

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals: **The U.S./Pakistan Professional Partnership Program for Journalists in Urdu**

Announcement Type: New Grant

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-051

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Key Dates:

Application Deadline: May 14, 2014

Executive Summary: Executive Summary: ECA is seeking proposals for the U.S./Pakistan Professional Partnership Program for Journalists in Urdu. This program will bring working broadcast and print journalists from the two countries together to develop cross cultural relationships and develop professional skills that will positively impact people's lives and contribute to stronger ties between the two nations. The Bureau expects funding in the amount of approximately \$900,000 to be available for the program and expects to award one grant in this competition.

The Pakistan Professional Partnerships for Journalists in Urdu will involve approximately 40-50 Pakistani journalist and approximately 10 American journalists in a program designed to demonstrate journalism skills, offer professional development opportunities, and include on-site visits to U.S.-based media outlets for Pakistani journalists.

II.) Award Information, below for additional details.

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. Funding for this competition is provided through to ECA FY 2013/FY 2014 Economic Support Funds (ESF) that will be transferred to ECA to obligate in FY 2013.

Purpose:

GENERAL PROGRAM OUTLINES

Language: This program will require the U.S. grantee organization to secure qualified Urdu language interpreters for the U.S. - based portions of the program. Two interpreters to every group of ten participants is the standard.

Visas: Applicants must demonstrate that they can work with ECA and PAS Islamabad for the U.S. visas and directly with the Pakistani Embassy for its visas. ECA will issue the DS-2019

forms required for J visas; see Section IV.3d.1 for additional information related to the administration of J visa programs.

Travel: The grantee will arrange all round-trip international travel, complying with the Fly America Act, and domestic travel arrangements for the participants. All Pakistani and American participants must depart Pakistan through Islamabad.

U.S. Based Programs: The recipient of the grant award will be responsible for implementing programs from two to three weeks in the United States for the Pakistani participants. It is envisioned that the Pakistani participants will be grouped in delegations of ten who will travel together to the United States. Four to five groups of ten Pakistani journalists will travel throughout the grant period. U.S.-based programming should include a three to four day orientation program for all ten participants in the same location upon arrival in the United States. The orientation should include trainings, lectures, and site-visits to introduce participants to the basic craft of U.S. journalism. Investigative reporting, ethics, safety, reporting in a conflict zone and the business of journalism in the United States could be included. Additionally, an overview of U.S. government structures, the political process, and the role that the media plays in the United States should be offered. This will be followed by a week to ten days of local programming in two separate locations for the Pakistanis who will be broken into groups of five (with one interpreter travelling with each group). Local programming will include on-site visits to media outlets, briefing by local educational institutions, and other relevant activities. The groups will rejoin together and end their U.S. program with a two to three day pre-departure program in Washington, D.C. that will include a meeting at the State Department.

The grantee should also include cultural enrichment activities as an integral part of the program experience. Such activities could include outings to museums, historic sites, sporting events, cultural exhibits, local school or community events, volunteering and other opportunities to experience American culture and diversity. Short-term homestays or home hospitality to give participants a personal experience of how typical Americans live is highly desirable.

Pakistan-Based Programs: Concurrent with the Pakistani-inbound program, proposals should also describe a selection process and logistics for an outbound two-week program for 10 U.S. participants to Pakistan. The U.S. participants will travel after all of the Pakistani groups have completed their programming. The U.S. participants will be selected from among the media outlets that Pakistanis visit while in the United States. The Pakistan-based program may include public presentations, on-site visits at Pakistani media outlets, and media interviews, if possible. All details and specifics on Pakistan-based programs will be coordinated in close coordination with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. Proposals must show a convincing plan to work with ECA and the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad on this project, and to adhere to U.S. government security restrictions on travel within Pakistan. If the security situation in Pakistan does not allow for travel of U.S. participants, the grantee will work with ECA to come up with an alternate program plan.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: The Bureau places high importance on monitoring and evaluation as a means of ensuring and measuring a project's success. Proposals must include

a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the project. Please refer to section. IV.3d.3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation below.

Follow-up activities: The grant recipient will develop enhancement activities that reinforce program goals after the participants' return to Pakistan. This includes informing participants of the Bureau's alumni programming, facilitating their enrollment, and encouraging their on-going participation. Please refer to the PSI for additional information on Alumni, Outreach/Follow-On, and Engagement.

Fiscal Management: Applicants must demonstrate competency to manage all financial aspects of the project, including participant costs and transparent arrangements of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.

Contact ECA: All interested organizations may contact ECA Program Officer Karin Brandenburg before the submission of proposals. ECA will also put the organizations in contact with appropriate colleagues at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad if necessary. Karin Brandenburg: 202-632-9368, BrandenburgKL@state.gov.

Specific Program Details:

This program will provide approximately 40-50 participants from Pakistan the opportunity to learn about journalism as practiced in the United States. The program will also provide 10 participants from the United States an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the current situation in Pakistan and allow them a chance to report on these issues from a first-person perspective to their local audiences. Successful programs will achieve the following:

- Show journalists the professional approaches to journalism as practiced in the United States and Pakistan, how journalists in both countries try to carry out their profession in an ethical and effective way, and how journalists can become leaders within the journalism field.
- Establish structured interaction among American and Pakistani participants designed to develop enduring professional ties and lasting partnerships.
- Provide an opportunity for all participants in the program to do reporting on the exchange itself as well as on the countries and individuals involved.

