**U.S. Department of State**
**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)**
**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2024 English Language Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Program
**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement
**Funding Opportunity Number:** SFOP0010149
**Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number:** 19.421
**Deadline for Applications:** February 5, 2024

**Executive Summary:**
The Office of English Language Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for proposals to advance ECA's objectives by improving English teaching capacity around the world and enhancing mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through exchanges of U.S. English language educators to all regions of the world.

The English Language (EL) Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Program builds bridges of mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through exchanges of U.S. English language educators.  Through U.S. embassy-designated projects, EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators share their expertise, build English teaching capacity abroad, hone their skills, and gain international experience.

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.

## 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.

### A.2. Purpose

The EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Program sends talented, highly qualified U.S. citizens in the area of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or a closely related field on approximately ten-month Fellow exchanges; or short-term (two weeks or more) Specialist assignments; or supports their participation in virtual projects at educational institutions in all regions of the world.   Projects are carried out with host-country ministries of education, universities, teacher-training institutions, NGOs, binational centers, and other English language teaching institutions.  Upon completing their projects, the U.S. participants share their experiences and acquired knowledge with their home communities and professional colleagues.

Through the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Program, students and teachers at foreign host institutions benefit from the U.S. participants' knowledge and perspectives on pedagogical issues and gain a better understanding of U.S. culture and values, representative government, sustainable economies, and media literacy.  EL Fellows and Specialists provide foreign educators, professionals, and students with the communication skills they need to participate in the global economy and to improve their access to accurate information and U.S. perspectives on a broad variety of issues.

**A.3. Program Specific Guidelines**
It is ECA's intent to award one Cooperative Agreement in the amount of $20,000,000, pending the availability of FY2024 funds, to administer the English Language Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Program. Administering this cooperative agreement entails overall program and financial management, conducting program outreach and participant recruitment, managing the selection and placement of candidates, logistical management and monitoring of the programs and supporting approximately 620 participants for the duration of their exchanges and project activity under the award.   The applicant should have the ability to carry out the responsibilities outlined in this NOFO and the necessary infrastructure and experience conducting academic exchange programs.  To administer ECA's premiere TESOL exchange program, it is critical that the applicant have knowledge of and experience in the TESOL field. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

> **Description of the English Language (EL) Fellow Program**
> Fellows are placed at academic institutions around the world for 10-month assignments.  Projects are typically 20 classroom contact hours per week plus 10 hours of preparation per week.  The remaining 10 hours a week can be dedicated to secondary duties.  Typical duties include teaching, teacher training, materials development, and extracurricular English language activities and programs.

EL Fellows are requested by U.S. embassies overseas that respond to an annual call for proposals from ECA.

### EL Fellow requirements:
- U.S. citizenship
- A master's degree or Ph.D. in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or a field related to English language teaching
- Minimum of five years of education experience, and three years full-time classroom TESOL teaching experience
- The ability and desire to live and take part in an intensive exchange overseas.
- Cross cultural sensitivity and respect for different cultures
- A demonstrated commitment to the field of English language teaching
- Personal qualities deemed necessary for a successful project, e.g., resourcefulness, determination, teamwork, adaptability, and flexibility

**Description of the English Language (EL) Specialist Program**

EL Specialists are highly experienced U.S. academics and professionals in the field of TESOL or related disciplines who participate in programs that contribute to the host country's capacity to teach English.  English Language Specialist projects can include in-country activities overseas, virtual activities, or a combination of both.  The length of in-country projects ranges from 10 working days to a maximum of three months.  The length of virtual-only projects varies – with no minimum or maximum number of hours.

EL Specialist assignments include international conference plenary presentations, conducting intensive teacher training workshops, advising ministries of education or other high-level educational consultations, developing university curricula, or other English capacity building activities.

The EL Specialist Program is an on-demand program, which means that proposals from U.S. embassies are accepted at any time throughout the year.

### EL Specialist requirements:
- U.S. citizenship
- A master's degree, Ph.D., or equivalent graduate-level degree in TESOL or a closely related field
- Minimum of 10 years conducting English language teacher training
- Cross cultural sensitivity and respect for different cultures
- A demonstrated commitment to the field of English language teaching
- Experience presenting at English language teaching conferences
- Publications of refereed presentations, journal articles, or books in the field of TESOL

**Description of the Virtual English Language Educator Program**

Virtual Educator assignments are completely online and part-time. Projects are a maximum of 10 contact hours per week plus preparation time, and project lengths range from a few weeks up to a semester. Typical duties include teaching, teacher training, and extracurricular English language activities and programs.

