

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2017 Community Solutions Program

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-17-028

The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Professional Fellows Division of the Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA/PE/C/PF) for the FY 2017 Community Solutions Program. Proposals must conform to the NOFO, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying NOFO, the NOFO is to be the dominant reference.

Introduction:

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) expects to award a cooperative agreement for the administration of the FY 2017 Community Solutions Program. The Community Solutions Program supports and encourages grassroots initiatives spearheaded by early to mid career professionals, ages 25-38, who are engaged community leaders working to address economic, environmental, political, and social challenges in their local communities. These challenges are related to the fellowship themes described in Program Guidelines, Section C “Eligible Partner Countries” and Section D. “Thematic Areas” below. Community Solutions Fellows will undertake a four- to six-month U.S.-based fellowship program in public institutions, government offices, state legislatures, social incubators, businesses, or non-profit organizations, working with seasoned community leaders on pre-defined substantive issues of mutual interest.

The FY 2017 Community Solutions Program will provide opportunities for approximately 100 engaged community leaders to more effectively address the challenges facing their communities through increased civic engagement, leadership development, enhanced technical expertise, and an improved understanding of the way public and private resources interface for community good. It is envisioned that the Community Solutions fellowship will enable participants to experience best practices in community development and effective models of public and community engagement. Strong emphasis should be placed on helping participants devise concrete strategies to support their home communities.

The Community Solutions Program seeks to:

- 1) facilitate and strengthen participants’ ability to address complex economic, environmental, political, and social challenges through a U.S.-based fellowship;
- 2) provide new skills and resources to enable participants to assume greater leadership roles in their institutions and communities;

- 3) provide concrete tools to facilitate leadership development, community engagement, public discourse, collaboration, effective communication, and project implementation and management;
- 4) cultivate professional ties with U.S. citizens and American economic, environmental, political, and social institutions through collaborative efforts and follow-on projects;
- 5) expand and strengthen the relationship between the people of the United States and other countries to work in partnership to identify solutions to common issues facing both local and global communities; and
- 6) create a global network of diverse, multi-disciplinary professionals and civic leaders committed to problem solving and community engagement.

I. Section One - Statement of Work

A. Recipient Responsibilities

For the overseas administration of the Community Solutions Program, the award recipient should, as appropriate to each geographic region, utilize the latest in technology and social media to:

1. Develop a global recruitment campaign that targets individuals meeting the eligibility criteria for the program, supports a merit-based open competition, and adheres to ECA's diversity goals;
2. Design, launch, and support a web-based application tool;
3. Develop a transparent review process to evaluate applicants for the Community Solutions Program. The award recipient will work closely with ECA on the development and implementation of review criteria, involving the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of each applicable U.S. embassy or consulate in the selection process, and selecting eligible applicants;
4. Arrange English language interviews (virtual or in-person) for semi-finalists as part of the selection process;
5. Administer an Institutional TOEFL or an equivalent language-based assessment to evaluate semi-finalists' English language abilities;
6. Create an internet-based platform to assist finalists in preparing for their U.S. fellowship, secure J-1 visas, and answer questions on programmatic issues, including, but not limited to, fellowship and community placements, program responsibilities and expectations, travel, accident and sickness benefits, housing, etc.;
7. Conduct pre-departure orientations (virtual or in-person) for finalists before departing their home countries; and
8. Utilize the internet (web or cloud), social media, and other communication tools to facilitate communication among finalists and host communities prior to their departure to the U.S., including but not limited to, program and community resources, pre-program fellowship assignments, and personal leadership development plans.

For the U.S. administration of the Community Solutions Program, the award recipient should utilize the latest in technology and social media to:

1. Conduct an open competition for U.S. public, private, and non-profit institutions and organizations to host Community Solutions Fellows for four to six months;
2. Create program guidelines and other relevant materials for U.S. host organizations. The award recipient should host a virtual orientation for U.S. host institutions that clearly outlines hosting roles and responsibilities. The award recipient should create an internet-based platform to post resources and facilitate communication among hosting organizations, Community Solutions Fellows, and as appropriate the greater Community Solutions network of alumni and past hosts;
3. Create opportunities for Community Solution participants to develop professional affiliations in U.S. communities;
4. Arrange and cover the cost of all appropriate program-related travel for Community Solutions Fellows and Americans participating in outbound exchanges including but not limited to transportation, lodging, and meals and incidental expenses, etc.;
5. Conduct a comprehensive orientation in Washington, D.C. for Community Solutions Fellows prior to the beginning of their U.S. fellowship;
6. Conduct a comprehensive “virtual” mid-program conference to be hosted on an internet-based platform created for the Community Solutions participants;
7. Develop and integrate a strong leadership development component into all program activities;
8. Facilitate professional enrichment activities that highlight and support the goals of Community Solutions, including leadership development, community engagement, volunteerism and civic responsibility, cross-sector development, and private-public partnerships;
9. Craft a comprehensive outreach strategy for highlighting participant and alumni achievements, collaborative projects, and new initiatives that fully utilizes online and social media platforms;
10. Conduct an end-of-program workshop in Washington, D.C.;
11. Promote and support community development projects following the participant’s U.S. fellowship;
12. Monitor participants and the performance of hosting institutions for the duration of the U.S. fellowship;
13. Evaluate the program and its impact on the participants, host organizations, and their communities;
14. Manage financial aspects of the program including timely disbursement of participant stipends, housing allowances, etc. and promptly report any irregularities in the budget or spending to ECA;
15. Participate in regular program reviews with ECA (in person or by telephone) to assess program implementation and identify matters of concern. The award recipient should report programmatic, financial and statistical information to ECA including brief monthly email updates outlining general programmatic activities conducted during the past month and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted the following month;
16. Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from ECA; and
17. Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement with ECA, including, but not limited to, submitting timely financial and program reports and proper budget oversight.

B. U.S. Department of State Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, ECA's Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division, is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA anticipates working closely with the recipient organization to ensure that all aspects of the program model support the Community Solutions program goals. ECA activities and responsibilities for this program include participation in the design and direction of program implementation including recruitment and selection strategies, development of publicity and program materials, creation of online components, and execution of U.S.-based and follow-on programming. ECA specific responsibilities for this program include:

1. Participate in the design and direction of all program activities. As needed, ECA will provide guidance in the execution of all program components;
2. Approve key personnel including leadership specialists, trainers, or coaches;
3. Approve program timelines and agendas;
4. Review and approve program publicity, outreach efforts, and other materials;
5. Approve the final selection of participants and host institutions;
6. Approve changes to participants' proposed community development field or project;
7. Issue participants DS-2019 forms and assist with SEVIS-related issues;
8. Enroll participants in the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program, issue health benefits identifications cards, and provide instructions on host claim forms;
9. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout duration of program and assist, as needed, with participant emergencies;
10. Liaison with relevant U.S. embassies and country desk officers at the State Department including, but not limited to, recruitment and selection, web-based publicity efforts, and D.C.-based opening and closing events;
11. Work with the award recipient to publicize the program through various media outlets and ECA and PAS's social media platforms; and
12. Monitor and evaluate the program as necessary, through site visits or debriefing sessions.

II. Section Two – Program Specific Guidelines

A. Overview

The Community Solutions Program builds on existing efforts by engaged civic and community leaders to improve the economic, environmental, political, and social conditions of their local communities. Through leadership training, an enhanced understanding of civic engagement as a development tool, and an emphasis on the role of public-private partnerships to advance key societal issues, Community Solutions will provide opportunities for eligible individuals to more effectively address complex problems in their own institutions, villages, cities, regions, and countries.

Community Solutions Program participants will undertake a four- to six-month U.S.-based fellowship program in public institutions, government offices, state legislatures, social incubators, businesses, or non-profit organizations to work with seasoned civic and community leaders on specific issues of mutual interest.

fellowship sites will provide real life models for Community Solutions Fellows to practice leadership lessons, identify creative approaches to global challenges, and develop concrete strategies to address existing issues within host and home communities. U.S. fellowships should be learning laboratories for Community Solutions participants to apply leadership theory, share best practices, observe civic engagement, and explore how public, private and non-profit sectors work together to advance the common good. Community Solutions should provide opportunities for participants to observe varied aspects of American life, discuss issues emerging during and connected to activities in host organizations and local U.S. communities, and develop resources related to follow-on activities. The program should also include opportunities for the participants to meet American citizens from a variety of backgrounds, to interact with peers, and to speak to appropriate student, community, and civic groups in the United States about their experiences and life in their home countries. Linking Fellows, program alumni, host organizations, and mentors together, the Community Solutions should endeavor to create a network of engaged professionals and civic leaders committed to problem solving, public engagement, and community-building.

