

**Department of State**

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

**(NOFO):** FY 2020 Professional Fellows Program

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SFOP0006609

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.415

**Key Date/Application Deadline:** Friday, May 8, 2020

**Executive Summary:** The Professional Fellows Division (ECA/PE/C/PF) of the Office of Citizen Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposal submissions for the FY 2020 Professional Fellows Program (PFP). The Professional Fellows Program will bring leaders, ages 25-40, to the United States from countries in Africa (AF), East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), the Middle East and North Africa (NEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and the Western Hemisphere (WHA). The Professional Fellows Program is a two-way global exchange program designed to promote mutual understanding, enhance leadership and professional skills, and build lasting and sustainable partnerships between emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States.

For foreign participants, the defining element of the five-to-six week U.S. program is a substantive four-week individually-tailored fellowship placement with a U.S. organization. The U.S. program culminates with a conference, referred to as the Professional Fellows Congress (see Section A.1.7.) in Washington, D.C. Following the conclusion of the U.S.-based portion of the program, select American participants will travel overseas for a minimum of five days to assist the foreign participants in implementing projects in their local communities. A leadership curriculum will be an integral part of the program and directly complement the U.S.-based exchange, reinforce collaborative activities, and support peer learning. The Professional Fellows Program will also include a "Professional Fellows Network" and robust alumni activities.

It is the Bureau's intent to award up to seven (7) cooperative agreements (each one for the FY 2020 base year plus two non-competitive continuations in FY 2021 and FY 2022, pending the availability of funds and successful performance), one for overall program administrative functions (Global Fellow Services (GFS) and one per geographic region (regional awards). Regional proposals must support 40-55 foreign participants and one U.S. participant per every two-three foreign participants.

Applicants may submit proposals for both the GFS award and one regional award under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Applicants may not submit proposals for more than one regional award under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Applicants applying under a single category are strongly encouraged to read the entire solicitation to understand the scope of implementation and programming. Applicants submitting more than one proposal for the GFS award or more than one proposal for regional awards will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process. If an

applicant chooses to apply for the GFS award and a regional award, they must submit two separate proposals.

The GFS award recipient will work in partnership with ECA and the six regional award recipients to coordinate administrative processes, support networking and alumni activities, and develop common templates to provide consistent and robust programming and branding across the six regional awards. This will include the development of standardized materials and timelines. Additionally, the GFS award recipient will have primary responsibility for the development of a PFP public website, an online Professional Fellows Network for participants and alumni, a leadership development curriculum, and the design and implementation of the Professional Fellows Congress (see Section A.1.7) in Washington, D.C.

The regional award recipients will have primary responsibility for recruitment and selection of participants from the six geographical regions and activities for the five- to six-week U.S.-based exchange program. The U.S.-based exchange will include an individually-tailored working placement, referred to as the “fellowship placement,” that is four weeks in length, a minimum of four days a week, and approximately 32-40 hours per week. Additionally, the regional award recipients will have primary responsibility for the Reciprocal Exchange component, which is an opportunity for an American counterpart who supported the U.S.-based exchange to travel to the foreign participant’s home country to assist the foreign participant with their individual action plan and contribute to the achievement of the program’s goals.

GFS and regional award recipients will work in close coordination on many program components, in consultation with ECA.

**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:*** The Professional Fellows Program supports the following broad goals:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States;
2. Provide opportunities for participants ages 25-40 to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies to develop solutions to pressing local and global challenges;
3. Increase Americans' global competitiveness through new and expanded partnerships with professionals from around the world;
4. Create resilient communities and address disinformation by supporting civil society, open transparent institutions, and human rights; and
5. Build a global network of like-minded professionals committed to creating positive change in their workplaces and communities.

“Program participants,” also referred to in this NOFO as “Professional Fellows” or “Fellows” for foreign participants and “U.S. Fellows” for Americans traveling on “Reciprocal Exchanges,” are defined as those individuals who travel under award funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country. Employees of the award recipients, any sub-award recipients, or U.S. government employees are not eligible to participate in the Professional Fellows Program and cannot be included as program participants.

#### **A.1. GFS: Global Fellow Services**

The GFS award recipient will work in partnership with ECA and the six regional award recipients (the regional recipients) to develop a public website, online platforms to carry-out administrative functions and for participant and alumni networking, frameworks, processes, and program templates to provide consistent and robust programming and branding across the six regional awards. To facilitate effective communication and oversight of complex program elements and activities, the award recipient for GFS must have an office and staff in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area dedicated to working on this award. Applicants who do not currently have an office with program staff in the Washington, D.C. area should include in their proposal a detailed plan for establishing an office with staff to work on this award by September 1, 2020. The award recipient shall bear the cost of establishing a D.C. area office; no federal funding to open a D.C.-based office may be included in the budget submission for this program.

Proposals for GFS must demonstrate the award recipient's willingness to actively collaborate and coordinate with the six regional award recipients on program components where standardization across the Professional Fellows Program supports consistency in administrative processes and consistent branding.

#### **A.1.2. Outreach and Program Promotion**

To ensure strong branding for the Professional Fellows Program, the award recipient for GFS will be responsible for developing an outreach and program promotion plan to raise

public awareness of the Professional Fellows Program, the impact of international exchanges, and the contributions of exchange participants in building long-lasting peaceful relations between the United States and other countries. Proposals must include an outline to describe how the Professional Fellows Program will be publicized, using traditional and digital technology, to reach the widest possible audience of qualified applicants, potential U.S. fellowship placement organizations, U.S. host families, U.S. embassies and consulates, and other relevant PFP stakeholders. The proposal should demonstrate how the award recipient will engage with ECA and other U.S. Department of State social media sites to share impact stories, demonstrate success, amplify core messages, and connect the program to foreign policy objectives. Additionally, the outreach strategy should include a plan to develop templates for promotional documents that will be shared with the regional award recipients.

At a minimum, the plan should include:

- A comprehensive strategy for developing social media toolkits and digital promotional materials that considers regional needs, and ensures input from the six regional award recipients, ECA, and other Department of State stakeholders;
- Strategy for managing the social media assets of the Professional Fellows Program, including but not limited to promoting open application periods and sharing program impact. ECA must be given administrative access to such accounts and will provide oversight, as well as own the data;
- Detailed strategy for collecting, analyzing, reporting, maintaining, and sharing data on the impact of the program with ECA, regional award recipients, as well as relevant Professional Fellows Program partners and program alumni. Special emphasis should be given to data visualization tools and providing real time access to program data;
- Management of promotion of the Professional Fellows Congress (see Section A.1.7) in collaboration with ECA and regional award recipients;
- Outline of staffing structures to effectively implement all proposed activities and initiatives; and
- Detailed strategy for working with ECA to ensure that the proposed outreach plan complies with all ECA's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communication Guidance.

All print and online materials provided to or created for dissemination to applicants, participants, program partners, U.S. government agencies, including U.S. embassies and consulates, and other entities must be submitted for ECA review and approval prior to distribution.

Additionally, the proposal should address the recipient's ability to develop a program website independent of the recipient organization's website. The Professional Fellows Program website should include both administrative and programmatic functionality that is 508 compliant under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and supports a variety of users' needs. Special attention should be paid to creating a site that describes the Professional Fellows Program and all its components in a creative, dynamic, and interactive manner. The award recipient must regularly update website content to ensure that posted material is current and engaging. Proposals should include work flows/plans and timelines for how the award recipient will work with ECA and the six regional award recipients to coordinate the updating of the site, promote impact stories, support peer learning and network development, and share updates related to the leadership curriculum. ECA must approve major revisions to online materials, new strategies for website development, and modifications to program information. ECA reserves the right to request that website content be added or removed in a timely manner. The website must be mobile friendly.

At a minimum, the website should:

- Provide a platform accessible to a wide range of users with differing needs, internet bandwidth, and national privacy laws;
- Provide general program information including overview, mission, and goals of the Professional Fellows Program in a format that is creative, engaging, and user friendly. Special emphasis should be placed on telling the Professional Fellows Program's story to a diverse audience;
- Highlight accomplishments, experiences, impact, and diversity of current and past program participants and partners;
- Provide updates and information about fellowship and partnership opportunities;
- Showcase the Professional Fellows Congress (see Section A.1.7 Professional Fellows Congress);
- Provide innovative ways to connect program alumni, Fellows, and U.S. hosts that promotes the continued development of the PFP Network;
- Provide data driven visuals that demonstrate impact and program reach;
- House the online application platform for the Fellowship application that is accessible to regional award recipients (see section A.1.3 Recruitment and Selection section for GFS award recipient and A.2.4 Recruitment and Selection section for regional award recipients); and

- Collect, store, and provide direct access to program data in real time to ECA, regional award recipients, and other program partners, as needed.

All program materials, including but not limited to, the Professional Fellows website, program templates, and social media content should support and reference the mission of the Professional Fellows Program. Materials should note that “The Professional Fellows Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State and is supported in its implementation by [award recipient].” When applicable, this note should include a link to the program website. Language emphasizing the role of the U.S. Department of State as the program’s funder should appear prominently on all print and electronic materials and should precede any language regarding the role of the award recipient in administering the program. Publications should prominently feature the Professional Fellows Program logo and the U.S. Department of State seal in accordance with established communication guidelines. The outreach strategy and all publication materials, including cover designs, must be submitted to ECA for approval prior to publication and dissemination.

Proposals should also indicate agreement to follow guidance in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) entitled “Acknowledgment of ECA’s Financial Support and Use of the Department Seal.”

### **A.1.3. Recruitment and Selection**

In collaboration with ECA and the Public Affairs Sections at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for working with the six regional award recipients to consolidate **recruitment plans** for Professional Fellows and U.S. hosts into a shared timeline that will be promoted on the Professional Fellows Program website. The GFS award recipient will provide **guidance on messaging, social media toolkits, and other relevant promotional materials** that will reach a broad, well-qualified, and diverse applicant pool. The GFS award recipient will work with ECA to ensure that recruitment materials make clear the primary purpose and audience for key messages, making sure to differentiate between recruitment and general program marketing and promotion. All aspects of diversity included in ECA’s Diversity Statement should be addressed in the recruitment plans including, where applicable, geographic, racial, ethnic, age, religious, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Proposals submitted for GFS must demonstrate the applicant’s ability and willingness to collaborate with regional award recipients on this aspect.

The award recipient of GFS will be responsible for developing adaptable **marketing materials** including, but not limited to social media campaign content, digital and/or print materials (flyers, fact sheets, one pagers, brochures), and online recruitment content

(application interface and information) to be shared with the regional award recipients. These materials will facilitate outreach to leaders in U.S. organizations related to Fellows' professional backgrounds, and other relevant stakeholders. For information about the eligibility criteria for Professional and U.S. Fellows, see section A.2.4 (Recruitment and Selection for regional award recipients). Proposals must demonstrate the applicant's ability and willingness to collaborate with regional award recipients on the recruitment and selection of applicants for the Professional Fellows Program, ensuring regionally appropriate platforms, information, and processes.

