

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY2020 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0006230

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Key Date/Application Deadline: December 18, 2019

Program Description/Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for one cooperative agreement for the FY2020 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program. NSLI-Y increases the number of American youth (ages 15 to 18) who learn critical foreign languages in support of strengthening national security, promoting U.S. competitiveness, building mutual understanding, and preparing youth for the global economy. 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 cooperate with ECA in the overall administration of NSLI-Y organizational responsibilities and the implementation of overseas summer and academic year language programs for approximately 650 individual participants according to the guidance detailed in this NOFO. NSLI-Y program activities funded by this award will take place during summer 2021 and academic year 2021-2022 in locations where Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Persian (Tajiki or Farsi), Russian, and Turkish are widely used in everyday life. The award also supports programming for NSLI-Y alumni of all program years. The Bureau anticipates that the single award recipient will manage the comprehensive organizational and administrative responsibilities of this program, and will identify qualified sub-award recipients to implement many of the overseas language programs.

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.

It is the Bureau's intent to award a cooperative agreement (one base year plus one non-competitive continuation) for an estimated total amount of \$20,000,000. Please see section B.) Federal 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: NSLI-Y increases the number of American youth (ages 15 to 18) who learn critical foreign languages in support of strengthening national security, promoting U.S. competitiveness, building mutual understanding, and preparing youth for the global economy. NSLI-Y programs accelerate and advance participants' language skills through a combination of structured classroom language instruction and less formal interactive and applied learning opportunities. For additional information, please visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/national-security-language-initiative-youth-nsli-y>.

NSLI-Y Program Goals:

- 1) To develop a cadre of Americans with advanced linguistic skills and related cultural understanding to advance international dialogue, compete effectively in the global economy, and promote mutual understanding;
- 2) To provide a tangible incentive for the learning and use of foreign languages by providing overseas language study opportunities for American high school students; and
- 3) To spark a lifetime interest in foreign languages and cultures among American youth.

Expected Program Outcomes:

- 1) Participants will demonstrate a substantive, measurable increase in language proficiency (oral comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing), as verified through pre- and post-program assessment utilizing an established and widely recognized language assessment tool.
- 2) Participants will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the host country's society, institutions and culture.
- 3) Participants will share American culture with their overseas peers, and alumni will share their overseas experiences with others in their U.S. schools and communities.
- 4) Alumni will continue their language learning, apply their linguistic and cross-cultural skills in their academic, career, and volunteer activities, and/or participate in other exchanges and educational activities to further language learning.

The total amount of anticipated funding available to support the overall program administration and the overseas language program implementation for the base year is \$10,000,000, pending the availability of FY 2020 funds. This amount is intended to support approximately 650 scholarships, including all administrative and program costs.

ECA seeks one organization to

- 1) Provide overall administration and management of the NSLI-Y overseas language immersion programs,
- 2) Engage and provide oversight of sub-award implementing organizations with relevant expertise to implement overseas language programs for approximately 70% of program participants, and
- 3) Directly implement overseas programs for approximately 30% of the program participants.

Organizations applying for this award must demonstrate their own and their proposed sub-awardees' competencies in the administration and oversight of international youth exchange programs, language instruction and related cultural activities, and language and program assessment.

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

ECA anticipates the cooperative agreement beginning on April 1, 2020 and ending on June 30, 2024.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

A. Overview

The FY2020 award will be executed as a cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and a single award recipient to support merit-based scholarships for American high school or recently graduated students for overseas intensive foreign language instruction in eight critical languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Persian (Tajiki or Farsi), Russian, and Turkish. The award also supports programming for NSLI-Y alumni from all program years.

Applicants should identify sub-award recipients, hereafter referred to as "implementing organization," to carry out overseas language programs that are in addition to those carried out by the applicant.

B. Distribution of Scholarships by Language, Duration, and Location

The *approximate* target distribution of scholarships by language, duration, and potential locations are detailed below. This distribution may be adjusted with the concurrence of ECA. ECA reserves the right to alter languages, countries, regions, programs, and participant numbers based on program goals, participant demand, safety and welfare, security, the availability of funding, and other factors in the FY 2020 base year and in exercising the non-competitive continuation in FY 2021. Applicants should propose a minimum of five participants for each academic year program and a minimum of 12

participants for each summer program. An adequate number of alternates should be identified to replace finalists who may drop out prior to the start of the program. Programs should be proposed for all eight languages, but do not need to be proposed for all potential locations. Specific locations should be where the target language is widely used in everyday life.

