

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):** FY 2018 U.S. Exchange Alumni Network and Capacity Building Program

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAPA-18-101

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.452

**Key Date/Application Deadline:** June 1, 2018

**Executive Summary:**

The Office of Alumni Affairs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the administration of the FY 2018 U.S. Exchange Alumni Network and Capacity Building Program. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct two primary functions in support of expanding opportunities to U.S. citizen alumni of U.S. government-sponsored people-to-people exchange programs: 1) Organize and implement approximately 12 professional development seminars and accompanying career events in different cities across the United States, focusing on professional networks, capacity building, and job skills-training; and 2) Develop and implement a small grants program targeted at U.S. citizen alumni to provide opportunities for them to use the skills, knowledge, and networks gained on their exchange programs to carry out community projects.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

**A. Program 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:** In order to enhance the U.S. Department of State's engagement with U.S. citizens who are alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs ("U.S. exchange alumni") in support of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy objectives, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA), Office of Alumni Affairs (ECA/P/A), will enter into a cooperative agreement with an award recipient to conduct the FY 2018 U.S. Exchange Alumni Network and Capacity Building Program.

**Background:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) Office of Alumni Affairs (ECA/P/A) leads and coordinates efforts to engage alumni of U.S. government-sponsored people-to-people exchanges in order to maintain relationships with these current and emerging leaders. With more than 1,000,000 exchange alumni worldwide, including over 350,000 Americans, ECA is committed to providing resources to sustain engagement with and tap into the energy, enthusiasm, and expertise of this influential audience. Working closely with U.S. Department of State regional bureaus and U.S. embassies worldwide, ECA/P/A supports alumni programs that are strategic and designed to reinforce U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Key to this effort is deepening ECA engagement with American citizens who have participated in USG-funded international exchange programs, in order to strengthen their connection to the Department of State and expand their professional networks both at home and abroad.

In recognition of the size and influence of this group of alumni, ECA/P/A has initiated several programs in the last year to engage U.S. citizen alumni, including the Alumni Thematic International Exchange Seminar (Alumni TIES) Program for U.S. Alumni and the Citizen Diplomacy Challenge.

To date, U.S. citizen alumni have been precluded from leading projects under one of our most popular offerings, the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF), due to the administrative burden of providing small grants directly to U.S. citizens. ECA/P/A seeks to overcome this challenge through this award.

The current AEIF model provides small grants to foreign teams of past and current participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to carry out public service projects using the skills and knowledge they gained during their exchange experiences. U.S. citizen alumni have to-date been limited in their participation in AEIF programs, as team members and volunteers only.

This cooperative agreement seeks to further expand ECA/P/A's engagement with U.S. alumni by offering professional development opportunities in different regions of the United States, and providing opportunities for alumni to build on their exchange experience through small grant funding.

**Goals:** The mission of ECA/P/A is to advance U.S. foreign policy by means of robust alumni programs. The Office of Alumni Affairs engages American and foreign alumni of U.S. Government sponsored exchange programs to develop the leadership capacity and networks necessary to pursue and protect American interests at home and abroad. Through the FY 2018 U.S. Exchange Alumni Network and Capacity Building Program, ECA/P/A aims to:

1. Strengthen U.S. Department of State ties to U.S. citizen alumni by offering benefits which allow them to expand upon their exchange experiences and use the skills they developed abroad to address shared global challenges.
2. Provide U.S alumni with information, resources, and networks that will allow them to leverage skills and experiences gained through their exchanges to prosper in a globalized world and marketplace.
3. Support alumni-driven initiatives that address international issues of common concern and promote mutual understanding between the United States and countries around the world.
4. Reinforce existing alumni program identities and build a sense of common identity among past participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs.

**Professional Development Seminars and Career Opportunities:** "Seminars" are defined as a set of learning, leadership, and networking activities for exchange alumni, focused on building professional development and skills-training. The one- to two- day seminars should specifically focus on how alumni can leverage cross-cultural skills, language competencies, or international knowledge gained on their exchange programs to succeed in the local and global economy. During the course of this award, the award recipient will conduct multiple seminars in different cities across the United States. Every in-person seminar should be accompanied by virtual opportunities to expand the reach of the program and may include job or opportunity fairs, mentorship programs, or other professional development activities where feasible.