Virtual Educators are requested by U.S. embassies overseas on a rolling basis throughout the year.

***Virtual EL Educator requirements:***

- U.S. citizenship
- A master's degree or Ph.D. in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or a field related to English language teaching
- Minimum of five years of education experience, and three years full-time classroom TESOL teaching experience
- Cross cultural sensitivity and respect for different cultures
- A demonstrated commitment to the field of English language teaching
- Personal qualities deemed necessary for a successful project, e.g., resourcefulness, determination, teamwork, adaptability, and flexibility.

**A.4. Recipient Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Overall Program Management:
- Hire staff and consultants as needed.
- Manage budget and give regular updates to ECA/A/L.
- Organize in-person and virtual meetings with ECA/A/L.
- Collaborate with ECA/A/L in strategic planning and program direction.
2. Outreach and Recruitment:
- Creating and implementing a quarterly outreach plan for FY 2024 cycle (2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic years) in consultation with ECA, that addresses the five main goals of EL Fellow, Virtual Educator, and Specialist outreach as identified below and outlines measurable objectives and deliverables. This plan should be provided to ECA six weeks prior to the start of each quarter.
    - o Recruitment: Implementing the recruitment strategy for the FY 2024 cycle (2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic years) by conducting an extensive, comprehensive, and ongoing promotional campaign to recruit applicants who meet the eligibility and preferred qualifications for the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs.

- o Current participants: Engaging and providing support for current participants before they begin their projects and while on-assignment by offering opportunities to connect with the program and with other participants and alumni, thus adding continued value to their overall experience.
- o Alumni: Designing and developing an alumni strategy and conducting alumni events to build stronger relationships with the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator alumni community by engaging with them in both formal and informal opportunities to connect with, promote, and represent the English Language Programs. Creating a network of alumni volunteers for the program, including a specific strategy to incorporate alumni into recruitment for the program.
- o Raising the profile of the program: Conducting year-round promotional activities that increase awareness of the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs in the TESOL community. Cultivating relationships with TESOL institutions including universities, community colleges, Minority Serving Institutions, organizations, and professional associations to increase the visibility and awareness of the English Language Programs and its association with leaders in the field of English language education.
- o DEIA: Creating and implementing a diversity plan to recruit qualified candidates that represent the diversity of the United States, to provide in-program support for participants of diverse backgrounds, to establish and maintain partnerships with organization and institutions (such as Minority Serving Institutions and Affinity Groups) that support diversity and underrepresented communities.
- Organizing special events to commemorate milestones for the program or to further relationships and partnerships with alumni and the TESOL academic community, at the request of ECA.
- Organizing activities for alumni, including a potential small grants competition, alumni networking events, conference grants, etc. for alumni to assist with recruitment of future EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators and help raise the profile of the program in the TESOL community in the U.S. and provide any necessary funding.
3. Selection and Placement of Candidates:
- In collaboration with ECA and U.S. embassies, vetting and selecting candidates for approximately 220 ECA-funded EL Fellow projects, approximately 250 ECA-funded EL Specialist projects, 150 ECA-funded Virtual EL Educator Projects, and 50 post-funded EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator projects selected by the U.S. Department of State.
- Identifying and reviewing eligible candidates for the programs through transparent and merit-based competition. The recipient organization must screen candidates using criteria established by ECA, review candidates, and match candidates with appropriate

projects. The vetting process should be based on both written applications and oral interviews.