1. **Arabic:** 92 for summer; 15 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. If security considerations permit and ECA concurs, programs in additional countries may be added at a later time.
2. **Chinese (Mandarin):** 199 for summer; 34 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.
3. **Hindi:** 32 for summer; 5 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for India.
4. **Indonesian:** 15 for summer. Programs may be proposed for Indonesia.
5. **Korean:** 85 for summer; 15 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for the Republic of Korea (South Korea).
6. **Persian (Tajiki or Farsi):** 15 for summer. One program may be proposed for Tajikistan.
7. **Russian:** 107 for summer; 16 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. The majority of participants should be placed in Russia.
8. **Turkish:** 15 for summer; 5 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Turkey.

C. U.S. Department of State Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The U.S. Department of State's activities and responsibilities include the following:

- Provide guidance in the execution of major program components, and provide concurrence as necessary.
- Review all recruitment and publicity materials prior to publication, including application forms, the program website, and brochures.
- Review and approve all participant award documentation, NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions, Operational Guidelines, and other key program documents.
- Collaborate on publicizing the program as a standalone program and in coordination with other ECA outbound exchange programs, as appropriate.
- Review and approve the participant recruitment strategy and selection process.

- Advise on outreach and programming for students with disabilities.
- Provide ECA-specific eligibility guidelines for use in the application process.
- If a subaward competition is proposed, concur on the solicitation documents and the selection of subaward recipients.
- Review implementing organizations' program descriptions and program plans/schedules including plans for language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, community service projects, peer tutoring, and excursions.
- Review and concur on general program location, host family/housing location, and host language institution or school.
- Participate in pre-departure orientations and re-entry orientations when possible.
- Support the award recipient's pre- and post-program standardized testing of participants' language proficiency.
- Provide a welcome and security briefing at the arrival orientation.
- Provide coordination for the inclusion of NSLI-Y participants in appropriate Embassy/Consulate activities.
- Assist in liaison with appropriate U.S. Department of State offices, including the regional bureaus and overseas posts.
- Consult on participant support issues and concur on all participant early returns from the program.
- Concur on the Scope of Work and resumes for consultants hired to perform key program functions, such as evaluation, curriculum development, or overseas site visits.
- Review and approve modifications to program locations, placement numbers, implementing organizations, or program structure.
- Facilitate cooperation with other federally-supported programs aimed at critical language learning and studying abroad.
- Collaborate on and participate in the annual NSLI-Y planning meeting.
- Provide survey results to the award recipient for the purposes of program management.
- Consult on alumni activities and follow-up events, including possible activities with the private sector.
- Facilitate access to the U.S. Department of State's international travel registration system (Smart Travel Enrollment Program or STEP) and to relevant consular forms as needed.
- Provide health benefits to participants through the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for any participant not using an equivalent health benefit plan.

D. Award Recipient Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of the award recipient include the following:

- Provide management and coordination for the NSLI-Y program.

- Identify qualified organizations as subaward recipients to implement NSLI-Y overseas programs and provide thorough oversight of the subaward recipients.
- Work with implementing organizations to develop quality language immersion programs.
- Conduct a nationwide marketing and recruitment plan to encourage and attract diverse applicants, including students with disabilities.
- Manage a nationwide, merit-based application process.
- Manage the selection and placement of NSLI-Y participants.
- Maintain, and regularly update, a database of participant information, protecting personally identifiable information.
- Monitor participant safety and well-being, and ensure on-program support for participants.
- Ensure that all participants receive the required hours of language instruction.
- Assess participant language acquisition using established and widely recognized language assessment tools.
- Ensure that all implementing organizations coordinate with the respective U.S. Embassies/Consulates.
- Organize and facilitate a (virtual or in-person) planning meeting for all NSLI-Y implementing organizations, overseas partners, and ECA staff.
- Evaluate the overall program and its various components.
- Manage all subawards, both programmatically and financially.
- Facilitate the development and activities of an alumni association, including alumni from all NSLI-Y program years.
- Coordinate engagement with the private sector for recruitment, alumni activities, and career options.
- Submit all reports and requested program information to ECA in a timely manner.
- Provide an equivalent health benefits plan for all participants not enrolled through the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE).