**Small Grant Program:** The small grants program component should provide a competitive opportunity for any eligible American citizen alumnus/a of an exchange program sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to propose projects up to \$10,000 that build on their exchange experiences in support of ECA and foreign policy goals. In order to promote collaboration and alumni network-building, projects should be submitted by teams of at least two alumni, with the ‘team lead’ being a U.S. citizen alumnus or alumna. Project activities can take place in the United States or overseas, and should multiply the effects of participants’ exchange experience by positively impacting communities in the United States and around the world. All projects should respond to specific ECA and foreign policy themes, to be determined by ECA/P/A. Of the total award amount, at least \$1,000,000 should be set aside for the small grants fund (roughly \$330,000 per year for the three years of the cooperative agreement period).

In close coordination with the Office of Alumni Affairs, the award recipient should be prepared to develop the grant management process, oversee application submissions, propose a review process, oversee the transfer of funds, and monitor and evaluate small grants for projects taking place in the United States and countries around the world.

**Organizational Capacity:** Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international educational and cultural exchanges, supporting exchange alumni engagement activities, and providing substantive programming for up-and-coming leaders.

Applicants should illustrate in their proposals the breadth of their experience working in alumni engagement and a record of flexibility and adaptability in programming under short timelines or challenging conditions. Proposals should include concrete examples in which the organization has responded quickly to rapidly evolving circumstances, including, if possible, examples that demonstrate the ability to recruit participants from a diverse and geographically dispersed alumni community.

In addition, applicants must demonstrate the breadth of their experience working with youth and emerging leaders, including professional development programming, virtual engagement, and the development of action plans and small grant opportunities. Applicant organizations must demonstrate the ability to manage small grants initiatives for exchange alumni, provide resources for alumni to draw on in developing strong proposals, and facilitate a transparent process for selecting competitive proposals that include U.S. Department of State representation. The proposed process must also include a robust monitoring and evaluation plan that will enable the Department of State to measure impact following the term of the cooperative agreement. Applicants should also demonstrate the ability to responsibly transfer and monitor funds for projects taking place in countries around the world.

**Partner Organizations:** Applicants should provide examples of organizations and individuals with whom they would collaborate, and describe previous cooperative activities. One approach would be for a proposal to choose a hypothetical professional

development seminar and provide a proposed plan for developing the program, with examples of organizations or individuals upon whom the applicant would rely to develop the most appropriate substantive aspects of the program design.

**Guidelines:**

The cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2018. The award period will be approximately 36 months in duration, and cover all aspects of program planning, professional development activities, and the small grants program for U.S. citizen alumni. Applicants should propose a timeline for the year, including potential seminar dates and planning milestones. Applicants should also provide a sample outline for a hypothetical seminar. Applicants should propose to hold approximately 12 seminars for approximately 40-200 participants each. Seminars should take place in different regions of the United States.

The applicant should also propose a timeline for implementing the small grant program. The applicant should plan to implement at least three small grant cycles, or at least one small grants cycle for each year of the award period.

All award activities, including professional development seminars and grant competition activities must be completed prior to the anticipated end date of the award, September 1, 2021. Applicants should propose specific seminar dates and key small grant benchmarks, but the exact timing may be altered through the mutual agreement of the U.S. Department of State and the award recipient, based on the flexible, rapid response approach preferred.

ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, seminars, number and size of small grants, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

**Please note:**

In a cooperative agreement, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. ECA/P/A's activities and responsibilities for the FY 2018 U.S. Exchange Alumni Network and Capacity Building Program are as follows:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 2) Provide clear guidance on locations, themes, and priorities.
- 3) Approve internal timelines to achieve seminar and small grant program roll-out.
- 4) Develop selection criteria for small grants and serve on final selection panel.
- 5) Approve final list of small grant recipients after selection panels.
- 6) Facilitate interaction within the U.S. Department of State, to include ECA, regional bureaus, and overseas embassies and consulates, as needed.
- 7) Provide input for and final approval of each seminar, including speakers and trainers.
- 8) Approve promotional materials and final calendar of activities for each seminar and for the small grants program.

- 9) Assist with promotion of seminars and grant opportunities to the alumni community.
- 10) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and routine site visits.
- 11) Work closely with award recipient and provide feedback following each seminar and program component to identify areas of improvement.

