PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2021 TechGirls Program
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0007923
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 TechGirls program. 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) is supporting the participation of young women (ages 15-17) in intensive, substantive four-week exchange(s) in the United States focused on the in-depth exploration of applied technology and STEM topics.

The responsibilities of the award recipient will be the following:

1) Recruitment and Selection – Proposals must include a detailed description of the proposed plans/processes to accomplish all elements outlined below, as well as a sample application form in the appendices.
   a) Develop an online application form, in consultation with the ECA Program Officer, for the merit-based open competition for foreign and American TechGirls participants to be utilized during program outreach and participant recruitment. The ECA Program Officer must approve the application form prior to it going live. Additionally, the application form and subsequent applicant data must be housed on a secure, private, password protected platform or website that is accessible only to the award recipient, participating embassies, and the ECA TechGirls Program Officer. The award recipient should prepare an identical paper-based version of the application for those applicants who have limited internet access.
   b) Conduct and manage open recruitment and competitive, merit-based selection of a diverse group of female secondary school youth from the United States and partner countries, in close consultation with the ECA Program Officer and the U.S. embassies.
   c) Consult with U.S. embassies and the ECA Program Officer to establish a mutually agreeable recruitment and selection timeline, incorporating time for outreach to prospective applicants, initial screening of applicants, the preparation of semi-finalist lists for the embassies' review, and candidate interviews by embassy staff.
   d) Develop a screening process and manage the initial screening of applicants by

performing a technical review of all applications received for eligibility and completeness. The award recipient should use a transparent, merit-based review process, with a consistent scoring mechanism and clearly identified evaluation criteria for assessing applications. Review criteria should be developed in close consultation with the ECA Program Office and participating embassies.

e) Provide each embassy (copying the ECA Program Officer) with a list of semi-finalists by the agreed upon deadline (determined after the award has been made) to be interviewed by PAS staff. Any notes or recommendations from the initial screening should be shared with the embassies to aid them in their selection of participants that would be a good fit for the proposed U.S.-based exchange. The award recipient may serve in an advisory role to participating embassies, as needed/requested, during the selection process. [Please note: U.S. embassies will interview candidates and make final selections, which will be sent to the ECA Program Officer for approval in the form of ranked nominations for the approximately three participant slots per country. Once approved, the ECA Program Officer will notify the award recipient of the final, approved selections.]

Please refer to Section II "Program Specific Guidelines" under "Participants" for additional details.

2) <u>Preparation</u>
   a) Contact participants before the program to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests, in coordination with U.S. embassies (for their awareness).
   b) Collect medical information from all participants and ensure that each participant has the necessary health documents for the program.
   c) Enroll foreign participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan for the duration of the exchange, and assist with claims as necessary.
   d) Prepare emergency contact information/cards for all participants. Participants must receive cards prior to traveling to the United States.
   e) Manage/arrange all round-trip international (complying with the Fly America Act) travel arrangements <u>for foreign participants</u>. The ECA Program Officer and U.S. embassies must be provided the opportunity to review international flight itineraries. The ECA Program Officer will approve all international itineraries prior to purchase.
   f) Identify and arrange for adult flight chaperones on all legs of the international (transatlantic) flights, in close consultation with U.S. embassies and the ECA Program Office. [Please refer to Section II. for more information on flight chaperones.]
   g) Manage/arrange all round-trip international travel (complying with the Fly America Act) to and from the site of program activity in the United States and all U.S. domestic travel related expenses (lodging, per diem) for the approved <u>adult flight chaperones</u>.
   h) Manage/arrange in-country domestic travel for all participants (including American participants). Related in-country expenses (for foreign participants) may include passport fees, participant travel allowances, inter-country travel to the capital city for

visa interview, and lodging and meals for pre-departure orientations, as needed. <u>The proposal should detail how the arrangements will be coordinated and managed.</u>

i)   Arrange for U.S. ground transportation, group meals, and the disbursement of pocket money.

j)   Hire and train 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 and for new staff prior to hiring.

k)   In collaboration with the overseas partner(s) and U.S. embassies, design and conduct pre-departure orientations, which will provide general and program-specific information for foreign participants.

l)   Design and conduct a separate pre-exchange orientation, which will provide general and program-specific information for American participants.

m)   Arrange housing for the participants in a dormitory, hotel, homestay, or some combination thereof and ensure appropriate staffing to monitor the housing arrangement throughout the exchange.

n)   Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer a minimum of one weekend homestays (lodging and meals). 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.

o)   Orient staff and those participating from the U.S. host communities, including host families, to the goals of the program and to the cultures and sensitivities of the exchange visitors.

