

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2021 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0007780

Office of Citizen Exchanges

Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division for the FY 2021 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship. Your proposal must conform to the solicitation, the guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any application 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 solicitation, the solicitation is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of U.S. embassies and consulates in Europe are supporting the engagement of youth in an intensive and substantive four-week-long Fellowship in the United States.

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Recruitment and Selection of U.S. Participants
 - a. Develop plans for outreach and recruitment that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates that represent the diversity of the United States.
 - b. Develop an application and screening process.
 - c. Conduct an open competition to select ten U.S. participants, ages 16-18, with clearly identified criteria for the selection process.
 - d. Recommend the final participants and alternates to ECA.
2. Preparation
 - a. Contact all participants before the exchange to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests.
 - b. Work with PAS of participating U.S. embassies to implement pre-departure orientations for participants. The pre-departure orientation should include general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training.
 - c. Hire and train program staff, as needed, to accompany participants during the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be

conducted for all program staff.

- d. Design and conduct an orientation(s) for program staff, American participants and their families, and those individuals participating from the U.S. host communities (including host families) on the goals of the program and on the cultures and sensitivities of the exchange visitors. The orientation for Americans may be held in person or conducted virtually.
 - e. Make housing arrangements on campus for all participants. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families for homestays of at least one week and preferably longer, for participants during their stay. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families and others living in the home who are 18 years or older. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health, safety and well-being of participants.
 - f. Make domestic travel arrangements for the participants.
 - g. Make arrangements to provide adult flight chaperones for the transatlantic air travel.
 - h. Enroll all participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Plan for Exchanges (ASPE). More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>.
3. Exchange Activities
- a. Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive four-week long program on the stated themes. Exchange activities must promote program goals.
 - b. Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.
 - c. Engage participants in at least one facilitated community service activity during the U.S. program to demonstrate American volunteerism. The program should provide context for the participants to undertake the service activity – identifying community needs, the nature of volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event, but is integrated into the larger program curriculum, and helps participants see how they can apply the experience at home.
 - d. Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' health and well-being, including preventing and dealing with health issues, misunderstandings, or adjustment issues that may arise.
 - e. Provide a closing session to summarize the project activities, prepare participants for their return home, and to plan for the future.
4. Follow-on Activities
- a. Promote follow-on activities with program alumni that reinforce the concepts imparted during the program. Help them apply what they have learned to serve their schools and communities.

- b. Applicants should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers, in order to amplify the program impact.
5. Work in consultation with ECA and PAS sections in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
6. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of any sub-award relationships with partner organizations.
7. Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program (See section D.3.h. Program Monitoring and Evaluation of the NOFO solicitation).

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The responsibilities of the Department are as follows:

1. Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
2. Recruit and select the European participants, arrange their international travel, and, in coordination with the award recipient, oversee their follow-on activities.
3. Facilitate interaction within the U.S. Department of State, including ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
4. Arrange meetings with U.S. Department of State officials in Washington, D.C., and the partner countries.
5. Approve the proposed slate of final and alternate U.S. candidates.
6. Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
7. Approve recruitment materials, application forms, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.
8. Monitor and evaluate the program through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.
9. Perform an annual performance evaluation/review. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuation (NCC) years.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Participants: Participants will be teenagers between the ages of 16 and 18 who have a strong interest in learning more about the global issues and diplomatic relationships, the role of a free press and free expression (such as advocacy and debate in a democracy), and/or have an interest in public or community service. Participants may represent as many as 45 countries in Europe (countries to be determined in consultation with the regional bureau and posts), as well as the

United States. ECA will determine the final participants.

English proficiency is required. Participants will demonstrate the academic aptitude for a program of this nature, as well as personal qualities that will enable them to be successful exchange participants, including maturity, strong social skills, flexibility, and open-mindedness. These factors are particularly important given the diverse group nature of the program.

Participant Selection: The Public Affairs Sections at the U.S. embassies in participating countries will nominate the foreign participants. They will send participant nominations to ECA in Spring 2022. The award recipient will be responsible for recruiting and screening the American participants through an open competition process and will present the proposed slate to ECA for approval also in Spring 2022.