- Matching candidates' skills to the requirements of specific projects. Interviews and matching should be conducted by staff members who are qualified and experienced in the field of TESOL and familiar with the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs and the Office of English Language Programs. ECA retains the final authority to determine placement of EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.
- Utilizing the approved medical protocol for medical clearance and collaborating with ECA when necessary to adjust the process. Ensure all EL Fellows and Specialists, with in-country assignments, have medical clearance by a qualified medical practitioner to carry out the duties of their project in the country of assignment.
- Drafting, finalizing, and signing an agreement with each participant that includes the program's terms and conditions, that will serve as a contract between the recipient organization and the EL Fellow, Specialist, or Virtual Educator.
- Developing and updating EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Program Policy Handbooks which outline the program roles and responsibilities, policy, guidance, and the terms and conditions for participants.
- Providing U.S. embassies with a copy of the signed terms and conditions agreement for each EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator and a link to the online handbook.
4. Pre-Departure Orientation:
- Planning and conducting a pre-departure orientation(s) to be held in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area for EL Fellows.
- Planning and conducting virtual pre-departure orientations for EL Specialists, Virtual Educators, and in-person Fellows when appropriate.
5. Financial Management:
- Conducting all financial management elements of the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs, including processing of all EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator grant payments electronically to EL Fellows', Specialists', and Virtual Educators' designated bank accounts.
- Maintaining a Program budget spreadsheet for the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs.
- Budgeting for the maximum number of EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators for the funding available in the cooperative agreement.
- Providing fiscal management for EL Fellows' professional development activities during their assignments. These activities are proposed by the Regional English Language Officers (RELOs) and approved by ECA.
- Budgeting for representation of the programs at appropriate TESOL conferences and for special events and processing all relevant payments.

6. Travel and Logistical Management:

- Making all necessary international travel arrangements for the EL Fellows and Specialists for travel to and return from their fellowship or project sites.  When using U.S. Government (USG) funds for travel, the recipient organization is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Fly America Act.

- Providing EL Fellows and Specialists support where possible with host country visa information from U.S. embassies and host institutions.

- Making all necessary domestic and international travel arrangements for the EL Fellows participating in the pre-departure orientation in the Washington, D.C. area.

- Enrolling the selected program participants in the ECA Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) Benefit Plan or other health benefit plan, as directed by ECA.  This may include the purchase of health insurance for program participants as appropriate.

- Keeping ECA informed on emergency incidents with participants that require ASPE services.

7. Monitoring the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs:

- Providing a copy of travel itineraries to the U.S. embassies and ECA so that U.S. embassies can make arrangements to meet the EL Fellow or Specialist upon arrival.

- Providing EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators with points of contact responsible for their project at the U.S. embassy.

- Supervising day-to-day administration and management of the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs.

- Maintaining communication with U.S. embassy staff, ECA, and the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator regarding issues such as security, performance, crisis management, health, termination of the project, termination of the grant of the EL Fellow, Specialist, or Virtual Educator, and other matters that may be of concern.

- Establishing an "EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Incident Report" log to document issues and concerns.

8. Evaluation:

- Developing an evaluation strategy to measure the impact and outcome of the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs and each project subject to ECA approval.

- Requiring end-of-program reports or impact statements from EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.

9. Information Management:

- Maintaining information-sharing tools (e.g., website, program database, contact management system, video conferencing/webinars, social media, Community of Practice), for the management of the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs as well as for outreach and abiding by the ECA guidance found at https://eca.state.gov/comms-guidance.  The information-sharing tools must be easy to

access and secure, and updates must be made in a timely manner.  Data must be maintained in a way that will enable the recipient organization to provide ECA with information on the EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators immediately upon request.

- Developing and maintaining a website, contact management system, and Community of Practice for current and former EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.  Ensuring that the website and all social media sites are branded as U.S. Department of State programs.  Maintaining an active alumni database to engage former EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators in the recruitment process and as a resource for new EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.  Posting the reports and photographs from EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators in the database, Community of Practice and, as appropriate, on the website and social media.
- Providing current EL Fellows', Specialists', and Virtual Educators' information to ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs.  Consulting with ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs to ensure maximum compatibility of the recipient organization's and ECA's databases.

10. Virtual exchanges:

- Carrying out a series of virtual events for current participants, prospective participants, and alumni as directed by ECA.  This may include purchasing appropriate video conferencing and social media software, recruiting and selecting presenters, registering participants, emailing certificates or digital badges, and providing sufficient staff to manage the relevant platforms, interact with participants during the virtual events, and act as moderators.
- Providing online professional development opportunities for current EL Fellows either before or during their fellowship to allow them to earn a certificate in teacher training.
- Piloting online professional development opportunities with alumni when appropriate.

