

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**(NOFO):** FY2016 EducationUSA Advising Services

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAAS-16-001

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.432

**Key Date/Application Deadline:** June 26, 2015

**Program Description/Executive Summary:** The Educational Information and Resources Branch (ECA/A/S/A or EducationUSA) in the Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces a NOFO for three assistance awards to administer EducationUSA Advising Services in FY 2016, pending the availability of FY 2016 funds. EducationUSA centers work with prospective students in 170 countries to promote U.S. higher education abroad. Advisers at 402 EducationUSA centers provide accurate, comprehensive, and current information about the diversity of U.S. higher education opportunities, guiding students to find their best academic fit. In addition, EducationUSA centers assist U.S. institutions of higher education in their overseas enrollment outreach and development of recruitment strategies and provide information on the complex U.S. higher education system to foreign governments and institutions.

With the goal of increasing student mobility between the United States and other countries through EducationUSA advising, this NOFO supports three cooperative agreements: Component A for global EducationUSA services, which encompass strategic planning and communications, REAC management, adviser professional development coordination, U.S. higher education outreach, international college fair logistics, and technology oversight; Component B for EducationUSA advising operations in post-Soviet countries—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine; and Component C for EducationUSA advising in the Middle East and North Africa—Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen. Applicants may submit proposals for one or more of the funding opportunities under this competition.

It is the Bureau's intent to award three cooperative agreements (one base year plus two non-competitive continuations) for an estimated total amount of \$22,305,000.

Organizations may submit proposals for one, two, or all three funding opportunities, but they must clearly identify the proposal submitted as for Component A: Global EducationUSA Services; Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet countries; or Component C: EducationUSA Advising Operations in the Middle East and North Africa. Applicants must submit separate proposals with budgets and narratives outlining a comprehensive strategy for the administration of each program component. Please see section II.) Award Information, below for additional details.

**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.

**Purpose:** EducationUSA, the U.S. Department of State's network of overseas educational advising centers, operates in 402 advising centers around the world, hosted by Public Affairs Sections at U.S. Embassies and Consulates, Fulbright Commissions, binational centers, overseas universities, and U.S. and local non-government organizations. These centers provide services to international students, representatives of accredited U.S. higher education institutions, and local governmental and academic entities at three levels: comprehensive (177 centers), standard (132 centers), and reference (93 centers). The support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) for these centers varies by center and region and ranges from support for educational resources and adviser professional development to funding office operations in post-Soviet countries and parts of the Middle East and North Africa. All EducationUSA centers receive specialized, highly tailored guidance and direction from ECA-supported Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) based in strategic locations around the world. REACs ensure standardization of EducationUSA advising services, training of EducationUSA advisers, and keep ECA apprised of advising and education developments in their regions.

To facilitate effective communication of ECA's EducationUSA office with the organizations cooperating in the administration of these programs, award recipients must have offices and staff in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area dedicated to working on this/these award(s). Applicants who do not currently have offices and with program staff in the Washington, D.C. area should include in their proposals a detailed plan for establishing a staffed office to work on this/these award(s) and staff in Washington, D.C. by October 1, 2015. The award recipients bear the costs of establishing the offices and staff. No such costs may be included in the budget submission for this program. The award recipients must have the ability to work electronically with all partners involved in the EducationUSA Advising Program.

**Component A: Global EducationUSA Services**

The award recipient will provide strategic planning and communications, REAC management, adviser professional development coordination, U.S. higher education outreach, international college fair logistics, and technology oversight on behalf of EducationUSA, and administer logistical support and human resources services. The

award recipient will also administer a professional development program in the United States and overseas for EducationUSA advisers. This NOFO includes the following components:

1. Strategic thinking, planning, and communications focused on the development of the EducationUSA network in the context of the U.S. Department of State's foreign policy goals and objectives.
2. Employment structure for Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) based in Sub-Saharan Africa (two people), Europe and Eurasia (three people), East Asia and the Pacific (three people), the Middle East and North Africa (one person), South and Central Asia (two people), and the Western Hemisphere (three people). REACs provide professional leadership and support to the EducationUSA network of advising centers to foster international student mobility and advance the U.S. government's public diplomacy efforts. In close consultation with ECA, REACs counsel Public Affairs Sections on student mobility issues and advising programs while providing training to advisers at host institutions. They receive policy guidance from ECA/A/S/A and U.S. Embassy/Consulate Public Affairs Sections and train advisers on U.S. higher education trends, advising methodology, and strategic planning. REACs supply ECA with regular updates on their regions. The recipient will employ all REACs, develop annual REAC work and travel plans, and conduct end-of-year REAC evaluations. REAC positions may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA. Employment support encompasses:
  - REAC salaries and benefits.
  - REAC office costs.
  - REAC travel to visit regional EducationUSA advising centers at least once in two years.
  - REAC professional development.
3. Employment structure for EducationUSA country coordinators in Brazil and Mexico. Country coordinators work with EducationUSA centers from a central location in two large and active countries. The proposal should include country coordinator salaries, benefits, office costs, and travel. These positions may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA.
4. Development of a strategic marketing plan for the EducationUSA brand to expand the global impact of EducationUSA advising. The award recipient must have staffing capacity and expertise in order to:
  - Maintain and update a web-based intranet site that hosts the Center Reporting System (CRS) and the online learning platform for EducationUSA advisers, Washington D.C. staff, representatives of accredited U.S. higher education institutions, and others as designated by ECA.
  - Provide tech support to REACs and EducationUSA advisers who are experiencing difficulties utilizing EducationUSA platforms or tools.
  - Design and implement EducationUSA's social media presence and community building.

- Write and manage contracts for technical resources, such as pertinent software licenses for social media, communications, and design use.
  - Write and manage contracts for creation of EducationUSA promotional materials, such as a yearly branded design marketing packet and exhibit upgrades.
  - Design, printing, and distribution of an annual EducationUSA Global Guide with content created by REACs and award recipient staff.
5. Professional development for EducationUSA advisers to build EducationUSA in-person, outreach, and virtual advising as a foundation of standardized EducationUSA advising center services through logistical support of:
- Six overseas training workshops, each for approximately 20 EducationUSA advisers, conducted annually by REACs.
  - Two regional forums each year of approximately 100 EducationUSA advisers and an equal or lesser number of fee-paying U.S. higher education institutions with content designed and delivered by REACs.
  - Two EducationUSA Training Institutes each year for 20-25 advisers that combine one week of D.C. residency to deepen advisers' understanding of U.S. public diplomacy and to share best practices in reaching youth audiences and one week of campus residency to broaden advisers' knowledge of U.S. higher education. The recipient will plan and present the D.C. workshop and manage the selection of the campus hosts in conjunction with ECA to maximize EducationUSA adviser exposure to the breadth of accredited higher education options. The award recipient will monitor and evaluate the quality of the Training Institutes.
  - Pre- and post-Training Institute virtual components to prepare advisers for U.S. training and to facilitate follow-on activities.
  - Development and maintenance of online adviser training with an introduction to EducationUSA advising, an in-depth course on advising practices, technical training on social media and web tools, and other online professional development and training as identified in conjunction with ECA to ensure continuing education and professional development of the adviser corps.
6. Logistical support for EducationUSA presence at education meetings and conferences:
- The EducationUSA Forum, an annual two-and-a-half day symposium with over 500 accredited U.S. higher education institution participants. The award recipient will handle Washington, D.C. venue rental, mobile app, online reservation system and collection of fees, promotional materials, audio visual equipment and Internet, catering, EducationUSA adviser travel, and other support services, as needed.
  - Exhibit hall support and travel costs for selected EducationUSA advisers to attend a two to three international education association annual meetings or conferences registration and logistical support to allow for the participation of U.S. college and university representatives to amplify U.S. higher education participation.

