

Department of State

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

(NOFO): FY 2022 Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0008403

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.009

Key Date/Application Deadline: November 22, 2021

Executive Summary: The Study of the U.S. Branch (ECA/A/E/USS), Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), invites proposal submissions from accredited U.S. post-secondary education institutions, including Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); community colleges, liberal arts colleges, public and private universities; and other U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions of a 501(c)3 organization (see section C. Eligibility Information) for the design and implementation of the new Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative to take place over six weeks (inclusive of travel days), virtually and in-person, beginning in summer 2022. The Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative will include four components: a) a one-week virtual program component; b.) a two-week academic residency in the United States; c) a two-week experiential learning program in India; and d) a multi-day closing forum. See details in section A. Program Description.

The Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative (Exchange) aims to inspire young leaders from the United States and India to work together to advance civil rights, social justice, and inclusion locally, nationally, and globally by exploring the history and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Exchange will seek to develop participants' leadership skills and equip them with the tools and networks to support these endeavors. Approximately 20 undergraduate and graduate students ages 18-25, ten (10) from the United States and ten (10) from India, will participate in the program. The program will draw on the long history of friendship and shared interests between the United States and India, and will provide participants with opportunities for interaction with diverse groups of Americans and Indians. The Exchange will also include opportunities for continued follow-on engagement once participants return to their respective countries. More information on the Exchange components and themes can be found in section A. Program Description.

The award recipient will be responsible for planning, overseeing, and implementing all components of the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative, including the oversight and management of any subaward recipients, if applicable. ECA will only consider one proposal from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will only consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets; participant numbers; and program themes, components and formats, based on program needs and the availability of U.S. government funding.

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. Purpose: The Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative is a new program that honors the legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and draws on the long history of friendship and shared interests between the United States and India. Mahatma Gandhi dedicated his life to the peaceful empowerment of the people of India and to the end of colonial rule. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dedicated his life to social movements against segregation, discrimination, racial injustice, and poverty in the United States. After travelling to India in 1959, Dr. King effectively applied Gandhi’s principles to create positive social change through the American civil rights movement.

The ultimate goal of the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative is to inspire and develop a network of aspiring young civic leaders from the United States and India to work together to advance civil rights, social justice, and inclusion locally, nationally, and internationally by exploring the history and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Exchange will seek to develop participants’ leadership skills and equip them with the tools and networks to support these endeavors. The Exchange aims to provide 10 U.S. and 10 Indian undergraduate and graduate students with a deep understanding of the practice of peace, nonviolence, and conflict resolution. The program will bring all 20 participants together online and in-person in the United States, and in India for an exploration of relevant themes by examining both countries’ historical and contemporary contexts through academic sessions, leadership development workshops, skills-building exercises, educational travel, site visits, and opportunities to interact with diverse communities in each country.

A.2. Overview: The Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative should be approximately six weeks in length (inclusive of travel days); participants should begin the Exchange with a one-week virtual program component that will set the foundation and prepare participants for a four-week academic and experiential program that includes approximately two weeks in the United States and two weeks in India. The U.S.-based component should consist of a rigorous academic residency that should preferably take place at an Historically Black College and University

(HBCU) campus and should be complemented by off-campus site visits that will reinforce academic sessions. The India-based experiential learning component should take place directly before or after the U.S.-based academic residency and should include educational travel to relevant communities and historical sites around India that highlight and explore the program theme. The Exchange should also include a multi-day closing forum that connects Exchange participants with experts, professionals, and civic leaders from the United States and India. This event should be planned in coordination with the ECA program office and the U.S. Embassy in India.

The Exchange should include academic sessions, group discussions, and experiential learning activities that focus on relevant topics and include opportunities to practice leadership, team building, collective problem-solving, effective communication, and management skills. Therefore, participants should gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The Exchange should foster an inclusive environment by incorporating speakers from diverse backgrounds and by encouraging open and collaborative discussions.

In addition, all components of the Exchange should foster ECA's mission to promote mutual understanding between citizens of the United States and other countries. Thus, the program should include robust opportunities for participants to meet Americans and Indians from a variety of backgrounds and to engage with diverse communities to share their experiences, culture, and home life. **Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for more information.**

ECA's goal is to conduct the inaugural Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative in person in summer 2022. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its current impact on travel and university operations, it is unclear when existing travel restrictions and health advisories will allow for in-person program activities to take place. As such, proposals should include language that demonstrates maximum flexibility, creativity, and rapid response capability for program planning and administration. Applicants should also ensure continuity of services should the current situation continue for an extended period of time. The applicant should present innovative options for virtual activities to augment, and/or substitute for, in-person engagement with all program stakeholders, if travel is not possible.