Logistics: The U.S. embassies will provide participants in the program with their international airline tickets, based on a destination and arrival date specified by the U.S. organization. Since some of these participants will be minors, may be inexperienced travelers, and may be traveling from their home country alone for the first time, applicants will present a plan for flight escorts, who will travel from one or two major Western or Central European cities to and from the United States.

Pre-departure Orientation: PAS staff will provide participants with a pre-departure orientation, reviewing the details of the program, cross-cultural issues, travel, and financial matters. The award recipient will provide written materials electronically in support of this orientation prior to the participants' departure from home. In any country where the award recipient has its own staff or the staff of an established partner organization available, they may work out orientation arrangements with PAS on a country-by-country basis.

U.S. Program: The program should include interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities to learn about the fundamentals of a civil society, community service, conflict resolution, critical thinking, tolerance and respect for diversity, and building leadership skills. Training and joint project activity will focus on providing participants with a deeper understanding of common global issues and diplomatic relationships, and how they in turn can influence others through media outlets, by examining freedom of speech issues, media ethics, and the role of media in creating or solidifying stereotypes.

The activities could include a mix of seminars, workshops, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, a volunteer service project, leadership training exercises, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Programming should include additional American participants wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule.

The exchange also will include a one-week educational tour to another geographical region of the U.S. and a closing workshop in Washington, D.C.

Suggestions include the following:

- Workshops on conflict resolution, civic education, current events, global challenges
- Community service/volunteer activities with American youth
- Exercises related to increasing tolerance and international cooperation and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the project's themes
- Workshops that explore the scientific legacy of Benjamin Franklin, specifically the intersection of politics and science
- Visits to historical sites, government centers, community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about the principles of government, history, and society with tourism
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical, camping and other extracurricular activities that provide opportunities to participants to work and play together
- Arts and cultural activities

The program staff will host a closing workshop for participants just prior to departure, which will focus on summarizing the experience, developing plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. The participants should be encouraged and assisted in developing projects to implement after they return home. The ideas and plans should spring from the participants, but the program staff should be prepared to assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the U.S.-based project and during the follow-on period.

Housing Accommodations: Homestays with local families must be arranged for all participants for at least one week of the exchange. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate adult supervision is an acceptable arrangement for other segments of the program, such as the educational tour.

Applicants must present in their proposals a clear and detailed recruitment, screening, and selection process for host families. The award recipient must also provide the families with an orientation prior to the arrival of their exchange participants, emphasizing the goals of the program. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in host family recruitment and selection. Host families may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. Exchange participants should be afforded private space in the home. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in

pairs. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations.

Applicants must explain how they will provide adequate supervision of participants when not in homestays.

Follow-on Activities: Follow-on activities will be organized for alumni. The award recipient will need to be prepared to work with PAS in each country to design activities for alumni, such as mini-grants or online collaborative projects, and mentor them in their implementation of these activities. Given the wide range of countries, this may need to be managed online and/or through low-tech methods that do not require in-country staff. ECA seeks creative ideas to ensure that the alumni can effectively pursue the remaining activities of the program, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through their peers. Alumni tracking is crucial for the evaluation of the program and for the implementation of follow-on programs. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the U.S. Department of State. Please refer to the PSI for additional guidance.

Evaluation: The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires that federal agencies measure the results of their programs in meeting performance goals. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's plan to measure the long-term impact of the program. The follow-on activities will provide an opportunity to assess the impact of the U.S. project on the participants, to determine how their attitudes have changed, and to evaluate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with the program themes. (See section D.3.h. Program Monitoring and Evaluation of the NOFO solicitation).

Social Media and Website: The award recipient will establish and maintain a web presence that will provide current information about the program and its alumni. Additionally, the award recipient will coordinate social media engagement for the program in coordination with ECA and in accordance with ECA's social media guidelines to ensure media is appropriate for the level of sensitivity and maintains the online security of those involved. Proposals should present a clear social media plan for program promotion, recruitment, alumni engagement and impact amplification.

