

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2017 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAE-17-011

Office of Academic Exchange Programs Near East Asia Programs Branch

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Near East Asia Programs Branch (ECA/A/E/NEA) for the FY 2017 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship 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.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

Subject to the availability of funds, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (herein referred to as the Bureau) expects to make one award of up to \$2,672,500 for the administration of the FY 2017 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program (herein referred to as “Tunisia UGRAD”).

The FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD, part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, offers full scholarships for an academic year of study in the United States for outstanding students from underrepresented sectors of Tunisia. Recruitment efforts should target a diverse applicant pool based on factors including, but not limited to, gender, geographic origin, and field of study. The program will provide approximately 65 students from across Tunisia with a deeper understanding of American culture and new academic and professional skills and expertise to help them contribute to the economic growth and development of Tunisia. The program will support two consecutive cohorts of students who will each pursue one academic year of non-degree undergraduate study in the United States at accredited four-year institutions. A broad range of academic fields of study are eligible. Please note that students may **not** enroll in clinical coursework while on the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD. Clinical coursework generally includes classes that require unsupervised, direct clinical patient contact or have the ultimate goal of receiving a medical license and/or prescribing or administering medication.

Responsibilities of the award recipient for the administration of Tunisia UGRAD for cohorts in academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 include:

1. Recruiting and nominating program participants from all 24 of Tunisia’s governorates, seeking gender parity;
2. Recruiting and selecting accredited, four-year host institutions in the United States;
3. Conducting English language assessments and placement in intensive English programs in

- the United States for participants, as necessary;
4. Placing participants at accredited, four-year institutions of higher education in the United States;
 5. Providing monitoring and support services for participants at host institutions in the United States;
 6. Creating materials for orientations and workshops;
 7. Assisting with community service and internship arrangements and other special program management;
 8. Financial administration of the program budget including, but not limited to, stipend disbursement, domestic travel arrangements, student reimbursement for cultural events, adhering to federal and local income tax laws, and fiscal reporting;
 9. Program reporting and evaluation;
 10. Managing and monitoring the visa process, including the processing of DS-2019s;
 11. Supporting alumni tracking and coordination, as well as creation of follow-on activities for program alumni; and
 12. Ensuring that participants receive and review a release form that states whether they approve or do not approve the use of their photos or quotes in publications related to Tunisia UGRAD.

In a cooperative agreement, the Bureau is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

In this Agreement, ECA/A/E/NEA will be responsible for the following:

1. Participating in the design and direction of program activities;
2. Approving key personnel;
3. Approving final selection of program participants;
4. Approving and providing input for all program agendas and timelines;
5. Reviewing and approving all program recruitment, publicity, and outreach materials;
6. Approving final host institution selections;
7. Providing final approval, after thorough consultation with the cooperating agency, of all student placements;
8. Providing guidance in the execution of all project components;
9. Arranging for Department of State speakers during workshops;
10. Advising and consulting during participant emergencies, including SEVIS-related issues;
11. Approving decisions related to specific circumstances or problems throughout the program;
12. Providing background information related to participants' home country and cultures; and
13. Providing liaison with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy and country desk officer at the U.S. Department of State.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

The cooperating organization will be expected to place approximately 65 participants at accredited U.S. colleges and universities over two consecutive academic years (approximately 32 each academic year) beginning in academic year 2018-2019. Programs and administrative responsibilities for the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD include:

A. PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Overseas Activity

The cooperating organization will be responsible for many overseas activities of Tunisia UGRAD. Overseas activity will include, but is not limited to, country-wide participant recruitment and selection; communicating with selected students, alumni, and the general public about Tunisia UGRAD; conducting pre-departure orientations; conducting alumni activities; and maintaining data on alumni and current students. Applicants should highlight experience or expertise administering successful exchange programs, including participant recruitment and selection, in the Middle East and North Africa or similar environments in the proposal.

Public Affairs Section Involvement

The cooperating organization will maintain ongoing communication with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and coordinate its operations during all phases of the program with the Public Affairs Section or designees and with the Bureau. The proposal should address the organization's plans for maintaining a close working relationship with the Public Affairs Section throughout the entire program cycle.

Participant Recruitment and Eligibility

For the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD, the cooperating organization will be responsible for the recruitment and nomination of all program participants in consultation with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and the Bureau. The cooperating organization may choose to utilize a regional partner/subcontractor agency to administer the recruitment and selection process in country. The applicant organization should describe their ability to coordinate and work effectively with the Public Affairs Section and any partner organizations that will be responsible for recruitment and selection of participants on behalf of the cooperating organization. Proposals should provide information about how selected participants' information will be logged and tracked.