The GFS award recipient will be responsible for creating adaptable Professional Fellow and U.S. Fellow **applications** that will be posted on the program website (see section A.1.2. Outreach and Program Promotion for more details about the program website), allow participants to apply online, and ensure a merit-based open competition. The GFS award recipient will work with the regional award recipients to develop supplemental application questions, based on their region and themes. Supplemental questions will be added to the standard application developed by the GFS award recipient. Proposals must demonstrate GFS award recipient's ability and willingness to include input from the regional award recipients in the application as well as developing a platform that allows regional administrative access to participant data (including data from program applicants).

GFS award recipients will be responsible for developing a **selection plan** for Professional Fellows and U.S. Fellows that ensures consistency across the six regions by adhering to the details on what the regional selection plan must include in section A.2.4 Recruitment and Selection for regional. The award recipient for GFS will be responsible for developing a template scoring rubric to aid in the consistency of selection of all Professional and U.S. Fellows.

#### **A.1.4. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)**

All participants must participate in a pre-departure orientation (PDO) prior to their departure from their home country for Professional Fellows and prior to their departure from the United States for U.S. Fellows. The PDO will be conducted by the regional award recipients. The PDO should be designed to give the Professional and U.S. Fellow an overview of the Professional Fellows Program, overarching goals, expectations of the exchange experience, cultural, logistical, health and safety information, along with any additional resources that would assist in their preparations for departure. PDOs should be interactive and where possible engage alumni of the program. In coordination with ECA, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing a template presentation and other overview orientation materials to ensure consistency of common program information.

At a minimum, all PDOs for Professional Fellows must include the following:

- Overview of the Professional Fellows Program including program goals and objectives and goals of the Fulbright-Hays Act;
- Overview of State Department role in supporting international exchanges;
- Expectations of the U.S.-based exchange program (including a review of the Terms and Conditions);
- Overview of and introduction to the leadership development curriculum including time to work on introductory modules;
- Overview of Fellow Action Plans (see Section A.1.6.);
- General expectations about the fellowship placement;
- Discussion on cross-cultural issues including day-to-day considerations of living and working in the United States, including ECA guidance on sexual harassment, and U.S. business standards and expectations regarding professional conduct;
- Overview of the Professional Fellows Congress (see Section A.1.7);
- Overview of J-1 visa regulations (including two-year home residency requirement);
- Overview of the accident and sickness health benefits program (ASPE) (particularly what is covered and not covered). More information on ASPE can be found at: <https://www.sevencorners.com/gov/usdos>
- Travel logistics;
- Opportunities for alumni and network engagement; and
- Social media toolkit and overview of social media engagement.

At minimum all PDOs for U.S. Fellows must include the following topics:

- Overview of the Professional Fellows Program including program goals and objectives and the Fulbright-Hays Act;
- Overview of State Department role in supporting international exchanges;
- Expectations of the Reciprocal Exchange component;
- Discussion on cross-cultural issues including day-to-day considerations of living and working in the host country, including professional standards of conduct;
- Instructions for registering with the local U.S. embassy or consulate using the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP);
- Overview of ASPE (particularly what is covered and not covered); More information on ASPE can be found at: <https://www.sevencorners.com/gov/usdos>
- Opportunities for alumni and network engagement;
- Social media toolkit and overview of social media engagement; and
- Opportunities to engage with the Department of State and tell the exchange story.

### **A.1.5. Arrival Orientation**

All Professional Fellows must participate in an arrival orientation in the United States, conducted by the regional award recipients. In coordination with ECA, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing a template presentation and other relevant

orientation materials to ensure consistency of common program information. Arrival orientation material should be designed to give Professional Fellows more specifics about the U.S.-based exchange and U.S. Fellows specifics about their Reciprocal Exchange. Proposals should explain how the orientation will work to reinforce and build on key messages presented at the PDO.

At a minimum the arrival orientation materials for the Professional Fellow must include:

- Overview of primary points of contact;
- Reminder of expectations (including review of Terms and Conditions);
- Details of U.S.-based exchange (review of schedule of activities, including program activities and deadlines);
- Fellowship placement-specific policies and regulations;
- Details on leadership development sessions;
- Fellow Action Plans (see Section A.1.6.);
- Discussion of health and safety (details on who they need to contact in case of an emergency, using ASPE, where the closest clinic and hospital is located, any specific state laws they should be aware of, ECA guidance on sexual harassment, etc.);
- Overview of the host state and city (including historical landmarks, closest grocery store and pharmacy, closest houses of worship, etc.);
- Culture, Diversity, and Respect (including discussion on professionalism and sexual harassment);
- Networking and ways to maximize experience;
- Social media and sharing theirs and the exchange story;
- Overview of Professional Fellows Network; and
- Overview of the Professional Fellows Congress (See Section A.1.7)

A formal arrival orientation may not be possible for the U.S. Fellows. U.S. Fellows and their counterparts should have every opportunity to engage with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. embassy or consulate in the host country. Where possible, additional arrangements should be made for a security briefing with the U.S. Embassy's regional Security Office (RSO). In consultation with ECA, the regional award recipients should coordinate with post to schedule an arrival orientation. Minimally, once the U.S. Fellow arrives in their host country the Professional Fellow(s) who is/are hosting the U.S. Fellow should provide him/her with a general overview of the host country and the plans for the exchange. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for creating an outline of a guidance document/talking points that the Professional Fellow(s) can use to orient the U.S. Fellow to their home country. These documents must be submitted to ECA for approval and then provided to the regional award recipients for dissemination.

At a minimum the document should include:

- Overview of host country;
- Discussion of health and safety (safety of food and water, where to avoid, who to contact in case of an emergency, etc.);

- Cultural norms;
- Overview of Reciprocal Exchange (review of schedule of activities); and
- Review of Professional Fellow(s) Action Plan (discussion of goals and expectations)

#### **A.1.6. Leadership Development Curriculum**

The GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing an innovative leadership curriculum that will be used by all regional award recipients to support the broader goals of the Professional Fellows Program. The curriculum should enhance the U.S.-based exchange, augment what Fellows learn at their fellowship placements, and contribute to the development of a global professional network. At a minimum, the curriculum should include modules for the pre-departure orientation, U.S.-based exchange, post Fellowship component, and alumni programming.

The leadership component should focus on: 1) skill development in leadership, management, community action, and building resilient communities; 2) storytelling/communications; 3) media literacy/countering disinformation; 4) and other relevant themes of the U.S.-based exchange program. Applicants for GFS should also feel free to propose additional leadership themes that align with and support the Professional Fellows Program. Additionally, this curriculum should be accessible to previous program alumni, as well as interested U.S. Fellows and fellowship placement organizations. While proposals are encouraged to utilize blended learning in developing the leadership curriculum, the majority of the leadership development modules should be administered through the online platform referenced in section A.1.9. Professional Fellows Network (Alumni Programming), be appropriate to adult learners, accommodate individuals with disabilities, and be mobile friendly. The proposal should provide an overview of the applicant's educational approach to leadership development, plans to accommodate diverse learners, proposed syllabus and timeline for the training module, and a strategy for cross-coordination across all regional award recipients. Proposals for GFS should also include a timeline for web development, testing, and implementation of all core program components.

The leadership curriculum should directly support the development of an **Action Plan** tool that will guide Fellows in articulating goals that they plan to achieve once they return to their home country after the U.S.-based exchange. The Action Plan should support the Fellows' professional growth throughout all stages of the program and alumni. Proposals should include a plan for how the GFS award recipient will coordinate with the six regional award recipients to ensure a consistent timeline for the Professional Fellows to develop an initial Action Plan and work to refine the Action Plan during the U.S.-based exchange. GFS proposals should include creative and thoughtful ways to incorporate the sharing of Action Plans into the Professional Fellows Congress programming. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing an Action Plan document template to

share with regional award recipients for dissemination.

### **A.1.7. Professional Fellows Congress**

The Professional Fellows Congress is a program-wide conference at the end of the fellowship placement that brings together, at a minimum, all Professional Fellows and may include past alumni and/or U.S. Fellows. The Congress should be held in Washington, D.C. and no more than four days/three nights, with a minimum of two days of common programming. GFS applicants will be responsible for the Congress and should include detailed plans in their proposals.

As the capstone event of the Professional Fellows Program, each Professional Fellows Congress should:

- Allow Fellows from all regions to interact and share their work and experiences with each other, both formally and informally;
- Allow an opportunity to examine ways an individual, organization, or interest group can generate change for the common good;
- Incorporate discussions or interactive sessions on cross-cultural issues and relevant topics;
- Include appropriate workshops and seminars that further complement and reinforce the leadership development curriculum and the Fellows overall U.S.-based exchange experience;
- Allow Fellows the opportunity to interact with senior U.S. government, business, and civic leaders and members of the diplomatic community; and
- Address the Professional Fellows Network and alumni follow-on activities, in consultation with ECA and other U.S. government agencies.

The Professional Fellows Congress should: 1) promote active engagement among Fellows from participating PFP countries; 2) highlight Fellows' professional achievements; 3) support planning around Fellows' Action Plans; 4) and provide opportunities for Fellows to reflect on how their U.S. experiences can translate into actionable projects in their home communities and workplaces. The Congress should open or conclude with a program-wide event such as a reception or banquet for approximately 240 – 330 Congress attendees and select invitees.

The proposal should outline how the goals and objectives of the Congress will be integrated into all activities, propose possible workshop themes and sessions, and discuss how the program will support the exchange of ideas between participants and invited guests. Special attention should be paid to incorporating adult learning styles into the Congress design and program. Proposals must demonstrate a high degree of cross-cultural awareness and the ability to engage a diverse group of program participants. Proposals should discuss how the use of mobile and web-based applications will be

thoughtfully and creatively integrated into the Congress design to ensure maximum opportunities for networking, collaboration, and learning.

The GFS award recipient is responsible for the overall design and implementation of the Congress and must work in close cooperation with ECA to coordinate this event. Additionally, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for collaborating with the regional award recipients. Effective management of this high-profile event is essential to the overall success of the Professional Fellows Program.

Housing and meal arrangements are an important dimension of program planning and must be addressed in detail in the proposal. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for providing housing and meals for the Professional Fellows Congress. In general, during Congress, Fellows should be housed in the hotel hosting the Congress and all meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) provided for under the GFS award. Additionally, the GFS award recipient is responsible for covering lodging and per diem during the Congress for up to three staff members from each of the regional award recipient organizations, and any U.S. Fellows or other alumni that ECA authorizes to attend as part of official programming.