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

- 1) Manage logistical arrangements and fees for the professional development seminars, including proposing site locations, managing contracts, arranging technical equipment, staffing, travel, and seminar organization.
- 2) Design and plan seminar sessions and activities to develop the participants' knowledge and skill base related to professional development.
- 3) Identify speakers, trainers, and local business contacts to participate in the professional development seminars and follow-on activities.
- 4) Develop appropriate virtual and follow-on activities, such as webinars, mentorship programs, and other opportunities.
- 5) Develop and execute a communications strategy to manage recruitment and provide participating alumni with program materials and logistical information prior to each seminar.
- 6) Facilitate a small grants program for U.S. exchange alumni, including developing the application process, creating a system for application review, developing a grants manual for participants, and creating a plan to monitor grant expenditures and activities.
- 7) Develop resources and assist participants in developing competitive proposals.
- 8) Oversee the responsible transfer and monitoring of funds to selected alumni for projects that take place across the United States and in countries around the world.
- 9) Establish a reporting plan for recipients of the small grants program, and regularly update ECA with the results of alumni projects.
- 10) Collaborate with ECA to design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the short- and medium-term impact of the program on participants, and that will enable ECA to assess long-term impact. Prepare and provide interim M&E reports as agreed.

**Additional Information:**

All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

*What to Include in Your Proposal*

Executive Summary. The Executive Summary should be one page in length, formatted in Times New Roman 12 with one-inch margins. The Executive Summary should include program title, goals of the program, names of potential partner organizations responsible

for project implementation, proposed numbers of activities and participants, and a general outline of the seminars and small grant program.

Proposal Narrative. In no more than 20 double-spaced pages the narrative should include:

*Project Goals, Objectives, Anticipated Outcomes.* A clear, succinct statement of program goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes that expand upon program goals as stated in this NOFO. Objectives should be described in specific, measurable, and realistic terms that are achievable within the scope of the program, both in terms of time and funding. They should be framed from the participant perspective, i.e., "By (time), the participants will..." Proposals that clearly delineate salient objectives in measurable terms and plan activities in a sequence that progressively leads to achieving those objectives, will be considered more competitive.

*Project Management Plan.* A simple project management plan for the life of the program that lists, in table format, proposed outputs (major events or tasks performed by the grantee organization or partners), dates, and the person or group responsible.

*Background Information on Implementing Organizations.* Information on proposed organizations and staff involved in the implementation of the project, including the mission, relevant expertise in conducting programs of a related nature, including on-going and planned activities not including the proposed project. If the applicant has received awards from ECA in the past, please list examples of relevant projects by office (Citizen Exchanges, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges, etc.), including project name, countries, year, and amount.

*Roles and Responsibilities.* A clear delineation of proposed roles and responsibilities for the potential award recipient and sub-recipient(s) in terms of project logistics, management, resources, and oversight.

*Support of Diversity.* A description on how the Bureau's policy on Support of Diversity will be integrated into all aspects of the seminar, including but not limited to program materials and training methodology. Please refer to guidance in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) under "Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines."

*Evaluation Plan.* The evaluation plan should measure the impact of the program in four ways: (1) Assessment by participants of the conduct of the program; (2) measurement of the increase in knowledge or skills attributable to the program; (3) measurement of the participant's change in behavior attributable to the program; (4) measurement of the changes in behavior of organizations or groups with which the participant is associated. Please refer to section D.3j. "Program Monitoring and Evaluation" for further guidance. Detailed evaluation plans that put the narrative over the 20-page limit and sample surveys or other evaluation tools may be included.

*Budget.* Please refer to section D.3o. in this document for allowable costs and the PSI for guidance on formatting your budget.

*Acknowledging ECA's Financial Support.* An acknowledgment to follow guidance in the PSI entitled "Acknowledgment of ECA's Financial Support and Use of the Department Seal." Proposals should also indicate agreement to use the "International Exchange Alumni" logo in all relevant program materials, applications, websites, and other related materials.

*Resumes.* Resumes of principal staff of all partner organizations involved in the implementation of the project should be included. Resumes should be no more than two pages in length.

*Letters of Commitment and/or Letters of Support.* Letters of commitment or support from partner organizations/partner institutions that demonstrate a capacity to arrange and conduct U.S. and overseas activities should also be included.