E. Scholarship Coverage

Ensure that the NSLI-Y scholarship is comprehensive and consistent across all implementing organizations, and covers the following expenses:

- **Travel:** Round-trip travel between the participant's city of official residence, to the pre-departure orientation location, and to the overseas NSLI-Y program location
- **Orientations:** Pre-departure, arrival, mid-program (academic year only), and re-entry
- **Visas:** Host country entry/exit and transit visas, as needed
- **Tuition and related academic expenses:** Including support and testing for placement and language acquisition
- **Educational and cultural programming:** Including overseas language-focused excursions, volunteer opportunities, and guided internships, if applicable

- **Meals:** Three meals per day
- **Accommodations:** A host family for the entirety of each program is preferred; if students are in a dormitory or other supervised group housing for part of the exchange, there must be a host family stay for part of the program
- **Health Benefits:** Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits, provided by the U.S. Department of State, or equivalent health benefits
- **Stipend:** To cover additional living expenses if needed as determined by in-country implementer and approved by award recipient

The NSLI-Y scholarship **does not cover** the following:

- **Passports:** Costs associated with obtaining a valid U.S. passport, except in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient
- **Medical:** Required medical examinations and immunizations needed to travel to the host country or routine medical checkups
- **Incidentals:** Pocket money for souvenirs or additional events such as movies, ice skating, etc, except in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient, in collaboration with ECA

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

The proposal must incorporate the following program elements:

A. Identification and Management of Overseas Implementing Organizations

Identification of Implementing Organizations: Propose overseas language programs to be implemented by the award recipient and identify subaward implementing organizations to carry out additional summer and academic year programs. The applicant itself should propose to implement programs for approximately 30% of the total NSLI-Y participants.

ECA encourages applicants to identify an adequate number of subaward organizations to provide a strong base of implementing organizations for each language. The applicant must demonstrate how it will continue to explore potential new partners with the goal of strengthening and expanding program capacity for the FY 2020 program. Organizations that manage or implement other study abroad programs and will support the continued language learning of alumni should be given special consideration.

The applicant must demonstrate that each implementing organization has significant and relevant experience and expertise in planning and carrying out overseas programs in the respective language(s) and country(ies)/location(s) where it proposes to implement the program(s). All implementing organizations must be capable of handling overseas on-

program support (OPS) issues in a timely and transparent way that permits information to be conveyed to the award recipient and to ECA.

The applicant should identify the majority of program participants through the national merit-based competition described below. However, some implementing organizations may recruit and select some or all of their own participants, as long as the organizations comply with basic NSLI-Y eligibility requirements, utilize a transparent and merit-based selection process, and provide appropriate documentation to show cost effectiveness.

Additional Subaward Implementing Organizations: Once the cooperative agreement is awarded, with ECA concurrence, additional subaward implementing organizations may be added into the program if needed to meet program requirements and scholarship distribution.

U.S. Embassy Liaison and Consultation: Ensure that all implementing organizations and overseas partners establish a working relationship with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the relevant U.S. Embassy, Consulate or in Taiwan, with staff from the American Institute in Taiwan. During the program-planning phase, implementing organizations must contact PAS to obtain concurrence on program placement locations, including the host language institution/host school, and host family or other long-term accommodations locations (regions, neighborhoods, etc.).

Implementing organizations must invite PAS to participate in the arrival orientation *and* request a briefing by the Embassy's Regional Security Officer or other U.S. Embassy official to address matters of safety and security. If the program site is not in a city with an Embassy or Consulate, the implementing organization should consider routing travel through a city that will allow for Embassy/Consulate involvement.

Implementing organizations should consult PAS staff regarding proposed activities with participants and/or alumni of other ECA programs. Implementing organizations should invite PAS staff to participate in NSLI-Y program events as appropriate. If the political situation in any country results in the need for the Embassy to assume more responsibility, the overseas implementing organization should work with the Embassy as appropriate.

Program Planning Meeting: Organize and facilitate a virtual or in-person planning meeting to ensure that a single worldwide program identity is cultivated and maintained, and to discuss policies, procedures and best practices. Each implementing organization should be represented by at least one participant at the meeting. Overseas partners may be included, but are not required. If the meeting is virtual, a series of shorter meetings over a period of time is encouraged. ECA must be notified in advance about all attendees.

Resident Director/Local Coordinator Training and Support: Facilitate additional training for resident directors, local coordinators, or other equivalent in country staff who implement student on-program support. Trainings and support systems should be flexible to be able to provide needed assistance across the program regardless of local technology or staffing structure. Funds may be used to send staff to private trainings in limited situations.

Operational Guidelines: Review and refine, with ECA concurrence, comprehensive operational guidelines, including procedures for emergency situations. Distribute the guidelines to implementing organizations and ensure that they understand, implement, and adhere to them.

B. Nationwide Recruitment and Selection of NSLI-Y Scholars

Outreach: Propose a comprehensive outreach plan to publicize and recruit a strong diverse pool of qualified candidates. Diversity addresses, but is not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disability. See ECA's Diversity Statement in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information. To the fullest extent possible, the proposal should address and encourage the participation of traditionally underserved audiences in all program activities. Outreach and recruitment should begin in early 2020 and be coordinated with other ECA exchanges. A written outreach and recruitment plan, with specific goals, should be submitted as part of the proposal.