3)   <u>Exchange Activities</u>

a)   Design, plan, and implement substantive and interactive exchange(s) in the United States designed to develop the youth participants' knowledge and skill base in the field of technology. The exchange(s) must include a ten-day (minimum) technology camp and a short trip to Washington, D.C. Exchange activities must include creative and interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities that provide a substantive experience on the program themes, and achieve program objectives outlined in the NOFO. The program should be somewhat flexible, as the proposed exchange dates may be adjusted once the award has been made due to the number of participating countries and varying academic calendars.

b)   Conduct a welcome orientation for participants upon their arrival in the United States to review program goals, objectives, and expectations. Welcome orientations should be held jointly with competitively selected American peers.

c)   Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities. Ensure that the range of program activities provides a balanced view of the social and political spectrum.

d)   Engage participants in in at least one facilitated community service activity during the exchange. The program should provide context for the participants – identifying

community needs, volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event and will help participants apply the experience at home.

e) Identify and manage job shadow opportunities for participants. The job shadow component should be a minimum of two days. [Please refer to Section II. Program Specific Guidelines for more information on job shadow opportunities.]

f) Facilitate the creation of structured mentorships for TechGirls participants that begin before (or during) the U.S.-based exchange and continue once the participants return home. Mentors may include American job shadow hosts, TechWomen (or other alumnae from ECA-funded professional programs), TechGirls alumnae who are now university graduates, among others. [Please refer to Section II. Program Specific Guidelines for more information on mentorships.]

g) Provide a closing session to summarize exchange activities, prepare participants for their return home, and present opportunities for alumnae engagement.

h) Include a short, substantive visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the program.

i) Develop, and implement, a comprehensive plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being during the exchange. [Please refer to Section II. Program Specific Guidelines for more information on participant monitoring.]

j) Make appropriate accommodations and arrangements for participants' religious observances (e.g., allotting time for prayer or services, providing halal meals).

4) <u>Follow-on Activities</u>

a) Plan, organize, and manage, in close collaboration with overseas partner(s), if applicable, and participating U.S. embassies (serving in an advisory role to the award recipient), follow-on activities in the participants' home countries. The award recipient should plan to facilitate engagement among the participants, advise and support them in the implementation of follow-on service projects, and offer opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills learned during the exchange. Participants should return home from the exchange prepared to conduct projects that serve a need in their schools or communities. Applicants should propose a robust plan to assist the participants in developing and carrying out follow-on projects with maximum community impact. [Please refer to Section II. Program Specific Guidelines for more information on follow-on activities.]

b) Support alumni in making presentations or preparing articles to share their experiences once they return home.

c) Connect newly returned program alumnae with alumni of previous program years and from other ECA sponsored programs to help reintegrate them into their home communities post-exchange, and to build and strengthen the ECA alumni network.

d) Continually engage alumnae for the length of the cooperative agreement and encourage alumnae engagement and reporting through web-based or social media platforms designed and described in the proposal.

e) [Optional: Arrange overseas site visits by program staff, trainers, job shadow hosts, and/or educators to further the training started during the exchange. Proposed visits must be discussed in adequate detail within the proposal.]

5) Evaluation
Design a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) that outlines plans to track progress towards the proposed program's goals and objectives through indicators and corresponding data collection questions. Please see section D.3h. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of the NOFO for more information.

6) Administrative
   a) Work in consultation with the ECA Program Officer and U.S. embassies in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA and U.S. embassies, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
   b) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants, and management and oversight of sub-award relationships with U.S. and overseas partner organizations, as applicable.
   c) Participate in regular program reviews with the ECA Program Officer (in person or by telephone) to assess program implementation and identify matters of concern. The award recipient should provide the ECA Program Officer brief monthly email updates outlining general programmatic activities conducted during the past month and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted the following month.
   d) Prepare and share program and/or alumnae highlights in a timely fashion with the ECA Program Officer and relevant U.S. embassies.
   e) Submit proposed changes to staffing plans and/or key personnel to the ECA Program and Grants Officers for approval.
   f) Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from the ECA Program Office.
   g) Inform, and consult with, ECA about any program or participant problems, emergencies, or other issues, as well as the progress of necessary corrective action.

