

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY 2020 Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Professional Fellows Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0006641

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Key Date/Application Deadline: Monday, May 11, 2020

Executive Summary: The Professional Fellows Division in 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 Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Professional Fellows Program. The YSEALI Professional Fellows Program is a two-way exchange program designed to promote mutual understanding, enhance leadership and professional skills, and build lasting and sustainable partnerships between emerging leaders in Southeast Asia and the United States.

The YSEALI Professional Fellows Program will bring at least 200 emerging leaders, ages 25-35, from Southeast Asia to the United States to participate in leadership and professional development activities under the themes of Civic Engagement, Economic Empowerment, Governance and Society, and Sustainable Development and the Environment. The U.S.-based exchange program will support spring and fall 2021 cohorts. The U.S.-based exchange program will be five to six weeks in duration and consist of: 1) Professional Fellowship Institutes (“Institute”) in each of the program themes, featuring individually tailored fellowship placements at relevant U.S. non-profit, public, or private sector organizations; and 2) a program closing conference called the YSEALI Fellow Forum in Washington, DC. Upon the conclusion of the U.S.-based exchange program, at least 50 select American participants will travel overseas for minimum one-week reciprocal exchanges to assist the non-U.S. participants in implementing Action Plans in their local communities, and help contribute to lasting, substantive partnerships between U.S. and Southeast Asian professionals. The YSEALI Professional Fellows Program will also include follow-on alumni engagement activities.

YSEALI is the U.S. government’s signature program to strengthen leadership development and networking in Southeast Asia. Through a variety of programs and engagements, including U.S. educational and cultural exchanges, regional exchanges, and seed funding for small alumni grants, YSEALI seeks to build the leadership capabilities of youth in the region, strengthen ties between the United States and Southeast Asia, and nurture an ASEAN community. YSEALI focuses on critical topics identified by youth in the region: civic engagement, sustainable development, education, and economic growth. The program serves U.S. foreign policy objectives in ASEAN and Southeast Asia as defined by the National Security Strategy. For more information about YSEALI, visit <https://asean.usmission.gov/yseali/>.

It is ECA's intent to award one cooperative agreement of up to \$4,200,000. For additional details on awards, please see Section B. "Federal Award Information" below. Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years before openly competing it again.

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

ECA reserves the right to modify the composition of the final award and its funding level based upon the quality of proposals submitted, the availability of funds, and other factors impacting long-term foreign policy objectives.

ECA also reserves the right to modify the list of participating countries, and the scope of any resulting cooperative agreement with any subsequent renewal solicitation.

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 YSEALI Professional Fellows Program supports the following broad goals:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between emerging leaders from the 10 ASEAN member countries (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), Timor Leste, and the United States;
2. Provide opportunities for participants ages 25-35 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 Southeast Asia;
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.

A.1 Participants

Program participants are those individuals who travel under cooperative agreement funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country. In this NOFO, non-U.S. participants are referred to as YSEALI Fellows and Americans traveling on reciprocal exchanges are referred to as U.S. Fellows. Employees of the award recipient or sub-award recipients, contractors and U.S. government employees are not eligible to participate in the YSEALI Professional Fellows Program and cannot be included as program participants.

Proposals must support a minimum of 250 participants to include 200 YSEALI Fellows and 50 U.S. Fellows. The primary award recipient will be responsible for the recruitment and selection of program participants.

YSEALI Fellows will be working professionals, ages 25-35, from the 10 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and Timor Leste. The YSEALI Fellows must possess working-level English skills and be committed to developing an Action Plan to implement their follow-on project at the conclusion of their U.S.-based exchange program.

U.S. Fellows will be working professionals who either hosted, or had substantive engagement with, the YSEALI Fellows during the U.S.-based exchange program. U.S. Fellows must be U.S. citizens.

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

A.2 Recipient Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. Additional information about these and other program activities, and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and the award recipient, are outlined in the attached Project, Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document.

All proposals should contain detailed information related to the following key program components.

A.2.1 Program Promotion and Outreach –The primary award recipient will develop and manage a program website, create adaptable program informational documents and templates, and develop and manage official program social media accounts.

A.2.2 Recruitment and Selection –The primary award recipient will create and disseminate marketing materials, develop and manage an online application system, organize and participate in candidate interviews, and create an application scoring system to ensure a fair and open competition. The primary award recipient will also identify and collaborate with at least one in country partner in each ASEAN nation and Timor Leste to assist, in part, with program recruitment efforts.

