Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational Cultural Affairs announces the Creative Arts Exchange (CAE) open competition for up to three cooperative agreements to support thematic projects in film, music, and musical collaboration as civic engagement. Thematic projects under the Creative Arts Exchange (CAE) are arts-based, international people-to-people exchanges that create partnerships through artistic collaboration and professional development activities, encourage inclusive economic opportunities, demonstrate the power of free expression to strengthen democratic values, and support U.S. Department of State foreign policy objectives. Eligible themes and/or artistic genres under the CAE vary and are determined based on Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) strategic priorities.

In FY 2023, CAE will focus on the following themes:

- Theme One: Film (American Film Showcase)
- Theme Two: Music (American Music Abroad)
- Theme Three: Musical Collaboration as Civic Engagement (OneBeat)

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.

It is the Bureau’s intent to award three cooperative agreements for an estimated total amount of $7,804,000. Please see section B.) Federal Award Information, below for additional details.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Authority

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.

**Purpose:** Cultural diplomacy enhances cross-cultural understanding and opens new avenues of dialogue and collaboration between individuals and nations. The Cultural Programs Division in the Office of Citizen Exchanges conducts global cultural exchanges with diverse artists and arts experts designed to engage communities at home and abroad; educate and share cultural and professional expertise; and elevate voices of emerging and established cultural leaders to build inclusive professional and social networks that position the United States as a partner for peace and prosperity. The goals of the CAE are to:

- Foster mutual understanding and deepen trust between the people of the U.S. and abroad to counter negative stereotypes and advance safety and security;
- Advance and complement U.S. foreign policy objectives;
- Build the capacity of creative leaders and institutions to develop new skills, partnerships, and opportunities, which promote creative industries and entrepreneurship;
- Advance America’s global competitiveness and create networks and opportunities for artists and institutions that endure beyond the program duration;
- Provide unique opportunities for artistic collaboration and engagement between American artists, foreign artists, and audiences;
- Convey the diversity and high artistic merit of the arts in the U.S. and increase awareness and understanding of U.S. art, culture, values, and society among international participants and audiences; and
- Foster opportunities for educational outreach and community engagement with diverse and underserved communities, especially youth (ages 12-25), women, and persons with disabilities.
- Support and increase opportunities for diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

**Theme 1: Film (American Film Showcase)**

The Bureau intends to award one Cooperative Agreement for approximately **$3,550,000**, to fund the FY 2023 American Film Showcase (AFS), a program which sends approximately 70-100 American envoys to approximately 35-50 ECA-designated countries worldwide to showcase approximately 35-45 relevant feature length and short documentaries, independent narrative films, television, and digital episodic programs organized by strategic themes to offer a broad overview of the best in current American independent filmmaking and content creation. Additionally, AFS will bring approximately 20-30 international participants to the United States for program activities. The program broadly encompasses the visual media arts such as documentary, animated, and feature films, as well as television programs, gaming, and digital
content. Envoys will screen and discuss their films and to conduct lectures, workshops, and master classes on a variety of topics including, but not limited to, filmmaking, short-form media, storytelling, scriptwriting, cinematography, marketing, distribution and funding, animation techniques, computer animation, digital technology, cellphone and digital storytelling, other forms of emergent media, and the creative use of social media. AFS will also design programs for foreign content creators, including television writers/producers, filmmakers, or film/TV professionals to travel to the U.S. for engagement with the American entertainment industry, including, but not limited to, attending film festivals, workshops, meetings with industry leaders, and professional networking opportunities. AFS will continue to support professional development opportunities in the form of job shadows, short-form media workshops to take place in-country, regionally, and in the United States, and as well as to encourage more follow-on trips and alumni engagement.

The FY 2023 AFS will include $300,000 in distinct funds for the development and implementation of activities in support of Ukraine’s creative community and economy. Proposals should outline activities that engage professionals to include cinematographers, directors, editors, producers, writers, and media and creative organizations from Ukraine and from Central and Eastern Europe who are connected to or in support of Ukraine. Participants will come from Ukraine, Eastern and Central Europe, or be those actively engaged in support of Ukraine. Special consideration should be reserved for Ukrainian creatives. These funds will support approximately 20-30 international participants. Activities can include, but are not limited to, professional collaboration and mentoring opportunities, microgrants, and workshops, in order to bolster professional skills and strengthen regional networks. These activities can take place in Central and Eastern Europe and in the U.S.

In addition, the FY 2023 AFS will include $1,000,000 for the implementation of a programming initiative focused on the creative economy in Africa. In additional to its wider global engagement, AFS will offer focused programming in approximately four-to-six sub-Saharan African countries to support deeper engagement and enhance the creative economy sector in film and television through public diplomacy exchanges. This Africa-focused initiative seeks to elevate the creative and professional talent and wider entertainment industry and systems through holistic programmatic work that offers a whole of industry approach and supports professional pipelines. These funds will support approximately 40-60 participants.

