

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2020 Community Solutions Program

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0006611

The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Professional Fellows Division of the Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA/PE/C/PF) for the FY 2020 Community Solutions Program. Proposals must conform to the NOFO, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying NOFO, the NOFO is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) expects to award a cooperative agreement for the administration of the FY 2020 Community Solutions Program (CSP). The Community Solutions Program is a global initiative that supports engaged community leaders, ages 25-38, working to address economic, environmental, political, and social challenges in their local communities. Community Solutions Fellows will undertake a four- to six-month U.S.-based fellowship program in public institutions, government offices, state legislatures, social incubators, businesses, or non-profit organizations, working with seasoned community leaders on pre-defined substantive issues of mutual interest.

The FY 2020 Community Solutions Program will provide opportunities for approximately 80 community leaders from over 93 countries around the world to more effectively address the challenges facing their communities through increased civic engagement, active dialogue, leadership development, enhanced technical expertise, and an improved understanding of the way non-profit, public and private sectors interface for community good. It is envisioned that the Community Solutions Fellowship will enable participants to experience best practices in community development, civil discourse, and effective models of public and community engagement. Strong emphasis should be placed on helping CSP leaders devise concrete strategies to address existing challenges in their home communities and contribute to civic initiatives in communities across the United States.

The Community Solutions Program goals strive to:

- 1) facilitate and strengthen participants' ability to lead collaboratively, address complex community challenges, and assume greater leadership roles in their institutions and communities;

- 2) enhance participants' leadership and technical skills providing concrete tools and resources that facilitates collaborative, cross-sector leadership development, community engagement, civil discourse, effective communication, and project implementation and management;
- 3) cultivate professional ties and sustained linkages with U.S. citizens and American institutions in ways that expand and strengthen the ability of the people of the United States and other countries to identify solutions to common challenges facing local and global communities; and,
- 4) develop a global network of diverse, multi-disciplinary professionals and civic leaders committed to innovative problem solving and community engagement.

A. Recipient Responsibilities

For the **overseas administration** of the Community Solutions Program, the recipient organization should utilize the latest in technology and social media to:

1. Develop a global recruitment campaign that targets individuals meeting the eligibility criteria for the program, supports a merit-based open competition, and advances ECA's diversity goals;
2. Design, launch, and support a mobile or internet-based application tool that allows for robust data collection, including real-time updates on application numbers and progress meeting diversity benchmarks;
3. Develop a transparent review process to evaluate applicants for the Community Solutions Program that provides opportunities to involve Public Affairs Sections (PAS) at participating U.S. embassies or consulates in the selection process. The award recipient will work closely with ECA on the development of review criteria, strategies for reaching underserved populations, diversity benchmarks, and final selection of applicants;
4. Arrange English language interviews (virtual or in-person) for semi-finalists as part of the selection process;
5. Administer an Institutional TOEFL or an equivalent language-based assessment to evaluate semi-finalists' English language abilities;
6. Create a mobile or internet-based platform to assist finalists in preparing for their U.S. fellowship, and answer questions on programmatic issues, including but not limited to fellowship and community placements, program responsibilities and expectations, travel, accident and sickness benefits, housing, leadership development, etc.;
7. Conduct pre-departure orientations (virtual or in-person) for finalists before they depart their home countries; and,
8. Utilize the internet (web or cloud), mobile technology, social media, and other communication tools to facilitate communication between finalists and host organizations and communities prior to participants departing to the United States, including but not limited to program and community resources, pre-program fellowship assignments, and leadership development activities.

For the **U.S. administration** of the Community Solutions Program, the recipient organization should utilize the latest in technology and social media to:

1. Conduct an open competition for U.S. public, private, and non-profit institutions and organizations to host Community Solutions Fellows for a four to six month tailored fellowship;
2. Arrange professionally relevant substantive placements for Community Solutions Fellows;
3. Create program guidelines and other relevant materials for U.S. host organizations. The recipient organization should host a virtual orientation for U.S. host institutions that clearly outlines hosting roles and responsibilities.
4. Design, launch, and support a mobile or internet-based platform to post resources and facilitate communication among hosting organizations, Community Solutions Fellows, and, as possible, the greater Community Solutions network of alumni and past host organizations;
5. Develop and support concrete strategies to facilitate host engagement in and support for the Community Solutions Program and related activities;
6. Create opportunities for Community Solutions' participants to develop professional affiliations in U.S. communities;
7. Conduct a comprehensive orientation in the United States for Community Solutions Fellows prior to the start of their U.S. fellowship;
8. Conduct a comprehensive "virtual" mid-program conference to be hosted on an internet-based platform created for the Community Solutions participants;
9. Develop and integrate a strong leadership development component into all program activities;
10. Facilitate professional skill building, enrichment, and wellness activities for Fellows that highlight and support the goals of Community Solutions, including leadership development, community engagement, civil discourse, inclusion, volunteerism and civic responsibility, cross-sector development, and private-public partnerships;
11. Develop and integrate a health and wellness component into program and leadership activities that assists with cross-cultural adjustment and provides participants opportunities to practice resilience and self-care with a special focus on working in high-stress environments;
12. Craft a comprehensive outreach and social media strategy that amplifies Community Solutions goals, supports host engagement, and highlights participant and alumni achievements, collaborative projects, and new initiatives;
13. Conduct an end-of-program workshop in Washington, D.C.;
14. Promote and support community development projects in Fellows' home communities, following the participant's U.S. fellowship;
15. Monitor participants and the performance of hosting institutions for the duration of the U.S. fellowship;
16. Evaluate the program and its impact on the participants, host organizations, host communities, and participants' communities;
17. Develop and implement alumni programming and related activities that support the goals of Community Solutions, provide continued leadership resources and growth opportunities, and model effective leadership and management principles;
18. Arrange and cover the cost of all appropriate program-related travel for Community Solutions Fellows, Americans, and alumni participating in collaborative projects, including but not limited to transportation, lodging, and meals and incidental expenses, etc. Special attention should be paid to helping Fellows find appropriate housing for the duration of the CSP exchange;
19. Manage financial aspects of the program including timely disbursement of participant stipends, housing allowances, etc. and promptly report any irregularities in the budget or spending to ECA;
20. Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the

duration of the program, issue health benefits identifications cards, and provide instructions on host claim forms. More information on ASPE is available at www.usdos.sevencorners.com;

21. Issue DS-2019 forms for international participants and alternates. All international participants will travel on a U.S. government designation for the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor program.
22. Participate in regular program reviews with ECA (in person or by telephone) that provide general updates on program implementation and matters of concern, including but not limited to a review of the effectiveness of past activities, progress on anticipated programmatic activities, and issues that may impede the implementation of planned programming;
23. Respond fully and promptly to requests for program or statistical information from ECA; and
24. Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement with ECA, including but not limited to submitting timely financial and program reports and providing proper budget oversight.

B. U.S. Department of State Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, ECA's Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division, is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA anticipates working closely with the recipient organization to ensure that all aspects of the program model support the Community Solutions Program goals. ECA activities and responsibilities for this program include participation in the design and direction of program implementation including recruitment and selection strategies, development of publicity and program materials, creation of internet-based components, execution of U.S.-based and follow-on programming, and development of alumni strategies and programming. ECA specific responsibilities for this program include:

1. Participate in the design and direction of all program activities. As needed, ECA will provide guidance in the execution of all program components;
2. Approve key personnel including leadership specialists, trainers, or coaches;
3. Approve program timelines and agendas;
4. Review and approve program publicity, outreach efforts, and other materials;
5. Approve the final selection of participants and host institutions;
6. Approve changes to participants' proposed community development field or project;
7. Assist with SEVIS-related and ASPE issues;
8. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout duration of program and assist, as needed, with participant emergencies;
9. Liaison with relevant U.S. embassies, consulates, and regional bureaus at the State Department regarding issues including, but not limited to, recruitment and selection, web-based publicity efforts, and D.C.-based opening and closing events;
10. Work closely with the recipient organization to share program successes and publicize the program through various media outlets and ECA and PAS's social media platforms; and
11. Monitor and evaluate the program as necessary, through site visits or debriefing sessions.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Overview

The Community Solutions Program builds on existing efforts by engaged civic and community leaders to improve the economic, environmental, political, and social conditions of their local communities. Through leadership training and skill development, an enhanced understanding of civic engagement and discourse as a development tool, and an emphasis on the role of cross-sector partnerships to advance key societal issues, the Community Solutions Program will provide opportunities for eligible individuals to more effectively address complex problems in their own institutions, villages, cities, regions, and countries.