The proposal should also include a plan to provide food options accommodating religious and dietary restrictions. A combination of a hosted meals and cash allowance for food is allowable based on the proposed Congress model. To the extent permitted by budget limitations, Fellows may receive up to the U.S. government per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses. See <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> for current U.S. government per diem rates. Ground transportation in Washington, D.C. for all foreign participants, U.S. Fellows, other alumni engaged in official Congress programming, and up to three staff members from each of the regional award recipients can be charged to the ECA award under GFS. A total of four days/three nights for Congress programming may be charged to the ECA award. A minimum of two of the four days must be for common programming. Anything above and beyond these limits can be included as cost-share. For information on allowable costs for the Congress see section D.3o.

#### **A.1.8. Reciprocal Exchange for Americans**

The Reciprocal Exchange allows an American to travel to the Professional Fellow's home country to assist the Fellow with their individual Action Plan. The exchange must be a minimum of five days of programming (not including travel). Proposals that offer alternative models based on regional needs will be considered. Additionally, in locations where it is not safe for an American to travel, virtual exchanges will also be considered.

The GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing selection criteria for the Reciprocal Exchanges in collaboration with the regional award recipients and ECA based on regional and thematic needs. See section A.1.3. Recruitment and Selection (GFS) and A.2.4 Recruitment and Selection (regional) for more details.

American participants for the Reciprocal Exchange will be selected by the regional award recipients, in an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA. U.S. Fellows must be American citizens primarily selected from those individuals who served as placement hosts for the foreign Fellows at the fellowship placement organizations, and who had significant engagement with the Fellow during the U.S.-based exchange. The foreign Fellow must take an active role in the American participant's Reciprocal Exchange application process. Americans can apply individually or collaboratively with another American to work with the foreign Fellow they hosted; although the preference is for one U.S. Fellow and one Professional Fellow to be involved in the Reciprocal Exchange. The foreign Fellow should be the primary person responsible for the development of the Reciprocal Exchange, including the conceptualization, scheduling, implementation of the exchange, and assisting with the coordination of lodging for the U.S. Fellow.

The Reciprocal Exchange should be substantive in nature. It must build on the U.S.-based exchange, allow the U.S. Fellow to conduct joint programming with the foreign Fellows and their colleagues, directly support U.S. public diplomacy objectives, and advance the Professional Fellows Program goals of building sustainable and lasting professional partnerships.

Once a Reciprocal Exchange is approved by ECA, in consultation with the Public Affairs Section at the respective U.S. embassy or consulate, the regional award recipients will provide the GFS award recipient with summary information including the exchange objectives, biographical information, and the proposed destination cities and times. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for working with regional recipients to maintain all U.S. Fellow data, and report on Reciprocal Exchange project updates and highlights.

Proposals for GFS should describe how they will meet the requirements of the Reciprocal Exchange and work collaboratively with the regional award recipients to support them in implementing the Reciprocal Exchange.

#### **A.1.9. Professional Fellows Network (Alumni Programming)**

Building and maintaining connections among Fellows across world regions before, during, and after the program is a critical part of its success. Proposals for GFS should include plans to create and maintain an engaged **global network** of alumni, program participants, and program hosts. The network should advance alumni's professional development goals and interests and the Department of State's public diplomacy objectives.

The network should facilitate communication among foreign Fellows and their fellowship placement organizations before, during, and after the fellowship placement; strengthen group identity; strengthen ties with the U.S. Department of State and U.S. diplomatic

missions; and facilitate follow-on/alumni activities. Content should be easily accessible via mobile app and/or a mobile-friendly web platform. The platform should have a space for alumni and participants to collaborate on projects. The network must connect all previous PFP alumni (approximately 6,000) to new program participants and alumni. Special administrative access to the online platform should be granted to ECA, regional award recipients, potential sub-awardees, and other Professional Fellows Program stakeholders, in consultation with ECA.

**Alumni programming** should be incorporated into and build upon the Professional Fellows online platform and global network. Alumni activities for the Professional Fellows Program should address ECA alumni program goals that foster:

- U.S. diplomatic mission engagement with exchange alumni;
- a sense of identity with the International Exchange Alumni network and alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs;
- alumni implementation and teaching of the concepts they explored during their exchange programs; and
- on-going communication and collaboration with U.S. professional and academic contacts established while the Fellows were on the program.

Alumni programming should be tailored to meet the needs of a diverse and highly motivated network of program alumni (foreign and U.S. Fellows). Activities can be virtual, in-person, or blended and must allow alumni to: 1) share their knowledge with broader communities; 2) enhance leadership skills; 3) expand networking opportunities; 4) engage in community service; 5) expand the multiplier effect in home institutions or communities; and 6) engage in continued professional development.

Proposals may include ideas to develop a mentoring component, offer small grants, and provide creative ways to showcase the work of program alumni at all stages of the Professional Fellows Program, including at the PFP Congress. Programming should creatively respond to the needs of the Professional Fellows Program participants and alumni, adhere to research on adult learning, be inclusive in nature, and accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities.

The GFS award recipient will create and maintain an **alumni database** to track all alumni across the Professional Fellows Program. The award recipient will work in close coordination with ECA to transfer previous alumni data and new data collected as part of the FY2020 and subsequent Professional Fellows Program Federal Assistance Awards. The database must be accessible to ECA and include biographical information on program participants and alumni. The program database should include functionality that allows for tracking successes stories and provide statistical reports by country, region, theme, and year. The database must include search functionality that allows ECA, regional award recipients, and potentially sub-award recipients to search by participant name, fellowship placement name, year, keywords, and other search criteria. The GFS

award recipient will report to ECA on outcomes and effectiveness related to all alumni activities; coordinate with ECA on alumni surveys throughout the period of the cooperative agreement; and provide information on aggregate data and outcomes of any surveys.

Alumni programming should also provide opportunities to support the long-term evaluation of the Professional Fellows Program. Proposals must demonstrate GFS's ability and willingness to work with regional award recipients to track all alumni activities, leverage resources, and where possible connect various initiatives.

Applicants for GFS and regional awards should also incorporate ECA alumni initiatives into their plans and communications for alumni programming, including, but not limited to, the online community on the International Exchange Alumni website ([alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov)) and other exchange alumni opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State such as small grants and professional development seminars. It is important that all alumni programs continue to strengthen a sense of identity with the U.S. government, as such, the applicants should follow ECA communications guidance for crediting the U.S. Department of State.

#### **A.1.10. Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation are an important component of all ECA programming; it helps to evaluate the program's success and impact, both as activities unfold and at the end of the program. To ensure consistency across the Professional Fellows Program, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing standard monitoring and evaluation tools to be shared with and implemented by the regional award recipients.

Proposals must include a monitoring and evaluation plan. The GFS award recipient should develop tools that the regional award recipient would use on a regular basis to ensure that any problems are identified and acted upon promptly during the U.S. based exchange. At the conclusion of the U.S. based exchange, a formal post-program survey should permit Fellows to comment on all aspects of the program. Post-program data should be collected no earlier than three days before program completion and no later than six weeks after program completion. Additionally, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing a survey for regional award recipients to disseminate and collect impact information from alumni. The evaluation should link outcomes of the program to stated program goals and objectives to ensure that all U.S. based exchange programs meet comparable high levels of quality in fulfilling program goals. The plan should include details on how they will collect information about reciprocal exchanges and Fellows' individual small projects. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for coordinating with ECA on any Alumni surveys to minimize potential survey fatigue amongst reciprocal exchanges and Fellows.

ECA expects that for the period of the award, the GFS award recipient, in coordination with the regional award recipient, 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, Reciprocal Exchanges and Fellows' individual small projects, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). For detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation, please refer to: 1) Section D.3i. "Performance Monitoring and Evaluation,"; and 2) Section E.1. "Review Criteria", specifically for the review criterion entitled "Project Evaluation."

#### **A.1.11. Knowledge Management**

The GFS award recipient must develop a database to electronically and securely maintain all applicant and participant data, as well as alumni data. See section A.1.9 Professional Fellows Network (Alumni Programming) for more information on the alumni database. Proposals must demonstrate GFS's ability and willingness to work with the regional award recipients to collect and maintain all data in compliance with the U.S. Department of State's regulations protecting personally identifiable information (PII) privacy. All data gathered and compiled by the recipient on the program participants should be electronically transferable to ECA in a secure manner. Therefore, applicants for GFS must work with ECA to ensure that its system for collecting and storing data on participants is compatible with ECA's systems. Award recipients of GFS and the regional awards must be willing to provide participant data to ECA in the form requested by ECA, which may include, but is not limited to using ECA-provided spreadsheets and ECA-designed databases.

#### **A.1.12. Logistical Considerations**

In addition to the major GFS elements listed above, proposals for GFS must include a concrete and detailed plan to address the following logistical considerations:

- The award recipient should work in close coordination with ECA to create **template forms** for program participants, including but not limited to Medical and Disability Accommodation Forms, a program Terms and Conditions document, and a Media Release Form, which will be shared with the regional award recipients to be signed by Professional and U.S. Fellows.
- Prepare and issue **DS-2019** forms to all foreign participants in this program. This will consist of creating the DS-2019 forms in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), printing and signing the DS-2019s, shipping the forms through an express delivery service (like FedEx or DHL) to all relevant U.S. embassies and consulates, and validating the arrival of the Fellows in SEVIS no later than three days after their arrival in the United States. Once packages are

shipped, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for notifying post, ECA, and the relevant regional award recipient, and include relevant package tracking information. It is advisable to designate one person to be responsible for collecting the participant information required for producing DS-2019 forms. The GFS award recipient is responsible for collecting all necessary information and documentation.

- Develop a **best practices document for host families and fellowship placement hosts**, as well as relevant recruitment, vetting, and preparation materials (explaining goals and objectives of the program, roles and responsibilities of hosts, and all participants). These materials must be housed on the Professional Fellows website and accessible to the regional award recipients to share with hosts.
- Develop a **best practices document for community service opportunities** that is available on the PFP website for regional award recipients and program participants. Materials should include an overview of the concept of community service and the importance that Americans place on volunteerism. All U.S.-based exchange programs must include at least one hands-on volunteer activity with a local nonprofit or community organization.
- All program participants, Professional Fellows, and U.S. Fellows must be enrolled in the U.S. Department of State Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (**ASPE**). ASPE is a self-funded, limited, health care benefit plan, administered by Seven Corners, Inc., designed to pay covered medical expenses for eligible exchange participants while they are engaged in program activity directly related to the exchange. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for enrolling all participants in ASPE and will produce individual ASPE cards for each participant. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for mailing all cards to the regional award recipient prior to the U.S. Fellows' departure from the United States and prior to the arrival of the Professional Fellows in the United States. It is the responsibility of the regional award recipient to distribute the ASPE cards to all program participants.

Please note: All foreign Fellows are required to return to their home countries following the conclusion of the Professional Fellows Program.

#### **A.1.13. Projected Timeline**

The GFS award recipient, in consultation with ECA, will be responsible for developing a timeline for all Professional Fellows Program activities. Once approved, the timeline will be shared with the regional award recipients. Proposals must include a proposed timeline. ECA envisions the below timeline for some of the major program components

of the program. ECA is open to other considerations given appropriate justification. ECA reserves the right to change this timeline based on the needs of the program.

