

Department of State

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

(NOFO): FY2021 Community Heritage Exchange Initiative

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0007928

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.451

Key Date/Application Deadline: June 4, 2021

Executive Summary: The Cultural Heritage Center (ECA/P/C) in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites submission of proposals from U.S. public and private nonprofit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) for a Cooperative Agreement to assist in the design and implementation of core programs for the FY 2021 Community Heritage Exchange Initiative (CHEI).

This initiative is one of three that the Center will launch in 2021 to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). Since its inception 20 years ago, the AFCP has supported over a thousand projects in more than 650 communities in 133 countries around the world. See here for more information: <https://eca.state.gov/cultural-heritage-center/ambassadors-fund-cultural-preservation/annual-reports>.

Two of the three initiatives celebrating the AFCP will be implemented via cooperative agreements. They are: the CHEI (the subject of this NOFO) and the AFCP Alumni Exchange. A NOFO has been issued for each. Applicants may apply to either one or both as they prefer.

The CHEI will strengthen connections between American and foreign communities by documenting and sharing stories of cultural heritage. This initiative shall provide communities, filmmakers and media specialists, both American and foreign, with new technical knowledge and skills that they may apply in their work. It shall consist of five core exchange programs centered on exploring the importance of cultural heritage preservation to those whose lives are impacted by those sites, objects, and practices. The AFCP projects chosen to be highlighted in these exchanges will represent a range of heritage types and serve as examples of the intricacies and complexities of preservation efforts worldwide.

The overarching goals for the CHEI are:

- To share stories of cultural heritage and values around previous and current AFCP projects;
- To increase the capacity of communities around AFCP projects to document and share stories of their own heritage;

- To strengthen bilateral cooperation on architectural and objects conservation projects of mutual benefit to the U.S. and other countries; and
- To build on the AFCP program, which supports the preservation of cultural heritage as a demonstration of U.S. respect for other cultures.

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

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.

A.1. Program Design: The CHEI will support the documentation and exchange of community-centered stories about the value and impact of the AFCP and efforts to preserve and protect cultural heritage more broadly. Communities participating in the initiative will receive technical and storytelling training and have opportunities to collaborate with U.S. experts to share their stories about the heritage the AFCP has helped to preserve using multi-media and virtual reality. Program development and planning, carried out in cooperation with ECA/P/C and U.S. embassies, should begin in fall 2021 with implementation beginning in winter 2021.

The CHEI is centered on a set of five, tightly integrated core exchange programs including: 1.) a Community Heritage Film Series, 2.) Community Heritage Virtual Tours, 3.) Community Storytelling Workshops, 4.) a Community Storytelling Tool Kit, and 5.) Resilient Intangible Heritage Workshops. Each core activity is outlined below and may involve communities from different countries. CHEI also includes a set of kickoff activities and the development of a platform for creating and disseminating exhibits for exchange that are outside the scope of this NOFO.

Note: An approximate cost for each of the five core exchange programs is included in the following descriptions. Applicants should use these as a guide and may adjust the total amount per program in their proposals. The total award however shall not exceed \$1,000,000.

1. **Community Heritage Film Series (approximately \$330,000)** - In its 20 years of operation, the AFCP has supported the preservation of a wide range of iconic and lesser-known ancient and historic cultural sites. In most cases, the heritage the AFCP has preserved is part of a community's social and historical landscape and endures as a source of pride and identity. Using the communicative power of film, the Community Heritage Film Series will help 12 communities develop, convey, and share with local, U.S. and international audiences the stories, and meaning of the sites AFCP has preserved. . ECA/P/C will select approximately two communities from each of the six State Department regions that have hosted AFCP project for participation in the Community Heritage Film Series. No community or country will participate in both the Community Heritage Film Series and the Community Heritage Virtual Tour.

The films will be 10 to 20 minutes long, in full resolution digital format, and produced by filmmakers and production companies based in or near the communities who will operate as subaward recipients. Each subaward will be approximately \$20,000. An open competition will not be used to select subaward recipients. Instead, the primary recipient will select potential subaward recipients based on consultations with communities, U.S. Embassies, and ECA/P/C with final approval resting with ECA/P/C.

Recognizing that communities may often have multiple perspectives and narratives about a historical site, the primary recipient will organize and facilitate workshops to help the community come to agreement on what it hopes to convey and to develop a narrative with the filmmakers. The primary recipient will also organize virtual, and potentially in-person, exchanges for the filmmakers with U.S. counterparts to provide technical training and interchange as needed. The resulting films will be shared in a series of U.S. and local events, exhibits and workshops.