One grant will be awarded for this project to take place over the course of three years.

Competitive proposals will demonstrate experience and contacts with relevant media and journalistic organizations to program the U.S. components of this program. If a sub grantee is proposed for the internship placement, its experience and relevance with media/journalism needs to be demonstrated.

Audience: Pakistani and American participants will be reporters, editors, and owners from print, television, radio, or online media outlets. Participants should have at least five years of active experience. NOTE: Groups should not be made up of mixed media types. For example, print journalists should not be in the same groups as broadcast journalists. The U.S. program can then

be based on specific issues pertaining to the various media types and internships will be easier to arrange.

Pakistan Recruitment and Selection:

Recruitment and selection for this program in Pakistan will be coordinated and funded separately through the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) and the Public Affairs Section in Islamabad. The grantee selected through this competition will be expected to work closely and coordinate directly with ECA/U.S. Embassy/USEFP throughout the program. Please contact ECA for more information on participant recruitment.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Grant Agreement

Fiscal Year Funds: 2014

Approximate Total Funding: \$900,000

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Approximate Average Award: \$900,000

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2014.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: August 1, 2017.

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:

a.) 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 one award, in an amount up to \$900,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years 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.

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 Office of Citizen Exchanges ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, Third Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 632-9368 fax (202) 632-9355, BrandenburgKL@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.

Please specify ***Bureau Program Officer Karin Brandenburg*** and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement 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 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 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. 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 or 1-866-577-0771.

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

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

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

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

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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

IV.3d.1 Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated

Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

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

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

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.3 **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. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including

satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

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

The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

1.) closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional option years. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

2.) review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;

- All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional option years.
 - Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
 - The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent option years.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) **Travel.** International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in Bureau sponsored projects.
- 2) **Per Diem.** For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at: http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78
- 3) **Book and Cultural Allowances.** Foreign participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50. U.S. project staff, trainers or participants are not eligible to receive these benefits.
- 4) **Consultants.** Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that figure. Subcontracting organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and sub-grantee should be included in the proposal. Such sub-grants should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.
- 5) **Room Rental.** The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.
- 6) **Materials.** Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for participants. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget. Grantee organizations should expect to submit a copy of all project materials to ECA, and ECA support should be acknowledged on all materials developed with its funding.
- 7) **Supplies.** Applicants may propose to use grant funds to purchase supplies, such as computers and printers; supply costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.
- 8) **Working Meal.** One working meal may be provided during each U.S.-based or foreign-based travel component. Per capita costs may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one.

- 9) **Return Travel Allowance.** A return travel allowance of \$70 for each foreign participant may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.
- 10) **Health and Travel Insurance.** The grant recipient will be responsible for enrolling foreign and U.S. participants in the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the grant proposal budget. Applicants may include costs for travel insurance for U.S. and foreign participants in the budget.
- 11) **Wire Transfer Fees.** When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to partner organizations overseas. Award recipients are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.
- 12) **In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes.** Visas for foreign participants are provided by DOS and should not be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including travel for interviews, delivering or picking-up passports, etc.
- 13) **Administrative Costs.** Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for grantee organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to project costs, proposals in which the administrative costs do not exceed 25% of the total requested ECA grant funds will be more competitive under the cost effectiveness and cost sharing criterion, per item V.1 below. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources.
- 14) **Reasonable Accommodations.** Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of participating individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 7% of the total requested ECA

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

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

Application Deadline Date: May 14, 2014

Methods 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

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 and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. 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 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. Program planning and ability to achieve objectives: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, direct linkage to the goals of the program and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Proposals should demonstrate a realistic and achievable scope that fits within the budgetary and time parameters set forth in the RFGP. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how project objectives and key project elements, especially the development of individual projects by the foreign fellows, will be achieved through programmatic activities.

2. Institutional capacity and track record: Proposals should include (1) the institution's mission and date of establishment; (2) a summary outline of prior awards--U.S. government and/or private support received for programs of a similar nature, including, preferably, the ability to conduct programs of a similar nature in Pakistan; and (3) descriptions of and resumes of key staff who will implement the program. The proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. ECA strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from relevant partners who would be involved in the program.

3. Program monitoring and evaluation: Proposals should include a detailed plan to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and overall impact of programs. Program goals should target clearly defined results in objective quantitative terms. Proposals should include draft evaluation instruments such as surveys and questionnaires.

4. 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.

5. Support of diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity and describe how that policy will be integrated into all aspects of the program including but not limited to selection of participants, fellowship placements, program materials, training methodology, etc. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities. Applicants should refer to guidance in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for the Bureau's "Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines."

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 an 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.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to this policy and procedure will be a requirement of all final federal assistance awards issued by ECA.

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 A-122, "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. A-110 (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. 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. 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, 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. 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: Karin Brandenburg, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, Third Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202)632-9368 fax (202) 632-9355, BrandenburgKL@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