Other Notes: The award recipient is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. The Bureau requires the recipient organization to communicate with ECA and the Public Affairs Sections of the relevant U.S. embassies on a regular basis about program activities, including participant and host family recruitment and selection, pre-departure and welcome orientations, publicity, and follow-on activities. The recipient must inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and it must obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

III. 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.

Executive Summary (One page)

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

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity and proposed venues
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
 - a. Number and description of participants
 - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S and overseas
 - d. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative

Within 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages with one inch margins (size 12 font), provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

1. **Vision and Motivation:** Describe the program objectives, goals, and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire.
2. **Participating Organization:** Identify partner organizations for the program, their roles, and the applicant's plan for monitoring them.
3. **Project Activities:** Describe the components of the exchange and how they relate to program themes, including program planning, orientations, educational and cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, and the closing session. A detailed outline of the four-week exchange should be included as an appendix. Describe support for follow-up activities.
4. **Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics:** Detail how the applicant will arrange international (in compliance with the Fly America Act); domestic travel; homestays (be specific about the recruitment, screening, and monitoring processes) and other housing arrangements; ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and relevant administrative matters.
5. **Participant Monitoring:** Detail how the applicant will assure the well-being, safety, and security of program participants during all stages of the program. A competitive monitoring plan should include the following:
 - a) the information provided in pre-departure orientation materials on safety and the avenues for youth to communicate concerns to staff
 - b) the staff supervision provided when the participants are in hotels and/or dormitories (if relevant)
 - c) screening of host families, including criminal background checks for all household members over the age of 18
 - d) the monitoring of participants while they are in homestays
 - e) a comprehensive emergency action plan

6. **Program Evaluation:** In the submitted proposal, applicants should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported.
7. **Diversity:** Explain how the program managers will pro-actively support diversity in participant selection and program content, demonstrating how diversity can contribute to a vibrant civil society. Diversity should be defined broadly to include geographic, urban/rural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, sexual orientation, and religious diversity.
8. **Institutional Capacity and Project Management:** Outline the applicant's capacity to conduct programs of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: provision of educational and thematic programs, age-appropriate programming for youth, and any previous work in the region. Describe the program staffing (individuals by name and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. If applicable, include this information for partner organizations as well.
9. **Work Plan/Schedule:** Outline the phases of the project planning and implementation for the entire award period. Provide a draft schedule of daily activities of the exchanges in an appendix.
10. **Non-Competitive Continuations:** Applicants should provide a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations, pending successful program performance and availability of funds.

Additional Information to be Submitted:

1. Detailed Budget

ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, countries and regions participating, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. The available funding will support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included.

Suggested program costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Educational materials
- Participant travel (within the United States, local ground transportation, follow-on travel)
- Flight escort travel
- Staff travel
- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Food and lodging, when not in homestay
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Important: Applicants should plan for 55 participants (45 Europeans and 10 Americans).

For travel to and from the exchange, the award recipient should cover the costs only for the American participants. International travel costs for foreign participants will be covered by the participating U.S. embassies.

Applicants should budget for adults to accompany groups of student travelers between Europe and the United States. For example, a program staff member or designee would meet participants traveling from Eastern Europe in Vienna for a group flight into the United States so that s/he could assist them with entry procedures and any problems that may arise.

Payments to host families are not allowed as an award-funded or cost-share item. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, ECA urges applicants to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant and other sources.

Maximum limits on cooperative agreement funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant; Conference room rental costs-\$250 per day per room; Consultant fees and honoraria-\$250/day; Cultural allowance-\$150 per participant; Per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs- 3% of the cooperative agreement. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share any rates that exceed these amounts.

Exchange participants will be enrolled in ECA's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) to provide them with health benefits during the exchange; this cost does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>.

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

2. Schedule of Exchange Activities

3. Letters of Commitment

Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations and any receiving a sub-award. Letters from elected officials are generally not advised.

4. Resumes

Resumes of all program staff should be included in the submission. *No one resume should exceed two pages.*

5. Attachments/Appendices

Please limit those materials essential for understanding the proposed program, such as a draft schedule or evaluation questionnaires, to no more than 10 pages (in addition to the 20-page

narrative). Extensive attachments will detract from your proposal.

6. First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable (please see PSI)

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The solicitation document 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, please contact the Youth Programs Division program officer Pamela Rasmussen, email address: RasmussenP@state.gov.