Pending satisfactory performance and the availability of funds, ECA will issue a non-competitive continuation (NCC) in FY 2021 (2022 Professional Fellows Program) and FY 2022 (2023 Professional Fellows Program). Below are the recommended dates for some of the major program components.

**FY 2020 Base Year (2021 Professional Fellows Program Cycle):**

- September 2020 – December 2020: development of Professional Fellow application, recruitment and selection materials, and website (minimum shell to launch application; website development will be an ongoing process)
- January 2021 – May 2021: launch of Professional Fellows application, recruitment and selection of foreign Fellows, and recruitment of potential fellowship placement organizations
- June 2021 – September 2021: regional award recipients will secure fellowship placements for foreign Fellows
- October 2021 – November 2021: U.S.-based exchange program
- Early November 2021: Professional Fellows Congress (must avoid elections (November 2, 2021) and federal holidays)
- November 2021 – January 2022: launch of Reciprocal Exchange application, recruitment and selection of U.S. Fellows
- February 2022 – August 2022: Reciprocal Exchange travel (varies per U.S. Fellow)

**FY 2021 First Non-Competitive Continuation Year (2022 Professional Fellows Program Cycle):**

- August 2021 – January 2022: launch of Professional Fellows application, recruitment and selection of foreign Fellows
- February 2022 – May 2022: recruit potential fellowship placement organizations
- June 2022 – September 2022: secure fellowship placements
- October 2022 – November 2022: U.S.-based exchange program
- Early November 2022: Professional Fellows Congress (must avoid elections and federal holidays)
- November 2022 – January 2023: launch of Reciprocal Exchange application, recruitment and selection of U.S. Fellows
- February 2023 – August 2023: Reciprocal Exchange travel (varies per U.S. Fellow)

**FY 2022 Second and Final Non-Competitive Continuation (2023 Professional Fellows Program Cycle):**

- August 2022 – January 2023: launch of Professional Fellows application, recruitment and selection of foreign Fellows
- February 2023 – May 2023: recruit potential fellowship placement organizations

- June 2023 – September 2023: secure fellowship placements
- October 2023 – November 2023: U.S.-based exchange program
- Early November 2023: Professional Fellows Congress (must avoid elections and federal holidays)
- November 2023 – January 2024: launch of Reciprocal Exchange application, recruitment and selection of U.S. Fellows
- February 2024 – August 2024: Reciprocal Exchange travel (varies per U.S. Fellow)
- August 31, 2024: Award closes

#### **A.1.14. Staffing**

Proposals must include a staffing plan that details how staff will fulfill all responsibilities. Proposal must outline appropriate staffing levels and structure to effectively implement all proposed activities and initiatives. The staffing plan as well as titles may vary; however, the following positions must be designated. The award recipient must designate a single person to oversee all aspects of GFS and serve as ECA's primary point of contact. They will coordinate budget, logistical and administrative arrangements, and work with ECA to ensure a clear and consistent brand across the full Professional Fellows Program, including the U.S.-based exchange. Additionally, staff should be included in the staffing plan to support the various elements under GFS - outreach and promotion, recruitment and selection, leadership curriculum development, Professional Fellows Congress, Professional Fellows Network, data management, and logistical support. Also see Section D.3m. Key Personnel for more details.

#### **A.1.15. ECA and GFS Award Recipient Responsibilities**

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

The following activities will be carried out by the **GFS award recipient**, in consultation with ECA:

#### **General Program Management**

1. Work with ECA to ensure the successful implementation of the program components including the transfer of historical information and data under the new award;
2. Provide overall coordination across the six regional Professional Fellows Program awards;
3. Submit all materials provided to or created for dissemination to applicants, participants, program partners, and U.S. government agencies, including U.S. embassies and consulates, and other entities to ECA for review and approval prior to distribution;
4. Provide administrative management of the Outreach and Program Promotion,

- Professional Fellows Congress, Professional Fellows Network, including ongoing evaluation of program activities and data management;
5. Inform and consult with ECA about issues related to the administration of the program and program or participant problems;
  6. Clear any communication (involving the Professional Fellows program) with U.S. government agencies or entities, including U.S. Members of Congress, with ECA before dissemination;
  7. Create and maintain a program website which includes an online application portal for prospective applicants including a system to review and collect scores and finalize selections online. The portal must be accessible by ECA, U.S. embassies and consulates, and regional award recipients;
  8. Develop informational resources for program participants, program alumni, and program hosts;
  9. Create and maintain social media accounts (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) for the Professional Fellows Program, including developing and posting relevant content;
  10. Develop and implement an outreach plan including brochures, one pagers and/or fact sheets, announcements, and other materials to communicate program information and demonstrate the impact of the Professional Fellows Program;
  11. Conduct a post-program survey linking program outcomes to stated program goals and objectives. The results of the survey will be used to evaluate the program implementation, identify necessary implementation changes and ensure that all U.S.-based exchange programs meet comparably high levels of quality in fulfilling program goals;
  12. Develop a Professional Fellows Network and propose innovative ideas for alumni follow-on activities and creative and effective ways to engage participants after their exchange;
  13. Manage all ECA funds for GFS activities, including submitting required semi-annual and final reports to ECA by the established deadlines;
  14. Coordinate an annual planning and debriefing meeting with key personnel working on the Fellowship from both the GFS award recipient and ECA;
  15. Provide a detailed staffing plan to include the names, titles, and portfolio breakdown of all staff who will work on the Professional Fellows Program. Any changes to staffing plans and/or key personnel must be submitted to ECA for approval;
  16. Prepare and print certificates of completion for Professional Fellows and U.S. Fellows who successfully complete their respective programs;
  17. Coordinate, in consultation with regional award recipients and ECA, logistical and administrative arrangements for Fellows such as providing information, lodging and meals, and ground transportation for the Congress, and the disbursement of program funds; and
  18. Follow all additional guidelines and policies provided by ECA.

### **Collection and Maintenance of Program and Participant Data**

1. Maintain and regularly update the participant database, always ensuring the protection of personally identifiable information, in consultation with ECA and the regional award recipients;
2. Provide participant data to ECA in the form requested by ECA, which may include, but is not limited to using ECA-provided spreadsheets and ECA-designed databases;
3. Submit all required reports to ECA/PE/C/PF by the established deadlines, and submit other ad hoc reporting as appropriate;
4. Enroll the participants in the ECA-sponsored accident and sickness health benefits program (ASPE) or other health benefits plan for the duration of the program and issue a health benefits identification card for each participant; and
5. Create and ship DS-2019 forms for the participants' J-1 visas, validate Fellows' arrival, and assist with SEVIS related issues.
6. Oversee the evaluation of the full Professional Fellows Program and its impact on foreign and U.S. Fellows before, during, and after the program, creating surveys and other tools that will be disseminated to the regional award recipients;

### **Recruitment and Selection**

1. Develop and implement, in coordination with ECA and regional Award recipients, a recruitment plan with recruitment materials, including, but not limited to, print and online content, social media, radio advertisements, and videos for dissemination to regional Award recipients and U.S. embassies and consulates to support and enhance their recruitment of foreign Fellows and U.S. Fellows;
2. Develop and maintain an online application and applicant and participant database system; and
3. Develop recruitment and selection procedures that are based on a merit-based open competition process for applicants. The award recipient will work closely with ECA on the development of selection criteria.

### **Leadership Development Curriculum**

1. Develop a leadership curriculum including an Action Plan document/tool to be utilized by all regional award recipients during U.S.-based exchange programming focused around a specific leadership methodology, practical leadership skills building, or other theme that can be standardized and incorporated into each U.S.-based exchange curriculum;
2. Develop and issue guidance about the leadership development curriculum and other activities to ensure consistency and quality across all U.S.-based exchange programs;
3. Develop pre-departure online modules that will be mandatory for all Fellows to complete prior to their participation in the U.S.-based exchange; and
4. Monitor the leadership development curriculum through regular communications with the regional award recipients and provide regular updates to ECA/PE/C/PF.

### **Professional Fellows Congress**

1. Implement the Professional Fellows Congress, a four-day/three-night event with a minimum of two common programming days, in Washington, D.C.;
2. Identify and negotiate a contract with appropriate hotel or conference facility. Contracts should include provisions for culturally-appropriate meals, and lodging for Fellows and up to three staff members from each regional award recipient organization, as well as space for plenary meetings, informal networking activities, and break-out sessions;
3. Develop Congress program agendas, content, and sessions including securing speakers, workshop facilitators, and other training elements;
4. Work with regional award recipient organizations to collect relevant biographical information related to the program participants, including information on the fellowship placements, thematic areas, and professional expertise;
5. Create a Congress program book which includes the Congress agenda, participant and speaker biographical materials, logistical and other pertinent event information;
6. Develop and utilize mobile apps or other technology to enhance communication and networking capacities among Congress participants;
7. Coordinate with the ECA/PE/C/PF and the regional award recipient organizations regarding any participant emergencies just prior to or during Congress;
8. Develop and implement a public digital and traditional media outreach campaign to interested stakeholders and the wider community;
9. Evaluate the Professional Fellows Congress through an online survey instrument;
10. Prepare and share a final Professional Fellows Congress evaluation report; and
11. Meet with ECA/PE/C/PF staff for a post-Congress debrief.

### **Standardized Program Materials**

1. Develop standardized materials, including adaptable program applications, as referenced in this solicitation, and provide to regional award recipients;
2. Develop a rubric for applicant selection criteria and a selection process;
3. Develop a participant Terms and Conditions template for all program finalists;
4. Create pre-departure and arrival materials, PowerPoints, and guidance documents, for modification and use by regional award recipients;
5. Develop template fellowship placement recruitment, vetting, and preparation materials explaining the goals and objectives of the program, roles and responsibilities of placement organizations and Fellows;
6. Develop template host family/friendship family recruitment, vetting, and preparation materials explaining goals and objectives of the program, roles and responsibilities of the hosts and Fellows; and
7. Develop social media toolkits for Fellows, regional award recipients, posts, and other program stakeholders.

**ECA/PE/C/PF will:**

1. Participate and provide guidance in the design and execution of all program activities;
2. Provide oversight, advice, and assistance to the award recipient staff;
3. Provide advice and assistance to regional award recipient staff and their sub-award recipients;
4. Provide input and approve all program timelines and agendas;
5. Review and provide input on leadership development curriculum, webinars and online modules, pre-departure and arrival materials, and other program materials;
6. Oversee all communications with U.S. embassies and consulates and regional Bureaus at the Department of State regarding the recruitment and selection of participants and other aspects of the program. The Department of State will be involved in the selection process and will approve final selection of all program participants. It is anticipated that U.S. embassies will interview semi-finalists and submit a slate of potential finalists;
7. Monitor the program through regular communications with all award recipients and site visits to partner organizations;
8. Collaborate on and approve recruitment and outreach plans and the corresponding materials;
9. Approve and collaborate on plans for the Professional Fellows Network and alumni activities;
10. Approve the final selection of sub-award recipients (if applicable);
11. Approve staffing plan and key personnel and any changes that are made;
12. Collaborate on planning and implementing all planning and debriefing meetings with staff from GFS and regional award recipients, including related to the Professional Fellows Program Congress;
13. Be involved substantially in the development of the vision of the Congress, including the approval of program material prior to printing or distribution and conference and reception facilities;
14. Provide input and approve all standardized program materials prior to distribution to regional award recipients;
15. Coordinate with GFS award recipient on the development of the program branded website, in collaboration with the regional award recipients; and
16. May provide additional guidelines and policies that award recipients must follow.

