

## **Department of State**

### **Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals: FY 2014**

YALI Connect Camps Program in sub-Saharan Africa

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAA-14-003

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.014

**Application Deadline:** May 30, 2014

#### **Executive Summary:**

The Collaboratory, a new group focusing on innovation within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), announces an open competition for the administration of sub-regional Connect Camps in sub-Saharan Africa. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct eight "Connect Camps," each a week long, focused on professional development for YALI participants. Specifically, the Connect Camps will integrate collaboration, technology and innovation techniques in participatory, in-person workshops on business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, and public management. Participants will be alumni from the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders who have participated in a U.S. exchange and their mentees, who have not. The week-long camps will be held in four regions of sub-Saharan Africa to allow for maximum participation. Participant recruitment, screening, and selection will be conducted by U.S. Embassies in participating countries. The Connect Camps will provide participants access to experts, opportunities for collaboration with the YALI network, and use of new technologies to build on innovative ideas in their chosen fields. **It is the Bureau's intent to award one cooperative agreement for up to \$485,000.**

#### **I. Funding Opportunity Description:**

##### **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.

##### **Background:**

The Obama Administration's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is an investment in the next generation of African leaders, spurring growth and prosperity, strengthening democratic governance, and enhancing peace and security across Africa. YALI participants are comprised of young people of extraordinary talent and promise; they are young leaders who are transforming the African continent and their communities. For additional background, visit:

<http://youngafricanleaders.state.gov/yali/> . This year, YALI will include a Washington

Fellowship for 500 Young African Leaders. For more information on the Washington Fellowship, visit: <http://www.irex.org/project/washington-fellowship-young-african-leaders>.

The Washington Fellows' U.S.-based training begins the United States' long-term investment in these young leaders. The investment in young leaders will continue in Africa with opportunities for networking, ongoing professional development, seed funding for entrepreneurs and community service. Washington Fellows will also be a part of a vibrant network connecting them to new opportunities in Africa and to each other. Fellows will be encouraged to mentor other promising young leaders, enhancing the impact and sustainability of the initiative, and growing the network to encompass other leaders, especially in disadvantaged communities. Fellows will be active in one of the three areas below:

- **Business and Entrepreneurship:** designed for aspiring entrepreneurs who hope to take on leadership roles within the private sector or start their own business ventures on the continent.
- **Civic Leadership:** oriented to young Africans who are civically engaged and serve the public through non-governmental organizations, and/or volunteer or community-based organizations.
- **Public Management:** tailored to young Africans who work or aspire to work in all levels of government, regional organizations such as the African Union, international bodies such as the United Nations, or other publicly-minded entities or think tanks.

The Connect Camps will provide opportunities for Washington Fellowship alumni to engage in the YALI network, mentor other promising young leaders, and develop their professional skills through use of technology. The specific goals of the Connect Camps are to:

- 1) Provide Washington Fellows and their mentees skills training in applied technology supporting innovation and collaboration in business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management.
- 2) Instruct participants in the use of applied technology to innovate leadership projects.
- 3) Develop leadership skills of the participants.
- 4) Facilitate a collaborative, innovative project or projects furthering the YALI goals.
- 5) Provide participants opportunities for face-to-face networking.
- 6) Encourage participants to actively promote mutual understanding among the peoples of the United States and the countries and territories of Africa.

Using these goals and the theme of applied technology to advance innovation in entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management, applicant organizations should identify specific and measurable outputs and outcomes based on the project specifications provided in this solicitation. Proposals should indicate how recipients will achieve short-term project objectives and how these objectives will contribute to the achievement of the overarching long-term YALI goal of empowering and providing opportunities for youth in Africa.

### **Participants:**

U.S. Embassies in participating countries will recruit, screen, and select the Washington Fellow alumni participants. The U.S. Embassies will also help the Washington Fellow alumni select mentees to join them at the Connect Camps. All participants will be proficient in the English

language and come from a variety of countries in their sub-region. Each Connect Camp will comprise approximately twenty participants ranging in age from eighteen to thirty-five to include the younger mentees, as well as the YALI alumni. To the extent possible, each camp will represent the diversity of the sub-region and include women, minorities, and marginalized populations, including individuals with disabilities.

**Organizational Capacity:**

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for providing projects that address the goals and themes outlined in this document, and providing appropriate programming for youth, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

The award recipient will need to work closely with the Public Affairs Section of the respective Embassies to develop plans for project implementation. The proposal should address plans for maintaining a close working relationship with the Public Affairs Section throughout the life of the award.

Applicants are strongly urged to garner private sector support. The Bureau encourages the expansion of the scope of this program beyond what it is able to fund. Private sector monies and in-kind offerings may be used, for instance, to enhance the instructional and applied elements of the educational program.

**U.S. Embassy Involvement:**

U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will recruit, screen, and select the participants, as needed, as well as provide pre-departure briefings and overseeing alumni follow-on activities.

**Guidelines:**

The total amount of funding is \$485,000. It is anticipated that the cooperative agreement will begin on or around September 1, 2014. The award period will be approximately 18 months, and will cover all aspects of program planning, Africa-based exchange activities, and support of follow-on activities in the participants' home countries.

Applicants should propose to hold eight Connect Camps for approximately twenty participants each. Ideally there will be two back-to-back camps per region, reaching 160 participants total. All eight Connect Camps must be completed prior to the anticipated end date of the award, March 31, 2016. Applicants should propose specific exchange dates in their proposals, but the exact timing may be altered through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the award recipient.

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust the participating countries if conditions change in a partner country or if other countries in sub-Saharan Africa are identified as Department priorities.