11. Pilot

- Due to the success of the Virtual English Language Educator program, reserve funding for an alumni, in-person component to the virtual program as a pilot.  The pilot parameters for the alumni element should be conceptualized in conjunction with ECA and, pending approval and funding availability, carried out at the direction of ECA.

12. TESOL Convention Related Activities:

- Organizing and implementing the participation of ECA in the annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International convention.
- Providing sufficient funding and staffing for representation of the Office of English Language Programs at the TESOL International convention for the duration of this cooperative agreement.
- Selecting and renting appropriate exhibit booth spaces and equipment.

- Providing staff and materials to manage the exhibit booth and recruit for potential EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.
- Registering Office of English Language Programs staff and Regional English Language Officers (RELOs).
- Arranging for information sessions on the EL Fellow, Virtual Educator, and Specialist Programs and making presentations jointly with ECA staff.
- Making hotel reservations for Office of English Language Programs staff, Regional English Language Officers (RELOs), and Regional English Language Assistants as well as other participants sponsored by ECA.
- Organizing and implementing networking events to be hosted by the recipient organization at the convention.
- Coordinating with ECA, vendors, and other cooperating agencies to develop a unified approach for the Office of English Language Programs.
- Organizing and implementing participation of the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs in other state and regional TESOL conferences as well as virtual events.

13. Content and Design for Print and Digital Materials:

- Motivating EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators to submit content to be used on the Community of Practice as well as for print and digital publication, including for *English Teaching Forum* and the American English website.
- Curating such content.
- Hiring consultants, as directed by ECA, for identifying, creating, curating, and copy editing content for publication and social media purposes.
- Subscribing to necessary tools and resources for production of digital and print content.

14. Timeline:

- Providing a timeline for the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs, specifying anticipated dates for program activities.

**A.5.  Substantial Involvement:**
In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

**ECA/A/L activities and responsibilities for this Program are as follows:**

- Reviewing and analyzing the potential of projects to improve teaching capacity overseas and to promote ECA's goals.
- Analyzing the prospective impact of projects on host-country English teaching institutions and the likelihood of projects meeting host-country institutional needs.

- Approving the design and development of the outreach strategy that addresses recruitment of new applicants, support for current participants, engagement with alumni, and raising the profile of the program.
- Reviewing and approving the selection criteria for accepting applicants into the program.
- Reviewing and approving the procedures for matching selected participants to appropriate approved projects.
- Reviewing and approving a health screening procedure for selected participants and retaining final approving authority for medical clearances.
- Retaining authority for final approval of the roster of candidates.
- Identifying the need for consultants to be hired by the recipient organization to create, curate, and copy edit content for publication and social media purposes.

**U.S. embassies are responsible for managing the EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator Programs in-country. The role of U.S. embassies includes:**

- Establishing viable partnerships with prospective, priority in-country host institutions that have critical English language programming needs.
- Selecting host institutions and assessing their ability to host Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.
- Developing project proposals in consultation with in-country host institutions to be implemented by EL Fellows, Specialists, and Virtual Educators.
- Submitting proposals to ECA for review and approval.
- Reviewing selected applicants' qualifications and making their selection among approved EL Fellow, Specialist, and Virtual Educator candidates, in consultation with in-country host institutions.
- Confirming that appropriate medical facilities are available for the needs of selected EL Fellows and Specialists.
- Taking responsibility for participants' safety and well-being, securing the concurrence of the Regional Security Office with the participants' placement.
- Assisting with locating and obtaining appropriate, secure housing.
- Assisting EL Fellows and Specialists with the host country visa process and ensuring that the EL Fellows' and Specialists' visa/residency status is adjusted immediately after arrival in host country to comply with host-country immigration regulations.
- Acting as the EL Fellows' and Specialists' and ECA's direct point of contact throughout their assignment.
- Conducting an in-country arrival orientation and ensuring that the EL Fellows and Specialists receive a security briefing by the embassy's Regional Security Officer. conducting virtual orientations for Virtual Educators and Virtual Specialists.

- Conducting site visits, monitoring EL Fellows' and Specialists' programs and activities and sharing information with the recipient organization.