A.2.3 Leadership and Professional Development Curriculum – The primary award recipient will develop a leadership and professional development curriculum. The curriculum should be designed with the goal of improving YSEALI Fellows’ professional competencies in areas including but not limited to, community action, leadership and management, and media literacy.

A.2.4 Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) – The primary award recipient will develop and host a series of virtual pre-departure orientations for YSEALI and U.S. Fellows. The PDOs should prepare the Fellows for their program experience and include elements related to program goals and expectations, and health and safety information. The PDOs should be conducted in collaboration with Public Affairs Sections at involved U.S. Embassies and/or Consulates (posts), and Institute subaward recipients.

A.2.5 Professional Fellows Institutes

The U.S.-based exchange program will comprise eight Institutes (four in Spring 2021 and four in Fall 2021) organized by each of the four themes referenced in section “**A.3 Professional Fellow Institute Themes.**” Each Institute should support at least 25 YSEALI Fellows and should be comprised of YSEALI Fellows from all eligible Southeast Asian countries.

The primary award recipient will plan and implement two Institutes (one in Spring 2021, one in Fall 2021) related to a single theme. The primary award recipient will also manage and oversee three subaward recipients, who will each support two Institutes (one in the Spring, one in the Fall) under a single theme.

Proposals must demonstrate the primary recipient’s and the Institute subaward recipients’ thematic expertise, as well as regional expertise.

Institutes must include the following two components:

Arrival Orientation Integrated with Professional Study Tour - The primary award recipient, in collaboration with each subaward recipient, will develop and host arrival orientations for YSEALI Fellows that offer specific information about the U.S.-based exchange program, including processes associated with developing Action Plans to implement follow-on projects. The arrival orientation should be integrated into a Professional Study Tour designed to improve YSEALI Fellows’ understanding of U.S. concepts, policies, and practices related to each Institute's theme, and introduce the Fellows’ to relevant U.S. experts and organizations.

Fellowship Placement - The primary award recipient, in collaboration with each subaward recipient, will identify and support individually-tailored fellowship placements related to each YSEALI Fellows' professional experience and interest. The fellowship placements should provide the YSEALI Fellows with: 1) direct experience with the day-to-day workings of a U.S. organization; 2) the opportunity to network and form professional relationships with American colleagues; and 3) help the YSEALI Fellows develop their Action Plans to carry-out their follow-on projects. The primary award recipient and subaward recipients must be able to offer and support regional and/or nationwide U.S. fellowship placements. The pairing and/or clustering of U.S. fellowship placements within the same community/ metropolitan area is encouraged. However, no more than five YSEALI Fellows may be placed, program-wide, in any one community/metropolitan area during any given Spring or Fall cohort.

A.2.6 YSEALI Fellows Forum (YFF) – The U.S.-based exchange program concludes with the YSEALI Fellows Forum, a two-day, program-wide conference held at the conclusion of the Institutes in the Spring and Fall. The primary award recipient will plan, implement, and support the Washington, D.C.-based YFF in close consultation with ECA. The YFF will provide YSEALI Fellows from all Institutes the opportunity to share their Institute experiences and engage with Department of State Officials, members of the diplomatic community, and other ECA alumni. Please see the Project, Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for more information about the YFF.

A.2.7 Reciprocal Exchange for Americans – The primary award recipient, in collaboration with the subaward recipients, will administer, coordinate, and support minimum one-week reciprocal exchanges that enable U.S. Fellows to travel to Southeast Asia to support YSEALI Fellows' follow-on projects. Responsibilities include developing an online application system for YSEALI Fellows and their U.S. hosts/interlocutors to propose reciprocal projects, working in consultation with Fellows on the development of schedules, and collaborating with posts to identify potential post-driven programming opportunities.

A.2.8 Alumni Engagement – The primary award recipient will develop a plan for continued alumni engagement activities. The plans should address ECA alumni program goals that foster: U.S. diplomatic engagement; an ongoing examination of concepts explored during the program; and continued communication and collaboration with U.S. contacts that were established during or as a result of the program.

A.2.9 Logistical and Administrative Support – The primary award recipient will arrange and participate in Fellow selection interviews, issue program notifications to Fellows and/or hosts, prepare, issue and send DS-2019 forms to posts, enroll all Fellows in the U.S. Department of State's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE), and coordinate and support Fellow housing, meal and transportation arrangements.