2. **Community Heritage Virtual Tours (approximately \$400,000)** – Using the power of virtual reality, the CHEI will make some of the heritage that has been preserved by the AFCP more accessible to the American public while also helping communities around AFCP sites that have suffered economically as tourism declines because of the coronavirus pandemic. CHEI will help 12 communities develop virtual tours of iconic sites narrated by local guides from the community. ECA/P/C will select approximately two communities from each of the six State Department regions that have hosted AFCP project for participation in the Community Heritage Virtual Tours. No community or country will participate in both the Community Virtual Tours and the Community Heritage Film Series.

The recipient will provide photogrammetry and 3D modeling equipment and training to local academic or non-profit organizations to capture the digital imagery needed to create the tours. It will provide storytelling workshops to help local tour guides develop tour narratives. It will organize exchange workshops and training to

facilitate the processing of the digital raw material into online tours which should include a system for tipping tour guides. The resulting tours will be shared in a series of U.S. and local events, exhibits and workshops.

3. **Community Storytelling Workshops (approximately \$80,000)** – All communities have stories about their heritage that link their lives to others. Sharing these stories builds trust and understanding. In addition to sharing community stories with professionally produced film and virtual reality tours, the CHEI will hold up to 12 workshops in different countries from at least four of the six State Department regions for community members to build their own capacity to record edit and share their own digital stories. Preference for participation in this program element will be given to communities that are not participating in either the Community Heritage Film Series, the Community Heritage Virtual Tours or the Resilient Intangible Heritage Workshops. The recipient will organize and lead these workshops that will focus on both technological skill building using commonly available recording and editing technologies, such as mobile phones and laptops, and storytelling and interviewing techniques. Workshops will be inclusive and oriented towards family and intergenerational story sharing. Community members will be invited to share their stories through the CHEI website and social media platforms.

In designing the workshops, the recipient should seek to include U.S. educational and outreach-focused organizations with experience supporting community building and storytelling in the U.S.

Additionally, the recipient should also plan to organize and conduct either one global workshop or three regional workshops that bring communities together across borders to examine issues facing communities as they seek to preserve cultural heritage and make suggested lessons that ECA/P/C can use to guide future programming. This will occur no earlier than midpoint of the CHEI in order to incorporate lessons learned from the community engagement that has occurred up to that point. The recipient will consult with and obtain approval of ECA/P/C on the choice global or regional workshops.

4. **Community Storytelling Tool Kit (approximately \$10,000)** -- To aid a wider audience of communities in their efforts to tell the story of their cultural heritage, CHEI will create a collection of storytelling resources and tools. The tools will help communities adapt narratives to various modes of communication, learn basic video and audio production techniques, identify potential audiences and dissemination channels, and access more advanced resources and expertise. The tools should be developed iteratively with other elements of CHEI, leveraging the various workshops and exchanges to refine topics to be addressed at the outset and test materials later on.

5. **Resilient Intangible Heritage Workshops (\$180,000)** – The AFCP was one of the first international funds to recognize the value of intangible forms of heritage and to support their preservation. Communities around the world responded with projects to document music, dance, language, and other forms of traditional cultural expression. But preserving intangible heritage presents unique challenges. The heritage is often at risk because of waning engagement in practices across generations, which can be driven by a range of complex social and economic factors. The CHEI will identify up to 12 AFCP projects involving intangible cultural heritage and will work with the community to move from documentation to resilience. The projects should be from at least four of the six State Department regions and should not include communities participating in the Community Heritage Film Series, the Community Virtual Tours or the Community Storytelling Workshops. The recipient will organize approximately three to four planning workshops to help the community identify the factors placing the heritage at risk and a corresponding roadmap to address the risks. Each community will receive a small grant up to \$10,000 as seed money to put their plan into action. The workshops will involve representatives from U.S. and international communities that have successfully made traditional practices more resilient and adaptable to modern pressures. They will share their best practices and help form a support network and community of practice.

Note: It is understood and expected that due to the coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions, most workshops, trainings, and events will be virtual initially; but as restrictions are eased in-person events may be held. Proposals should plan and budget for the transition from virtual to in-person events.

A2. Substantial Involvement: In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. Specifically, ECA/P/C will be involved in the following:

- In consultation with U.S. embassies and the recipient, ECA/P/C will select approximately two communities from each of the six State Department regions that have hosted AFCP projects for participation in the Community Heritage Film Series and two per region for participation in the Community Heritage Virtual Tours. Communities will be selected to maximize the diversity of project types and impacts, considering aspects such as types of heritage, regional or local impacts, range of community engagement styles, and types of implementing partners. No single community or country will participate in both the Community Heritage Film and Community Heritage Virtual Tours.
- ECA/P/C will approve the final selection of the filmmakers or production companies that will participate in the film series based on a selection process managed by the

recipient that includes consultation with communities, the U.S. Embassy and ECA/P/C.