In pursuit of the goals outlined above, the award recipient will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Providing U.S. Embassy Public Affairs staff in participating countries with program materials and logistical information for preparation sessions at the pre-departure orientations.
- 2) Managing logistical arrangements and fees, including Connect Camp site selection and contract(s), arranging all technical equipment, all travel, ground transportation, accommodations, group meals, and conference organization for all participants.
- 3) Conducting an orientation for the Connect Camps upon participants' arrivals at the Connect Camp site.
- 7) Designing and planning Connect Camp activities to develop the participants' knowledge and skill base for innovation and leadership in their fields.
- 8) Assisting participants in developing a collaborative, innovative project or projects furthering the YALI goals. For example, Connect Camp participants could inform and support the creation of open educational resources for the next generation of young African leaders.
- 4) Developing and implementing a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while at the Connect Camp, and creating opportunities for participants to share potential issues and resolve them promptly.
- 5) Making proper arrangements for participants' religious observances and dietary needs.
- 6) Facilitating, in coordination with ECA and U.S. Embassies, continued engagement among the participants and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values, and skills imparted during the exchange.
- 7) Collaborating with ECA and U.S. Embassies to design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the short- and medium-term impact of the project on the participants.

**Please note:**

The ECA award for the Connect Camps program will be a cooperative agreement. In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State is substantially involved in project activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. The Department's activities and responsibilities for the Connect Camps program are as follows:

- 1) Provide guidance on the execution of all program components. Provide contacts for key speakers to include in camps, where needed.
- 2) Manage the recruitment and selection of the participants, and oversee pre- and post-Connect Camp activities in each country.
- 3) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureau, and overseas embassies and consulates.
- 4) Approve publicity materials and final calendar of Connect Camp activities.
- 5) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.

**Additional Information:**

The award recipient will use the name YALI "Connect Camps" to identify the project. All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the project will acknowledge funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and control distribution of materials related to this project as it sees fit.

The organization must inform the ECA Program Officer and participating U.S. Embassies of progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and will be required to obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation.

Proposals must demonstrate how the stated objectives will be met. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major project activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package – this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) – for further information.

## **II. Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under number I above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY-2014

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$485,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** One

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 1, 2014

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** Approximately 18 months after start date, to be specified by applicant based on project plan.

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of these programs and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for up to four additional fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

## **III. Eligibility Information:**

**III.1. Eligible applicants:** Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

**III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:** There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

### **III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

- 1) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years' experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making an award in an amount exceeding \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with fewer than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.
- 2) Proposed sub-award recipients are also limited to grant funding of \$130,000 or less if they do not have four years of experience in conducting international exchanges.
- 3) The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.
  - b. Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following:
    - Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition.
    - If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process.

**Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

### **IV. Application and Submission Information:**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

#### **IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

Please contact the Collaboratory, ECA/FO, SA-5, 5th Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, by telephone (202) 632-6042 or E-mail: [StorrowA@state.gov](mailto:StorrowA@state.gov) to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Program Officer Amy Storrow and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this Request for Grant Proposals on all other inquiries and correspondence.

#### **IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:**

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

#### **IV.3. Content and Form of Submission:**

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

**IV.3a.** You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) 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 DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

**IV.3b.** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

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.

**IV.3c.** All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (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 have been completed. 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. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities,

will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

**IV.3d.** All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing [www.GrantSolutions.gov](http://www.GrantSolutions.gov). To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click “Getting Started-Request a User Account” at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/>. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday and can be reached at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) or 1-866-577-0771.

**IV.3d.** Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

**FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY:**

**IV.3d.1 ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
SA-44, Suite 668  
301 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

**IV.3d.2 Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

#### **IV.3d.2. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. ECA recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. ECA expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

- 1) **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
- 2) **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
- 3) **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
- 4) **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

**IV.3d.4. Virtual Exchange Component:** ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

**IV.3e.** Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

**IV.3e.1. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients:** All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA’s Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

**IV.3e.2.** Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed \$485,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

**Suggested costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Staff travel.
- Participant travel.
- Honoraria for speakers.
- Educational materials.
- Lodging.
- Food.
- In-person expenses related to technical training and exercises.
- Promotional materials.
- Software and equipment such as digital cameras, computers, webcams, etc. to support online project work. Applicants should primarily seek out donations or acquisition of equipment through outside sources.
- Technical equipment rental and internet access fees.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Justifiable expenses directly related to program activities and follow on activities
- Administrative expenses: The award funds may be used to pay reasonable costs for program administration, technical support, and other administrative needs. Cost sharing in these areas is strongly encouraged.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package (POGI and PSI) for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

**IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:**

Application Deadline Date: Friday, May 30, 2014

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Find” portion of the system.

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

Please follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

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

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 "For Applicants" 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.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission 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](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.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 midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**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.**

**IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications:** Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **V.1. REVIEW PROCESS**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

## 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:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The proposed program should be creative, age-appropriate, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should also include a plan to support participants' follow-on activities upon their return home.
- 2) **Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives:** A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives will be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The substance of exchange activities, such as workshops, presentations, and/or site visits, should be described in detail.
- 3) **Support of diversity:** The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue, and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and debriefing sessions, and follow-on activities). Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.
- 4) **Institutional capacity and track record:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful implementation of similar programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- 5) **Program evaluation:** The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program's success in meeting its goals, both as the activities unfold and after they have been completed. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique, plus a description of a methodology to link outcomes to original project objectives.
- 6) **Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing:** The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other

private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

### **VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

**VI.3. Reporting Requirements:** You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

*Mandatory:*

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 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 first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here:

[http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov). The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: [FFATAECA@state.gov](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

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

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Amy Storrow, The Collaboratory, ECA/FO, SA-5, 5th Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, by telephone (202) 632-6042 or e-mail [StorrowA@state.gov](mailto:StorrowA@state.gov).

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP 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 RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**VIII. Other Information:**

**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Kelly Keiderling  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

April 8, 2014