A.3. Exchange Theme: The Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative should provide approximately 20 undergraduate, graduate, and recently graduated students (ten from the United States and ten from India) with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and discuss a variety of topics related to the histories and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., particularly in their practice of peace, nonviolence, and reconciliation in championing civil rights. Topics may include, but are not limited to: civil rights movements; social justice; the roles of civic and government organizations in advancing human rights; the rights of minorities or historically disadvantaged groups, whether racial, ethnic, religious, or based on sexual orientation or gender identity; community building; resilience; diversity, equity, inclusion, and

accessibility; grassroots activism; women's issues; peaceful conflict resolution; reconciliation; and social change. Topics should be discussed from both historical and contemporary perspectives in the United States and India, individually and through a comparative lens. In addition to offering an academic exploration of the themes, the Exchange should include hands-on workshops and activities that allow participants to develop and apply new knowledge and skills as aspiring civic leaders while also enhancing participants' knowledge of U.S. and Indian history, culture, society, and institutions. As such, participants should be encouraged to develop innovative and practical plans to become more engaged citizens in their own communities. The Exchange should also include discussions on principles and values such as democracy, social inclusion, freedom of expression, equality, and diversity in U.S. and Indian culture and society.

A.4. Exchange Components: The Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative should comprise four major components. Each component should support the overall goals and objectives of the Exchange; address relevant topics; leverage local resources; and complement other program components to create a coherent, well-integrated exchange program. **Please refer to the attached Project, Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for more information about these components.**

A.4a. Virtual Program Component: The Exchange should include a virtual introductory program and orientation of approximately one week that offers both synchronous (live) and asynchronous elements for all U.S. and Indian participants. This virtual component may include, but is not limited to, a pre-program logistical orientation, an introduction to academic themes, leadership development sessions, ice breaker activities, and small group breakout discussions that could take place consecutively or in the weeks leading up to the in-person exchange in the United States and India.

A.4b. U.S. Academic Residency Component: The Exchange should include an academic residency of approximately two weeks hosted on an HBCU campus in the United States. The residency should be a custom-designed and well-integrated academic program that imaginatively combines interactive academic and discussion sessions, readings, and opportunities for leadership development into a substantive, cohesive, and coherent program. Off-campus site visits to historical and cultural points of interest should be integrated into the program to complement the residency's classroom work and expose participants to communities beyond the host campus.

A.4c. India Experiential Learning Component: The Exchange should include approximately two weeks in India for an experiential learning component to focus on activities in the field that contribute to participants' understanding and exploration of the program's themes. The India-based program should include, but is not limited to, hands-on workshops and interactive discussions, site visits, educational travel, and community engagement.

The U.S. academic residency and the India experiential learning components should be complementary, and together should provide participants with a cohesive and substantive four-week in-person exchange that supports the overall goals and objectives of the program.

A.4d. Closing Educational Forum: The Exchange should include a multi-day educational closing forum that will convene Indian and U.S. participants with a diverse group of scholars, practitioners, community leaders, government officials, and others to further explore and apply the philosophies of Gandhi and King to relevant current issues. The forum should offer opportunities for networking, participant presentations, remarks from expert speakers, panels and/or roundtables, and a reception, among other engaging and interactive sessions and workshops. The closing forum may include both virtual and in-person components.

A.5. Program Administration: ECA is seeking detailed proposals from accredited U.S. post-secondary higher education institutions including Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), community colleges, liberal arts colleges, public and private universities and other U.S. public and private non-profit academic organizations meeting the provisions of a 501(c)3 organization and the other eligibility requirements outlined in section C. Eligibility Information. ECA intends to issue one cooperative agreement for the administration and implementation of the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative. The recipient may propose to administer the U.S. academic residency and India experiential learning component through a sub-award to a U.S. post-secondary higher education institution and/or a sub-award to an institution in India. The recipient may also propose to implement all components of the Exchange. **ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets; participant numbers; and program themes, components and formats, based on program needs and the availability of U.S. government funding.**

A.6. Participants: Participants will be undergraduate, graduate, or recent graduates ages 18-25 with a demonstrated interest in the Exchange theme. The twenty participants will be recruited from historically underserved and disadvantaged groups. Participants will have a record of academic achievement and demonstrated leadership experience in their communities. Approximately ten participants will come from the United States and ten from India. The U.S. Embassy in India will take the lead on the recruitment of qualified candidates from India. The award recipient will take the lead in the recruitment of qualified candidates from the United States. ECA will approve the final participant selection decisions. Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for more information on participants.