- Exhibit hall support and travel costs for selected EducationUSA advisers to attend six to eight U.S. education association annual meetings, conferences, fairs, or exhibits.
  - Online registration support to assist when local EducationUSA host institutions are unable to provide the needed logistical framework to support EducationUSA fairs.
7. Virtual EducationUSA advising hub with online EducationUSA advising outreach to Iranians in Farsi and English and potential to expand virtual advising needs for prospective students in regions of conflict where an in-person adviser is not able to operate. Conceptualize and design broader virtual advising platforms to respond to growing global advising needs.
  8. Evaluation of funding opportunity activities
    - Monthly report on D.C. social media and web metrics.
    - Annual review of individual REAC accomplishments in conjunction with ECA.
    - Evaluation of EducationUSA training activities for continuous improvement.
    - Annual evaluation of above program components in conjunction with ECA.

ECA encourages applicants to propose innovative strategies for all aspects of the Global EducationUSA Services program. The award recipient will have sufficient headquarters staff to ensure in-depth support for the above programmatic activities. Proposals should also describe the roles of REACs and of ECA program staff in program design and delivery.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

ECA/A/S/A's activities and responsibilities for Component A: Global EducationUSA Services under the NOFO are as follows:

1. Provide policy guidance and direction to the award recipient.
2. Approve Washington staff selections.
3. Participate in and approve REAC selections.
4. Monitor REACs' relationships and facilitate REAC communications with advisers, Public Affairs Sections, DOS/ECA offices, U.S. universities, Fulbright commissions, cooperative agreement recipients, adviser host organizations, and other institutions.
5. Assist with facilitating REAC access to U.S. Embassies/Consulates and with arrangements for APO or pouch privileges to speed receipt of educational materials through Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies/Consulates.
6. Consult with REACs on the review of annual country EducationUSA advising strategic plans from Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies/Consulates.
7. Review EducationUSA adviser travel requests, professional development nominations, and workshop venues and agendas.

8. Consult with REACs and recipient organization staff regarding substantive advising issues.
9. Participate in annual EducationUSA strategic planning.
10. Consult with Public Affairs Sections at U.S. Embassies/Consulates and REACs to oversee and evaluate the quality of advising services and to identify appropriate center locations.
11. Contribute substantively to the establishment of REAC annual work goals and annual performance evaluations.
12. Develop annual strategic marketing plan in conjunction with award recipient.
13. Review all program design materials, written products, and technology resources.
14. Develop annual EducationUSA adviser professional development plan in conjunction with award recipient.
15. Review EducationUSA adviser professional development curricula and program location, content, and scheduling.
16. Perform an annual review of program administration under the cooperative agreement. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

The award recipient will also ensure that Regional and Country Advising Coordinators (REACs) have the necessary logistical and programmatic support to complete the following tasks:

1. Oversee the work of the advising centers in close consultation with ECA and U.S. Embassies/Consulates to strengthen EducationUSA advisers' ability to respond promptly to regional goals and ECA priorities.
2. Ensure that EducationUSA centers adhere to the EducationUSA mission to provide accurate, comprehensive, and current information on educational opportunities at the full diversity of accredited institutions of higher education in the United States, including prominent reference to this mission on promotional materials and websites.
3. Ensure that EducationUSA centers display the EducationUSA logo on promotional materials and websites to demonstrate that they belong to the U.S. Department of State's network of EducationUSA advising centers.
4. Monitor and coordinate the proper use of the EducationUSA logo and mission statement in close consultation with ECA.
5. Conduct site visits to advising centers in consultation with ECA and public affairs sections of U.S. Embassies and Consulates, submitting timely reports to ECA.
6. Establish and maintain strong consultative professional relationships with Public Affairs Officers at U.S. Embassies/Consulates and with chief executive officers of the organizations employing EducationUSA advisers.
7. Evaluate the service level of advising centers and provide advisers with appropriate professional development opportunities locally and in the United States in consultation with ECA.
8. Serve as a resource for Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies/Consulates and EducationUSA advising centers as they develop yearly country-wide EducationUSA advising strategic plans.