Merit-Based Competition: Conduct a nationwide merit-based competition for U.S. applicants with clearly identified criteria and a formal selection process that includes documented in-person, telephone, or video conference interviews for all academic year semifinalists. Interviews for summer applicants are encouraged, but not required. Interviews for summer applicants can be conducted individually or as a group as long as all interviews are conducted in the same format.

Disabilities: Develop a plan for outreach and placement of students with disabilities. Demonstrate how participants with disabilities will be reasonably accommodated.

Recruitment Criteria: Ensure that the following minimum criteria are used for recruitment. NSLI-Y applicants must be:

- U.S. citizens;
- 15 to 18 years of age at the approximate beginning of the program (beginning of the program can be defined as early as when the scholarship is accepted; one cut-off date for summer programs and one for academic year programs is allowed);
- enrolled in high school or equivalent home school program at the time of application; and
- Have a minimum 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale or equivalent.

Application: Develop a comprehensive online application. Monitor the online system to limit and address technical problems. The award recipient must be capable of accommodating applicants who cannot apply online. All application materials and associated data should be available in a sortable, searchable, database format that can be easily shared with ECA upon request. Historically, 3,000-4,000 applications are received each year.

Applications from Alumni of NSLI-Y and other ECA programs: Adhere to the ECA eligibility policy for alumni of NSLI-Y and other ECA Youth Programs Division exchange programs.

Public Inquiries: Respond to and manage general inquiries and application questions. Record and track all inquiries related to problems or issues with any part of the application process.

Selection Process: Plan for and conduct a transparent, criterion-based selection process. Screen and select participants who show maturity and strong evidence of their ability to succeed in an intensive, demanding language study program, and who represent the diversity of the United States' high school population, including individuals from underserved populations and locales. Give preference to applicants who demonstrate their intent and ability to continue their language and culture study beyond the scholarship period and apply their critical language and cultural skills later in their professional careers. Give preference to qualified applicants who might not otherwise be able to study abroad were it not for the NSLI-Y scholarship.

Department of State Notification: Provide ECA with lists of proposed finalists and alternates prior to participant notification. Identify proposed finalists and alternates who have participated in previous ECA programs.

Program Placement: Assign finalists and alternates to particular programs based on language level and other relevant criteria to ensure that each participant is placed into an appropriate and challenging program, and when possible, contribute to positive group dynamics. The proposal should address how the participants' language skills will be assessed for placement purposes and on what basis program assignments are made. Notify all implementing organizations of finalists and alternates from the national application pool assigned to them.

Applicant Notification: Prepare and send notifications to all finalists, alternates, and non-selected applicants. Prepare program descriptions for each overseas program based on a standard template. Inform participants of their program placement (including implementing organization, city, and school) at the time of scholarship notification, unless this is not possible due to security or other concerns about the location or program. Inform participants of specific housing accommodations (host family name, location and,

if applicable, dormitory or group housing location) no later than one week prior to departure from the United States and preferably earlier.

Congressional Notification: With the permission of the finalist, assist ECA in notifying Congressional Representatives and Senators of the finalists selected from their district or state.

C. Language Instruction and Assessment

Language Program Standards: Develop, implement, and monitor language program standards for language instruction and language-focused cultural activities and excursions for all NSLI-Y programs. Ensure that all summer programs include a minimum of 120 hours of classroom language instruction. Ensure that all academic year programs include a minimum average of ten hours per week of classroom language instruction for most weeks of the academic year. For both summer and academic year programs, classroom language instruction should generally not exceed five hours per day.

Language Goals, Curriculum, and Teacher Training: Ensure that each implementing organization proposes, implements, and maintains an appropriate curriculum for language instruction based on relevant standards and pedagogical best practices. Ensure that each implementing organization conducts appropriate teacher training. Provide advice and guidance as needed to implementing organizations on their language goals, curriculum design, and teacher training.

Level of Instruction: Group participants in classes based on their language proficiency. Participants with widely varying levels of language knowledge must not be placed in the same class. In general, classes should be limited to approximately twelve or fewer students. Overseas implementing organizations must be informed of student language levels prior to the program start date in order to make appropriate student groupings, assign qualified teachers, and adapt the curriculum as needed.

Language Instruction in the Target Language and Local Dialect: A minimum of 70% of language instruction time must be devoted to the target language. A maximum of 30% of class time may be allotted to the local dialect, if applicable. This ensures that NSLI-Y students receive sufficient instruction in the target language and are given enough language instruction to be able to communicate with their host families and others in the local community. For Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the target language and should be taught for at least 70% of language instruction time. Colloquial Arabic as spoken in the host country should be taught for 20% to 30% of the time, unless otherwise approved by ECA.