*Project Materials.* Materials that help demonstrate seminar design and implementation should be included. These include:

- 1) Sample calendar outline
- 2) Sample seminar agenda
- 3) Draft materials to support the alumni small grants program
- 4) Sample evaluation and survey instruments
- 5) List of potential in-country partners
- 6) Project management plan
- 7) Sample social media plan
- 8) Draft promotional materials

*Unsolicited Documents.* Attachments that do not directly address the proposed project (i.e., organization brochures, pamphlets, unsolicited reports) are strongly discouraged.

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

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

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY2018

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$2,260,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** One

**Approximate Average Award:** \$2,260,000

**Floor of Award Range:** \$2,260,000

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$2,260,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 1, 2018.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 1, 2021

**Additional Information:** The cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of performance ending September 1, 2021. This award will cover three years of activity.



**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 include it 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.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount of approximately \$2,260,000, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

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

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

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, 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 Alumni Affairs, ECA/P/A, SA-5, Floor 1, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-6179, BalsonSS@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

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

Please specify Suzanne Balson 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 <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 D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section 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 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](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.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. SAMS Domestic:** All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. 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). SAMS Domestic

will utilize three ILMS modules to support the Federal Financial Assistance Award process including the SAMS Domestic portal a.k.a. Service Now; Ariba; and Status Tracking a.k.a. the Federal Award File. To register as a SAMS Domestic user, please click the “create an account” link at <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. Organizations that have previously used SAMS Domestic 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 Grantee Organizations 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://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

In the event you are having difficulty registering, please email [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

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-4E (Bldg. 3)  
2430 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1) **Travel:** International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs for American participants. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.
- 2) **Per Diem.** For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at: [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)
- 3) **Consultants.** Consultants (i.e. trainers, speakers, etc.) may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day per session. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that figure. Subaward recipients and subcontracting organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective award recipient and subaward recipient or subcontractor should be included in the proposal. Subawards and subcontracts should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subawards and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.
- 4) **Room Rental.** The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.
- 5) **Materials.** Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for fellows. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget.
- 6) **Working Meal.** One working meal may be provided during U.S.-based and foreign-based components. Per capita costs for working meals may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental and other overhead charges. The number of invited guests may not exceed seminar participants by more than a factor of two to one.

- 7) Administrative Costs. Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources. Award recipient staff travel should NOT be included in the exchange participant numbers.
- 8) Reasonable Accommodations. Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of participating individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose.
- 9) Post-Seminar Engagement. Reasonable costs related to post-seminar engagement and alumni activities may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed post-seminar engagement and alumni activities. Proposals should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively utilize technology and online networking sites to enhance and amplify alumni programming.
- 10) Alumni Small Grants Program. Organizations should include appropriate small grant funds as well as any administrative costs to administer and monitor the small grant program.

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 1, 2018

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>).

**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>

### **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>

### **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](mailto:support@grants.gov)

### **Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission**

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.

**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 Authorized Organization Representative (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.

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.

**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.3r. 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:** A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- 3. Ability to achieve program objectives:** The 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, and networks.
- 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 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.
- 7. Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.
- 8. 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.

**Prohibition on the use of Federal Funds to Promote, Support, or advocate for the legalization or practice of Prostitution.**

The U.S. Government is opposed to prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. None of the funds made available under this agreement may be used to promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed to preclude assistance designed to ameliorate the suffering of, or health risks to, victims while they are being trafficked or after they are out of the situation that resulted from such victims being trafficked.

The recipient shall insert the foregoing provision in all sub-agreements under this award.

This provision includes express terms and conditions of the agreement and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Department of State prior to the end of its term.

**Additional Requirements for the Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza**

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

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Suzanne Balson at (202) 632-6179 for additional information.

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

(Revised August 2014)

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

personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a

Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

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

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

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://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; 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 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 US 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](mailto: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](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USAspending.gov](http://USAspending.gov) website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

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

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

#### **G. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Suzanne Balson, U.S. Department of State, Office of Alumni Affairs, ECA/P/A, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, by telephone, 202-632-6179 or email [BalsonSS@state.gov](mailto:BalsonSS@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.

Marie Royce  
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

April 11, 2018