9. Make recommendations to ECA on funding posts' EducationUSA strategic plans to improve outreach to areas underserved by advisers and to provide supplemental country-specific project management and professional development.
10. Approve Opportunity Fund applicants for participating countries in region.
11. Create newsletters and participate in virtual media to highlight activities and share information about current initiatives and achievements of EducationUSA centers
12. Increase the visibility of EducationUSA centers through outreach to a variety of constituents and stakeholders, including U.S. higher education representatives, host country government officials, and local education leaders.
13. Ensure that all advising center contact information is correctly entered and maintained in the EducationUSA website.
14. Coordinate the development and annual revision of advising center fact sheets.
15. Provide regional content for EducationUSA Global Guide.
16. Generate weekly ECA program highlights with EducationUSA adviser input.
17. Stay abreast of the latest visa regulations and ensure advising centers work with Public Affairs and Consular Sections of U.S. Embassies/Consulates to inform students about the visa application process.
18. Coordinate and monitor the advisers' submission of statistical information (in-person, outreach, virtual contacts) via ECA's electronic Center Reporting System (CRS) on a monthly basis.
19. Increase public knowledge of U.S. higher education through participation in and/or organization of university fairs, media programs, international education conferences, and other education events.

### **Components B and C:**

In cooperation with ECA, one or more award recipient(s) will manage EducationUSA advising centers in the following regions:

**Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet Countries—** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine

**Component C: EducationUSA Advising Operations in the Middle East and North Africa—** Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen

Location of centers in these regions may be affected by political considerations and could be based remotely, as appropriate. ECA will decide, in consultation with the award recipient, on center relocations. Organizations may propose EducationUSA advising activities in additional regions/countries; however, additional regions and countries will only be funded based on ECA's needs and resources, as determined by ECA. Note: ECA reserves the right to increase, add, or reduce countries and regions based on U.S. foreign policy priorities and the needs of the program.

The proposal should indicate that the organization has the institutional capacity to host and support advising centers. The proposal should include information about each

proposed advising center, describing a plan for locations, hours of operation, staffing pattern, including percentage of time each employee will devote to advising activities (proposals that include 100% full-time employment for advisers will be more competitive), and a proposal for adviser functions and responsibilities in addition to advising, the process of staff evaluations, the framework and process for providing salary increases, an iteration of how information will be shared with EducationUSA advisers, including budget details, an estimated budget for each office, and information delineating the services to be provided by each center. Fee-based services should be listed, including the amounts charged, to ensure compliance with EducationUSA practices and standards.

If the recipient plans to charge students for services, a detailed justification and fee schedule should be included in the proposal, along with a statement indicating the anticipated revenue from such fees. If these fees are related to advising activities supported by this cooperative agreement, i.e. not placement services or administration of Fulbright or other scholarship programs, income must be reported under this program and contributed as cost-sharing in the cooperative agreement budget. Given ECA's priority of reaching non-elite populations, the fee structures should allow applicant(s) to reach beyond economically privileged populations. Therefore, proposals should include a statement regarding the level and accessibility of information available to those unable to use paid advising services

Proposals should describe in detail for each country the entire range of EducationUSA advising activities, which include group and individual consultations. Proposals should also explain how the ECA-funded EducationUSA program will be coordinated with information on any additional non-EducationUSA educational advising activities administered by the recipient organization and how any income that is generated by EducationUSA advisers supported by ECA under the cooperative agreement will be accounted for and contributed to the award recipient's cost-share. The proposal should include information about any homepages or websites developed by or for centers.

The use of the current EducationUSA logo and branded marketing materials is critical to the identity of the network. Proposals should explain how recipients will ensure that all centers funded under a cooperative agreement for this program use the logo consistently and following guidelines laid out in the EducationUSA brand identity guide.

Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative strategies for all components of the program.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A (EducationUSA) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

ECA/A/S/A's activities and responsibilities for Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet Countries and for Component C: EducationUSA Advising Operations in the Middle East and North Africa are as follows:

1. Provide policy guidance and direction to the award recipient(s).

2. Approve Washington staff requirements and selections.
3. Approve hiring of new EducationUSA advisers in conjunction with REAC.
4. Monitor REACs' relationships and facilitate REAC communications with advisers, Public Affairs Sections, DOS/ECA offices, U.S. universities, Fulbright commissions, cooperative agreement recipients, adviser host organizations, and other institutions.
5. Consult with REACs on the review of annual country EducationUSA advising strategic plans from Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies/Consulates.
6. Review EducationUSA adviser travel requests and professional development nominations.
7. Work with REACs and award recipient staff on substantive advising issues.
8. Encourage regular and open communications among REACs, EducationUSA advisers, adviser host organization supervisors, Public Affairs Sections, DOS/ECA offices, Fulbright commissions, and cooperative agreement recipient organizations.
9. Consult with Public Affairs Sections at U.S. Embassies/Consulates and REACs to oversee and evaluate the quality of advising services and to identify appropriate center locations.
10. Review all program outreach materials.
11. Perform an annual review of program administration under the cooperative agreement. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

The responsibilities of the award recipient(s) for Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet Countries and for Component C: EducationUSA Advising Operations in the Middle East and North Africa are as follows:

1. Establish and manage EducationUSA advising centers in specified countries/locations to provide educational advising on U.S. study opportunities at accredited U.S. institutions of higher education. Applicant organizations may propose specific locations within the countries and regions listed above based on the organizations' knowledge of local environments and educational systems, as well as ECA's priorities of maximum impact and outreach to underserved populations.
2. Proposal(s) should describe each proposed center's operations. The description of each proposed center should include the location and hours of operation, a staffing pattern, a clear explanation of the percentage of time each employee would devote to advising activities, as well as to non-advising activities (including, but not limited to, work on behalf of other ECA assistance awards, if applicable), employee functions and responsibilities, an estimated center budget, and a delineation of all services provided by that center.
3. Proposals should demonstrate each center's ability to provide educational advising services that follows *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* to international students and scholars without cost.
4. Proposals should describe the award recipients' ability to provide additional resources at advising centers free of charge to students, such as:

- Student-accessible comprehensive university information in print or electronic format and an extensive collection of current reference materials on U.S. higher education institutions and programs.
  - Computers available for student use. The number of computers in each center should be commensurate with the anticipated volume of student traffic. Computers should have U.S. study sites bookmarked, especially [educationusa.state.gov](http://educationusa.state.gov).
  - Office equipment and software that expedite the processing of inquiries, facilitate educational advising, and increase communication among EducationUSA offices and the REAC, ECA, Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies/Consulates, and the award recipient(s)'s U.S. headquarters office.
  - Use of virtual advising, social media, and other electronic tools that advance the advising centers' ability to reach and assist target audiences.
  - Space suitable for conducting group advising sessions with Power Point presentations and internet, and space suitable for private, individual advising consultations.
5. For Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet countries, the component includes administration of the Opportunity Funds for the region. Opportunity Funds are an ECA program that assists highly qualified students who are likely to be awarded full financial aid from U.S. colleges and universities but lack the financial resources to cover the up-front costs of obtaining admission, such as testing, application fees or airfare. This program promotes the Department's objectives of broadening outreach to youth and underserved audiences, advancing mutual understanding, and supporting social inclusion. The proposal budget should include funding for this program, and the proposal narrative should give a detailed description of the program's administration. For further information on Opportunity Funds, please see program officer contact details in D.
  6. For Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet countries, the component includes employment and administrative support for the Russia country coordinator. Country coordinators serve to centrally work with EducationUSA centers in large and active countries. This includes the country coordinator salary, benefits, office costs, and travel. This position may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA.
  7. ECA will offer appropriate professional development opportunities, such as workshops and other training programs. All these services will be supported by ECA through Component A: Global EducationUSA Services. ECA expects that the award recipient will support advisers to participate in these events while providing coverage for daily advising activities and cost-sharing for selected advisers. Budgets should include the applicant's plan for cost-sharing professional development activities.
  8. Coordinate and ensure advisers' submission of statistical information (in-person, outreach, virtual contacts) via ECA's electronic Center Reporting System (CRS) on a monthly basis.