Language Assessment: Identify and use an established, standardized, and widely recognized language assessment tool to evaluate the baseline and post-program language skills of all NSLI-Y participants. Provide to ECA the participant assessment results,

including analyses and summaries, in a timely fashion after the completion of the post-program assessments. The assessment tool does not need to be the same for all languages, but must be the same for all participants within the same language.

D. Monitoring Participant Safety and Well-Being

Participant Monitoring: Develop a plan for monitoring participants' safety and welfare that parallels, to the extent possible, the standards for J-1 visa regulations for international secondary school students found in 22 CFR 62. This includes, among other points, the identification and use of appropriate means of verifying the integrity and suitability of each host family. Ensure that all implementing organizations and any volunteers and staff who have regular contact with the NSLI-Y participants have undergone screening for suitability.

In keeping with the J-1 visa regulations cited above, immediately report to ECA any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation, harassment, or abuse or harm of an exchange student participant. Furthermore, inform ECA promptly of any physical abuse or harm or serious problem or controversy that could be expected to bring the Department of State or the exchange program into notoriety or disrepute.

Ensure that implementing organizations have a plan for monitoring participants on a regular basis, and provide adequate support and guidance to participants during their programs. All implementing organizations must maintain, at a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the participant and monthly contact with the host family, addressing legitimate concerns in a timely fashion and apprising ECA in a timely manner about significant issues. All records and data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and be provided to ECA upon request.

On-Program Support (OPS): Management of OPS issues is among the most important participant monitoring functions and should be detailed in a monitoring plan. Provide regular monitoring of the program and its participants, and plans for dealing effectively with misunderstandings, adjustment issues, and emergencies. Provide guidance to implementing organizations on handling OPS issues, as necessary. Convey serious issues and concerns to ECA in a timely fashion.

Ensure that all participants abide by NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions and other program standards and requirements. Develop, distribute, and publicize disciplinary procedures that include ECA concurrence for individual participants' dismissal from the program. Immediately inform ECA and the Embassy/Consulate of any participant that is involved in a civil or criminal police matter, or is admitted to a hospital.

Emergency Contact Information and Access: Supply each NSLI-Y participant with a cell phone with in-country calling capability and the means to communicate with a local

representative in an emergency. Ensure that ECA, participants, and their parents/guardians have access to emergency contact information for the award recipient, the U.S.-based implementing organization, and the overseas implementing organization prior to international departure.

E. Pre-Program Planning and Activities

Database: Ensure that lists of all finalists, including those from implementing organizations that identify their own participants, conform to ECA database requirements and are submitted in a spreadsheet that includes host family information on dates as agreed upon by ECA and the award recipient for each summer and academic year cohort. Secure and protect any personally identifiable information. All statistical information collected on ECA program applicants and participants should be transferable to databases maintained by ECA.

Terms and Conditions: Ensure that all participants and their parents/legal guardians sign the NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions provided by ECA.

Release Form: Share with all participants and their parents/legal guardians the official *Minor Participant Name and/or Likeness Release* form provided by ECA to permit the award recipient, implementing organizations, Department of State, and United States Government to use their image and name for program promotion or other similar purposes.

Medical Clearance: Ensure that each participant meets minimum program medical and health standards and has required immunizations prior to their departure from the United States.

Health Benefits: Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits program and facilitate claims as necessary. Applicants may propose to use a different health plan for some or all of the participants, but must demonstrate that the alternate plan provides comparable or more comprehensive coverage. Coverage must begin when students depart the United States and not conclude until they return to the United States. A copy of the alternate health insurance policy should be included with the proposal.

Travel Arrangements: Ensure that implementing organizations arrange all travel in accordance with the Fly America Act. Provide an adult flight chaperone with necessary language skills for group flights to and from all overseas destinations, unless this requirement is waived by the award recipient with ECA's concurrence. Provide dates of international and domestic travel to ECA in advance of travel.

Travel Documents: Provide information to participants about obtaining valid U.S. passports. Make arrangements and pay costs for obtaining all necessary visas, including transit visas.

Communication with Participants: Ensure that implementing organizations contact participants in a timely fashion in advance of departure to provide them with program information, language preparation materials, flight details, and accommodations information.

Host Family Placement: All overseas programs must include a host family stay for all or part of the program. Ensure that all implementing organizations identify and screen host families in an appropriate manner. Ensure that proper host family reference checks are conducted, recorded, and maintained. Records must be kept for three years and made available to ECA upon request. Ensure that implementing organizations obtain concurrence from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate Public Affairs Section on the general locations of host families.