Please note: In a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. U.S. Department of State activities and responsibilities for all program options listed in this document are as follows:

The Department's activities and responsibilities for the TechGirls Program are as follows:
1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
2) Approve the final candidate selections and proposed alternates.
3) Provide the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan for foreign participants. [The award recipient will enroll participants in ASPE.]
4) Issue J-1 visas to approved visa applicants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program. [The award recipient will complete the DS-2019 process.]
5) Approve participants' international flight itineraries prior to purchase by the award recipient.
6) Approve all flight chaperones identified by the award recipient. [U.S. embassies and the ECA Program Office can provide suggestions for flight chaperones, if needed.]
7) Facilitate interaction within the U.S. Department of State, including ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas embassies and consulates.

8) Arrange meetings with U.S. Department of State officials in Washington, D.C.
9) Review and approve all printed or web-based program materials, including applications, publicity materials, and the final calendar of exchange activities.
10) Monitor and evaluate the program through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits, as necessary.
11) Oversee pre- and post-exchange activities in each country, in collaboration with the U.S. award recipient.
12) Perform an annual performance evaluation/review of the primary award recipient to ensure program goals are being met. Make recommendations for changes or replacement of sub-award partners when program goals are not being sufficiently met. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all Non-Competitive Continuation years.

U.S. Embassy-Specific Involvement: In collaboration with the U.S. award recipient and ECA Program Officer, participating U.S. embassies will: 1) review public-facing program materials; 2) review and approve the award recipient's proposed recruitment and selection strategies; 3) interview semi-finalists after initial screening by the award recipient, and nominate TechGirls finalists and alternates (to be approved by ECA); 4) facilitate visa interview appointments, as needed; 5) participate in pre-departure orientations and planned alumnae activities, if available; 6) provide country-specific information and guidance to award recipient, as necessary; 7) conduct post-exchange debriefs with participants to learn about their experiences and impressions, as feasible; and 8) assist in integrating TechGirls alumnae into the broader ECA alumni network in their home countries.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES
The section below include additional detail/information on required program elements.

Partner Organizations and/or Affiliates:
While not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to identify partner(s) in the participating countries or regions (i.e. branch offices and/or consultants or affiliates) that could assist with, and facilitate, some of the in-country aspects of the program including participant recruitment, in-country travel, pre-departure orientations, and follow-on activities.

This capacity may take the form of a branch office of the U.S. applicant organization, a non-governmental partner organization, or other affiliates/consultants with demonstrated experience in implementing educational exchanges. The award recipient will be responsible for its partners' activities under the cooperative agreement, both programmatically and financially. All applicants should identify their representation in the partner countries, describe their in-country partner's responsibilities and qualifications, and provide a signed letter of commitment from the partner(s), where applicable. The cooperative agreement requires that the award recipient (and its partners) be able to manage the program activities in partner countries in their entirety, with little reliance on the embassy staff for support.

Participants: The selected participants will be high school girls, ages 15 to 17 years old (at the start of the planned U.S.-based exchange), who already have a demonstrated aptitude and a serious interest in technology, engineering, and/or math in their academic studies. Participants must be fluent in English in order to actively participate in all exchange activities and understand some technical vocabulary and concepts.

Ideal candidates will exhibit enthusiasm and intent to pursue continued studies and possibly a future career in applied technology. A candidate's skill and interest in technology may be assessed through her previous work on technology-focused projects, involvement in technology clubs at school or other technology camps, and/or active participation in relevant class work. Candidates also must demonstrate a general knowledge or understanding of key technology-focused topics such as coding, web design and development, and/or mobile communications technology and applications.

The Bureau anticipates that approximately three (3) foreign participants will be selected from each participating country, and approximately 25-30 peers from the United States who are of the same age range and share similar interests in the field of technology.

