMC@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 the ECA's website at https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding or from the Grants.gov website at https://www.grants.gov.

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

more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

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

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

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

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

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

D.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. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing https://mygrants.service-now.com and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

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 oversight of Alternate Responsible Officers, 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 award recipient 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-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

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, politics, 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. 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. <u>Outcomes</u>, 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 must provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. A minimum of $175,000 must go to sub-awardees to support robust programming, but applicants are encouraged to allocate more. It is estimated that one Institute costs approximately $240,000.

For competitions that will be renewed through a Non-Competitive Continuation 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 mechanism, the recipient will be required to submit:
1. semi-annual performance and financial reports on time;
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 semi-annual 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 semi-annual 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.

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: **January 11, 2019**
Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Search Grants" portion of the system.

D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures:
Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

D.3r. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov: Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html.

D.3s. How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov: For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

D.3t. Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues: Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays
Email: support@grants.gov

D.3u. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission: 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.

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

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.

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.3v. 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 U.S. 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 show substantive support of ECA's diversity policy. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, including a balance of speakers and perspectives with diverse viewpoints, 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. Program Monitoring and Evaluation, 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, and a 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/Capacity**: 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 Office. 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's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative

Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/
https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm

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

  Mandatory:

    1.)   Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). For assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Help Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for U.S. callers) or through the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: http://www.dpm.psc.gov/. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to SAMS Domestic, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants;

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

    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; and

4.)   Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of non-competitive continuations, applicants will be placed on semi-annual program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer. A reporting template is available from the Program Officer to award recipients for guidance.

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.

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 ECA 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 U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to beginning of the Institutes.

G. Agency Contacts:

For questions about this announcement contact: Program Officer Macon Barrow, tel: 202-632-9435, and email: BarrowME@state.gov or Program Officer Maureen James, tel: 202-632-9433, and email: JamesMC@state.gov; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, ECA/A/E/USS, SA-5, 4th Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037.

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

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

H. Other Information:

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

Marie Royce   November 13, 2018
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State