## **A.2. Regional Professional Programming**

The regional award recipients, in coordination with ECA, will have primary responsibility for all activities under the U.S.-based exchange program, **not** including design of the Professional Fellows Congress and administration of the Professional Fellows online platforms, which are the responsibilities of the GFS award recipient. The U.S.-based program, which is five- to six-weeks, features an individually tailored professional “fellowship placement” that is four weeks in length, minimum four days a week, approximately 32-40 hours per week. Fellowship placements may be at government and non-government organizations, think tanks, media organizations,

businesses, and universities. The U.S.-based exchange program will conclude with a capstone Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., attended by all Professional Fellows. Additionally, the regional award recipient will have primary responsibility for the Reciprocal Exchange component, which is an opportunity for an American to travel to the Professional Fellow's home country to assist the Fellow with their Action Plan and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the program.

**All U.S.-Based Exchange Programs Must Include:**

1. A pre-departure orientation (PDO) in the Fellow's home country before departure for the United States;
2. An arrival orientation in the United States;
4. Leadership development curriculum and programmatic support for Fellows;
3. A four-week individually tailored fellowship placement;
5. Cultural activities that include opportunities for Fellows to engage with a diverse range of Americans such as home stays, friendship families, meals in an American home, etc.;
6. At least one hands-on volunteer volunteer/community service component;
7. Participation in the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C.; and
8. Professional Fellows Network and follow-on alumni activities.

Proposals must demonstrate the ability to implement all major components of the U.S.-based exchange. The details on each of the various components can be found in the relevant sections below. Each regional award recipient will be required to collaborate with, and use certain materials provided by the GFS award recipient. This will ensure a consistent and robust programming and branding and across all regions in the Professional Fellows Program. For a list of primary responsibilities and materials that will be developed by the GFS award recipients, see Section A.1. Proposals must demonstrate an ability and willingness to collaborate with the GFS award recipient.

Proposals for regional awards must demonstrate subject matter expertise in the thematic area(s) and geographic region for which applicants are applying. See section A.2.2. Eligible Countries and Themes for more details on the themes and geographic regions. Applicant organizations without an existing organizational presence in the target countries must identify an overseas partner ("in-country partner") with whom they propose to collaborate. ECA and participating Public Affairs Sections at U.S. embassies and consulates reserve the right to approve in-country partners. In addition, proposals must demonstrate capacity to secure effective and appropriate fellowship placements for the Professional Fellows in the United States.

**A.2.2. Eligible Countries and Themes:**

Under this NOFO, six regional awards will be issued, one for each of the following regions: Africa (AF), East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), the Middle East and North Africa (NEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and the Western

Hemisphere (WHA). **Applicants can submit a proposal for one region only.** Proposals must address only the combination of eligible countries and themes listed below. ECA reserves the right to modify the final list of participating countries and themes.

**Africa (AF):**

Proposals should support a program for approximately 40-55 foreign participants and must include participants from all the following countries only: Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The program should also support U.S. participants traveling to these countries at a ratio of one U.S. Fellow for every two to three Professional Fellows. The program theme should be Media and Communications with particular emphasis on freedom of the press, ethical journalism, media literacy, countering disinformation and misinformation, and media entrepreneurship.

**East Asia and the Pacific (EAP):**

Proposals will support programming for approximately 40-55 foreign participants. Proposals must include: 1) at least 60% of the total of foreign participants from Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu under the program themes of Civic Engagement, Economic Empowerment, Governance and Society, and Media and Communications, AND 2) the remainder of the foreign participants from People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong, Mongolia, and Taiwan under the program theme of Civic Engagement. The primary regional award recipient and/or subaward recipient working on programming related to the PRC must have experience successfully implementing exchange programs in the PRC that support civil society. The program will also support U.S. participants traveling to all referenced places at a ratio of one U.S. Fellow for every two to three Professional Fellows.

**Europe and Eurasia (EUR):**

Proposals should support a program for approximately 40-55 foreign participants and must include participants from at least 15 of the following 19 countries only: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The program should also support U.S. participants traveling to these countries at a ratio of one U.S. Fellow for every two to three Professional Fellows. The program theme should be Governance and Society.

**Middle East and North Africa (NEA):**

Proposals should support a program for approximately 40-55 foreign participants and must include participants from all the following countries only: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia. The program should also support American participants traveling to these countries at a ratio of one U.S. Fellow for every two to three Professional Fellows. The program theme should be Economic Empowerment emphasizing small and medium business development (starting/growing small businesses), economic

development policy (the role of government in promoting economic growth), and increasing economic opportunities for women, youth, minorities, and marginalized populations.

**South and Central Asia (SCA):**

Proposals should support a program for approximately 40-55 foreign participants and must include participants from all the following countries only: India, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. The program should also support American participants traveling to these countries at a ratio of one U.S. Fellow for every two to three Professional Fellows. The program theme should be Governance and Society.

**Western Hemisphere (WHA):**

Proposals should support a program for approximately 40-55 foreign participants and must include participants from all of the following 21 countries only: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. The program should also support American participants traveling to these countries at a ratio of one U.S. Fellow for every two to three Professional Fellows. The program should be one unified program that brings together diverse stakeholders working in the themes of Civic Engagement, Governance and Society, and Media and Communications, with a particular emphasis on transparency and accountability, countering disinformation and misinformation, freedom of the press, ethical journalism, media literacy, civic engagement, and transparency and accountability.

**Complete descriptions of the four eligible themes are below:**

**Governance and Society:**

Proposals submitted under the Governance and Society theme should explore the relationship between the public sector and broader society. Proposals should support professionals involved in the legislative process; governance; public administration; policy making; political campaigns; law and judicial reform. Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on rule of law; access to justice; civil liberties, anti-corruption; and transparency and accountability.

**Economic Empowerment:**

Proposals submitted under the Economic Empowerment theme should explore how systems can support sustainable economic development and should support professionals involved in small and medium business development; business administration; business education; economic development policy, social entrepreneurship, and community training programs. Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on starting or growing small businesses; community-based and educational training programs; global competency and employment readiness; the role of government in promoting economic growth; sustainable development; education to employment; and the

economic empowerment of women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

**Civic Engagement:**

Proposals submitted under the Civic Engagement theme should explore how individuals can organize around community issues and support professionals involved in non-governmental management; community development; advocacy; education; journalism; law; youth initiatives; and the empowerment of women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations. Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis in NGO management; staff training and development; volunteer management; conducting community outreach and public relations; creating strategic partnerships and coalition building; conflict resolution and tolerance; and education programs.

**Media and Communications:**

Proposals submitted under the Media and Communications theme should support professionals involved in print and broadcast media and journalism; social or transmedia; press relations; public relations; public affairs; and communications. Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on freedom of the press; ethical journalism, countering disinformation and misinformation; audience engagement, media entrepreneurship, creating compelling narratives and storytelling; and new trends in digital media and communications.

**A.2.3. Outreach and Program Promotion**

To ensure strong and consistent branding for the Professional Fellows Program across all regions, the GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing an outreach and program promotion plan that will be used in collaboration with regional award recipients and other PFP stakeholders. More details can be found in section A.1.2. Outreach and Program Promotion.

The award recipient for GFS will be responsible for developing a dynamic and interactive Professional Fellows Program website. The regional award recipients must be willing to work with the award recipient of GFS to provide relevant content. Proposals must demonstrate the applicant's ability and willingness to do so. The GFS award recipient will develop promotional and recruitment materials, including a social media toolkit, in consultation with regional award recipients and ECA.

**A.2.4. Recruitment and Selection**

Each regional award recipient will be responsible for carrying-out recruitment and selection for each year of the award in collaboration with ECA, the Public Affairs Sections at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas, and the GFS award recipient. See Section A.1.3. Recruitment and Selection for GFS for more details.

Proposals must demonstrate the capacity of the award recipient to conduct a recruitment and selection process for Professional Fellows, fellowship placement organizations, and U.S. Fellows for the Reciprocal Exchange component, all through an open competition. Proposals for regional applicants must include a plan for the recruitment and selection process for Professional Fellows and U.S. Fellows. Proposals should demonstrate how the regional award recipient plans to collaborate with ECA, posts, and the GFS award recipient in all recruitment and selection efforts.

The award recipient of GFS will be responsible for the developing **marketing materials** including, but not limited to print materials (flyers, fact sheets, one pagers, brochures), online content (website information, social media campaigns), and materials for outreach to stakeholders in U.S. organizations, sectors related to Fellows' professional backgrounds, and other relevant stakeholders. Proposals for regional awards must demonstrate the ability and willingness to work with the GFS award recipient in the development of these materials.

The GFS award recipient will be responsible for creating Professional Fellow and U.S. Fellow **applications** that will be posted on the program website for use in a competitive selection process. Proposals for regional awards must demonstrate the applicant's ability and willingness to work with the GFS award recipient on application materials.

The award recipient for GFS will be responsible for developing a template **scoring rubric** to aid in the selection of all Professional and U.S. Fellows. The regional award recipients, in consultation with ECA, will be responsible for selecting participants.

**Required Elements for Fellow Selection:**

1. Technical eligibility review of all applicants. This is to be completed by the regional award recipient in consultation with ECA;
2. Regional award recipients will ensure all applications are read and scored using the scoring rubric developed by GFS award recipient. Each application must be read and scored by three reviewers. Scores must be entered into the online application system;
3. Once applications have been reviewed and scored, regional award recipients must send all proposed semi-finalist candidates to the assigned ECA Program Officer for approval and then to post copying ECA;
4. The regional award recipient will work with U.S. Embassies in each country to come up with a slate of potential finalists;
5. Finalist slates must be sent by regional award recipients to ECA for final approval.

**Fellow Eligibility Criteria:**

At a minimum, the selection criteria for Professional Fellows are:

- citizen of the eligible country for which the applicant is applying (*Note: Citizens of eligible countries residing in a different eligible country due to specific geo-political reasons may apply and will be considered by the U.S. Department of State on a case by case basis*);
- emerging leader in government, civil society, or the private sector who has demonstrated expertise pertaining to the respective theme under which he/she is applying;
- mid-level professional, 25 to 40 years old at the time of application, who is currently employed and has two or more years of relevant professional work experience;
- demonstrated proficiency in both written and oral English. Applicant must have a “working-level knowledge of English” that has been verified by the regional award recipients;
- self-directed and able to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting;
- identified a project/objective of his/her own selection that the applicant would like to complete/achieve in his/her home workplace or community; and
- genuinely interested in developing an Action Plan to complete a specific project/meet a specific objective through their participation in the Professional Fellows Program.