**Theme 2: Music (American Music Abroad)**

The Bureau intends to award one Cooperative Agreement for approximately $1,840,000 to fund the FY2023 season of American Music Abroad (AMA). AMA showcases the excellence and diversity of America and American music to audiences abroad in a way that supports the foreign policy objectives of U.S. embassies. The program will tour 10-15 American
musical ensembles of three to five musicians (up to 70 participants) specializing in a wide variety of traditional U.S. musical forms, selected through open, U.S.-wide auditions, to approximately one-three countries each. Countries will be those of importance to the Department of State’s public diplomacy mission to build mutual understanding in the following world regions: Africa (AF), East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), the Middle East/ North Africa (NEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and/or Western Hemisphere (WHA). The AMA program is designed to reach a range of foreign audiences, including but not limited to fellow musicians, underserved populations, people with little or no exposure to American cultural performances, and youth. AMA artists connect with participants through concerts, collaborations, workshops, master classes, and jam sessions, and encourage sustained relationships and collaboration through post-tour follow-on activities. AMA also hosts one to two alumni-led academies annually with 20-40 foreign participants each to receive mentorship in industry business practices and production.

Theme 3: Musical Collaboration as Civic Engagement (OneBeat)

The Bureau intends to award one Cooperative Agreement for approximately $2,414,000 to fund the FY2023 cycle of OneBeat which will include virtual and in-person exchanges held in the United States and abroad, a micro-grant program and an alumni summit. OneBeat is a music-based initiative that will bring together up to 100 musicians (ages 19-35) from the United States and every world region to participate in multi-national musical collaborations, professional development workshops, youth educational classes, and public performances which engage diverse communities in the practice of musical collaboration as civic engagement. The collaborative music making activities will focus on key foreign policy priorities. Of the total award solicitation amount, $500,000 will be dedicated to support a three-to-four-day one-time alumni summit in the United States for up to 70 participants representing OneBeat alumni from every world region and the United States, private sector thought leaders, industry change makers, and NGOs dedicated to music as a social practice to share best practices, inspire artistic innovation, discover entrepreneurial opportunities, and position the United States as a key partner for peace and prosperity.

In a cooperative agreement, the Cultural Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/CU is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined in the attached POGI, which correspond to the relevant theme.

B. Federal Award Information

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement. ECA’s level of involvement in this program is listed under Substantial Involvement in the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI).

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2023

**Approximate Total Funding:** $7,804,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** Three
Approximate Average Award:

- Theme One: Film - $3,550,000 (American Film Showcase);
- Theme Two: Music - $1,840,000 (American Music Awards);
- Theme Three: Musical Collaboration as Civic Engagement - $2,414,000 (OneBeat)

Floor of Award Range: none

Ceiling of Award Range:

- Theme One: $3,550,000 (American Film Showcase);
- Theme Two: $1,840,000 (American Music Abroad);
- Theme Three: $2,414,000 (OneBeat)

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2023

Anticipated Project Completion Date:

- American Film Showcase: December 31, 2025
- American Music Abroad: December 31, 2025
- OneBeat: December 31, 2026

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

Pending successful implementation of the programs under each CAE theme and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew each 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 academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons, and other not-for-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.3. and D.5. 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 three awards all in excess of that amount. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.
b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI, 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, ECA 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, ECA 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 ECA'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.16. “Application Deadline and Method of Submission” section below.

D.3. **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](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](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html)

D.4. **Required Proposal Elements**
All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGi) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.5. **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](http://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.

D.6. 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.7. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic
All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State’s SAMS Domestic by accessing https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com and clicking the “create an account” link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State’s grants management system and is supported by the Department’s Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.8. Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa
ECA places critically important emphasis 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 Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA 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 Private Sector Exchange Designation
U.S. Department of State
SA-5, Floor C2, Room C2L13
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20522

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.9. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and Freedom and Democracy Guidelines
Pursuant to ECA’s authorizing legislation, “Diversity” should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, geographic location, education, income, socio-economic status, and other diversity dimensions, that may hinder inclusion. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility will enhance the program’s goals and objectives and the participants’ exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. 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. Please refer to the “Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility” review criterion of this document for more information on how this will be reviewed as a part of any application. Please also refer to the “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility” section in the “Proposal Submission Instructions” document for specific suggestions on incorporating DEIA into the 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," ECA "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.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
Distinct from grants or cooperative agreement monitoring and participant monitoring, performance monitoring is designed to assess progress against a program’s goals and objectives. A performance monitoring framework is vital to tracking the direction, pace, and magnitude of change that result from ECA programs.