Host families must have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations, and may receive a reasonable reimbursement to cover the costs associated with hosting a student, but not to serve as a financial incentive. The amounts of any stipends or allowances should be justified based on the host country's local economy. All implementing organizations must maintain regular, at minimum monthly, contact with host families to answer questions, provide information, and assist in working out problems.

Alternate Housing: Ensure that non-host family housing arrangements, such as dormitories or group housing, provide safe, appropriate, and supervised living accommodations. Identify, screen, and orient the individual(s) responsible for supervising the participants in the group living environments.

Resident Directors/Local Coordinators: Work with all implementing organizations to identify, screen, and orient a resident director or local coordinator to serve as a cultural and academic liaison for NSLI-Y participants during their overseas program.

Registration: Ensure that participants and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) complete relevant consular forms and participants are registered in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

F. Orientations

Pre-Departure Orientation: Ensure that all NSLI-Y programs include a substantive participant pre-departure orientation (PDO) held in a logistically convenient location. Invite ECA to participate in all PDOs and provide copies of agendas to ECA in advance of PDOs. Provide guidance to implementing organizations to ensure that all key topics

are covered and a common approach to PDOs is maintained across programs. Topics must include, but are not limited to, program goals and expectations, cross-cultural training, host country information, language program tips and requirements, personal safety and security, and information on identifying and reporting sexual harassment and abuse. Ensure that each participant receives the name and contact information for the participant's resident director and/or local coordinator, an emergency contact, and health benefits information. Participants should be informed that NSLI-Y is a U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program.

Orientation for In-Country Partners: Orient all in-country teaching staff and administrators about NSLI-Y goals and objectives, required language classroom hours, learning styles of American high school students, and relevant safety and security guidelines in advance of the arrival of NSLI-Y participants.

Host Family Orientations: Ensure that all host families receive an orientation that includes information about NSLI-Y goals and objectives, responsibilities of being a host parent, support available to host families, and an introduction to the inter-cultural experience of hosting an American high school student.

Arrival Orientation: Organize an in-country arrival orientation. Contact the Embassy/Consulate far in advance of arrival to arrange for State Department participation in the orientation, as noted above. Inform participants of relevant local and country-specific information including personal and general safety considerations, as well as emergency services offered by the Embassy to American citizens.

Mid-Program Workshop: All academic year programs must include a mid-program workshop during which participants share their experiences, discuss concerns, and speak one-on-one with the resident director/local coordinator.

Re-entry Orientation: Provide a re-entry orientation to prepare participants for their return to the United States. Re-entry orientations must include a discussion of the following topics: required post-program language testing; post-program evaluation; tips for cultural re-entry; ideas for future language study; information about other U.S. government scholarships for continued language study; internships and careers that utilize language skills; and suggestions for sharing the NSLI-Y experience with other individuals and groups in the United States. The re-entry orientation should also encourage participants to join the NSLI-Y alumni association and register on the Department's International Exchange Alumni website (<https://alumni.state.gov>).

Programs may include a re-entry workshop component in the Washington, D.C. area if it is feasible and cost-effective. Implementing organizations should work with ECA to arrange a time for returning participants to interact with the U.S. Department of State to share their experiences and receive information about Department careers and internships.

G. Key Program Activities

Design and Implement Overseas Language Programs: Design, plan, and implement overseas programs focused on language acquisition and cultural immersion, and work with implementing organizations to do the same for the programs they implement. Each implementing organization must maintain program standards and meet all program requirements. Each implementing organization should provide a detailed program schedule for each program location. Program schedules must clearly delineate language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, and community service activities. Activities should be designed to ensure participants focus on the target language and culture. Schedules must be provided well in advance of the start of the programs for review by the award recipient and ECA.

Enrichment Activities: Include cultural enrichment activities that reinforce language learning, such as planned excursions, guided internships, activities with local peers, and extra-curricular activities. Cultural activities should enhance the participants' understanding of contemporary society, culture, media, political institutions, ethnic diversity, history, and environment of the host country. Activities must be language-focused and promote NSLI-Y goals and objectives. Incorporating peer language partners on a regular basis to practice language and/or explore the local culture is strongly encouraged.

Community Service: Arrange or help facilitate volunteer community service activities that provide opportunities for language practice and enhance understanding of local culture and society. ECA reserves the right to waive this requirement in situations where volunteer work is deemed inappropriate or risky.

Room and Board: Provide appropriate living arrangements for all participants, including housing and three meals per day. Refer to section II. Program Specific Guidelines: E. Pre-Program Planning and Activities above for host family and alternate housing guidance.