9. Facilitate regular and open communication among EducationUSA advisers and the REAC, as well as among adviser host organization country executive directors and the REAC.
10. Encourage communication among EducationUSA advisers and Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies and Consulates, ensuring that educational advising activities meet the needs of the public affairs sections and follow embassy mission strategic objectives.
11. Conduct outreach sessions to underserved populations, whenever possible in collaboration with Public Affairs and Consular staff, to inform them of U.S. study opportunities and the services available at the EducationUSA advising center.
12. Provide services to U.S. colleges and universities while maintaining impartiality and representing the full range of accredited U.S. academic institutions. Funding under this agreement may not be used to support the fee-based placement services of students at specific universities.
13. If the award recipient plans to charge students for services, a detailed justification and fee schedule should be included in the proposal, along with a statement indicating the anticipated revenue from such fees. If these fees are related to advising activities supported by this cooperative agreement, as stated in the above paragraph (i.e., not placement services or administration of Fulbright or other scholarship programs), income must be reported under this program and contributed as cost-sharing in the cooperative agreement budget. Given ECA's priority of reaching non-elite populations, the fee structures should allow applicant(s) to reach beyond economically privileged populations. Therefore, proposals should include a statement regarding the level and accessibility of information available to those unable to use paid advising services. Semi-annual financial reports should show the actual amounts generated and that these funds are applied to support advising services. All such income must be enumerated on Financial Status Report "Long Form 269." Program reports should also show how using such income reinforces the goals and objectives of this award.
14. Monitor the status of educational systems in each of the countries, provide trend reports, and share that information with the relevant REAC, ECA, and Public Affairs Sections within each country. The applicant should be prepared to assist and support educational outreach activities of U.S. Embassies/Consulates by developing a network of contacts with local ministries of education, universities, and other appropriate institutions.
15. Centers should provide information to all interested persons on the application process to U.S. colleges and universities (EducationUSA's *5 Steps to U.S. Study*), issues of accreditation, up-to-date information on student visa regulations and requirements, standardized tests, scholarships and grant opportunities (including U.S. government-sponsored programs), information about life as a student in the United States, and pre-departure orientations. Special topic lectures and expert speakers are encouraged to provide students with up-to-date information. Centers are encouraged to work with local alumni of U.S. educational institutions to help answer students' questions and provide useful pre-departure information.
16. EducationUSA advisers should follow policy guidance as established by ECA.

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 continuations 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 continuations.

**B. Federal Award Information:**

**Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement**

**Component A: Global EducationUSA Services**

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2016 – base year, \$5,500,000; FY 2017 – non-competitive continuation year-one (formerly referred to as option year one), \$5,500,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds; FY 2018 – non-competitive continuation year-two (formerly referred to as option year two), \$5,500,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$16,500,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** one

**Floor of Award Range:** none

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$5,500,000

**Approximate Average Award:** \$5,500,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** October 1, 2015, pending availability of funds

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2018. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

**Additional Information:**

Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 12 months (FY 2016) with Non-Competitive Continuations (formerly referred to as option years) for two additional 12 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our 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.

**Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet Countries**

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2016 – base year, \$1,275,000; FY 2017 – non-competitive continuation year-one (formerly referred to as option year one), \$1,275,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds; FY 2018 – non-competitive continuation year-two (formerly referred to as option year two), \$1,275,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$3,825,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** one

**Floor of Award Range:** none

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$1,275,000

**Approximate Average Award:** \$1,275,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** October 1, 2015, pending availability of funds.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2018. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

**Additional Information:**

Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 12 months (FY 2016) with Non-Competitive Continuations(formerly referred to as option years) for two additional 12 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our 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.

**Component C: EducationUSA Advising Operations in Middle East and North Africa**

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2016 – base year, \$660,000; FY 2017 – non-competitive continuation year-one (formerly referred to as option year one), \$660,000, pending successful performance and availability of funds; FY 2018 – non-competitive continuation year-two (formerly referred to as option year two), \$660,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$1,980,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** one

**Floor of Award Range:** none

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$660,000

**Approximate Average Award:** \$660,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** October 1, 2015, pending availability of funds

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2018. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

**Additional Information:**

Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 12 months (FY 2016) with Non-Competitive Continuations (formerly referred to as option years) for two additional 12 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our 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 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, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

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

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

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making three awards with each award in an amount over \$130,000 in Bureau funding to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

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

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

**D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

Please contact the Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/A, SA-5, Fourth Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-6337, [masloskia@state.gov](mailto:masloskia@state.gov) to request a Solicitation Package.