Eligible regions/countries and territories include:
- **Sub-Saharan Africa (AF) –** Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe
- **East Asia and Pacific (EAP) –** Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, Taiwan, and Vietnam
- **Europe and Eurasia (EUR) –** Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Turkey
- **Middle East and North Africa (NEA) –** Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, and Tunisia
- **South and Central Asia (SCA) –** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- **Western Hemisphere (WHA) –** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Suriname

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Additionally, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust countries and/or regions should conditions change in a partner country and/or if other countries are identified as alternatives to respond to Department priorities.

Recruitment and Selection: The applicant organization must design and present a comprehensive plan to recruit qualified applicants that represent the geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic/racial diversity of the partner countries. To reach beyond the elite, particular emphasis should be placed on selecting participants from underserved or disadvantaged populations, including public high schools.

All candidates will be interviewed by U.S. embassy staff prior to their selection. The interview process will allow U.S. embassy staff to evaluate the candidates' language skills, personalities, and overall interest and prior experience in the technology field.

Strategies and plans for participant recruitment and selection, including interviews, should be closely coordinated with, and approved by, the ECA Program Office and U.S. embassies to ensure that these processes are conducted fairly, efficiently, and reach target audiences.

Foreign program candidates who have not previously traveled to the United States, especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program, should be given preference during program selection. Once the cooperative agreement is awarded, the award recipient should consult with the ECA Program Office and embassy staff in the partner countries to review its recruitment plans in detail, identify any specific selection criteria, and assess the screening and selection process.

Recruitment must include a web-based application process, with alternate methods available for those who do not have consistent or reliable access to the Internet.

Orientations:
Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO): The award recipient, in consultation and coordination with its in-country partners (where applicable) and U.S. embassies, will design and conduct a pre-departure orientation(s), either in-person or virtually, for participants and their parents/guardians prior to the participants' departure to the United States. The PDO should include a general political, historical, educational, and cultural introduction to the United States; information on key program objectives, concepts, themes, and expectations; and travel, lodging and other logistical matters. All participants must participate in the PDO and receive programmatic information in advance of their travel.

Plans to offer participants structured opportunities to establish and foster ongoing collaboration prior to the exchange, either at the PDO or earlier, are strongly encouraged. Opportunities may be conducted virtually.

U.S. embassy staff should be invite to participate in the PDO and engage with participants to the greatest extent possible so that participants are fully cognizant of the U.S. Government's (ECA and participant embassies) support of the program.

Flight chaperones should be required to attend part (or all) of the PDO so that they will be prepared to assist participants with any concerns or questions during their travel to/from the United States. Their attendance also will give parents/guardians the opportunity to meet chaperones in-person. Once chaperones are selected (and approved by ECA and U.S. embassies), the award recipient should plan to introduce them to the participants and their parents/guardians in advance of the PDO in order to build familiarity and trust before the exchange.

The award recipient will conduct a separate pre-exchange orientation for American participants and their parents/guardians to review program goals and expectations, and to introduce them to the cultures and sensitivities of the international participants. The pre-exchange orientation for Americans may be held in person or virtually. All participants must participate in the orientation.

Welcome Orientation: The award recipient will conduct a welcome orientation for the American and foreign TechGirls participants at the start of the U.S.-based exchange to review program goals, objectives, and expectations, and to prepare them for the activities ahead. The orientation should include team-building activities and sessions on cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

Flight Chaperones: To ensure the participants' safety and ease parental concerns, the award recipient, in consultation with the ECA Program Office and U.S. embassies, will identify adult flight chaperones (aged 25 years or older) in each country to travel with the participants on international flights from their home countries to the site of activity in the United States. Similar arrangements will be made for the participants' return travel. Once in the United States, the participants will be met and supervised for the duration of the U.S. exchange by award recipient staff.

ECA strongly encourages the award recipient to select ECA program alumnae (particularly TechWomen and age-eligible TechGirls alumnae) to serve in the role of flight chaperones to the greatest extent possible as a way to establish and foster connections/relationships between alumni, thus strengthening the ECA alumni network.