Stipends: A stipend is allowable, but not required for participants to cover incidental expenses. If proposed, all participants within one country and on the same duration of program (summer or academic year) should receive the same stipend amount, regardless of implementing organization.

Acknowledge the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: Ensure that all print and electronic materials (online application, websites, digital resources, brochures, press releases, announcements, etc.) developed for promotional purposes and related to the program comply with [ECA's Communications Guidance](#). Use the U.S. Department of State seal, the U.S. flag, and the NSLI-Y logo on all materials related to the program as delineated in ECA's Communications Guidance.

Obtain ECA concurrence on all print and electronic materials related to NSLI-Y in advance of publication and distribution. ECA retains copyright use of, and may distribute, materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Publicity: On a regular and timely basis, provide ECA with participant and program highlights, photos, videos, press coverage, and the like that may be used to publicize the program. Inform ECA of any publicity that highlights the NSLI-Y program or NSLI-Y participants, or otherwise strengthens outreach efforts, particularly those that involve government officials and the media. When the media interacts with NSLI-Y participants or alumni, the award recipient should make every effort to identify NSLI-Y as a U.S. Department of State program, unless otherwise advised by ECA or the Public Affairs Section of a U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Build Relationships: Cultivate relationships with organizations that implement other U.S. government-funded critical language programs, such as STARTALK, The Language Flagship, Critical Language Scholarships (CLS), and Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP). Facilitate interactions and cooperation between NSLI-Y participants and the participants and/or alumni of other U.S. Department of State programs, including but not limited to, Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES), Kennedy-Lugar YES Abroad, Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program (CBYX), Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), Youth Ambassadors, English Access Microscholarship, and Fulbright programs.

H. Follow-on Alumni Activities

Alumni Association: Manage an alumni association that includes alumni from all NSLI-Y program years. Provide opportunities for alumni to develop their leadership skills. Work with the alumni association leadership to set goals and priorities, plan and implement activities, recruit additional alumni, and encourage alumni to share their overseas experiences with their schools and their communities. Provide financial and programming support for participation in alumni activities, including travel as appropriate, for alumni of all NSLI-Y program years.

Language Study and Career Opportunities: Propose and/or develop creative and effective ways to assist alumni in continuing their foreign language and cultural studies in high school, in post-secondary educational settings, or in other settings. Follow-on activities should also introduce alumni to internship and career opportunities in which they can use their language and cultural skills.

Department of State's International Exchange Alumni Website: Encourage participants and alumni to register on the *International Exchange Alumni* website (<https://alumni.state.gov/>).

Alumni Program Linkages: Encourage linkages to other federally-sponsored language programs to share resources, pursue common goals, and inspire NSLI-Y alumni to pursue critical language learning.

Tracking Alumni: Track NSLI-Y alumni from all program years to determine whether and how their NSLI-Y language learning has influenced or affected their post-secondary experience and career choices. If requested, conduct an alumni survey.

Alumni Involvement in NSLI-Y: Encourage and facilitate the involvement of NSLI-Y alumni in supporting the current and future program through recruitment, publicity, outreach, virtual exchanges, mentoring, pre-program preparation, and program planning.

I. Program Evaluation

Present a plan to monitor and evaluate the program's success during the program implementation as well as at the end of the program. Monitor participants and be able to respond to evaluation questions including satisfaction with the program, language acquisition, cultural learning, and changes in behavior as a result of the program. Monitor the performance of all implementing organizations, including language learning, participant support, adherence to NSLI-Y operational guidelines, and other relevant criteria.

J. Reporting Requirements

Performance Reports: The award recipient is responsible for implementing mechanisms to monitor participants and report to the ECA Grants Office and the Program Office success and impact through semi-annual program and financial performance reports. Program performance reports will address, at a minimum, the following topics: past and planned program activities, financial status (e.g., identify significant financial variations from original budgets), and the strengths and weaknesses of program design and implementation. Reports should include updates on the key activities and achievements of each implementing organization, as well as for the overall administration of the program.

The award recipient must submit to the ECA Program and Grants Offices electronic copies of all semi-annual performance reports no more than 30 days after the reporting period end dates.

Final Reports: Final program and financial performance reports must be submitted no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award. The final program report should include both qualitative and quantitative data. The report must include an analysis and summary of the language acquisition of participants, as well as a summary of the performance of each of the implementing organizations.

Evaluation Reports: The recipient must share program evaluation reports, both interim and summary reports, with ECA in a timely manner, and make appropriate adjustments to the programs in consultation with ECA. Monitoring and evaluation results should be addressed in the semi-annual and final program performance reports. The final program reports should include an analysis and summary of the language acquisition of participants, as well as a summary of the performance of each of the implementing organizations.