For each theme in this proposal, ECA requires that the applicant include the MODE Framework objectives and indicators listed in the respective POGIs (note that, because not all MODE objectives and indicators are relevant for a program, the numbering will not be sequential). In addition to the ECA-required objectives and indicators, applicants may also select additional MODE Framework indicators (see the Indicator Book on the MODE Framework website), or design custom objectives and indicators that are specific to the proposed program and this proposal.

Please see the respective POGIs for Theme One: Film (American Film Showcase); Theme Two: Music (American Music Abroad); Theme Three: Musical Collaboration as Civic Engagement (OneBeat) for programmatic objectives, and indicators.

Performance Monitoring Plans
ECA recommends the use of a performance monitoring plan (PMP) to serve as the primary reference document for performance monitoring for this award. If used, the PMP is an important part of any proposal, as it outlines how the applicant plans to track progress towards the proposed program’s goals and objectives through indicators and corresponding data collection questions. A PMP document that includes all MODE Framework indicators is a part of this solicitation’s attachments. Specific instructions on how to modify the PMP to be responsive to this solicitation are included in that document. While ECA recommends the applicant use the PMP format provided, this is not a requirement. If a PMP is not included in the proposal, applicants should provide similar information to that found in the suggested PMP format, in a presentation of your choice. A training on how to complete a PMP is available here: [https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and](https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and). Successful PMPs (or similar documentation) should include the following:
• **Objectives.** Programmatic objectives are statements of the condition(s) that state what the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART; see the ECA Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Innovation (MELI) Unit’s pages on the ECA website for more information: [https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-evaluation-division/capacity-building](https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-evaluation-division/capacity-building)). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the MODE Framework, the Functional Bureau Strategy ([https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau](https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau)), or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives.

• **Indicators.** Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives and sub-objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations (meaning, breakdowns of the data by subgroups, such as gender or country; the PMP lists the demographic questions required to obtain the information necessary to report the disaggregations). Each indicator should also include a target number to be achieved. A target is a planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe.
  
  o If you do not use the PMP format provided, note that any performance monitoring reference document the applicant submits should include the information in the column headers (Indicator Name, Definition, Target, Survey Question, etc.) in the PMP attachment at a minimum.
  
  o In addition to those indicators outlined in above, the applicant may propose additional custom, program-specific indicators in the PMP (ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each custom programmatic objective).
  
  o During the period of performance of the award, the ECA program office may further revise, add, or remove indicators. Therefore, the applicant’s PMP and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established.

Award recipients are responsible for collecting indicator data only on participant outcomes during the period of performance of the award itself (see the PMP for guidelines as to when these data collection efforts should occur). ECA will measure outcomes of ECA participants at one, three, five, and 10 years after the exchange has ended to capture the long-term impact of ECA programming unless otherwise specified in the NOFO and/or POGI. In this instance, the recipient will be responsible for coordinating with ECA on any alumni surveys to de-duplicate questions and minimize potential survey fatigue.

Award recipients will be required to submit an upload of the raw data (in CSV format) along with the State Assistance Management System Domestic (SAMS-D RPM) reporting (see below). Regardless of the survey platform used, all MODE Framework survey questions outlined in the POGI are **required** (i.e., should be forced response); please see the Consent Language in the
MODE Framework Indicator Book for more information on how to convey this to participants/survey respondents.

**Program Performance M&E Narrative**
The applicant should include information within the program narrative section(s) of the proposal that outlines how the applicant intends to measure the indicators listed in the POGI. This will be separate from the PMP and should include but not be limited to:

- An overview of resources available to the applicant that outline the team structure and responsibilities surrounding performance monitoring.
- The mechanism(s) through which surveys and other data collection tools (if applicable) will be administered, including which platform will be used, and when and how surveys will be advertised to participants – detailing strategies to ensure adequate survey response rates ([https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/eca_eval_division_survey_response_rates.pdf](https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/eca_eval_division_survey_response_rates.pdf)), and to reduce selection and non-response bias.
- A brief explanation of data analysis and reporting procedures.
- An overview of a proposed learning plan and feedback loops to ensure that the Grant Officer (GO)/Grant Officer Representative (GOR) are informed on performance monitoring issues at regular intervals.

**SAMS-D RPM Reporting Requirements**
The SAMS-D is a database solution that serves as the official system of record for all U.S. Department of State and ECA awards. The Results Performance Monitoring (RPM) module within SAMS-D is an extension module that enables users to report performance monitoring data in the same system where they currently manage federal assistance actions. As part of ECA’s efforts to streamline data collection and management, the recipient(s) of this award will be required to input performance reporting data outlined in this solicitation into the SAMS-D RPM. The data stored in the SAMS-D RPM will provide ECA with a bureau-wide, uniform M&E reporting tool that is already linked with other elements of the awards familiar to existing awardees.