The proposal should integrate Community Solutions goals into all aspects of the program design and implementation. Proposed program models should endeavor to mirror program goals, community engagement principles, and leadership in its broadest sense. Every effort should be made to ensure that the administration and implementation of the program also provide models of effective leadership, inclusivity, and community engagement.

B. Program Dates

ECA envisions the approximate dates of FY 2017 the Community Solutions Program to be as follows:

- *August 2017 – January 2018*: Recruitment and selection of foreign participants.
- *January 2018 – May 2018*: Recruitment of U.S. hosting institutions. Secure U.S.-based hosts and fellowship sites.
- *July/August 2018*: Community Solutions Fellows travel to the United States to attend a D.C.-based orientation before departing for fellowship sites.
- *July/August 2018 – December 2017*: Community Solutions U.S.-based fellowship.
- *December 2018*: Community Solutions Fellows travel to Washington, D.C., for the end-of-program workshop before departing for their home countries.
- *January 2019 – July 2019*: Conduct follow-on projects. U.S. participants travel overseas to support collaborative projects.

C. Eligible Partner Countries

To the fullest extent possible, program participants should be recruited and selected from all of the countries listed below. No guarantee is made or implied that every country will have participants. Note: The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposed project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the program's needs and the availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust and/or add eligible countries should conditions change in a country and/or if other countries are identified as viable alternatives and/or according to Department priorities. Geographic regions and eligible

countries are as follows:

Africa:

Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Europe and Eurasia:

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine

South and Central Asia:

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

East Asia and the Pacific:

Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Thailand, and Vietnam

Middle East and North Africa:

Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and West Bank/Palestinian Territories

Western Hemisphere:

Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago

D. Thematic Areas:

The Community Solutions program must embrace a global program design that incorporates all four of the proposed themes under Community Solutions. Thematic areas are as follows:

Environmental Issues:

Fellowships should focus on issues related to water and resource management, food security, supporting food supplies (at local, regional or national levels) including locally-sourced or community agriculture, social entrepreneurship (leveraging science and technology to address ecological and environmental issues), low-carbon technologies, and the use of natural resources, renewable energy, and pollution. Fellowships may also explore the role of educational programs and youth engagement as they pertain to environmental sustainability.

Tolerance and Conflict Resolution:

Fellowships should expose participants to issues and strategies addressing tolerance, multi-culturalism, anti-discrimination, inclusion, and conflict resolution. Negotiation skills, the art of compromise, fair treatment and inclusion of minority and marginalized populations, preventing community-based violence, youth engagement, and civil and human rights could also be addressed. Based on participants' specific interests, fellowships may need to be identified that deal with conflict resolution and crisis response techniques in failing, failed, and post-conflict states and complex emergencies/disasters. Fellowships may also explore the way technology and social media can be utilized as tools for promoting tolerance, inclusion, resolving conflicts, and preventing violence.

Transparency and Accountability:

Fellowships should provide exposure to programs, models, and/or institutions related to civil society and civil liberties, grass-roots democracy, good governance, open government, anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, press freedom, and/or fair elections. Fellowships may also explore the role technology and media play in supporting civil society and corporate and public accountability and transparency. Under this theme, the important role of youth engagement and volunteerism could also be addressed.

Women and Gender Issues:

Fellowships should focus on issues related to women's education, empowerment, health, and entrepreneurship. Under this theme, fellowships may also focus on gender issues and equality, preventing exploitation and abuse, including gender-based and domestic violence, and public policies or community perceptions related to gender stereotyping. Special emphasis should be placed on identifying fellowships that will provide exposure to best practices for grassroots organizations working to advance the political, economic, and social empowerment of women and/or the protection of the individuals marginalized because of their gender.

E. Selection of Participants

Utilizing the latest in technology including web interfaces, cloud applications, SMS technology, and social/new media platforms, the award recipient will administer a targeted global recruitment campaign to advertise the Community Solutions Program. Recruitment materials should be posted on appropriate media sites that appeal to young community leaders meeting the eligibility requirements. The award recipient should work closely with ECA and Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of U.S. missions in participating countries to ensure that outreach efforts are appropriately tailored to the country or region and have the broadest reach.

It is anticipated that the participants' backgrounds will be varied and could include the sciences, social sciences, humanities, education, business, technology, media/communication, and other professional fields but with a unifying commitment to using community engagement, participation, and dialogue as the basis for confronting local and global challenges. Every effort should be made to attract as large and diverse an applicant pool as possible, including persons with disabilities, a balanced mix of male and female participants, participants who are from non-elite backgrounds, rural and urban sectors, etc.