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

Please specify ECA Program Officer Andy Masloski and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

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

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

Please read all information before downloading.

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

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

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

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

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

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY:**

**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. 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, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

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

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

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

**D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

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

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program 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**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

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

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

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

**D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component:** ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our [International Exchange Alumni](#) space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

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

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

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

If the recipient plans to generate income, the organization should include a statement indicating the anticipated revenue in the proposal. All such income must be enumerated on Financial Status Report "Long Form 269." Program reports should also show how the income will be used to reinforce the goals and objectives of this award. The budget

submission should include separate columns for income generation and use of this income, in addition to a column for cost sharing from the award recipient.

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

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
- 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
- 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;
  - All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
  - 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.
  - 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 for the program include the following:

**Component A: Global EducationUSA Services**

1. Salaries and benefits for Global EducationUSA Services Director, Assistant Director, Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs), two country coordinators, and one EducationUSA adviser for Iran.
2. Salaries and benefits for Global EducationUSA Services staff, as decided upon in conjunction with ECA, to support functions listed in Section A.
3. Funds for REAC professional development and for facilitating communication and information flow.
4. Part-time REAC assistant salaries.
5. REAC and country coordinator travel.
6. Office supplies and expenses, including rent, equipment, communications, postage, and shipping.
7. Overseas EducationUSA adviser professional development workshops and forums. v
8. Professional development participant program costs, i.e. international/domestic travel, visas, and per diem for non-U.S. Embassy- and Consulate-employed EducationUSA advisers, conference registration and lodging reservations for all participating EducationUSA advisers.
9. Campus visit logistics for professional development activities.
10. Logistical support for domestic and international education fairs and conferences, as described in Section A.

11. Tools, resources, and staff support for expanded virtual advising, including adviser professional development, EducationUSA advising delivery, brand promotion, and global network communications.
12. Course development and delivery for EducationUSA adviser professional development.
13. Outreach, publicity, and special project costs, including annual design packet.
14. Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program costs.

**Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operations in post-Soviet Countries and Component C: EducationUSA Advising Operations in the Middle East and North Africa**

1. Advising center staff salaries and benefits.
2. For Component B: EducationUSA Advising in post-Soviet countries, salary and benefits for Russia country coordinator and administrative assistant.
3. For Component B: EducationUSA Advising in post-Soviet countries, Opportunity Funds.
4. Resource materials, computer equipment for centers and coordinators.
5. Office supplies and expenses, including rent, equipment, communications, postage, and shipping.
6. Outreach, publicity, and special project costs.
7. Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, and the like;
8. Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program 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: Friday, June 26, 2015

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, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

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

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

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

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

### **E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA**

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

- 1. Quality of the program idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.
- 2. Program planning:** Detailed and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- 3. Ability to achieve program objectives:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 4. Multiplier effect/impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
- 5. Support of Diversity:** Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.
- 6. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- 8. Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau-supported programs are not isolated events.
- 9. Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau

recommends that the proposal include a draft of the proposed technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit reports quarterly.

**10. Cost-effectiveness and 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.

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

### **F.1. Award Notices:**

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

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

The following additional requirements apply to this project

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

**Note:** To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact ECA/A/S/A Program Officer Andrew Masloski at 202-632-6337 or [masloskia@state.gov](mailto:masloskia@state.gov) for additional information.

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

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Program Officer Andrew Masloski at 202-632-6337 or [masloskia@state.gov](mailto:masloskia@state.gov) for additional information.

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

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

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

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

*Mandatory:*

1. Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) 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](http://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 a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [GrantSolutions.gov](http://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 SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
3. A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;

4. A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: [FFATAECA@state.gov](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USA Spending.gov](http://USA Spending.gov) website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
5. Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC) (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 Grant Officer and Program Officer.

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

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

#### F.4. Program Data Requirements:

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

1. Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
2. Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

#### G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Andy Masloski, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, EducationUSA, (ECA/A/S/A), SA-5, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-632-6337, [masloskia@state.gov](mailto:masloskia@state.gov).

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

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

**H. Other Information:**

**Notice:**

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

Kelly Keiderling  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

May 4, 2015