Given the level of interest expressed in previous years, flight chaperones should be competitively selected through a brief application and interview process. To be eligible for this opportunity, candidates, particularly ECA program alumni candidates, should commit in writing to not only fulfilling the travel-related responsibilities outlined below, but to serving as a mentor/resource to the TechGirls participants following the exchange, thereby sustaining the relationships/connections. The flight chaperones should express their willingness and ability to support the TechGirls post-exchange by providing consultation, resources, and/or advice on follow-on projects and connecting them to larger alumni or professional networks in their home countries to further the impact on their educational and career trajectories.

The flight chaperone should:
- Be an experienced traveler
- Be a responsible individual whom the parents will trust
- Be able to speak English well
- Be able to calmly and effectively handle challenging situations (such as canceled flights) and keep the participants calm

Responsibilities include:

- Guiding participants through the various airports
- Keeping track of the participants at all times during travel
- Answering participant questions
- Managing any flight delays and/or re-bookings
- Providing assistance to the group as they pass through U.S. immigration and customs, and connecting them with program staff at the final U.S. destination

While selected flight chaperones will not have any role in the actual U.S-based exchange, the award recipient is encouraged to provide selected ECA alumni flight chaperones with opportunities to participate in orientation and closing workshop programming, where feasible (i.e. presentations by alumni about the U.S. program experiences, networking workshops, etc.), to maximize the benefit of this opportunity.

The ECA Program Office and U.S. embassies must approve all flight chaperones in advance. The award recipient should budget for all costs related to the flight chaperones' international and U.S. domestic travel, including per diem and lodging for the number of days deemed appropriate in the United States (typically two days).

Proposals should include a plan for identifying flight chaperones and handling their travel arrangements. The ECA Program Office and U.S. embassies may be able to assist in facilitating connections and contacts with alumni of other ECA programs, as needed.

Flight chaperones may be award recipient staff members, staff of local NGOs, educators and/or consultants in situations where ECA alumni are not available to fulfill this role.

International Travel and In-Country Domestic Travel: The applicant should detail in the proposal a plan for making the participants' international travel arrangements, in consultation with participating embassies, and include appropriate costs in the budget. The applicant also should present a detailed plan and budget for providing funds to participants to cover their required costs within their home countries such as passport fees, travel allowances, and domestic travel to the capital city for visa interviews, pre-departure orientations, and international departure, as needed.

Other Logistics: The award recipient will manage all logistical arrangements, including U.S. domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, group meals, and disbursement of pocket money.

U.S. Exchange Activities: The award recipient will design, plan, and implement four weeks of exchange activities that provide a creative and substantive program aimed at developing the participants' knowledge and skill base in the field of technology. Ideally, the technology camp component will be hosted on a university campus to provide participants with the opportunity to experience life on an American university campus. Exchange activities should focus primarily on practical experiences, hands-on classes, labs, small group work, and individual and/or team-

based projects.

The academic component of the exchange (technology camp) should provide participants with an overview and examination of technology related topics and engage them in in-depth, "how-to" lessons in areas of specific interest. Through interactive activities, participants will work towards the development of tangible product(s) that they may design together in small teams or individually, depending on participant interests and preferences. The camp should be complemented by mentoring experiences and job shadow opportunities. Additional activities may include site visits to technology companies, career readiness workshops (i.e. job fairs or resume building workshops), leadership and team-building exercises, and social, recreational, and cultural activities.

Applicants have the flexibility of structuring the camp and complementary activities in a manner they deem to be most beneficial and constructive for the participants. This may include scheduling mornings for the camp and afternoons for site visits and other activities, or implementing the camp for a defined period within the exchange and conducting complementary activities prior to and/or after the camp takes place.

While the program experience is intended to be intensive and immersive, daily activities should conclude at reasonable hours. It is important that the teenage participants be provided with ample opportunity within the schedule for downtime to reflect on program lessons and experiences, to connect with family and friends back home, and to spend unstructured time with TechGirls peers to form meaningful and lasting friendships that will continue after the program.