A.7. Program Guidelines: The award recipient is responsible for the conception, structure, and monitoring of all aspects of the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative. Proposals must provide a detailed and comprehensive narrative describing the goals and objectives of the entire project. The proposal should also include an overall description as well as draft academic syllabus and calendar demonstrating the proposed components for the program and how they

relate to the overall goals of the entire project. The proposal should include descriptions of pre-departure preparation and logistics; plans for monitoring and communicating with sub-recipients (if applicable); media and outreach plans; and follow-on activities. In addition, the proposal should demonstrate the applicant's thematic expertise and experience in both the United States and India. The U.S. academic residency should preferably take place at an HBCU.

The recipient will serve as the lead administrator and will be responsible for the oversight of all aspects of this project, including: a virtual program component, a U.S. academic residency, an India experiential learning component, and a multi-day closing forum. Additionally, the proposal should describe the applicant's proposed strategy for recruiting U.S. participants and managing a transparent selection process. Overall, proposals will be reviewed on the basis of their responsiveness to NOFO criteria listed in Section E.1. Review Criteria. The POGI provides program-specific guidelines that all proposals must address fully.

A.8. Substantial Involvement: In a cooperative agreement, the Study of the U.S. Branch (ECA/A/E/USS) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The Branch may request that the award recipient make modifications to any of the four program components. The award recipient will be required to obtain approval of significant program changes in advance of their implementation. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and the recipient are outlined in the POGI.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A.8. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2022

Approximate Total Funding: \$400,000, pending availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$400,000, pending availability of funds.

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$400,000 for FY 2022 base year

Anticipated Award Date: February 18, 2022, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2025

Additional Information: The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years before openly competing it again.

C. Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D.3a. and D.3c. below).

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements: The following additional eligibility requirements apply to this NOFO announcement:

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 \$400,000 per year to support all 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.) All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

c.) Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will only consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

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:

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. Solicitation Package Location: 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.2. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3o. Application Deadline and Method of Submission section below.

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

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

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.3d. 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://afsism.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. 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. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the 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.

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. The Branch requires organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to implement an approximately one-week virtual program component before the in-person exchange. ECA strongly suggests additional virtual exchange components after the physical exchange to complement the in-person experience. 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 the U.S. Embassy in India.

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, a detailed budget, and a budget narrative. 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:

- Staff salaries and benefits. Each staff person must be listed separately. Provide the percentage of time spent on the program.
- Other direct expenses
- Indirect expenses
- Exchange costs including, but not limited to, honoraria for speakers, educational materials, lodging, room rental(s), welcome and farewell events, and participant admissions for all 20 participants;
- Sub-award(s), if applicable;
- Travel costs including, but not limited to, round trip international airfare, visa travel, ground transportation, domestic travel, and other transit costs for all 20 participants;
- Per participant allowances including baggage allowance, travel allowance, book and cultural allowance, and meals and incidentals for all 20 participants;
- Educational forum;
- Follow-on activities;
- Tax withholding;
- Wire transfer fees;
- Consultant fees;
- Web hosting;
- Communications (e.g. participant cell phones or SIM cards);
- Medical contingency;
- Health benefits, as necessary;
- Medical costs related to the pandemic including, but not limited to, personal protective equipment (PPE), medically required quarantine (outside of medical facilities covered under health benefits program);
- Reasonable accommodations; and
- Other cost categories as necessary

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Monday, November 22, 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.3o. 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, D.C., 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. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality and clearly demonstrate how the program will meet the objectives laid out in this solicitation. A detailed staff work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Activities should be reasonable, feasible, and form a coherent and substantive program for participants. Competitive proposals will clearly promote ECA's mission: to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations.

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

3. 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 after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

4. Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing: The overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary

and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

5. Institution's Record/Ability: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs (past exchange programs need not have been ECA funded). The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by ECA Grants staff. ECA will consider the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be fully qualified to achieve the project's goals.

6. Follow-on Activities: Proposals should discuss provisions made for follow-up with returned participants as a means of establishing longer-term individual and institutional linkages. Proposals also should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without ECA support) ensuring that ECA supported programs are not isolated events. Please refer to the POGI for additional information on follow-on activities.

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.

F.4. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S.

activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Program Officer Tania Jazyuka, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, ECA/A/E/USS, SA-5, 4th Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, tel: (202) 230-9898, email: JazyukaT@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. ECA 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

September 22, 2021