## B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

**Type of Award:**  Cooperative Agreement.  ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.
**Fiscal Year Funds:**  FY 2024
**Approximate Total Funding:**  $20,000,000, pending the availability of funds
**Approximate Number of Awards:**  1
**Approximate Average Award:**  $20,000,000, pending the availability of funds
**Minimum "Floor" of Award:**  $15,000,000, pending the availability of funds.
**Maximum "Ceiling" of Award:**  $20,000,000, pending the availability of funds.
**Anticipated Award Date:**  June 1, 2024, pending the availability of funds
**Anticipated Project Completion Date:**  December 31, 2029
**Additional Information:**
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.

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

## C.  ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### C.1.    Eligible Applicants
U.S. public and private 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.

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

1.) ECA's grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to $130,000 in ECA funding.  ECA anticipates making cooperative agreement, in an amount of $20,000,000 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.

2.) 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.

3.) In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3. & D.5. for more information.

4.) 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.15. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

**D.3.    Unique Entity Identifier Number**
All organizations are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government.  A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.  ***Note:  As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications. A UEI is issued as part of the required SAM.gov registration below in section D.5.***

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number.  Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

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

**D.5.    Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM)**
All organizations 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.  ***Note:  The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks.  Please begin your registration as early as possible.***  Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

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.

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

Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

**D.6.    Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly, FAPIIS)**

1.) The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

2.) An applicant, at its option, may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. Currently, federal agencies create integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov;

3.) The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, 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 §200.206 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.     For Informational Purposes Only - 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.  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 DEIA" 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.

ECA created the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework to measure the performance of ECA programs.  **The MODE Framework provides standard indicators and corresponding survey questions to ensure consistent measures across all ECA programs.**  More resources and guidance documents on the MODE Framework are available online at: https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and.

For this proposal, ECA requires the applicant include the MODE Framework objectives and indicators listed below (note that, because not all MODE objectives and indicators are relevant for a program, the numbering below 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.

- Demographic Questions as outlined in the Indicator Book on page vi, and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) (https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and)

   **EL Fellow Program Objectives**
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
   - Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
      - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their exchange experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
      - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program (core)

- E1.1.11: Percent of American participants indicating a change in their understanding of their host country's culture and values
- Objective 2: Increase the impact that participants and alumni have on their communities / countries
  - Sub-Objective 2.2: Foster participant's belief that civic engagement benefits communities/countries
    - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country (core)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
    - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant (core)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
    - E4.0.01: Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation
    - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of exchange program participation
    - E4.0.05: Percent of participants who report an increase in technical skills as a result of exchange program participation
  - Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
    - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core)
    - E4.1.02: Total number of program cohorts (core)
    - E4.1.04: Number of professional placements
    - E4.1.07: Number of instruction methodology trainings implemented
    - E4.1.08: Number of English Language Fellows enrolled
    - E4.1.13: Number of English Language Fellows completing fellowships
- Objective 6: Increase Capacity of ECA partner institutions to achieve program strategic goals
  - Sub-Objective 6.1: Increase capacity of implementing partners and educational institutions for the internationalization of programs
    - E6.1.02: Number of exchange participants from or hosted by Minority-Serving Institutions participating in ECA (both funded and private sector) exchanges (core)
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
    - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core)

**EL Specialist Program Objectives**

- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
    - o Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
        - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their exchange experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
        - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program (core)
        - E1.1.11:  Percent of American participants indicating a change in their understanding of their host country's culture and values
- Objective 2: Increase the impact that participants and alumni have on their communities / countries
    - o Sub-Objective 2.2:  Foster participant's belief that civic engagement benefits communities/countries
        - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country (core)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
        - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant (core)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
        - E4.0.01: Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation
        - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of exchange program participation
        - E4.0.05: Percent of participants who report an increase in technical skills as a result of exchange program participation
    - o Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
        - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core)
        - E4.1.04: Number of professional placements
        - E4.1.07: Number of instruction methodology trainings implemented
- Objective 6: Increase Capacity of ECA partner institutions to achieve program strategic goals

- o Sub-Objective 6.1: Increase capacity of implementing partners and educational institutions for the internationalization of programs
  - E6.1.02: Number of exchange participants from or hosted by Minority-Serving Institutions participating in ECA (both funded and private sector) exchanges (core)
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
  - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core)