Potential topics to be covered during the exchange may include the following, in addition to others:
1) Web design and development
2) Programming in C++, Java and/or Python
3) Software applications
4) Computer network systems
5) Mobile communications technology and applications
6) Online game design and programming
7) 3D modeling
8) Robotics
9) Cloud computing
10) Social networking

Throughout the exchange, participants will engage in small group activities, in order to develop projects that are relevant to STEM fields and will produce tangible, presentable outcomes. They also will have time allotted to plan for follow-on activities. Participants will be required to participate in at least one community service activity, not necessarily technology focused, in order to expose them to volunteerism and community engagement in the United States.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included:
1) Trainings and workshops on action planning, project design and development

2) Leadership development with workshop trainers or organizations
3) Site visits to technology companies
4) Meetings with technology experts
5) Interactive computer labs and classes
6) Hack-a-thons
7) Career readiness workshops (i.e. job fairs or career building workshops),
8) Team building exercises related to developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
9) Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the program themes
10) Sports, drama, fine arts, musical and other extracurricular activities
11) Visits to historical sites and cultural sites

Applicants must include a short, substantive visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the program to allow participants to debrief U.S. Department of State representatives on their exchange experiences and individual or team projects, and engage in additional cultural and/or skill-building activities.

The program staff will host a closing workshop, or series of workshops, for participants prior to departure, which will focus on summarizing the experience and preparing for re-entry. The participants should be encouraged and assisted with developing projects and activities to implement on their return home. The ideas and plans should spring from the participants, but the project staff should be prepared to assist and direct the participants in developing these plans during the U.S.-based exchange. The final closing workshop should be held during the visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the program.

Mentoring Component: Applicants should build a structured mentoring component into their proposed program design. This component could involve matching TechGirls participants with American job shadow hosts (or other American technology experts they engage with in the United States), and/or alumni of ECA-sponsored programs (i.e. TechGirls, TechWomen, International Visitor Leadership Program, among others.) Mentorships should be formed based on the TechGirls overall interests. Mentors should commit to supporting the TechGirls with their follow-on projects post-exchange by providing advice and/or resources, as needed. Additionally, mentors must be willing and prepared to regularly connect with the TechGirls virtually or in-person (approximately once a month) after the exchange to discuss, and provide guidance on, professional development, higher education and/or career opportunities in the field, or other topics of the TechGirls' choosing. Mentors may be matched with more than one TechGirls participant, as feasible.

Job Shadow Component: Applicants should propose a job shadow component in their program design in order to give the TechGirls participants first-hand knowledge of, and exposure to, a day in the life of a technology professional. The job shadow experience should be a *minimum of two days* and should afford participants opportunities to engage in staff meetings, special projects, or other meaningful experiences. Job shadow host institutions may include U.S. companies, NGOs,

governmental agencies, or a combination thereof. Regardless of the type of institutions proposed, the job shadow hosts must have an organizational focus on technology (STEM) or include specific offices or divisions that do. Effort should be made to place TechGirls at job shadow institutions that do work in fields that closely align with their specific interests (i.e. information technology, web design and development, mobile application development, software engineering, cyber security, data management, among others) to ensure that the experience is as impactful and beneficial as possible. More than one participant may be placed at an institution, as appropriate.

Activity Sites: The proposed exchange(s) activities should not be held in more than two locations (in addition to Washington, D.C.) so that the participants have time to familiarize themselves with a community. Applicant organizations should describe the rationale for their location selections. The Bureau encourages applicants to consider proximity to sites of historical or cultural interest, access to organizations that can conduct appropriate workshops, and representation of the diversity of the United States.

Accommodations: The award recipient will arrange housing for the participants in a dormitory, hotel, homestay, or some combination thereof and provide adequate staff to monitor the housing arrangement throughout the exchange. All-female floors should be arranged for dormitory stays, where feasible.

To maximize the foreign participants' interaction with their American peers, the award recipient should pair them with American roommates in all housing accommodations (dormitory arrangements, hotels, etc.).

Note: The award recipient should be aware of, and make an effort to accommodate, participants' dietary and religious needs, which may include making halal meal options available and scheduling time within the program agenda for daily prayer and any other religious observances.

Homestays: The Bureau encourages placing participants in homestays for a portion of the program (one-weekend, at minimum) to provide them with greater exposure to American culture and day-to-day living, and to foster the development of lasting relationships with American families.

The award recipient must present a clear and careful recruitment, screening, and selection process for host families, and 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. 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. Host families must be properly screened and briefed and 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 of age or older, regardless of the length of the homestay (e.g. one night or more). If homestays are not proposed for a significant portion of the exchange, at a minimum, home hospitality arrangements should include at least one weekend stay (Friday night – Sunday night) with a local American family.