Community Solutions Program participants will undertake a four- to six-month U.S.-based fellowship program in public institutions, government offices, state legislatures, social incubators, businesses, or non-profit organizations to work with seasoned civic and community leaders on specific issues of mutual interest. Fellowship sites will provide real life models for Community Solutions Fellows to practice leadership lessons, identify creative approaches to global challenges, and develop concrete strategies to address existing issues within their host and home communities. U.S. fellowships should be learning laboratories for Community Solutions participants to apply leadership theory, share best practices, observe civic engagement, practice civil discourse, and explore how public, private and non-profit sectors work together to advance the common good and build healthy resilient communities. The Community Solutions Program should provide opportunities for participants to observe varied aspects of American life, discuss issues of importance to host organizations and local U.S. communities, and provide resources to assist participants with the development and implementation of follow-on activities. The program should also include opportunities for the participants to meet American citizens from a variety of backgrounds, interact with peers, share professional skills and expertise, and speak to appropriate student, community, and civic groups in the United States about their experiences and life in their home countries. Linking fellows, program alumni, host organizations, and mentors together, Community Solutions should endeavor to create a global network of engaged professionals and civic leaders committed to innovative problem solving, public engagement, and community-building.

The proposal should integrate Community Solutions goals into all aspects of the program design and implementation. Proposed program models should endeavor to mirror program goals, community engagement principles, and leadership in its broadest sense. Every effort should be made to ensure that the administration and implementation of the program also provide models of effective leadership, inclusivity, and community engagement.

B. Selection of Participants

Utilizing the latest in technology including web interfaces, cloud applications, SMS technology, and social/new media platforms the recipient organization will administer a targeted global recruitment campaign to advertise the Community Solutions Program. Recruitment materials should be posted on appropriate media sites that

appeal to community leaders meeting the eligibility requirements. The recipient organization should work closely with ECA and PAS of U.S. missions in participating countries to ensure that outreach efforts are appropriately tailored to the country or region and have the broadest possible reach.

It is anticipated that the participants' backgrounds will be varied and could include the sciences, social sciences, humanities, education, business, technology, media/communication, and other professional fields, but with a unifying commitment to using broad-based community engagement and dialogue as the basis for confronting local and global challenges. Every effort should be made to attract as large and diverse an applicant pool as possible, including persons with disabilities, a balanced mix of male and female participants, participants who are from non-elite backgrounds, rural and urban sectors, etc.

Eligibility

Competition for the Community Solutions Program is merit-based and open to community leaders, ages 25-38, who meet the following criteria:

- Is age 25-38 at the time of application;
- Currently living and working on a community engagement initiative in his/her home country and has at least two (2) years of professional experience in this capacity at the time of application. Special consideration can be given to individuals living in another country who have refugee status and are working on behalf of his/her home community;
- Submits a complete application, with all required documents, by the application deadline;
- Able to begin the Community Solutions Fellowship program in the United States in 2021;
- Able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Committed to returning to his/her home country, or country of residence in the case of refugees, after completion of the program; and,
- Proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application.

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the Community Solutions Program:

- U.S. citizens and/or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals participating in academic, training, or research programs in the United States or other countries at the time of application;
- Individuals residing or working outside their home countries at the time of application unless the individual is a refugee or holds special refugee status and is working on behalf of their home country/community;
- Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. government (e.g., U.S. Department of State, Public Affairs Sections of U.S. embassies or other U.S. government agencies) who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years; and
- Other criteria to be determined in consultation with ECA.

Selection Process for Program Participants

After collecting and screening applications for completeness and eligibility, the recipient organization will identify a selection committee comprised of community leaders, citizen advocates, policy makers, non-profit representatives, social entrepreneurs, and professionals/scholars with expertise in the applicants' designated fields to read and evaluate each application using a form and scoring matrix designed in consultation with ECA. Based on the written application evaluations, the recipient organization will invite a percentage of the applicants (approximately three candidates for every placement available) for virtual interviews. Interview teams should be comprised of at least one experienced U.S. community developer and one regional or thematic expert. Interviews will be conducted in English. Each panelist will complete an interview evaluation form designed by the recipient organization and approved by ECA. The panelists will rank order the candidates interviewed and make recommendations based on the anticipated number of Community Solutions finalists and alternate candidates. An Institutional TOEFL or comparable English-language proficiency exam will be administered to each semi-finalist who does not already possess a valid TOEFL score of 520 (or 213 on the Computer-Based Test) or higher.