**D.11. Virtual Exchange Component**
When changing political, health, environmental, or other similar circumstances require a suspension or halt of in-person activities and where ECA determines that a virtual alternative is appropriate and viable, award recipients should demonstrate the ability and capacity to transition from in-person to virtual exchanges. Proposals should demonstrate the organization’s capacity to provide innovative options for virtual activities to substitute for in-person engagement for program participants. Organizations should consider how they will implement virtual exchange activities, given the potential limits to internet access from
participants in some locations and while continuing to advance foreign policy objectives and achieve lasting benefits for U.S. citizens and international participants.

In addition to planning for virtual exchange activities if in-person programming is prohibited, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage virtual programming technologies during or in addition to in-person programming. ECA encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s) 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. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project-by-project basis.

D.12. 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.13. Celebration of America’s Semiquincentennial
ECA is excited to play a key role in making the Semiquincentennial – commonly known as “America250” – a truly global celebration. As the period of performance for this award is scheduled to cover part or all of calendar year (CY) 2026, the applicant may wish to consider ways the program can celebrate America250. Any America250 focused activities or plans will be subject to ECA approval and direction, and changes may be requested by ECA. Use of any ECA-provided America250 brand elements will be subject to advance ECA approval and require adherence to Department of State and ECA guidelines for such branding.

D.14. 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.14.a. Allowable costs for the program include the following:
Please refer to the POGI for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.15. 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.16. Application Deadline and Method of Submission
Application Deadline Date: May 31, 2023
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.17. 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).

D.17.a. 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

D.17.b. 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

D.17.c. 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
D.17.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, DC, time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system and will be found 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

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.18. Intergovernmental Review of Applications
Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Review Process
ECA 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
ECA 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 ECA’s Grants Officer.

E.2. 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, program planning, and ability to achieve program objectives:
   Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to ECA's mission. A
detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and
logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines
described above. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should
clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

2. Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA):
   Proposals should show
   substantive support of ECA's policy on Diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will
   be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and program design, content
   and implementation, including individual participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is
   important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEIA plan and not simply express general
   support for the concept of DEIA. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will enhance the
program’s goals and objectives and the participants’ exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities.

3. **Institutional Capacity and Institution’s Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by ECA’s Grants Division. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

4. **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Proposals should include a fully developed performance M&E narrative and a PMP (or similar document) that includes the goals, objectives, and indicators used. Proposals will be evaluated for feasibility and alignment with the M&E section of this solicitation, including if: 1) M&E resources, monitoring mechanisms, and data analysis and reporting procedures are sufficiently detailed and realistic; 2) a realistic learning plan provides a strategy to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices in conjunction with the Grant Officer/GOR; and 3) a PMP (or other document that includes similar information) is complete, clear, and well-organized. All submitted PMPs and M&E narrative sections will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided information on the minimum data required as per the solicitation.

5. **Cost-effectiveness:** The budget should be supported in detail by the budget narrative and demonstrate that all proposed costs (including cost share, if included) are verifiable, allowable, reasonable, and allocable. The identified time, personnel, and other resources should be appropriate for the scope and scale of the proposed program activities and reflect the number of participants and program components proposed, support the project narrative, and be adequate to carry out the program effectively. All costs must show correct calculations to justify and assess how each line item is calculated, including any subawards.

6. **Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without ECA support) ensuring that ECA supported programs are not isolated events.

**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 ECA procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the ECA’s Grants Division. 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 applicable to all ECA agreements include:
- 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.
- U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

For a copy of the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, or to review other Department of State assistance information, please download from: https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/

F.3. Region and Topic Specific requirements

The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3.b. Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza Programming

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact the following for additional information:

Theme One: Film (American Film Showcase)
Catherine Collins, (202) 632 9301, email: CollinsCS@state.gov

Theme Two: Music (American Music Abroad)
Nora Gordon, (202) 826 4344, email: GordonNP@state.gov

Theme Three: Musical Collaboration as Civic Engagement (OneBeat)
Julia Gómez-Nelson, (202) 632 6409, email: NelsonJG2@state.gov
F.4. Reporting Requirements:

All reports must be submitted in a timely manner. 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 grant 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 monitoring and evaluation findings to ECA in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to ECA upon request.

F.5. 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 ECA 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 workdays prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about this announcement, contact:

**Theme One: Film (American Film Showcase)**  
Catherine Collins, (202) 632 9301, email: CollinsCS@state.gov

**Theme Two: Music (American Music Abroad)**  
Nora Gordon, (202) 826 4344, email: GordonNP@state.gov

**Theme Three: Musical Collaboration as Civic Engagement (OneBeat)**  
Julia Gómez-Nelson, (202) 632 6409, email: NelsonJG2@state.gov

U.S. Department of State, Cultural Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/CU, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

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 ECA representative. Explanatory information provided by ECA 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.

Scott Weinhold March 28, 2023
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State