Eligibility

Competition for the Community Solutions Program is merit-based and open to community leaders, ages 25-38, who meet the following criteria:

- Living and working in his/her home country at the time of application;
- Currently working on a community engagement initiative in his/her home country and has at least two (2) years of professional experience in this capacity at the time of application. Special consideration can be given to individuals with refugee status working on behalf of his/her home community;
- Submits a complete application, with all required documents, by the application deadline;
- Able to begin the Community Solutions Fellowship program in the United States in 2016;
- Able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Committed to returning to his/her home country after completion of the program; and
- Proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application.

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the Community Solutions Program:

- U.S. citizens and/or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals participating in academic, training or research programs in the United States or other countries at the time of application;
- Individuals residing or working outside their home countries at the time of application;
- Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. government (e.g., U.S. Department of State, Public Affairs Sections of U.S. embassies or other U.S. government agencies) who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years; and
- Other criteria to be determined in consultation with ECA.

Selection Process for Program Participants

After collecting and screening applications for completeness, the award recipient will identify a selection committee comprised of community leaders, citizen advocates, policy makers, non-for-profit representatives, social entrepreneurs, and scholars with expertise in the applicants' designated fields to read and evaluate each application using a form that is designed in consultation with ECA. Based on the written application evaluations, the award recipient will invite a percentage of the applicants (approximately three candidates for every placement available) for virtual interviews. Interview teams should be comprised of at least one experienced U.S. community developer and regional expert to conduct the interviews in English. Each panelist will complete an interview evaluation form designed by the award recipient and approved by ECA. The panelists will rank order the candidates interviewed and make recommendations based on the anticipated number of Community Solutions finalists and alternate candidates. An Institutional TOEFL or comparable English-language proficiency exam will be administered to each semi-finalist who does not already possess a valid TOEFL score of 520 (or 213 on the Computer-Based Test) or higher.

The award recipient will work closely with ECA and PAS on all aspects of the selection process. PAS should be invited to read applications, participate in the interviews either virtually or in a designated location, and provide comments on semi-finalists. Based on the written applications, interviews, TOEFL scores, and PAS comments, the award recipient will select the Community Solutions finalists and alternates, according to the number of participants designated by ECA. The Public Affairs Section in participating countries must receive a list of candidates nominated for the Community Solutions Program for concurrence. After consulting with ECA, the award recipient will inform *in writing* all finalists, alternate candidates, and rejected applicants of their status in the competition.

Recruitment and selection of candidates for the Community Solutions program is the responsibility of the award recipient in collaboration with ECA. U.S. embassies in participating countries are unable to offer more than minimal support for these processes. It is required, however, that the award recipient maintain ongoing communication with the Public Affairs Section of the relevant embassies and coordinate PAS' involvement, as possible, during the recruitment, interview, selection, and pre-departure orientation phases of the program. The proposal should address the award recipient's plans for maintaining a close working relationship with PAS

throughout the entire program cycle including but not limited to strategies to provide real-time updates to PAS on participants' achievements and facilitating a meeting between PAS and the Community Solutions alumni upon their return to their home countries.

F. Selection of U.S.-based Fellowship Placements

The proposal must discuss how the award recipient expects to recruit and select U.S. hosting organizations and community placements. ECA encourages the selection of fellowship placements that reflect the diversity of the American socio-economic and cultural landscape. Host institutions should be selected on the basis of their demonstrated track record of success in community endeavors, commitment to collaborative approaches to problem solving, organizational culture, ability to provide active mentoring and participant support, cost share, and capacity to engage the local community in support of the program. Participants can be placed in public institutions, government offices, legislatures, social incubators, businesses, or non-profit organizations working with seasoned community leaders on substantive issues. Fellowship sites should provide real life models for Community Solutions Fellows to apply leadership lessons and explore creative approaches to real world challenges.

The fellowship placements should be designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the role community development plays in U.S. political, social, economic and social life, while at the same time providing useful skills, models, and concepts for participants' own leadership development. Fellowship placements should include a mentoring component that complements online leadership discussions and trainings. Fellow placements must be experiential in nature, reinforce key learning objectives embedded in other parts of the Community Solutions Program, and allow participants to engage in substantive organizational initiatives/projects. Placements should enable participants to experience firsthand the American tradition of grassroots approaches to solving community problems. The proposal should also include a strategy for ensuring that participants meet with a wide-cross section of individuals and have access to additional professional and leadership opportunities within the U.S. host community.