The recipient organization will work closely with ECA and PAS on all aspects of the selection process. PAS should be invited to read applications, participate in the interviews either virtually or in a designated location, and provide comments on semi-finalists. Based on the written applications, interviews, TOEFL scores, and PAS comments, the recipient organization will select the Community Solutions finalists and alternates, according to the number of participants designated by ECA. The recipient organization must review the list of semi-finalists with ECA but also send the list to the Public Affairs Sections in participating countries for concurrence. After consulting with ECA, the recipient organization will inform *in writing* all finalists, alternate candidates, and rejected applicants of their status in the competition.

Recruitment and selection of candidates for the Community Solutions program is the responsibility of the recipient organization, in collaboration with ECA. U.S. embassies in participating countries are unable to offer more than minimal support for these processes. It is required, however, that the recipient organization maintain ongoing communication with the Public Affairs Section of the relevant embassies and coordinate PAS' involvement, as possible, during the recruitment, interview, selection, and pre-departure orientation phases of the program. At a minimum, the proposal should include concrete plans for maintaining a close working relationship with PAS throughout the entire program cycle, including but not limited to sharing a social media toolkit and other promotional materials, providing real-time updates on recruitment efforts and program achievements, and facilitating a meeting between PAS and the Community Solutions alumni upon their return to their home countries.

B. Selection of U.S.-based Fellowship Placements

The proposal must discuss how the recipient organization expects to recruit, select and secure U.S. hosting organizations. ECA encourages the selection of fellowship placements that reflect the diversity of the American socio-economic and cultural landscape. Host institutions should be selected on the basis of their demonstrated track record of success in community initiatives, commitment to collaborative approaches to problem solving, organizational culture, ability to provide active mentoring and participant support, cost share, and capacity to engage the local community in support of the program. Participants can be placed in public institutions, government offices, legislatures, social incubators, businesses, or non-profit organizations working with seasoned community leaders on substantive issues. Fellowship sites should provide real life models for

Community Solutions Fellows to apply leadership lessons and explore creative approaches to real world challenges. Every effort should be made to ensure that Community Solutions Fellows are able to share their professional expertise and skills with hosting organizations and as possible, the broader host community.

The fellowship placements should be designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the role community development and dialogue plays in U.S. political, social, economic, and social life, while at the same time providing tangible skills, models, and concepts for participants' own leadership development. Fellowship placements should include a mentoring component that complements the online leadership activities, discussions, and trainings administered by the award recipient. Fellow placements must be experiential in nature, reinforce and complement key learning objectives embedded in other parts of the Community Solutions Program, and allow participants to engage in substantive organizational initiatives/projects. Placements should enable participants to experience firsthand the American tradition of participatory democracy, civic engagement, and grassroots approaches to solving community problems. The proposal should also include a strategy for ensuring that participants meet with a wide-cross section of individuals and have access to additional professional and leadership opportunities within the U.S. host community, in addition to those at their placement organization.

At a minimum, the proposal must outline the level of support that it will require of the U.S. organizations and institutions hosting participants. Each Community Solutions Fellow should have two-levels of support in the form of an organizational and community mentor. Organizational mentors are professional affiliates within the organization responsible for directing Fellows' leadership activities over the four-month exchange. Community mentors are individuals from within the local community with experience engaging communities around critical issues. Organizational mentors should provide Community Solutions Fellows with insight into organizational culture, assist in identifying substantive projects that advance the organization's and Fellows' goals, provide relevant resources for a successful fellowship, and offer active constructive feedback of the Fellows' work. Community Mentors should provide their Community Solutions Fellows guidance and key insights into civic engagement and leadership opportunities in their local host communities.

C. Pre-Departure Orientation

Pre-departure orientations, virtual, in-person or blended, should be conducted for Community Solutions finalists before they leave their home countries. The pre-departure orientation should be the entry point for participants' personal leadership development journey. Pre-departure orientations should facilitate the safe passage of the Community Solutions Fellows to the United States, assist Fellows in identifying and securing appropriate housing for the duration of their Fellowship, clarify their understanding of the program's goals and regulations, including each Fellow's mandatory compliance with the J-1 visa two-year home residency requirement and a Terms and Conditions document, be developed in partnership with ECA, and generally prepare Fellows for the U.S. cultural and work environment. Each participant must understand his/her obligation to maintain communication with the recipient organization throughout the duration of the program.