Participants will be highly motivated undergraduate students from colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher education in Tunisia who demonstrate leadership through academic work, community involvement, and extracurricular activities. Their fields of study will be varied, including the sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities, information technology, and business. Please note that students may **not** enroll in clinical coursework while on the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD. Participants will have achieved a minimum TOEFL score of 500 (or a likelihood of achieving that score after short-term pre-academic English language study in the United States prior to the start of the academic year), and must meet other requirements of the U.S. colleges and universities where they will be placed.

Every effort should be made to select a balanced mix of male and female participants and to recruit participants who are from underrepresented backgrounds, from geographically diverse areas of Tunisia, studying a variety of eligible fields, and who have had little or no prior experience in the United States or elsewhere outside of their home country.

Competition for participant selection in the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD is merit-based and open to anyone who meets the following criteria:

- Is a citizen, national or permanent resident qualified to hold a valid passport issued by the Government of Tunisia;
- Is enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in good academic standing at the time of

- application at a registered academic institution in Tunisia;
- Is **NOT** currently in the final year of their undergraduate program. More specifically:
 - Is a student enrolled in the *Licence*/three-year system in their first or second year of study, or
 - Is a student in the American/four-year system in their first, second, or third year of study, or
 - Is an Architecture or Engineering student in their first, second, third, or fourth year of study;
- Is currently residing in Tunisia;
- Is able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Is committed to returning to Tunisia after completion of the program; and
- Is able to achieve a TOEFL score of 500 or likely to achieve this score after short-term pre-academic English training in the United States prior to the start of the academic year.

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for Tunisia UGRAD:

- Students pursuing a Bachelor’s degree at a Tunisian *Institut Supérieur des Études Technologiques* (ISET), *Institut Supérieur des Sciences Appliquées et de Technologie* (ISSAT) or *Institut des Hautes Études Touristiques* (IHET).
- Part-time students;
- U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals currently participating in academic, training, or research programs in the United States;
- Individuals currently residing or working outside of Tunisia;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years;
- Employees and their families of non-profit organizations who administer Tunisia UGRAD on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents;
- Locally employed staff of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia who work for the U.S. Department of State or any U.S. government agency are ineligible for scholarships during the period of their employment and for one year following the termination of employment;
- Immediate family members (i.e. spouses and dependent children) of U.S. Department of State employees for a period of one year following the termination of such employment. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents; or
- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime.

U.S. Host Institution Selection and Participant Placement

In collaboration with the Bureau, the cooperating organization will be expected to recruit U.S. host institutions and will serve as the main point of contact for the host institution selection process. The proposal should describe in detail how the U.S. host institution competition will be conducted, including what measures will be taken to secure tuition awards and/or other cost sharing.

Host institutions for the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD should be accredited four-year colleges and universities that will provide students with a supportive environment and personalized attention. Placement at community colleges will not be permitted under this program. In addition, host

institutions should be selected on the basis of geographic diversity, their academic rigor, overall cost and ability to cost-share, and their ability to engage the students in the local community. These communities should be able to offer quality internships, as well as accessible housing, accommodations, and transportation.

The Bureau will approve the proposed placements at U.S. colleges and universities for all participants. No more than three participants should be placed at a single institution. If hosting more than three participants at one institution is proposed, the proposal should demonstrate how the cooperating organization will ensure maximum interaction with Americans and lessen the likelihood that participants will interact predominantly with each other.

Participants are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement under U.S. law, Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 212(e) and are expected to return to Tunisia immediately upon the conclusion of the program. Transfers of academic program and visa sponsorship to another U.S. institution will not be considered under Tunisia UGRAD.

Allowances

The proposal should present participant maintenance allowances in accordance with suggestions below or an alternative benefit package that includes the costs of campus housing, meals, books, and incidental expenses. The cooperating organization should monitor and directly distribute approved allowances (e.g. maintenance) and reimbursements (e.g. relevant fees); authorize special allowances as stipulated in the program terms and conditions (e.g. enrichment funds); clarify policies and procedures; and resolve problems relating to recipient benefits and payments.