The proposal must outline the level of support that it will require of the U.S. organizations and institutions hosting participants. Each Community Solutions Fellow should have two-levels of support in the form of an organizational and community mentor. Organizational mentors are professional affiliates within the organization responsible for directing Fellows' leadership activities over the four-month exchange. Community mentors are individuals from within the local community with experience engaging communities around critical issues. Organizational mentors should provide their Community Solutions Fellows with guidance into organizational culture, assist in identifying substantive projects that advance the organization's and Fellows' goals, provide relevant resources for a successful fellowship, and offer active constructive feedback of the Fellows' work. Community Mentors should provide their Community Solutions Fellows guidance and key insights into civic engagement and leadership opportunities in their local host communities.

G. Pre-Departure Orientation

Pre-departure orientations, virtual or in-person, should be conducted for Community Solutions finalists before they leave their home countries. The pre-departure orientation should be the entry point for participants'

personal leadership development journey. Pre-departure orientations should facilitate the safe passage of the Community Solutions Fellows to the United States, clarify their understanding of the program's goals and regulations, including each Fellow's mandatory compliance with the J-1 visa two-year home residency requirement, and generally prepare Fellows for adjustment to the U.S. cultural and work environment. Each Fellow must understand his/her obligation to maintain communication with the award recipient throughout the duration of the program.

The award recipient should develop a Terms and Conditions document outlining program requirements, J-1 visa conditions, and other relevant program elements. Each Fellow must receive a copy of the Community Solutions Terms and Conditions, and sign the Terms and Conditions document prior to his or her departure to the United States.

H. U.S.-Based Orientation

In addition to a comprehensive introduction to the program design, goals and activities, the program orientation in Washington, D.C. should contain the following components:

- Broad introduction to the problems and challenges facing American society in the 21st Century;
- Overview of democratic institutions and processes;
- Personal leadership development and cultivation of leadership skills;
- Team building activities that model civic and community engagement;
- Introduction to concepts of U.S. civic and community development;
- Discussion of ethical leadership and public good; and
- Financial management issues, with a discussion of U.S. income tax obligations;

The U.S.-based orientation program should also address the Community Solutions themes of Environmental Issues, Tolerance and Conflict Resolution, Transparency and Accountability, and Women and Gender Issues.

I. Professional Development Activities: Conferences, Seminars, and Enhancements

Professional activities (virtual or otherwise) should be an integral part of the program and directly complement the fellowship portion of the program. Professional development activities should consist of a carefully integrated series of lectures, panel presentations, seminar discussions, individual and group activities, and reading assignments before and during the fellowship period. All activities should place a strong emphasis on the use of analytic tools, communication and leadership skills, and personal development. Participants should be exposed to a variety of civic leaders, community developers, and policy experts representing diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and occupations on the topics and issues to be explored. The proposal should also provide a variety of learning styles to maximize learning outcomes within the Community Solutions community with special attention paid to incorporating adult learning styles into the Community Solutions program design.

Technology should be a cornerstone for all program activities. Technology, defined in its broadest sense, should be utilized to strengthen core learning objectives, create a forum for substantive dialogue on pressing global issues, and allow a robust repository for resources and best practices. The award recipient should develop an

integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative approach to leadership development that is reinforced through the fellowship placement, enhanced through online discussions, and reinforced through program activities. The leadership component should include at least one leadership training session per month and include opportunities for reflection and introspection. These workshops should be creative, highly interactive, and team oriented. They should require input and contribution from all participants and provide Fellows with enhanced leadership skills. The award recipient may recruit leadership specialists, qualified instructors, and workshop facilitators for these sessions from other organizations.

J. Virtual Mid-Program Conference and Online Leadership Development

The proposal must discuss the goals and objectives of the mid-program virtual conference and online leadership development. The proposal should include tentative dates for online activities and possible session topics. Special attention should be given to an examination of how the virtual mid-program conference and the online leadership training will further participants' understanding of and encourage dialogue around the issue of leadership, civic engagement, social challenges, community building, and collaborative approaches to problem solving.