#### **A.2.5. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)**

All participants must participate in a pre-departure orientation (PDO) prior to their departure from their home country for Professional Fellows and prior to their departure from the United States for U.S. Fellows. The PDO will be provided by the regional award recipient and should be designed to give the Professional and U.S. Fellow an overview of the Professional Fellows Program, the key components, provisions and expectations of the exchange, information on next steps they should take, and additional resources to assist in their preparations for departure. The regional award recipient will be responsible for coordinating with the relevant U.S. embassy or consulate to implement the PDO. For details on what the PDO must include see section A.1.4. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO). Proposals must demonstrate the applicant’s ability and willingness to implement a PDO and coordinate with ECA, the GFS award recipient, and U.S. Embassies overseas.

#### **A.2.6. Arrival Orientation**

All regional award recipients must conduct an arrival orientation in the United States for all Professional Fellows. When possible, U.S. Fellows should also participate in an arrival orientation in their host country. In consultation with ECA, the regional award recipients should coordinate with post to schedule an arrival orientation. For details on what the orientation must include see section A.1.5. Arrival Orientation. Proposals must

demonstrate the applicant's ability and willingness to implement an arrival orientation and coordinate with ECA and the GFS award recipient.

### **A.2.7. Fellowship Placement**

“Fellowship placement” refers to the program component where the Fellow is working in a U.S. organization relevant to his/her professional experience and interest. Fellowship Placements are individually tailored and must be four weeks, minimum 4 days a week, approximately 32-40 hours per week. The fifth day, or the remainder of the 40 hours, should be programmed at the discretion of the regional award recipient. The time can be used for the Fellows to work on their leadership development curriculum, community service activities, networking, etc. Each regional award recipient must secure the fellowship placement for all Fellows at least two months in advance of the Fellows' arrival in the United States.

The fellowship placement should be mutually beneficial to the Fellow and the placement organization. The fellowship placement organization must provide a substantive experience for the Fellow; for example, the placement organization may ask the Fellow to complete a specific project for the organization and/or conduct research or develop a proposal to solve a professional challenge the organization is facing. Fellowship placements must be developed in accordance with the Fellow's and placements hosts' professional needs, and the Fellow's proposed goals regarding what he/she plans to accomplish in his/her home country, which the Fellow will identify in his/her application. The fellowship placement should provide the Fellows direct experience with the day-to-day workings of a U.S. organization and the opportunity to network and form professional relationships with American colleagues. U.S. placement hosts should increase their global skills and expand their reach through hosting a Fellow. The experience and relationships that Fellows gain through their fellowship placements should help them to develop and carry-out their Action Plans upon their return home.

To ensure that each Professional Fellow has a substantive professional experience and a primary point of contact throughout the placement, each fellowship placement organization must designate an assigned person (placement host) to work with the Fellow and support the goals and objectives of the Professional Fellows Program. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing best practices documents to be shared with placement hosts through the regional award recipient.

The regional award recipient must arrange for the placement host and the Professional Fellow they will be hosting to connect at least one time, either by email or virtually/over the phone, prior to the Fellow's arrival in the United States. The purpose of the pre-arrival discussion is for the placement host and Fellow to discuss their mutual goals and expectations for the placement, and for the host to introduce their organization and what to expect. This will also be an opportunity for the Fellow to discuss the goals regarding what he/she plans to accomplish in his/her home country.

Proposals should include how the award recipient will recruit and select appropriate U.S. Fellowship placement organizations. Proposals must demonstrate the ability to secure fellowship placements by including letters of support from potential fellowship placement organizations.

#### **A.2.8. Professional Fellows Congress**

At the conclusion of the U.S. Fellowship placement, the foreign Fellows and some alumni will participate in the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. For more details about the Congress see section A.1.7 Professional Fellows Congress.

The Congress will be designed and implemented by the GFS award recipient, with the assistance of ECA. Regional award recipients may be asked to assist with identifying possible speakers, potentially facilitate break-out sessions at the Congress, support Congress-related products or activities, and prepare Fellows for active participation during the Congress. Proposals must demonstrate a willingness and ability to participate collaboratively in regularly scheduled planning meetings for the Congress via teleconference and/or on-line forum. This collaboration is critical to making each Congress a success. Please see section D.3o. Allowable Costs for the Professional Fellows Congress for additional information.

#### **A.2.9. Reciprocal Exchange for Americans**

The Reciprocal Exchange allows an American to travel to the Professional Fellow's home community to assist the Fellow with his/her Action Plan and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the program. For more details on the Reciprocal Exchange component see section A.1.8 Reciprocal Exchange for Americans.

The GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing recruitment and selection materials for the Reciprocal Exchange in consultation regional award recipients and ECA. See section A.1.3. Recruitment and Selection and A.2.4 Recruitment and Selection for more details.

Upon completion of the selection process for the Reciprocal Exchanges, regional award recipients must submit the proposed slates of U.S. Fellows, with summary information including exchange objectives, biographical information, and the proposed destination cities and timeframe, to the designated Program Officer in ECA for approval. The regional award recipient, in collaboration with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) at the respective U.S. embassy or consulate, will review the slate and recommend a final list of U.S. Fellows to participate in the Reciprocal Exchange. Recommendations must be sent to ECA for final approval. Once approved, regional award recipients must share the aforementioned information with the GFS award recipient.

It is important that all proposed Reciprocal Exchange schedules are reviewed by ECA and PAS no less than one month prior to the start of the international travel. Initial conversations about the proposed Reciprocal Exchange activities and schedule must happen before a final schedule is submitted to ECA and posts. The U.S. Fellow may be asked by PAS to take part in public diplomacy outreach activities while on their Reciprocal Exchange. U.S. Fellows should be encouraged to take part in these activities when possible. The U.S. Fellow can complement other in-country PAS programs, enhancing the impact of the exchange and its value to the Department of State.

Proposals should describe how applicants will meet the requirements of the Reciprocal Exchange and work collaboratively with the GFS award recipient, ECA, and U.S. Embassies overseas.

#### **A.2.10. Professional Fellows Network (Alumni Programming)**

Maintaining the connections between Fellows across world regions before, during, and after the program is a critical part of the Professional Fellows Program's success. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for developing plans to create and maintain a network of alumni and program participants. See section A.1.9 Professional Fellows Network (Alumni Programming) for more details. regional award recipients may also propose ideas for engagement with the alumni of their region. If the regional recipient chooses to engage alumni in a substantial way, proposals must include a plan for alumni engagement that supports the goals of the Professional Fellows Program and ECA and builds networks of professionals in individual countries and/or regionally.

The plan should include:

- an outline of proposed activities for alumni engagement;
- strategies to connect new alumni with past program participants, if applicable; and
- a plan for how long-term linkages within the alumni community will be encouraged, coordinated, and integrated into existing ECA initiatives.

Proposals should explain how the regional award recipient will collaborate with the GFS award recipient and provide GFS and ECA with regular updates on Fellows' progress implementing their Action Plans, Reciprocal Exchanges, as well as professional successes resulting from Fellows and hosts participation in the Professional Fellows Program.

#### **A.2.11. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation are an important component of all ECA programming; it helps to evaluate the program's success and impact, both as activities unfold and at the end of the program. The regional award recipient will be responsible for monitoring participant conduct (utilizing the Terms and Conditions document), health and safety concerns and

reporting to ECA the status. For detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation, please refer to: 1) Section A.1.10. Evaluation; 2) Section D.3i. “Performance Monitoring and Evaluation,”; and 3) Section E.1. “Review Criteria”, specifically for the review criterion entitled “Project Evaluation.”

#### **A.2.12. Knowledge Management**

The GFS award recipient will have the overall responsibility for developing a database to electronically and securely maintain all applicant and participant data, as well as alumni data. Regional award recipients will be responsible for working with the GFS award recipient to provide them with all relevant data. Proposals must demonstrate this ability and willingness to work with the recipient of GFS. For more details see Section A.1.11. Knowledge Management.

#### **A.2.13. Logistical Considerations**

In addition to the major regional elements listed above, proposals must demonstrate how applicants will address the following logistical consideration:

- **Housing and meal arrangements** are an important dimension of program planning and must be discussed in detail in the proposal. The GFS award recipient will be responsible for providing housing and meals for the Professional Fellows Congress. See section A.1.7. Professional Fellows Congress for more details on what is covered by the GFS award recipient during Congress. Regional award recipients will be responsible for providing housing and meals for the full U.S.-based exchange. In general, during the four-week fellowship placement, Fellows should be housed in host families, in university housing, or at a nearby extended stay hotel. The proposal should indicate options for housing, including a plan to provide food options accommodating religious and other dietary restrictions. If possible, Fellows should have access to kitchen facilities, either in their own rooms or in a common area. A combination of a cash allowance for food, combined with a cafeteria meal plan, is allowable. To the extent permitted by budget limitations, Fellows may receive up to the U.S. government per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses at the various program locales. See <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> for current U.S. government per diem rates. During the U.S.-based exchange, housing should be easily accessible to the fellowship placement site, ideally, within walking distance. Regional award recipients are responsible for providing Fellows with adequate funds to cover costs associated with **transportation** to their fellowship placements and other required programming during their arrival orientations and U.S.-based exchange. Regional award recipients are responsible for paying for international and domestic flights for all their Fellows. Additionally, flights for up to three staff members to attend the Professional Fellows Congress may be charged to the ECA award. Any

expenses outside of this can be covered through cost-share.

Please note: All foreign Fellows are required to return to their home countries following the conclusion of the Professional Fellows Program. For more information on logistical considerations, see Section A.1.12 Logistical Considerations.

#### **A.2.14. Projected Timeline**

The GFS award recipient, in consultation with ECA, will be responsible for developing a timeline for all Professional Fellows Program activities. Once approved, the timeline will be shared with the regional award recipients. The regional award recipient will be responsible for expanding the standard timeline to include all activities under the regional award recipient's scope of work. Proposals must include a proposed timeline of all regional activities using the guide listed in section A.1.13 Projected Timeline. Additionally, proposals must demonstrate a willingness to work with ECA and the GFS award recipient to finalize timelines.