**Virtual EL Educator Program Objectives**
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
  - o Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
    - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their exchange experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
    - E1.1.16: Percent of virtual exchange (VE) participants who report VE as their only likely way to interact with citizens from other countries in the future
- Objective 2: Increase the impact that participants and alumni have on their communities / countries
  - o Sub-Objective 2.2: Foster participant's belief that civic engagement benefits communities/countries
    - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country (core)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
  - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant (core)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
  - E4.0.01: Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation
  - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of exchange program participation

- E4.0.05: Percent of participants who report an increase in technical skills as a result of exchange program participation
  - o Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
    - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core)
    - E4.1.04: Number of professional placements
    - E4.1.07: Number of instruction methodology trainings implemented
- Objective 6: Increase Capacity of ECA partner institutions to achieve program strategic goals
  - o Sub-Objective 6.1: Increase capacity of implementing partners and educational institutions for the internationalization of programs
    - E6.1.02: Number of exchange participants from or hosted by Minority-Serving Institutions participating in ECA (both funded and private sector) exchanges (core)
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
  - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core)

**Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs)**
ECA recommends the use of a 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 .  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).  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), 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.
  - 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.
  - 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).
  - 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 above 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 above.  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), 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.13.   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.   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.15. Application Deadline and Method of Submission
**Application Deadline Date:  Monday, February 5, 2024.**

**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.16. 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.16.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.16.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.16.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.16.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 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.17. Intergovernmental Review of Applications**
Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

**E.    APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**E.1. Review Process**
ECA will check that all proposals meet the technical requirements in this solicitation.  Proposals that do not meet the guidelines, including those under the eligibility section above or in the PSI, will be ineligible for further review.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office before being reviewed by an ECA grant panel and may be reviewed by Public Diplomacy sections overseas, State Department regional bureaus, or other State Department offices, as appropriate.  All reviewers, including the ECA grant panels will review any eligible proposals based on the criteria below.  Recommended proposals will be reviewed for compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines, and assessed for risk.  Final funding decisions are made by the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs.  Only an ECA Grant Officer has the final authority to issue assistance awards.

**E.2. Review Criteria**
An ECA grants panel will competitively evaluate all technically eligible applications according to the criteria stated below.  These criteria are not rank ordered, and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation.

1.  **Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives:**  Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible.  The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
2.  **Multiplier effect/impact and follow-on activities:**  Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.  The proposal should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) which ensures that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.
3. **Support of DEIA:** Proposals should show how the program and your institution supports ECA's policy on diversity. Proposals should have a clear DEIA plan that is integrated into all aspects of program administration, design, content, and implementation. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will enhance the program's goals, objectives, and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEIA plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEIA.

4.  **Institutional Capacity and track record:**  Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. The proposal 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 the Bureau Grants Staff.  The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

5. **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):**  Proposals should have a fully developed M&E plan that includes goals, objectives, and indicators.  The plan should be feasible and aligned with the M&E section of this solicitation.  Proposals should include a realistic learning plan that outlines how your organization plans to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices.  All submitted M&E plans will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided at least the required information outlined in the M&E section of this solicitation and demonstrated the applicant's capacity to carry out the M&E plan.

6. **Cost effectiveness/cost sharing:**  The overhead and staffing components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible.  All costs should be necessary and appropriate.  The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

7. **Professional expertise in teaching English as a foreign/second language:**  Proposals should demonstrate a publicity and recruitment plan that allows for the greatest dissemination of information to professionals in the areas of TESOL, Applied Linguistics, and related fields.

8. **Value to U.S-Partner Country Relations:**  Proposals should demonstrate the program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).


## 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**:
Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

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.a. 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 Jennifer Hodgson, HodgsonJM@state.gov for additional information.

**F.3.b. Special Provision For Performance In A Designated Combat Area And Future Contingency Operations (Currently Iraq And Afghanistan)**
Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over $150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment.  The DOS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to

AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number." The following information shall be provided:

Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:
    1.) Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
    2.) Total Number Host Country Personnel:
    3.) Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, Recipients are required to ensure

they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR).  Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO.  COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR.  Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

**F.4. Reporting Requirements**
Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports.  The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.  All reports must be submitted in a timely manner.   For planning purposes, applicants can expect to 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 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.

**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:  Jennifer Hodgson, U.S. Department of State, Office of English Language Programs, ECA/A/L**,** ELFSpec@state.gov.

All correspondence with ECA 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, ECA 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                                               December 5, 2023
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State