K. End of Program Workshop

At the end of the Community Solutions Program, a closing workshop will be held in Washington, D.C., to highlight key learning objectives, support plans for follow-on projects, and showcase Fellows' achievements with relevant stakeholders. The award recipient will work closely with ECA to coordinate this event. The award recipient will be responsible for setting up meetings in the D.C. area and providing transportation, lodging, per diem, working lunches, reception and miscellaneous expenses for all Community Solutions Fellows for a minimum of two to three days. ECA will be responsible for arranging meetings within the U.S. Department of State, as appropriate.

The proposal should discuss the goals and objectives of the event, propose possible workshop themes and topics, creative ways to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of ideas between Community Solutions Fellows and invited guests, as well as ways to invite meaningful interaction between the Fellows, host organizations, and other professionals from the Washington community. Special attention should be given to an examination of how Community Solutions Fellows will translate and utilize their U.S. experiences in their home communities.

L. Program Monitoring

The proposal must discuss how the participants' progress in achieving program goals and objectives will be monitored at their U.S. hosting organization (e.g., surveys, interviews, work plans, email, etc.). The proposal should cite the intended frequency of communication with the participants and representatives of the U.S. organizations, and outline performance goals or benchmarks for the participants' time in the United States. The proposal should also discuss how the quality of the participants' experience will be evaluated.

M. Program Measurement and Evaluation

The proposal must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the success of the program, both as the activities unfold, at the end of the program, and once the participants return to their home communities. The award recipient should develop a set of outcomes that can be tied to the Community Solutions goals and address plans to administer a pre- and post-program survey to the Community Solutions Fellows. ECA requests that the proposal provide a description of a methodology to link outcomes to original program objectives with a special emphasis on leadership development and network creation. These evaluation tools should complement ECA surveys, not duplicate them. ECA expects that the award recipient will track participants and partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning and 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.

N. Follow-On Projects

The proposal should provide concrete approaches to encourage and support follow-on projects between Community Solutions participants, U.S. hosts, as well as with the broader Community Solutions community including but not limited to alumni and international stakeholders. The proposals should exercise creativity in the conceptualization of the follow-on component and support for Community Solutions goals. Follow-on projects should encourage the continued sharing of ideas and resources. The proposal should include plans for an outbound exchange program with U.S. host mentors as well as cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation. Competitive outbound programs will directly support ongoing collaborative efforts between Community Solutions Fellows as well as between Fellows and U.S. host organizations. Follow-on projects should contribute to the Community Solutions' goal of creating a global network of diverse, multi-disciplinary professionals and civic leaders committed to problem solving and community engagement. The proposal should also examine how technology might be used to support and amplify participants' outbound projects.

O. Alumni Programming

The proposal must include a defined strategy for alumni engagement that reflects the goals and anticipated outcomes of the Community Solutions Program. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on or alumni activities; information on how these will be coordinated with individual alumni efforts; strategies to connect individual program cohorts to the larger Community Solutions alumni community; and explore how long-term linkages within the alumni community will be encouraged. The proposal must also include a discussion of how Community Solutions alumni programming might be coordinated with, and integrated into, existing ECA initiatives. Alumni activities should be conducted with minimum financial support of ECA, demonstrated cost-share by the award recipient, and where possible, enhanced through private-public partnerships including organizations that directly support ECA and Community Solutions goals.

The proposal should also demonstrate how the award recipient will creatively utilize technology and online networking sites to engage with program participants before, during, and after they take part in the international exchange. As appropriate, the proposal should elaborate on creative ways to encourage discussion about international exchange and hosting opportunities on the ECA and the State Department's Facebook and other social networking sites. The proposal should detail how ECA websites will be promoted to exchange

participants and how the award recipient will facilitate participant registration on the ECA alumni website.

The tracking of alumni is crucial for the evaluation of the program and for the implementation of follow-on programs. The proposal must provide a clear plan for alumni tracking and cite how it will be coordinated with ECA and PAS in participating countries. All statistical information gathered and compiled by the award recipient on the participants should be transferable to the database maintained at ECA. The award recipient will be required to provide bi-annual data submissions via electronic data transfer to the ECA database that are compatible with and meet ECA database standards. Data fields should include, but are not limited to, the following: first name; middle name; last name; gender; date of birth; country of citizenship; country of residence; participant type; field of study/research topic; home/host institution or affiliation; program category; fiscal year of participation; U.S. state where fellowship takes place, and SEVIS ID number. The award recipient will be expected to meet all statistical requirements including the submission of all grantee data for the Bureau's annual statistical report. Please refer to ECA's General Policy Guidance on Alumni Outreach/Follow-on and Engagement and Commitment to Public Private Partnerships in the PSI for additional details on alumni activities.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions' Application Control Checklist. All documents, including attachments, should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- *SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Cover Sheet*
- *SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs*
- *SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs*
- *Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.*