Suggested amounts for allowances are:

- Travel Allowances: \$250 (for baggage, transit to airport, incidentals, etc. \$100 for the arrival journey to the U.S. and \$150 for the return journey to Tunisia.)
- Monthly Maintenance Allowance: \$400/month
- One-time Settling-in Allowance: \$100 (for items needed immediately upon arrival and not provided by host institution)
- Book Allowance: \$450/semester or \$300/quarter
- Enrichment Allowance: \$500/year (dispersed via an “application” process or other mechanism)

Housing & Meal Accommodations

Program participants will be placed in on-campus housing and have access to a comprehensive meal plan with provisions for religious-specific or other dietary needs.

Participants should be paired with U.S. student roommates, not other Tunisia UGRAD participants or international students.

The proposal should include a description of appropriate accommodations for participants’ religious observances and ensure options to meet particular needs such as single-gender and substance-free dorms/floors.

Fields of Study

A broad range of academic fields of study are eligible. Students should identify their fields of study on their application and these fields should be drawn from the standard university/college curriculum within the United States. Please note that students may **not** enroll in clinical coursework while on Tunisia UGRAD.

Academic Components

To support the mutual understanding goal of the exchange, the Bureau is particularly interested in opportunities for academic study related to U.S. institutions, society, and culture. Likewise, this program is designed to provide participants with skills that will improve their ability to succeed in the U.S. and Tunisian education systems and prepare them for joining the workforce in Tunisia. Therefore, participants must enroll in full-time coursework that incorporates their designated fields of study, American Studies, and a skills training component. See below (C. Program Components) for specific requirements.

Cultural Components

To further the exchange, participants will be encouraged to take part in enrichment activities. An enrichment allowance will be available to enable participants to engage in campus, community, and regional activities of a cultural nature, such as concerts, plays, museum exhibits, cultural festivals, etc. Participants may pursue enrichment activities on their own or as a group. The cooperating organization will be encouraged to assist participants in identifying potential enrichment activities.

Practical Experience Components

To provide opportunities for participants to develop key professional skills, students will participate in community service activities during their first semester of the program. Participants should volunteer for at least 20 hours at local nonprofit organizations. Additionally, participants will partake in an unpaid practical internship during the final semester for a minimum of 80 hours. Internships will be part-time and must be related to the participants' field of study and/or career plans. This is a key component of the program intended to prepare participants for eventual entry into the Tunisian workforce.

B. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Monitoring and Support

The proposal should demonstrate that the applicant can provide support systems to the Tunisia UGRAD participants that reflect cultural understanding and sensitivities, as well as effective communication skills to facilitate a successful exchange experience.

The cooperating organization should verify participant enrollment in the approved U.S. college or university and resolve any initial placement and/or adjustment problems upon arrival at their host institution. The cooperating organization should assist program participants in finding adequate academic and counseling services where needed. The cooperating organization should monitor and evaluate the performance of Tunisia UGRAD participants to ensure satisfactory progress in the achievement of academic goals, including periodic campus visits, consistent communication with host advisors and professors and review of academic reports.

Working in close consultation with the Bureau, the cooperating organization should assist

participants, as required, in resolving matters related to academic issues and personal or health emergencies; provide counseling or make appropriate referrals; perform domestic travel to resolve participant emergencies; and provide other assistance as needed.

Visas and Tax Requirements

The secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by participants and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa is essential to the Bureau. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including orientation of participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting, and other requirements.

In addition, administration of the scholarships must comply with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes, as applicable. Applicant organizations must also present a plan for assisting participants to comply with federal income tax regulations and for calculating appropriate amounts that must be withheld from students' allowances, in accordance with the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Health Benefits

The cooperating organization should enroll participants in a health insurance plan offered by the host university in addition to the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Plan for Exchanges (ASPE). In instances where health insurance plans are not provided by universities, the cooperating organization should work with the Bureau to find a suitable alternative. The organization should provide information concerning health benefit coverage, procedures, and benefits as needed, to Tunisia UGRAD participants and assist them in presenting claims.

Participant Travel

The cooperating organization should manage program participant travel arrangements, in consultation with the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, for both domestic and international travel, including the distribution of travel allowances. All travel arrangements must be made in accordance with the "Fly-America Act." (The Fly-America Act requires that all U.S. government-funded travel be on American flag carriers where such service is available.)

Extensions and Transfers

Extensions of sponsorship or transfers from Exchange Visitor Program No. G-1-0332 will not be allowed. The intent of this program is to provide participants with one academic year of non-degree undergraduate study. Students must return immediately to Tunisia to complete their undergraduate degrees and fulfill their two-year home residency requirements.

C. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Pre-Departure Orientation

The cooperating organization will host a substantive pre-departure orientation program in Tunisia for each cohort. With assistance and materials provided by the cooperating organization and the Bureau, the orientation will cover topics such as the terms and conditions of the scholarship, including a clear articulation of J visa requirements and the two-year home residency requirement; detailed information about health insurance, finance, safety, diversity,

and sexual harassment issues; and, to the extent possible, information regarding host institutions and placements. The orientation will also provide a general introduction to U.S. undergraduate education and campus life, U.S. culture, and cultural adjustment.

Additionally, program handbooks including this material should be provided by the cooperating organization for dissemination at the pre-departure orientation. Tentative pre-departure locations and dates should be listed in the proposal, but final approval will be given in consultation with the Bureau and Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia.

U.S. Orientation

Host universities and colleges should provide academic/program orientations for the participants upon their arrival at the university or college that will reiterate the topics mentioned above as well as introduce the participants specifically to the host school and community. The cooperating organization should provide materials for such orientations that will ensure participants associate themselves with Tunisia UGRAD, as well as with their host institutions. Proposals should include tentative dates, location, and topics for the orientation with the understanding that the cooperating organization will work closely with the Bureau to develop the agenda.

Academic Program and Skills-Building

All participants must be enrolled full-time in undergraduate coursework chosen from the host institution's existing curriculum so that students have ample opportunity for both substantive interaction with U.S. faculty and student peers and exposure to U.S. academic and classroom culture.

Participants will be required to take at least two courses in their fields of study and one American Studies course, such as American history, literature, or government, per semester. Additionally, participants will be required to take at least one academic skills-building course or training, which may be a specific course or mandatory trainings outside of class, during the first semester. Training may include, but is not limited to, time management, note taking, preparing for exams, conducting presentations, researching, and writing. If the host institution does not offer academic skills-building courses, it should provide participants with tailored instruction in what is required to succeed academically in the United States, such as academic research and writing, critical thinking, time management, note-taking, and studying for and taking tests. Once program course requirements are met, participants may also enroll in elective courses and should work closely with cooperating organization and host institution advisors to determine suitability.

Pre-Academic English Language Study

The cooperating organization will provide placements in intensive English language study programs in the United States to students who need to elevate their skills and knowledge to a level necessary to successfully complete Tunisia UGRAD. Providing pre-academic English language study will promote participation by diverse Tunisian students who are otherwise well-qualified but may not have had access to advanced English training. Those students requiring additional language study should be enrolled in English as a Second Language classes (ESL) ranging from two to six weeks either prior to the start of the academic term, or during the first semester of the program. The cooperating organization will place students in ESL training appropriate to the students' abilities. Proposals should outline how suitable training programs

will be identified and how students will be assessed for need and eligibility to receive additional short-term pre-academic ESL training.

Community Service and Presentations

Students should participate in community service activities during their first semester of the program. Students should participate in at least 20 hours of community service during their first semester. Students may not receive salaries, stipends, or wages for their community service.

Participants must conduct at least one local presentation (at area schools or community organizations) about their home country. This may be counted toward their hours of community service.

Internships

The proposal should include an unpaid practical internship component during the second and final semester to provide further opportunities for participants to develop important professional skills needed for eventual entry into the Tunisian workforce. This is a key component of the program. Internships should be part-time and must be related to the participants' field of study and/or career plans. Ideally, participants should complete no less than 80 internship hours during their second semester. Participants should seek out opportunities on their own, but the cooperating organization should guide the students in their search, and provide sample resume and other resources, as necessary. The Bureau will approve internship placements. The cooperating organization will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the internship component of the program.

U.S. Cultural Enrichment

The Bureau welcomes creative ideas for introducing participants to American institutions, such as discussion groups on U.S. issues, visits to political campaign offices and polling places, attendance at school board or city council meetings, exposure to U.S. religious institutions, and civic-related volunteer work. Student attendance at museums, concerts, plays, and other cultural events that feature American content should be encouraged and facilitated whenever possible.

Mid-Year Workshops

The cooperating organization will host a substantive mid-year conference in the United States for each cohort. The mid-year workshop should address issues including, but not limited to, cultural adjustment, academic and future job search skills, leadership, and other mid-year topics as appropriate. Students should have an opportunity to present their community service activities from the previous semester.