#### **A.2.15. Staffing**

Proposals must include a staffing plan that details how staff will fulfill all responsibilities. Proposals must outline appropriate staffing levels and a structure to effectively implement all proposed activities and initiatives. The staffing plan as well as titles may vary; however, the following positions must be designated. The award recipient must designate a single person to oversee all aspects of regional awards and serve as ECA's and the GFS award recipient's primary point of contact. This person will be present throughout the U.S.-based exchange to ensure the continuity, coherence, and integration of all aspects of the exchange program. This person will plan and implement the programs, oversee day-to-day management, monitor Fellows, and connect with ECA on a regular basis. The proposal must identify a staff member who will handle budgetary, logistical, and other administrative arrangements for the U.S.-based exchange. Additionally, staff should be included in the staffing plan to support the various elements under regional awards: outreach and promotion, recruitment and selection, fellowship placements, Reciprocal Exchanges, orientations, Professional Fellows Congress, Professional Fellows Network, monitoring and evaluation, data management, and logistical support. Also see D.3m. Key Personnel for more details.

#### **A.2.16. ECA and regional Award Recipient Responsibilities**

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The following activities will be carried out by the **regional** award recipient in consultation with ECA:

#### **General Program Management**

1. Work with ECA and the GFS award recipient to ensure the success of the program and transfer of historical information and data under the new award;
2. Submit all print and online materials provided to or created for dissemination to applicants, participants, program partners, and U.S. government agencies, including U.S. embassies and consulates, and other entities to ECA for review before distribution;
3. Provide administrative management of the U.S.-based exchange and the Reciprocal Exchange component, including ongoing oversight of fellowship placements, and on-going monitoring of all participants, in coordination with ECA and the GFS award recipient;
4. Proactively inform and consult with ECA about the administration of the program, any program- or participant-related problems, and the progress of necessary action;
5. Clear with the ECA, before dissemination, any communication with U.S. government agencies or entities, including U.S. Members of Congress, involving the Professional Fellows Program;
6. Arrange for and purchase international round trip travel for all Professional Fellows and domestic travel to the Congress for all Professional Fellows and U.S. Fellows. All U.S. domestic flights must be on a U.S. carrier, per the Fly America Act, when possible;
7. Work with the GFS award recipient who will be responsible for developing an official program website and social media accounts (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) for the Professional Fellows Program, including developing and posting relevant content;
8. Develop and implement a recruitment and outreach plan and other materials based on the templates provided by the GFS award recipient;
9. Coordinate with GFS award recipient to conduct a post-program survey linking program outcomes to stated program goals and objectives. The results of the survey will be used to evaluate the program implementation, identify necessary implementation changes and ensure that all U.S.-based exchange programs meet comparably high levels of quality in fulfilling program goals;
10. If proposing alumni follow-on activities and creative and effective ways to engage participants after their exchange, provide plans to ECA for approval;
11. Conduct an in-person or online orientation for fellowship placement organizations that includes the provisions and goals of the placements including a delineation of roles and responsibilities. Must use guidance and materials provided by GFS award recipient;
12. Manage all ECA funds for regional activities, including submitting required semi-annual and final reports to ECA by the established deadlines;
13. Attend an annual planning and debriefing meeting organized by the GFS award recipient, in consultation with ECA;
14. Provide a detailed staffing plan to include the names, titles, and portfolio breakdown of all staff who will work on the Professional Fellows program. Any

changes to staffing plans and/or key personnel must be submitted to ECA for approval;

15. Participate in regular check-in meetings either in-person or via phone call with ECA to report programmatic, financial, and statistical information to ECA outlining general programmatic activities recently conducted and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted;
16. Work with GFS award recipient to ensure dissemination of certificates of completion for Professional Fellows and U.S. Fellows who successfully complete their respective programs; and
17. Follow any additional guidelines or policies that ECA may provide.

### **Collection and Maintenance of Program and Participant Data**

1. In coordination with ECA and the GFS award recipient, evaluate components of the Professional Fellows Program and its impact on foreign and U.S. Fellows before, during, and after the program, using surveys and other tools that will be disseminated to the regional award recipient;
2. Provide participant data and program updates and highlights to the GFS award recipient always ensuring the protection of personally identifiable information. This will be done in consultation with ECA;
3. Submit written weekly updates to ECA during the U.S.-based exchange program, as well as required reports by the established deadlines and other ad hoc reporting as appropriate;
4. Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from ECA and GFS award recipient; and
5. In coordination with the GFS award recipient and in consultation with ECA, assist U.S. Fellows in procuring foreign visas.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

1. Utilizing the template materials provided by the GFS award recipient, manage the recruitment and selection process for Professional Fellows, fellowship placements, and the Reciprocal Exchange component, in coordination with ECA;
2. Utilizing the template materials provided by the GFS award recipient, develop and implement, in coordination with ECA, a recruitment plan with recruitment materials, including, but not limited to, print and online content, social media, radio advertisements, and videos for dissemination to U.S. embassies and consulates to support and enhance their recruitment of Fellows; and
3. Utilizing the template materials provided by the GFS award recipient, develop recruitment and selection procedures that are based on a merit-based open competition process for applicants and keep ECA informed about the application review process. The GFS award recipient will work closely with ECA on the development of selection criteria that will be shared and utilized by the regional award recipients.

### **U.S.-based Exchange and Fellowship Placements**

1. Utilizing guidance documents developed by the GFS award recipient, design and oversee a five to six-week, U.S.-based exchange program for 40-55 Professional Fellows, including an in-person or virtual pre-departure and arrival orientations, a four-week individually tailored fellowship placement, inclusion of leadership development curriculum, cultural activities and opportunities to learn about the United States and engage with Americans, and participation the Professional Fellows Program Congress;
2. Recruit hosts for and manage individually tailored fellowship placements for all Fellows, including conducting regular check-ins with Fellows and fellowship placement hosts.
3. Facilitate pre-program communication among the selected Fellows, the in-country partner, the Fellowship placement organizations, and other program stakeholders, as applicable;
4. Provide reasonable accommodations to Fellows with disabilities; and
5. For both foreign Fellows and U.S. Fellows, arrange and cover the cost of all appropriate program-related travel such as transportation, lodging, and meals and incidental expenses, etc.

#### **Leadership Development Curriculum**

1. Implement leadership development curriculum that will be developed by the GFS award recipient and utilize guidance about the leadership development curriculum and other activities to ensure consistency and quality across all U.S.-based exchange programs;
2. Ensure participants complete all pre-departure online modules that will be mandatory for all Fellows to complete prior to their participation in the U.S.-based exchange; and
3. Monitor the leadership development curriculum and provide regular updates to ECA and the GFS award recipient on fellows' experience and progress.

#### **Professional Fellows Congress**

1. Cooperate with GFS to facilitate Fellows participation the Professional Fellows Congress, a four day/three night event, with a minimum of two common programming days, in Washington, D.C.;
2. Provide the GFS award recipient with the relevant biographical information related to the program participants, including information on the fellowship placements, thematic areas, and professional expertise;
3. Facilitate Fellows use of the mobile apps or other technology to enhance communication and networking capacities among Congress participants, provided by GFS;
4. Inform ECA and the GFS award recipient regarding any participant emergencies or extenuating circumstances prior to or during Congress; and
5. Evaluate the Professional Fellows Congress through an online survey instrument;

#### **Reciprocal Exchange Component**

1. Utilizing templates developed by GFS award recipient, oversee the Reciprocal Exchange for U.S. Fellows, including selection, coordinating with PAS, and monitoring and reporting on exchange activities;
2. In coordination with the GFS award recipient, disseminate certificates of completion for U.S. Fellows who successfully complete their Reciprocal Exchange;

**Standardized Program Materials**

1. Utilize standardized materials, including adaptable applications as referenced in this solicitation, to modify materials as required by regional and thematic conditions, in consultation with ECA;
2. Develop applicant selection criteria and a selection process based on templates and the rubric provided by GFS award recipient;
3. Ensure Terms and Conditions are reviewed and signed by all program finalists;
4. Modify pre-departure and arrival materials provided by the GFS award recipient, as required by regional and thematic conditions, in consultation with ECA;
5. Utilize fellowship placement recruitment, vetting, and preparation materials provided by GFS to explain the goals and objectives of the program, roles and responsibilities of placement organizations and Fellows; and
6. Utilize host family/friendship family recruitment, vetting, and preparation materials provide by GFS to explain the goals and objectives of the program, roles and responsibilities of the hosts and Fellows.

**ECA/PE/C/PF will:**

1. Participate and provide guidance in the design and execution of all program activities;
2. Provide oversight, advice, and assistance to the award recipient staff and sub-award recipients;
3. Provide input and approve all program timelines and agendas;
4. Review and provide input on leadership development curriculum, webinars and online modules, pre-departure and arrival materials, and other program materials;
5. Oversee all communications with U.S. embassies and consulates and regional Bureaus at the Department of State regarding the recruitment and selection of participants and other aspects of the program. The Department of State will be involved in the selection process and will approve finalists. It is anticipated that U.S. embassies will interview semi-finalists and submit a slate of potential finalists for ECA final approval;
6. Approve final selection of all foreign Fellows and U.S. Fellows;
7. Approve fellowship placements for Fellows;
8. Monitor the program through regular communications with all award recipients and site visits to partner organizations;
9. Collaborate on and approve recruitment and outreach plans including the corresponding materials;

10. Approve and collaborate on plans for Professional Fellows Network and alumni follow-on activities;
11. Approve the final selection of sub-award recipients (if applicable);
12. Approve staffing plan and key personnel and any changes that are made;
13. Approve changes to fellowship placements for foreign Fellows, partner organizations, including in-country partner organizations and sub-award recipients;
14. Collaborate on planning and implementing planning and debrief meetings, and the closing Professional Fellows Congress;
15. Be involved substantially in the development of the vision of the Congress, including the approval of program material prior to printing or distribution and conference and reception facilities;
16. Provide input and approve all program materials prior to dissemination;
17. Coordinate with GFS award recipient on the development of the program branded website, in collaboration with the regional award recipients; and
18. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or complex matters that arise throughout the duration of program, including assisting with participant emergencies.

**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:**

GFS: Global Fellow Services: FY2020 Base Year – \$1,686,000; FY2021 – non-competitive continuation year-one \$1,686,000; FY2022 – non-competitive continuation year-two \$1,686,000 pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Regional: regional Professional Programming: FY2020 Base Year – \$5,400,000; FY2021 – non-competitive continuation year-one \$5,400,000; FY2022 – non-competitive continuation year-two \$5,400,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:**

Global Fellow Services (GFS): \$5,058,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Regional Professional Programming (regional awards): \$16,200,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** Pending the review and approval of successful proposals, the Bureau intends to issue one (1) cooperative agreement under Global Fellow Services (GFS) and to issue six (6) cooperative agreements under Regional Professional Programming (regional awards) for this competition.

**Approximate Average Award:** Global Fellow Services: \$1,686,000; Regional Professional Programming: \$900,000.

**Floor of Award Range:** Global Fellow Services: None; Regional Professional Programming: None.

**Ceiling of Award Range:** Global Fellow Services: \$1,686,000; Regional Professional Programming: \$900,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 1, 2020.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** December 31, 2024. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the awards – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

**Additional Information:**

ECA reserves the right to modify the composition of the final awards and their funding levels based upon the quality of the proposals submitted, the availability of funds, and other factors impacting long-term U.S. foreign policy objectives.

A cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of 48 months. The base year award will open for 24 months, from September 2020-August 2022. The first non-competitive continuation will be open for 25 months, from August 2021 to August 2023. The second non-competitive continuation also will be open for 25 months, from August 2022 to August 2024.

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:**

U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in

Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D.3a and D.3c below.)

## **C.2. 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 seven awards (one for GFS: Global Fellow Services, and six for regional: regional Professional Programming), in an amount over \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this 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:

Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal for GFS and more than one proposal for regional in this competition. If more than one proposal for GFS and more than one proposal for regional are 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.

All proposals for regional must be two-way exchange programs that comply with the specific guidance included in Section A.2.2, “Eligible Countries and Themes.” Proposals that do not cover the relevant theme(s) for the selected region and/or that cover countries not covered under the region will be declared ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

**C.3. 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.

#### **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 ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, phone: 202-632-9451; Email: WoodsAN@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 the appropriate Program Officer listed under G. Agency Contacts 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, budget and budget narrative.

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

In addition to information included in the PSI, proposals for **GFS: Global Fellow Services** applicants should include:

**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. Component you are applying for (GFS: Global Fellow Services)
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
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 twenty (20) double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (outreach/program promotion, recruitment, selection, orientations, leadership curriculum, Congress, etc.)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

### **Additional Information to be Submitted**

- Detailed Budget (see section D.3o. Allowable Costs)
- 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.
- Calendar of activities/itinerary, if applicable
- Sample materials
- Letters of endorsement
- Resumes and CVs (resumes of all staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

In addition to the online forms, proposals for **regional: regional Professional Programming** applicants should include:

### **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. Component you are applying for (regional: regional Professional Programming)
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
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 twenty (20) double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (outreach/program promotion, recruitment, selection, orientations, leadership curriculum, Reciprocal Exchange, participant monitoring, etc.)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on (if applicable)
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

**Additional Information to be Submitted**

- Detailed Budget (see section D.3o. Allowable Costs)
- 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.
- Calendar of activities/itinerary, if applicable
- Sample materials
- Letters of commitment/support
- Resumes and CVs (resumes of all staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

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

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

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

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

**D.3.d. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS):**

Prior to making a Federal Assistance award over \$250,000, the Federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIIS, they can comment on any information about its organization that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

**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. 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](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov) and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

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

**D.3g. Adherence To All Regulations Governing the J Visa:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals for both GFS and regional should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient for GFS will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to all foreign participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)  
2430 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

**D.3h. 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.3i. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation:** Please note: The Bureau plans to add standardized indicators and corresponding data collection questions for performance monitoring during the period of performance of this award. Therefore, proposed performance monitoring plans and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established. 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):

**Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.

**Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.

**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.

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

**D.3m. Key Personnel**

ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (\*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department’s Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>).

**D.3n. Non-Competitive Continuations: For competitions that will exercise 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 two additional non-competitive continuation years, pending successful program performance and the availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two non-competitive continuation years).

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

1. performance and financial reports on time;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 30 days in receipt of the NCC invitation;
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 performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations.

(Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

- 2.) Review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;
  - All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
  - Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
  - The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent non-competitive continuations.
  
- 3.) Prior Grants Officer approval is required to utilize the remainder from 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 utilize the remainder from 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 utilize the remainder of funds. A final determination and approval to utilize the remainder of any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

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

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

**GFS: Global Fellow Services**

1. Staffing and general administrative expenses necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other

direct and indirect costs as outlined in the PSI. Proposals are benefitted by administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant organization and other sources;

2. Program branded website development, design, and maintenance costs;
3. Leadership development curriculum and delivery for Fellows and alumni;
4. Alumni activities, including but not limited to small grant competitions and workshop expenses;
5. Reasonable accommodations as it relates to the Professional Fellows Congress, website and other online platforms, and recruitment;
6. Costs associated with evaluations and data management;
7. Shipping costs for DS2019s and other items;
8. Professional Fellows Congress-related costs:
  - a. Venue rental, including conference space and audio-visual support for approximately 240-330 Professional Fellows, plus up to three staff from each of the regional award recipients, speakers and invited guests;
  - b. Meals and coffee breaks;
  - c. Honoraria for speakers and workshop facilitators;
  - d. Lodging and hotel expenses for three nights for all Professional Fellows and the recipient organization representatives;
  - e. One formal reception or closing banquet;
  - f. Ground transportation in the Washington, D.C., area for Fellows, staff, and speakers;
  - g. Printed materials including the production of a Congress program book and other related administrative items;
  - h. Travel to and from Washington, D.C., per diem and lodging (for up to three nights) for approximately four alumni;
  - i. Mobile apps or other technology designed to enhance communication and networking capacities among Congress participants, speakers, and invited guests;
  - j. Reasonable accommodations for Fellows and/or recipient organization staff persons with disabilities.

**regional: regional Professional Programming**

Administrative Costs: Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. Proposals are benefitted by administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources. Award recipient staff travel should not be included in the exchange participant numbers.

Travel: International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in Bureau-sponsored projects.

Per Diem: For U.S.-based Fellowship, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at: [https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=207&menu\\_id=75](https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=207&menu_id=75).

Cultural Allowances: Participants may be provided a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person. U.S. project staff, trainers or participants are not eligible to be reimbursed for expenses when they escort participants to cultural events.

Consultants: Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day per session. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that the allowable amount. Subaward recipient organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the regional award recipient and subaward recipient should be included in the proposal. Such subawards should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget. Contractors/contracting organizations may also be employed in which case the written agreement between the award recipient and the contractors/contracting organizations should be included in the proposal.

Room Rental: The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.

Materials: Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for Fellows. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget.

Supplies: Applicants may propose to use award funds to purchase supplies, such as computers and printers; supply costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.

Working Meal: One working meal may be provided during each U.S.-based and foreign-based component. Per capita costs for working meals may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental and other overhead charges. The number of invited guests may not exceed the number of Fellows by more than a ratio of two-to-one. Please note inviting speakers to stay for lunch does not constitute a working meal.

Return Travel Allowance: A return travel allowance of \$70 for each foreign participant may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

Re-Entry Seminars/Debrief: Costs related to providing foreign Fellows a re-entry seminar may include per diem, hotel accommodations, material development, and other related expenses.

Health and Travel Insurance: The award recipient will be responsible for working with ECA and the GFS award recipient to ensure that both foreign and U.S. Fellows are enrolled in the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the proposal budget. Applicants may include costs for travel insurance for both foreign and U.S. Fellows in the budget.

Wire Transfer Fees: When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to foreign-based partner organizations. Award recipients are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes: Visas for foreign Fellows are provided by DOS and costs should not be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including travel for interviews, delivering or picking up passports, etc.

Reasonable Accommodations: Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5-7% of requested ECA award funds for this purpose and reflect plans to make the necessary program modifications or participant numbers should these funds be used for reasonable accommodations.

Professional Fellows Congress: Allowable costs associated with the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. are:

1. Travel to/from Washington, D.C.: Domestic travel to Washington, D.C., for the Professional Fellows Congress, including ground transportation to and from the airport to the conference hotel. Program plans that conclude with the D.C.-based Congress and send foreign Fellows home directly from the Washington area at the conclusion of the Professional Fellows Congress.
2. Food and lodging for foreign Fellows and award recipient staff (limited to two-three staff per regional award recipient organization) attending the Congress will be covered by the GFS award recipient and should not be included in individual proposal budgets for this competition. GFS will only cover food and lodging costs for the official Congress Programming days and the night before Congress begins and breakfast on the morning after Congress concludes.

Alumni Activities: Reasonable costs related to alumni activities may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on activities. Note: the GFS award recipient will have primary responsibility for alumni follow-on activities.

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Friday, May 8, 2020

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

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

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

**How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov**

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

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

**How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov**

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

**Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues**

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

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

Applicants have until 11:59 p.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 the application deadline date and time 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 Achieve Objectives:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, direct linkage to the goals of the Professional Fellows Program, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Proposals should demonstrate a realistic and achievable scope that fits within the budgetary and time parameters set forth in the NOFO. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how project objectives and key project elements will be achieved throughout the award period.

**2. Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity and describe how that policy will be integrated into all aspects of the Professional Fellows Program including but not limited to selection of Fellows, fellowship placements, program materials, training methodology, etc. Applicants should demonstrate readiness and ability to accommodate Fellows with

physical disabilities. Applicants should refer to the Bureau's "Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines" in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI).

**3. Institutional Capacity and Track Record:** Proposals should include (1) the institution's mission and date of establishment; (2) detailed information about proposed partners including a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities; (3) an outline of prior awards, U.S. government and/or private support received, for programs of a similar nature; and (4) descriptions and resumes of key staff who will implement the program. The proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

**5. Cost Effectiveness and Cost Sharing:** The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as is reasonable. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment. The Bureau reminds applicant organizations that all proposed costs must be reasonable, applicable and allocable.

**6. Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events. Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

**7. Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

## **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](http://www.ecfr.gov) website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

**F.3. Region and Topic Specific Requirements:** The following additional requirements apply to this project:

**F.3a. Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza:**

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

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Nalinee Cain at [CainNL@state.gov](mailto:CainNL@state.gov) or at (202)-632-3219 for additional information.

**F.4. Reporting Requirements:** You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the cooperative agreement 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](#).

- 2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: [FFATAECA@state.gov](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USAspending.gov](http://USAspending.gov) website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 5.) Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC), applicants must submit program and financial reports on time. The due dates for these reports will be included in the cooperative agreement. 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 monitoring and 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.5. 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 two weeks prior to the official opening of the activity.
- 3) All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

**G. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact:

**Global Fellow Services (GFS)**

Angela Woods, U.S. Department of State, Professional Fellows Division, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-9451, [WoodsAN@state.gov](mailto:WoodsAN@state.gov).

**Regional Professional Programming (regional awards)**

AF	Eythan Schiller (202) 632-6424 <a href="mailto:SchillerE@state.gov">SchillerE@state.gov</a>	NEA	Nalinee Cain (202) 632-3219 <a href="mailto:CainNL@state.gov">CainNL@state.gov</a>
EAP	Chris Remsen (202) 632-9432 <a href="mailto:RemsenCM@state.gov">RemsenCM@state.gov</a>	SCA	Karin Brandenburg (202) 632-9368 <a href="mailto:BrandenburgKL@state.gov">BrandenburgKL@state.gov</a>
EUR	Linnéa Allison (202) 632-6060 <a href="mailto:AllisonLE@state.gov">AllisonLE@state.gov</a>	WHA	Della Hareland (202) 632-9372 <a href="mailto:HarelandD@state.gov">HarelandD@state.gov</a>

U.S. Department of State, Professional Fellows Division, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037.

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 will be subject to periodic programmatic and financial reporting and evaluation requirements as outlined in the NOFO.

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

March 9, 2020