K. Fiscal Management

The award recipient is responsible for the management of all financial aspects of the program, including the subawards to implementing organizations. Submit financial reports as detailed above.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus one additional non-competitive continuation, 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 non-competitive continuation is 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.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements. Proposals should include the following items. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity

5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources if applicable
6. Scope and Goals
 - a. Number and description of participants
 - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - c.. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - d. Fields covered
 - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative

In a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

- Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
- Participating implementing organizations
- Number of anticipated participants for each language and duration, including percentages of participants assigned to each implementing organization
- Proposed locations of overseas programs
- Program activities
- Plans for outreach to a diverse applicant pool
- Monitoring of participant safety and welfare
- Language assessment
- Program evaluation
- Follow-on activities for alumni
- Program administration and management
- Work plan/Time-frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

Calendar of Activities

The Calendar of Activities is a monthly plan of action or timetable that demonstrates the timing and organization of the major program activities.

Letters of Commitment from all subaward implementing organizations identified in the proposal.

Resumes of key staff members of the applicant organization and implementing organizations. No resume should exceed two pages.

Evaluation Plan and Sample Survey Instruments

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

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

Fiscal Year Funds: FY2020 - \$10,000,000, pending the availability of funds; FY2021 - \$10,000,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$20,000,000. This figure represents base year plus one Non-Competitive Continuation year, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$20,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Approximate Average Award: \$10,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: April 1, 2020, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: June 30, 2024. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus one non-competitive continuation year.

Additional Information:

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.

A Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 39 months (base year) with Non-Competitive Continuations for one additional 12 month period (non-competitive continuation year one). 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 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 may 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 exceeding \$130,000 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 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 Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 632-6350, schwabcj@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 ECA Program Officer Christopher Schwab 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 until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

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

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

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

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

D.3g. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.service-now.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS

(4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

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

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

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: A detailed budget and budget narrative for applicant and proposed subaward implementing organizations must be included.

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.

For competitions that will be renewed through a Non-Competitive Continuation, 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 one additional non-competitive continuation year, 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 one non-competitive continuation year).

To exercise the Non-Competitive Continuation mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

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

The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

1.) Closely monitor the recipient’s performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory semi-annual performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

2.) Review and evaluate all mandatory semi-annual program and financial reports;

- 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.30. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- Staff, chaperone, group escorts, resident director/group leader costs and per diem, in accordance with General Services Administration (GSA) standards, separating out: international airfare; in-country travel overseas; and domestic travel in the U.S.
- Participant travel costs
- Materials (film and video rentals, educational materials, etc.)
- Language program tuition
- Language-related enrichment and community service activities
- Costs associated with identifying host families and monitoring participants' safety and well-being throughout the program
- Costs associated with providing reasonable accommodations to participants
- Cell phones and service for participants for emergency use

- Food and lodging, when not in home-stay
- Alumni and follow-on activities for NSLI-Y alumni of all program years
- Program, teacher, and student evaluation
- Program planning meeting
- Promotional materials, including website development
- Stipends to participants (optional)
- Stipends to host families (optional)

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

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

Application Deadline Date: **Wednesday, December 18, 2019**

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Search Grants” portion of the system.

D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

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

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

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

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of

submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

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

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

D.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 U.S. 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. Program Planning and Ability to Meet Program Goals and Objectives: The proposal should clearly indicate how the applicant will meet the program goals and objectives. The proposal should demonstrate how participants will be recruited, selected, monitored, and tested for language gains. A detailed work plan should demonstrate organizational competency and logistical capacity. The proposal should include plans for

administering and managing the overall program, as well as working with subaward implementing organizations to carry out overseas programs. The responsibilities, capacity, and expertise of proposed implementing organizations should be clearly delineated.

2. Follow-on Activities: The proposal should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) which insures that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

3. Support of Diversity: Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration 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.

4. 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 semi-annually.

5. Cost-effectiveness: Reviewers will analyze the overall budget and sub-budgets for clarity and cost-effectiveness. They will also assess the rationale of the proposed budget and whether the allocation of funds is appropriate to complete tasks outlined in the proposal narrative. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. The proposal should demonstrate a quality, cost-effective program.

6. 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.

7. Institution's Record/Ability/Capacity: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, show personnel and institutional resources adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's goals, 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.

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.

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

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<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 semi-annually 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 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 <https://mygrants.service-now.com/r> specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

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

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 4.) Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC), applicants must be placed on a mandatory semi-annual program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

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

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

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

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

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Christopher Schwab, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-632-6350, youthprograms@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

October 15, 2019