This mid-year workshop should also bring together host advisors from all U.S. host colleges and universities to discuss the management of the program. The cooperating organization should lead discussions on best practices related to program administration, emergency protocols, and student issue scenarios.

Re-entry Workshops

The proposal should include administration of a re-entry workshop for each cohort that may either take place in the United States or directly upon the participants' return to Tunisia. The workshop dates should be scheduled in consultation with the Bureau. The re-entry workshop

should address issues including, but not limited to, reverse cultural shock, academic and job search skills, alumni opportunities, and other re-entry topics as appropriate.

Alumni Tracking and Follow-On Activities

Alumni activities are an important part of the Bureau's academic exchange programs. Alumni programming in the form of newsletters, listservs and use of social media provides critical program follow-on and maximizes and extends the benefit of the participants' program in the United States. Proposed follow-on activities for alumni must be developed in close consultation with the Bureau and PAS Tunis, should reflect the goals and objectives of the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD, and must contribute to the Bureau's goals to foster mutual understanding between the people of Tunisia and the people of United States. The proposal should describe how long-term links with Tunisia UGRAD alumni will be fostered and maintained.

Proposals should outline ways to creatively organize and support engagement with alumni without additional Bureau funding, including a timeline of proposed activities. Proposals should explain how alumni activities will be integrated with initiatives for alumni of other ECA programs, rather than being isolated events. Alumni tracking is critical for the evaluation of the Program and for the implementation of worthwhile follow-on programs. The proposal should detail how database systems will be maintained and updated beyond the duration of the Cooperative Agreement and how often updated database information will be provided to the Bureau. Applicants should explain how these efforts will be coordinated with the Bureau and the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis.

All statistical information gathered and compiled by the award recipient on the program participants and alumni should be transferable to the database maintained at the Bureau. The proposal should describe how the applicant organization intends to store data on participants for transfer to the Bureau's system.

Because Tunisia UGRAD is one component of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP), which also includes the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP), the applicant should cooperate closely with the organization that is awarded the cooperative agreement for TCCSP to implement alumni activities that will be available to all TJSP alumni. These alumni activities should be promoted as TJSP alumni activities under unified branding.

Alumni Workshop

The proposal should include a detailed plan for the administration of a workshop that would include alumni from all cohorts of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, including Tunisia UGRAD and the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP), totaling approximately 600 alumni. The alumni workshop should offer alumni ample opportunity to network amongst themselves and with Tunisian representatives from various sectors; to present the work they have been doing since their programs in the United States; and to reflect on the impact their programs have had on their lives and communities. The workshop should take place in Tunisia after the return of the final program cohort and no later than March 2021.

The cooperating organization will develop the workshop agenda in close consultation with the Bureau and PAS Tunis, and must be willing to work with cooperating organizations previously responsible for implementing Tunisia UGRAD and TCCSP to include all program alumni equally. Applicant organizations should explain how they would plan this workshop if there are

multiple organizations administering the two components of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program: Tunisia UGRAD and TCCSP. For the purposes of this proposal, the applicant should budget for the participation of approximately 320 Tunisia UGRAD alumni.

D. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The proposal should demonstrate the existence of suitable financial systems to track, audit, and disburse Tunisia UGRAD funds. The cooperating organization will be expected to submit interim, residual and final reports, as directed by the Bureau, detailing expenditures, and to consult with the Bureau on the reprogramming of funds. Administration of these scholarships must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes where applicable.

E. PROGRAM PROJECTIONS, REPORTING, AND EVALUATION SERVICES

The proposal must include a statement of goals and expected outcomes for the program, including how results would be measured, as necessitated by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 2010. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include sample forms and/or a description of the methodology that will be used to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the cooperating organization will track participants 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. The evaluation plan should also include a plan for host campus representatives to evaluate the impact of the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD on their campuses and local communities, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program.

The recipient organization will be required to provide reports analyzing evaluation findings to the Bureau in regular program reports. The cooperating organization should develop and maintain a participant statistical database that records such information as bio-data, academic program, visa status, and participant accomplishments. 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.

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 Checklist. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”
- 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 one 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 theme
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 no more than 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, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

- Detailed Budget:

As with other exchange programs, the Bureau is committed to the containment of costs consistent with overall program objectives and sound management. The proposed budget should be separated into program expenses and administration costs.