A.3 Professional Fellow Institute Themes

Proposals must support two Institutes for each theme listed below. Four Institutes, one for each of the themes listed below, will occur in Spring 2021 and four will occur in Fall 2021.

Please see section “A.2.5 Professional Fellows Institutes” and the Project, Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for additional information about Institutes.

Institute themes for this award are:

- **The Professional Fellows Institute on Civic Engagement** should provide YSEALI Fellows with an opportunity to explore how individuals can organize around community issues. The Civic Engagement Institute should 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. Institutes under this theme may include an emphasis on: 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.
- **The Professional Institute on Economic Empowerment** should provide YSEALI Fellows with an opportunity to explore how systems can support sustainable economic development. The Economic Empowerment Institute should support professionals involved: in small and medium business development; business administration; business education; economic development policy, social entrepreneurship, and community training programs. Institutes under this theme may 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 economic development; education to employment; and the economic empowerment of women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.
- **The Professional Fellows Institute on Governance and Society** should provide YSEALI Fellows with an opportunity to explore the relationship between the public sector and broader society. The Governance and Society Institute should support professionals involved in: the legislative process; governance; public administration; policy making; political campaigns; and law and judicial reform. Institutes under this theme may include an emphasis on: rule of law; access to justice; civil liberties, anti-corruption; and transparency and accountability.
- **The Professional Fellows Institute on Sustainable Development and the Environment** should provide YSEALI Fellows with an opportunity to explore public and private sector approaches to environmental challenges. The Sustainable Development and the Environment Institutes should support

professionals involved in food and water security; public health; ecotourism, the innovative development and management of agricultural, energy, housing and/or transportation resources; natural disaster response; natural resource conservation and restoration; and waste management. Institutes under this theme may include an emphasis on: grassroots activism; government policy and regulation; and market-oriented initiatives.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement: ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under Substantial Involvement in the POGI.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2020

Approximate Total Funding: \$4,200,000

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Approximate Average Award: \$4,200,000

Floor of Award Range: \$4,200,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$4,200,000

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2020

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 31, 2022

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets, participant numbers, participating countries and/or the number of Professional Fellows Institutes (Institutes) in accordance with the needs of the program 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 one cooperative agreement, in an amount \$4,200,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process. It is ECA's intent to award one cooperative agreement of up to \$4,200,000. The award will support a total of eight Institutes. Institutes will be grouped/ organized by theme, with each theme referenced in section "A.3 Professional Fellow Institute Themes" (four total) conducted in the Spring 2021 and the remainder (four total) in the Fall 2021. Applicants must administer two Institutes (one in the Spring 2021, one in the Fall 2021) related to a single theme. Applicants must identify three subaward recipients to each support two Institutes (one in the Spring, one in the Fall) under a single theme.

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

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing 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 Chris Remsen, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division (ECA/PE/C/PF), SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, (202)-632-9432, RemsenCM@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.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Program Officer Chris Remsen 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.3o. "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. Please see the Project, Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for additional information.

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 a current registration in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting is completed on any issued award. 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. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (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 award 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 program 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 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 Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this NOFO, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this NOFO will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their 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 recipient organization will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

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

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State

SA-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, 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. Program 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):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

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

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

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

D.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. Allowable costs

Please see POGI section O. Proposal Contents/ Additional Items to be submitted/ Detailed Budget.

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Monday, May 11, 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.3p. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

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

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

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

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

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

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

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

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

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

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

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 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 midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA

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

1. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, direct linkage to the goals of the YSEALI 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 that secure one Fellowship placement during the exchange rather than multiple, short-term placements with different U.S. organizations will be deemed more competitive under the Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives criterion. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how project objectives and key project elements, especially the development of individual projects by the YSEALI Fellows, will be achieved through programmatic activities.

2. Support of Diversity: Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

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.

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

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. Proposals in which the administrative costs do not exceed 34% of the total requested ECA cooperative agreement amount will be considered more competitive under the Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing review criterion.

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 as identified in the application.

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

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

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

F.3. 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 grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#).
- 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.

- 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. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their SF-424B 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; and
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity (unless specified otherwise in the POGI).

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Chris Remsen, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division (ECA/PE/C/PF), SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202-632-9432), RemsenCM@state.gov

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

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

H. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards 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 11, 2020