The recipient organization should develop a Terms and Conditions document outlining program requirements, J-1 visa conditions, and other relevant program elements. Each Fellow must receive a copy of the Community Solutions' Terms and Conditions and sign the Terms and Conditions document prior to his or her departure to the United States.

D. U.S.-Based Orientation

In addition to a comprehensive introduction to the program design, goals, and activities, the program orientation should contain the following components:

- Broad introduction to the problems and challenges facing American society in the 21st Century;
- Personal leadership development and cultivation of leadership skills;
- Team building activities that model civic dialogue and community engagement;
- Introduction to concepts of U.S. civic and community development;
- Activities that promote the health and well-being of the participant;
- Discussion of ethical leadership and public good; and,
- Financial management issues, with a discussion of U.S. income tax obligations;

The U.S.-based orientation program should also address the Community Solutions themes of Energy and Environmental Issues, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Transparency and Accountability, and Women and Gender Issues. Proposals should exercise creativity in designing a U.S.-based orientation program for participants and U.S. hosts that is interactive, supports peer learning, and incorporates local community resources into the program design.

E. Professional Development Activities: Conferences, Seminars, and Enhancements

Professional development activities (virtual or otherwise) should be an integral part of the program and directly complement the U.S.-based fellowship and follow-on component of the program. Professional development enhancements should consist of a blend of carefully integrated activities that might include lectures, panel presentations, seminar discussions, individual and group activities, or independent readings. All activities should place a strong emphasis on the use of analytic tools, communication and leadership skills, and personal development. Participants should be exposed to a variety of civic leaders, community advocates, and policy experts representing diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and occupations on the topics and issues to be explored. The proposal should also provide a description of how materials and activities will be tailored to a variety of learning styles to maximize learning outcomes for participants, with special attention paid to incorporating adult learning styles into the Community Solutions Program design.

Technology should be a cornerstone for all program activities. Technology, defined in its broadest sense, should be utilized to strengthen core learning objectives, create a platform for substantive dialogue on pressing global issues, and allow a robust repository for resources and best practices. The recipient organization should develop an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative approach to leadership development that is reinforced through the fellowship placement, enhanced through online and in-person discussions, and reinforced through program activities. The leadership component should include at least one leadership training session per month along with opportunities for reflection and introspection. Workshops and other leadership development offerings should be creative, highly interactive, and team oriented in ways that reinforce CSP goals and model leadership principles. Leadership and enhancement activities should require input and contributions from all participants and provide participants with enhanced leadership skills. The recipient organization may recruit

leadership specialists, qualified instructors, and workshop facilitators for these sessions from outside their organization.

F. Virtual Mid-Program Conference and Online Leadership Development

The proposal must discuss the goals and objectives of the mid-program virtual conference and the development of online leadership activities. The proposal should include tentative dates for online activities and possible session topics. Special attention should be given to an examination of how the virtual mid-program conference and the online leadership training will further participants' understanding of and encourage dialogue around the issue of leadership, civic engagement, civil discourse, social challenges, community building, and collaborative approaches to problem solving. Proposals should include a clear vision and strategy for inviting host mentors and colleagues to participate and support online activities.

G. End of Program Workshop

At the end of the Community Solutions Program, a closing workshop will be held in Washington, D.C., to highlight key learning objectives, support plans for follow-on projects, showcase Fellows' achievements with relevant stakeholders, and provide opportunities for Community Solutions Fellows to engage with the international community around thematic or regional interests. The recipient organization will work closely with ECA to coordinate the event. The recipient organization will be responsible for setting up meetings in the Washington, D.C. area and providing transportation, lodging, per diem, working lunches, a reception and miscellaneous expenses for all Community Solutions Fellows for a minimum of two to three days. As appropriate, ECA will be responsible for arranging meetings with key stakeholders at the U.S. Department of State.

The proposal should discuss the goals and objectives of the End of Program Workshop, propose possible workshop themes and creative ways to facilitate the exchange of ideas between Community Solutions Fellows and invited guests, host organizations, and other professionals from the Washington community. Special attention should be given to an examination of how Community Solutions Fellows will translate and utilize their U.S. experience in their home communities.