The cooperating organization must enroll all students in a health insurance plan offered by the host university in addition to the Bureau-funded health benefits program, Accident and Sickness Policy for Exchanges (ASPE). Applicant organizations should include a line item to purchase health insurance plans as part of their budget proposal. Funding for the ASPE coverage will be provided separately from the Tunisia UGRAD budget of the cooperative agreement. ASPE provides for limited accident and sickness coverage, medical evacuation and repatriation of remains for all students during the duration of the exchange program.

For ASPE enrollment, the Bureau will provide the cooperating organization with the software/web-based applications, ID cards, brochures, instructions and forms necessary to manage the health insurance enrollment for the students. The cooperating organization will assist in presenting claims to the benefits administrator and consult with the Bureau on grantee health issues that may affect successful completion of individual programs. The cooperating organization must utilize a system that assigns a unique ID number to each participant for the purposes of insurance enrollment. This unique ID number must further include a specific number (assigned to each award recipient) that identifies the participants particular to that organization.

Under a cooperative agreement, funded items of expenditure may include, but are not limited to, the items listed below. The program budget narrative should cite areas in which economies of scale beyond the Bureau's allowable costs can be achieved and document the proposed cost sharing in the most concrete way possible. Administrative and program costs must be cost shared to the greatest extent feasible. Administrative costs must be kept as reasonable and low as possible.

Program Expenses

- Pre-departure orientation expenses
- Visa-related expenses, as necessary (travel to interviews)
- Round-trip travel from participants' home cities to international points of departure
- Round-trip international travel (via American carrier and in accordance with Fly America regulations)
- Round-trip domestic travel from U.S. ports of entry to host institutions
- Maximum of six weeks of pre-academic ESL training costs including, but not limited to, room and board, instructional fees, and use of facilities (A special effort should be made to limit these costs, both overall and per fellow, as much as possible.)
- Orientation and workshop costs, including but not limited to room and board, per diem, instructional fees, additional staff costs, use of facilities, materials, guest

lectures, etc. Include costs for pre-departure, arrival, mid-year, and re-entry orientations/workshops.

- Travel and per diem for senior staff members of cooperating organization to monitor and evaluate programs at host campuses
- Tuition and fees
- Monthly maintenance allowance
- Incidental expenses, including travel allowances
- Health insurance plans
- School break maintenance costs, including maintenance for any time period between pre-academic orientation sessions and academic programs
- Advising and monitoring of students
- Educational materials, which includes a book allowance per semester
- Costs for practical education and service learning
- Costs for cultural enrichment activities
- Costs for disability accommodations
- Costs for alumni activities and conference
- Evaluation
- Costs associated with registering participants in SEVIS
- Withholding for taxes, as necessary

Administration Costs

- Staff salaries and fringe benefits (Each staff member and his/her position must be listed separately, including the percentage of his/her total time spent on this program and duties performed on *behalf* of the program. Proposed salaries and time on task must be certified as true and accurate representations of actual costs and percentage of time. Resumes must be included for all staff.)
- Staff travel and per diem
- Communication costs (fax, telephone, postage, communication equipment, etc.)
- Office supplies
- Printing and duplication costs
- Administration of tax withholding and reporting as required by Federal, State, and local authorities and in accordance with relevant tax treaties
- OMB Circular 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F Audit fees if not included in the indirect cost pool
- Other direct costs
- Indirect costs (Per the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)

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 the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

- Calendar of activities/itinerary
- Letters of endorsement
- Resumes and CVs (Resumes of all program staff should be included in the submission. No resume should exceed two pages.)
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

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 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.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. 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) Quality of the Program Idea and Program Planning: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

2) Ability to Achieve Program Objectives: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

3) Multiplier Effect/Impact: Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

4) Support of Diversity: Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

5) Institutional Record and Capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of administering successful exchange programs in the Middle East and North Africa or similar environments, including participant recruitment and selection, responsible fiscal management, and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

6) Project Evaluation and Follow-on Activities: Proposals also should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended. Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

7) Cost-sharing and cost-effectiveness: 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. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

8) Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations: Proposed programs should receive positive assessments by the Bureau's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

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 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 Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The cooperating organization 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. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The NOFO provides details on proposal submission, including the submission deadline. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the competition, please contact Program Officers Cameron Davis-Bean or Jamie Sharp in the Middle East and North Africa Programs Branch, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, Fourth Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Mr. Davis-Bean can be reached at (202) 632-3277, or DavisBeanCC@state.gov. Ms. Sharp can be reached at (202) 632-9446 or SharpJ2@state.gov.