- ECA/P/C approve the final selection of the communities in the Community Storytelling Workshops and the Resilient Intangible Heritage Workshops based on a selection process managed by the recipient that includes consultation with communities and the U.S. Embassy and ECA/P/C.
- ECA/P/C will facilitate:
 - collaboration between the recipient and organizations that have received previously issued AFCP grants;
 - contact, via the relevant U.S. embassy, with any local government agencies responsible for the heritage that is to be the subject of the films and virtual tours;
 - collaborations with other programs managed by ECA, such as American Spaces, the English Language Program and the American Film Showcase;
 - collaboration and exhibition of the resulting films and tours with the Smithsonian Institution, Library of Congress and other U.S. government entities;
 - the development of a shared media and awareness plan with U.S. embassies in countries with communities selected to participate in the film or virtual tour series.

Additionally, ECA/P/C will be responsible for two additional components of the CHEI that fall outside the auspices of this NOFO and resulting cooperative agreement, namely a kickoff activity and a dissemination and exchange platform. ECA/P/C will ensure coordination between all elements of the CHEI.

More broadly and generally, the ECA/P/C will also reserve the right to:

- participate in the design, implementation, and direction of the program;
- approve key personnel;
- provide input on and approve program design, timelines, and administrative procedures;
- provide guidance in the execution of program components;
- review and approve program publicity and other materials, including social media, as applicable.

A3. Recipient Responsibilities

The recipient will be responsible for the design, development, administration, and implementation of the five core activities of the FY 2021 CHEI, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Providing selected filmmakers and/or production companies with subawards of approximately \$20,000 each to produce the films in the Community Heritage Film Series.
- Providing selected community based organizations with subawards of approximately \$10,000 each to implement their Resilient Intangible Heritage Workshops.
- Finalizing specific project plans, activities and budgets of any subaward recipients and monitoring their implementation;
- Providing partners and participants in training and capacity building exchange activities with equipment as may be needed;
- Designing, organizing and delivering all workshops, trainings, exchanges and events needed to successfully implement each of the five core activities of the FY 2021 CHEI, to include designing content, curriculum, and publicity, identifying and arranging the participation of U.S. partners and subject matter experts, and funding and organizing travel as may be needed. It is understood and expected that due to the coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions, most workshops, trainings, and events will be virtual initially; but as restrictions are eased in-person events may be held, pending consultation and approval by ECA/P/C.
- Developing and organizing U.S. based and international events to showcase the output of the five core activities, particularly with U.S. audiences.
- Gathering and maintaining participant data, anecdotes, and other details for reference and reporting to ECA.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA/P/C's level of involvement in this program is listed under A2. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY2021

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$1,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$1,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2021, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: July 31, 2023

The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets and the five core exchange programs 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 D3a and D3c 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 of \$1,000,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process:

1. Applicants must address all five of the core exchange programs outlined in section A, namely the: 1.) a Community Heritage Film Series, 2.) Community Heritage Virtual Tours, 3.) Community Storytelling Workshops, 4.) a Community Storytelling Tool Kit, and 5.) Resilient Intangible Heritage Workshops.

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 the Cultural Heritage Center, ECA/P/C, SA-5, 5th floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, culturalproperty@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. Please specify FY2021 Cultural Heritage Exchange Initiative and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

D.3b. Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

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. 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.servicenowservices.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.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

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.3f. FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY - ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3g. 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.3h. 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.3i. 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.3j. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients: All ECA 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.3k. 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.3l. 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.3m. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) Personnel
- 2) Fringe Benefits
- 3) Travel, including Per Diem, and visa fees
- 4) Supplies
- 5.) Equipment, including devices and software for photogrammetry and 3D modeling
- 6) Contractual
- 7) Other Direct Costs
- 8) Indirect Costs

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Friday, June 4, 2021

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.30. 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 the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D.3p. 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 program objectives:** Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- 2. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.
- 3. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.
- 4. 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.

5. 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.

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/ope/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 120 calendar days after the cooperative agreement year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and

supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic.

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

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

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 120 days after the expiration or termination of the award;

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3h. 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.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Erin Leckey, U.S. Department of State, Cultural Heritage Center, ECA/P/C, SA-5, 5th floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, LeckeyEH@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.

Matthew Lussenhop
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

March 29, 2021