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In a double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed themes
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
 - a. Number and description of participants
 - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - d. Fields covered
 - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative

In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment/selection, orientation and conference activities, professional development component, cultural program, participant monitoring, follow-on programming, alumni programming)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

Detailed Budget

The proposal must include a comprehensive line-item budget, the details and format of which are contained in the PSI. In addition, the proposal must include a comprehensive budget narrative demonstrating how costs were derived. **The total amount of funding requested from ECA may not exceed \$2,300,000, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds, and must support approximately 100 foreign participants.** Program activity is anticipated to begin on or about August 1, 2017 and it is anticipated to end on or about August 1, 2019. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the proposed budget

in accordance with funding availability and the needs of the program.

The following program costs are eligible for funding consideration:

1. **Travel.** Please note that all international air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. Visas for non-U.S. Fellows 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. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each foreign participant may be included in the budget. The allowance may be used for incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

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 Allowance.** Foreign participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50. U.S. program staff members 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 session. Subcontracting organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and subcontractor should be included in the proposal. Subawards should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget. Contractors/contracting organizations may also be employed in which case the written agreement between the award recipient and the contractors/contracting organizations should be included in the proposal.

5. **Room Rental.** Room rental may not exceed \$250 per day per conference room or per activity.

6. **Materials Development.** Your proposal may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for participants.

7. **Supplies.** Proposals may contain costs to purchase equipment for programming such as computers and fax machines. Costs for furniture are not allowed. Supply costs for the

purchase of equipment must be kept to a minimum.

8. **Working Meals.** No more than two working meals may be provided for each program component. At least one working meal should be budgeted for the D.C. final workshop. The cost per person should not exceed \$45 for the working meal. No charges may be made against U.S. government funds for alcoholic beverages. The number of invited guests should not exceed the number of funded program participants by more than a factor of two (i.e., no more than twenty invited guests for a working meal involving ten funded program participants).

9. **Health Insurance.** Foreign participants will be covered under the terms of a U.S. Department of State-sponsored health insurance policy. The premium is paid by the U.S. Department of State directly to the insurance company. Applicants are permitted to include costs for travel insurance for participants in the budget.

10. **Reasonable Accommodations.** Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose, and reflect plans to make the necessary program modifications or participant numbers in the event participants need reasonable accommodation.

11. **Wire Transfer Fees.** When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to partner organizations overseas. Applicants are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

12. **Alumni Activities.** Reasonable costs related to alumni programming may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on activities. Proposals should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively utilize technology and online networking sites to enhance and amplify alumni programming. Organizations can propose small grants or a small grant competition for which the Fellows compete in order to encourage their continued work on, and implementation of, their individual projects.

13. **Administrative Costs.** Costs necessary for the effective administration of the program may include salaries for recipient organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, proposals in which the administrative costs do not exceed 28% of the total requested ECA grant funds will be more competitive under the review criterion. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner, and other sources. Please include in the administrative portion of your budget plans to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with

your program officer within the first 45 days after the grant has been awarded.

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

Program Materials

While not a requirement, materials that advance the reviewer's understanding of the program design and implementation can be included in GrantSolutions' Application Control Checklist. Supplementary materials, if included, should be kept to a minimum and labeled clearly such as "RESUMES" or "SELECTION MATERIALS." These could include:

1. Draft agendas of professional workshops, conferences and seminars including pre-departure, orientation, and final conference activities
2. Draft application and recruitment materials
3. Draft selection and interview materials
4. Outline of proposed alumni programming
5. Sample evaluation and survey instruments
6. Timeline for program implementation
7. Program promotional materials
8. Outline of follow-on activities
9. Outline of the American outbound component
10. Letters of endorsement
11. Resumes of program staff should be included in the submission. No resume should exceed two pages.

Please note: 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:

- 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.
- Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

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

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The NOFO indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which the proposal must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the solicitation process, call Linnéa E. Allison at (202) 632-6060, Office of Citizen Exchanges Professional Division (ECA/PE/C/PF) ; Fax: (202) 632-6492; email: allisonle@state.gov.