H. Program Monitoring

The proposal must discuss how the participants' progress in achieving program goals and objectives will be monitored while they are at their U.S. hosting organization (e.g., surveys, interviews, work plans, email, etc.). The proposal should cite the intended frequency of communication with the participants and representatives of the U.S. organizations, and outline performance goals or benchmarks for the participants' time in the United States. The proposal should also discuss how the quality of the participants' experience will be evaluated.

I. Program Measurement and Evaluation

The proposal must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the success of the program, both as the activities

unfold, at the end of the program, and once the participants return to their home communities. The recipient organization should develop a set of outcomes that can be tied to the Community Solutions goals and address plans to administer a pre- and post-program survey to the Community Solutions Fellows. ECA requests that the proposal provide a description of the methodology linking outcomes to program objectives with a special emphasis on leadership development and network creation. These evaluation tools should complement ECA's evaluation efforts, not duplicate them. ECA expects that the recipient organization will track participants and partners and be able to respond to evaluation indicators that include the effectiveness of the program model and core components in meeting stated goals and objectives, learning and changes in behavior as a result of the program, delivery of the online leadership platform, and the effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work in their home countries and host institutions in the United States). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding, substantive knowledge, as well as the program's impact on communities in the United States and overseas.

J. Follow-On Projects

Follow-on projects should contribute to the Community Solutions' goal of creating a global network of diverse, multi-disciplinary professionals and civic leaders committed to problem solving and community engagement. The proposal should provide concrete approaches to encourage and support follow-on projects between Community Solutions participants, U.S. hosts, as well as with the broader Community Solutions community including but not limited to alumni and international stakeholders. The proposals should exercise creativity in the conceptualization of the follow-on component and support for Community Solutions goals. Follow-on projects should encourage the continued sharing of ideas and resources. The proposal should include plans for a reciprocal exchange program for U.S. host mentors to travel overseas, as well as cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation within the Community Solutions alumni community. Competitive reciprocal exchange programs will directly support ongoing collaborative efforts between Community Solutions Fellows, as well as between Fellows and U.S. host organizations. The proposal should also include plans for using technology, including social media, to support and amplify participants' follow-on projects.

K. Alumni Programming

The proposal must include a defined strategy for alumni engagement that reflects program goals and anticipated outcomes of the Community Solutions Program. Alumni programming must include both U.S. and foreign participants as well as Community Solutions alumni from the first nine years of the program (approximately 800). The recipient organization must agree to work with previous and current Community Solutions award recipient in transitioning the alumni data in order to provide outreach and support to past CSP alumni. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on or alumni activities; information on how these will be coordinated with individual alumni efforts; strategies to connect individual program cohorts to the larger Community Solutions alumni community; and explore how long-term linkages within the alumni community will be encouraged. The proposal must also include a discussion of how Community Solutions alumni programming might be coordinated with, and integrated into, existing ECA initiatives, both domestically and overseas. Alumni activities should encourage program "ownership" by Community Solutions alumni, provide leadership opportunities, support the continued development of a sustainable network, and promote the role of alumni as global thought leaders and influencers. Alumni programming, where possible, should be enhanced through private-public partnerships, including partnerships involving organizations that directly support ECA

and Community Solutions' goals.

The proposal should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively utilize technology and/or online networking sites to engage with program participants before, during, and after their international exchange. The proposal should include creative ways to encourage alumni to stay connected and share successes on ECA's and appropriate State Department's social networking sites. The proposal should detail how the recipient organization will assist Community Solutions participants in effectively using online and social media to highlight their fellowship experience and share post-fellowship activities with ECA and appropriate professional communities.

L. Participant Tracking and Database Management

The tracking of program participants, hosts, and alumni is crucial to evaluating program goals, highlighting successes, and adjusting program components in real-time. The proposal must provide a clear plan for participant tracking and database management and providing data points to ECA and PAS in participating countries. Organizations without an existing database system may provide funding in the budget for database development or enhancements necessary to implement CSP. All statistical information gathered and compiled by the recipient organization should be transferable to the database maintained at ECA. The recipient organization may be asked to provide bi-annual data submissions, via electronic upload or data transfer, to an ECA database, or to enter data directly into an ECA provided platform. Data fields should include, but are not limited to the following: first name; middle name; last name; gender; date of birth; country of citizenship; country of residence; participant type; field of study/research topic; home/host institution or affiliation; program category; fiscal and calendar year of participation; and U.S. state where fellowship takes place. The recipient organization will be expected to meet all statistical requirements including the submission of all grantee data for the Bureau's annual statistical report. Please refer to ECA's General Policy Guidance on Alumni Outreach/Follow-on and Engagement in the PSI for additional details on alumni activities.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)

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>.

- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, “Assurances-Non-Construction Programs” (only required for organizations if its representations and certifications have not been completed in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). If an organization is exempt from registering in SAM.gov, then it would still need to provide the form as part of its application.)
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), form 990 Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax , SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only required for organizations that engage in lobbying activities), etc.

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 end dates of the program
3. Proposed themes and sub-themes, if applicable
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 anticipated benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative

In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12 pt font, provide a detailed description of the proposed Community Solutions Program model addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities that address all core components outlined in the Program Specific Guidelines above
4. Diversity
5. Program Evaluation

6. Follow-on Activities
7. Project Management Plan
8. Workplan

Additional Information to be Submitted:

Program Materials

While not a requirement, materials that advance the reviewer's understanding of the program design and implementation can be included in the proposal submission. Supplementary materials, if included, should be kept to a minimum, tailored to the Community Solutions Program, and labeled clearly and concisely, such as "RESUMES" or "SELECTION MATERIALS." These could include:

1. Draft agendas of enhancement activities and professional workshops, conferences, and seminars including pre-departure, orientation, and final conference activities
2. Outline of proposed leadership activities
3. Draft application and recruitment materials
4. Draft selection and interview materials
5. Outline of proposed alumni programming
6. Sample evaluation and survey instruments
7. Timeline for program implementation
8. Program promotional materials or social media toolkit(s)
9. Outline of follow-on and collaboration activities
10. Letters of endorsement
11. Resumes of program staff. No resume should exceed two pages.

Detailed Budget. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. A list of program costs that are eligible for funding consideration are listed below:

Travel. Please note that all international air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. Visas for non-U.S. Fellows are provided by the U.S. Department of State and 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. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each foreign participant may be included in the budget. The allowance may be used for incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

Per Diem. For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal

per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at:
https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

Book and Cultural Allowance. Foreign participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$60. U.S. program staff members are not eligible to receive these benefits.

Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per session. Subcontracting organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and subcontractor should be included in the proposal. 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 recipient organization and the contractors/contracting organizations should be included in the proposal.

Room Rental. Room rental may not exceed \$250 per day per conference room or per activity.

Materials Development. Proposal may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials for participants.

Supplies. Proposals may contain costs to purchase equipment for programming such as computers and fax machines. Costs for furniture are not allowed. Supply costs for the purchase of equipment must be kept to a minimum.

Working Meals. No more than two working meals may be provided for each program component. At least one working meal should be budgeted for the D.C. End of Program Workshop. The cost per person should not exceed \$45 for the working meal. No charges may be made against U.S. government funds for alcoholic beverages. The number of invited guests should not exceed the number of funded program participants by more than a factor of two (i.e., no more than twenty invited guests for a working meal involving ten funded program participants).

Health Insurance. Foreign participants will be covered under the terms of a U.S. Department of State-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). The premium is paid by the U.S. Department of State directly to the insurance company. An additional line item for supplemental health insurance may be included for hosting organizations requiring specialized insurance coverage. Applicants are permitted to include costs for travel insurance for participants in the budget.

Reasonable Accommodations. Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose and reflect plans to make the necessary program modifications, or modifications to participant numbers, in the event that participants need reasonable accommodation.

Wire Transfer Fees. When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to partner organizations overseas. Applicants are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

Alumni Activities. Reasonable costs related to alumni programming for both U.S. and foreign participants may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on activities. Proposals should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively utilize technology and online networking sites to enhance and amplify alumni programming. Organizations can propose small grants or a small grant competition for which the Fellows compete in order to encourage their continued work on, and implementation of, their individual follow-on projects.

Database Management. Reasonable costs for the purchase or development of a database management system to track applicant, participant, host organization, and alumni data may be included.

Administrative Costs. Costs necessary for the effective administration of the program may include salaries for recipient organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, a proposal 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. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner, and other sources.

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

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The CSP NOFO indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline.** For further information regarding this program or the solicitation process, contact Linnéa E. Allison, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges Professional Division (ECA/PE/C/PF) at (202) 632-6060 or allisonle@state.gov.