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. Host families may not receive any compensation, monetary or otherwise, for hosting.

Participant Monitoring: The award recipient will develop and implement a comprehensive plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange and to create opportunities for participants to share potential issues and resolve them promptly. The award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision to ensure that the program participants have safe and pedagogically rich programs. Staff will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed.

Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff. Award recipients must immediately inform ECA and relevant U.S. embassies about any significant health or safety issues affecting program participants as they arise. Participants must be given emergency contact information/cards prior to their arrival in the United States.

Young women in the same or related fields should be recruited to serve as mentors and role models for the girls throughout the program. These mentors, along with the staff, will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. A detailed monitoring plan should be included in the proposal submission.

Follow-on Activities: The award recipient will design activities for TechGirls alumnae, such as mini-grants or online collaborative projects, and support and mentor the youth participants in their follow-on project implementation. This may include providing materials, serving as a resource or advisor, and collaborating with the relevant U.S. embassies to help nurture on-going contact with the participants.

The award recipient will assist participants throughout the course of the exchange in brainstorming and planning creative ways to address project themes as a means to amplify program impact upon their return home. Examples of follow-on activities may include alumnae conducting presentations or workshops that share their U.S. experiences and newly acquired knowledge and skills with others in their schools or communities, or engaging younger girls in interactive, technology-focused activities aimed at sparking their interest in the field.

The award recipient must keep U.S. embassies and the ECA Program Officer informed and updated on the plans for, and progress of, the participants' follow-on projects and any other follow-on activities as they unfold. Embassy staff should be provided with opportunities to attend/participate in follow-on activities when possible.

To amplify program impact, proposals should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, and ensure that alumnae effectively carry out their follow-on projects and remain engaged in activities, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through peers. Alumni programming in the form of seminars, networking events, newsletters, and online platforms serves to maximize and extend the exchange program's benefits. Follow-on plans should take into account that internet access may be limited in some areas. Applicants may propose overseas visits by project staff, trainers, or educators to partner countries to further the training started during the exchange. Structured alumnae reunions or gatherings also may be incorporated into follow-on activities.

Applicants should incorporate ECA alumni initiatives into their plans and communications for alumni programming, including, but not limited to, the online community on the International Exchange Alumni website (alumni.state.gov) and other exchange alumni opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State, such as the [Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) grants](#) or U.S. embassy hosted events. It is important that all alumni programs continue to strengthen a sense of identity with the U.S. government, and the applicants should follow ECA communications guidance for crediting the U.S. Department of State.

All alumnae contact information gathered by the award recipient on behalf of this program must be made available to the Department of State. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional guidance.

Communications Strategy: Successful proposals will present a communications plan for keeping ECA and participating U.S. embassies informed of program progress, including programmatic and/or participant concerns/issues, as well as of alumnae activities and success stories. The award recipient should communicate and consult with embassy Public Affairs Section staff prior to organizing in-person or virtual alumnae events to learn of any current on-the-ground cultural, political, or security considerations/sensitivities, and to offer opportunities for participation, when and where feasible. Additionally, the award recipient should be prepared to provide the ECA Program Officer and U.S. embassies with detailed summaries of alumni activities/events in a timely fashion (no later than two weeks) following a scheduled activity. Summaries should include the Who, What, Where, When and Why details, as well as highlight the specific outcomes and notable successes from the activities/events.

Social Media and Website: The award recipient will establish and maintain a web presence that will provide current information about the program and its alumnae. 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.

Evaluation: See section D.3h. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of the NOFO solicitation for more information.

Other notes: The award recipient is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. The award 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 ECA approval of any significant program changes in advance of 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 applicant organization and participating institutions
2) Beginning and ending dates of the program
3) Proposed themes and any relevant subthemes
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 (foreign and American)
   b) Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
   c) Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
   d) Fields covered
   e) Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative (20 pages)
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 (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits): Describe the project objectives and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire.

2) Participating Organizations: Identify critical partner organizations (and/or consultants) for the program, their roles, and the reasons for including them. Applicants also must describe their working relationship with the partner organization(s) and detail the division of program responsibilities between the award recipient and the partner organization(s). Applicants should also indicate how they will monitor the performance of their overseas partner(s), where applicable.

3) Recruitment, Screening, and Selection: Describe coordination with relevant local partners and U.S. embassies to conduct open recruitment and competitive selection of a diverse group of international participants from the partner country. Describe plans for the development and rollout of an online application for foreign participants and program as

well as plans for the initial screening of applications and the sharing of semi-finalist lists with the ECA Program Officer and embassy staff. A detailed description of the recruitment and selection processes for American participants must be provided.

4) Program Activities: Describe the components of the exchange and how they relate to project themes, including program planning, orientations, the technology camp, educational and cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, a visit to Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the exchange, and a closing session. A detailed outline of the four-week exchange must be included as an appendix. Describe support for follow-on activities.

5) Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics: Applicants must describe how they will arrange and manage in-country (overseas) and U.S. domestic travel arrangements for participants; international travel (in compliance with the Fly America Act); flight chaperone arrangements; homestays (be specific about the recruitment, screening, and monitoring processes); dormitory, hotel, and/or other housing accommodations; ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and other relevant administrative matters.

6) Participant Monitoring: Describe a plan to assure the well-being, safety, and security of program participants during all stages of the program. A competitive monitoring plan should be comprehensive and 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; and
   e) A detailed emergency action plan.

7) Program Monitoring: In the submitted proposal, applicants should include a plan describing how the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported.

8) Diversity: Explain how the program managers will pro-actively support diversity in participant selection, program design and 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.

9) Institutional Capacity and Project Management: Outline the capacity to conduct programs of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: a) educational and thematic programs, b) age-appropriate programming for youth, and c) any previous work in the relevant program regions. Describe the program staffing (individuals by name and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. If applicable, include this information for primary partner organizations as well.

10) <u>Follow-on Activities</u>: Describe a plan to provide follow-on activities to the U.S-based project.

11) <u>Work Plan/Schedule</u>: 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.

12) <u>Non Competitive Continuation</u>: Applicants should provide a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus one Non-Competitive Continuation year, pending successful program performance and the availability of funds.

Additional Information to be Submitted:

1) <u>Detailed Budget</u>
The level of funding available for the FY 2021 base year of the program is approximately $1,660,000, which will support one cooperative agreement (one or two U.S.-based exchange(s) for a total of approximately 111 competitively selected foreign secondary school girls and approximately 25-30 American peers.)

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

The available funding may be used to 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 <u>explanatory budget narrative also must be included</u>.

Suggested program costs include, <u>but are not limited to</u>, the following:
o   Staff travel
o   Application and educational materials
o   Participant travel (international airfare, domestic travel, ground transportation within the United States, passport and visa fees). This should include travel expenses for American participants.
o   Flight chaperone travel expenses
o   Orientations
o   Technology camp
o   Lodging, when not in homestays
o   Food (primarily group meals)
o   Follow-on activities (including alumni events/activities that bring TechGirls together with ECA program alumnae, including TechWomen alumnae, where applicable, for networking and mentorships)
o   Program evaluation

o   Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
o   Costs related to the development of an online application system
o   Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

IMPORTANT: Stipends for homestays or for host families **are not** allowed.

Significant cost-sharing is encouraged and will enhance the proposal. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau 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 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.

Please note that there are no fees for the J-1 visas that foreign participants will use to enter the United States. Applicants should budget for foreign program participants to travel to the applicable U.S. embassy for visa interviews and should budget to cover the cost of participants' passports, if necessary.

The award recipient should be prepared to provide funds to participants to cover costs for their domestic expenses within their countries, such travel allowances, and inter-country travel to the capital city for visa interviews, pre-departure orientation, and/or international departure, as needed.

Exchange participants will be enrolled by the awardee in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). This cost of the ASPE coverage does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com.

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

2)   Schedule of exchange activities

3)   Letters of commitment/endorsement
Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations and those 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 single resume**

should exceed two pages.

5)   Attachments/appendices

Please limit those materials essential for understanding the proposed program, such as a draft schedule(s) or evaluation questionnaires, to no more than 20 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)

IV. OTHER AWARD INFORMATION

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 Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at http://J1visa.state.gov or from:

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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

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 or the proposal submission, please contact the Youth Programs Division program officer Sarah Shields, e-mail address: ShieldsSD@state.gov.