

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity

(NOFO): FY 2022 EducationUSA Advising Services

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0008045

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.432

Key Date/Application Deadline: July 2, 2021

Executive Summary:

The Educational Information and Resources Branch or EducationUSA Branch (ECA/A/S/A) in the Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces a NOFO for up to three cooperative agreements to administer FY 2022 EducationUSA Advising Services, pending the availability of FY 2022 funds. ECA reserves the right to fund, partially or fully, or not fund, one or more components and program elements based on the availability of funds. EducationUSA is the U.S. Department of State's global network of educational advising centers that work with prospective international students in more than 175 countries to promote U.S. higher education abroad. Advisers at more than 430 EducationUSA centers provide accurate, comprehensive, and current information about the diversity of U.S. higher education opportunities, guiding prospective students to find the institution that best fits their needs. In addition, the EducationUSA network assists accredited U.S. institutions of higher education institutions (HEIs) to help institutional leaders meet their campus internationalization goals, including strategic guidance to U.S. institutions regarding relevant international higher education systems and partners to enhance their international networks and potential partnerships. The EducationUSA network, in collaboration with ECA, also provides information on the U.S. higher education system to foreign governments and institutions, and encourages study abroad by Americans to expand their understanding of foreign cultures, communities, and countries.

With the goal of increasing student mobility between the United States and other countries through EducationUSA advising, this NOFO will result in up to three cooperative agreements:

- **Component A for Global EducationUSA Services** to support advising operations worldwide including, but not limited to, the development and maintenance of IT infrastructure, training resources and materials, global communications and outreach, and the employment and management of 15 Regional Educational Advising Coordinators.
- **Component B for EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia**, to support advising in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.
- **Component C for EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa**, to support advising in Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen.

ECA reserves the right to add or remove countries designated in Component B or C depending on Bureau and Mission priorities and the availability of funds. In these cases, the recipient will need to submit an updated budget and budget narrative highlighting adjustments to the original budget submission.

It is the Bureau's intent to award up to three cooperative agreements for an estimated total amount of \$8,600,500. Organizations may submit proposals for one, two, or all three funding opportunities, but they must clearly identify the proposal submitted as for Component A: Global EducationUSA Services; Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia; or Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa. **Applicants applying for more than one component must submit separate proposals for each component, with detailed budgets and narratives outlining a comprehensive strategy for the administration of each program component for which they apply. Applicants should include in their proposal a detailed staff budget with proposed level of effort** (please see section D.3.k. for information regarding the budget format). See section B. Federal Award Information for additional details.

FY 2022 award recipients should be prepared to work closely with previous implementing partners across all components to maintain continuity of programming and operations during the award's period of performance. This would include, but is not limited to, the maintenance and transfer of developed IT platforms and systems, virtual events and EducationUSA fair registration and payment platforms, outreach and communication strategies, advisor training and development materials and timelines. Additionally, FY 2022 award recipients for components A, B, and C should be prepared to collaborate with each other to ensure the overarching successful implementation of EducationUSA program goals and objectives, including, but not limited to advisor training, EducationUSA representation at priority events such as fairs and forums, EducationUSA marketing and communications. It should be noted that ECA will retain copyright use of EducationUSA outreach and event platforms and materials developed specifically for EducationUSA; platforms and materials will be utilized by the Bureau and current award recipients and will be considered proprietary.

To facilitate effective communication by ECA's EducationUSA Branch with the organizations cooperating in the administration of these programs, the award recipients must have the ability to work virtually using electronic media with all partners in the EducationUSA Advising Network. Award recipients must have offices and staff in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area dedicated to working on this/these award(s). Applicants who do not currently have offices and program staff in the Washington, D.C. area should include in their proposals a detailed plan for establishing a staffed office in Washington, D.C. to work on this/these award(s) no later than October 1, 2021. The award recipients bear the costs of establishing the offices and staff. No such costs may be included in the budget submission for this program.

A. Program Description:

Authority:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose:

Under this award, EducationUSA Global Advising Services will support the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), and ECA's Functional Bureau Strategy (FBS), by increasing international student engagement with American peers, and subsequently expanding ties between American and foreign governments. Additional information about the Department of State's foreign policy and public diplomacy goals may be found in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), and ECA's Functional Bureau Strategy (FBS). Successful applicants will submit a proposal that clearly links communication and marketing, advising, and training activities to these goals in a thoughtful, practical, and effective approach.

EducationUSA's global network of educational advising centers is based at U.S. embassies and consulates, as well as at a variety of institutions including, but not limited to, Fulbright Commissions, Binational Centers, American Spaces, universities, and NGOs. There are three categories of advising centers: Reference Centers (offer reference materials for the U.S. higher education search process but no advising services); Standard Centers (offer reference materials and some in-person or virtual advising by an EducationUSA adviser); Comprehensive Centers (offer full reference collection and at least one full-time educational adviser). There are currently 442 centers in the network: 80 Reference, 148 Standard, and 214 Comprehensive.

EducationUSA centers and advisers provide accurate, current and comprehensive information on U.S. higher education and opportunities to study in the United States to prospective international students, their parents, and foreign governments and educational institutions. They promote the recruitment, application, and admission of students to accredited U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs). EducationUSA advisers support students from all economic backgrounds to find the institution best suited to their needs. They also assist all interested, accredited U.S. higher education institutions in their internationalization efforts, in particular to prospective international students, foreign governments, and educational institutions.

Each year, U.S. missions around the world propose strategic priorities and plans for educational advising in their respective countries to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). ECA's Educational Resources and Information Branch or EducationUSA Branch (ECA/A/S/A) oversees the network of advising centers, engages U.S. embassies in the strategic planning

process, formulates policies for the network as a whole, and funds advising operations in part by the provision of funding to U.S. missions as well as via cooperative agreements with U.S. implementing partners. The Branch hosts a central website for the network at www.EducationUSA.state.gov, provides guidance on digital content, oversees various training programs for advisers, and coordinates global outreach and resources in partnership with domestic and international stakeholders. ECA/A/S/A program officers serve as experts on educational issues and support the management of EducationUSA global operations, including close coordination with U.S. missions on their educational outreach strategies and operations. Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs), based overseas and employed by an NGO partner under a cooperative agreement with ECA (Component A herein), monitor the network of advisers and centers, lead adviser training in the field, and serve as regional experts on higher education for the network.

Component A: Global EducationUSA Services

The award recipient will support advising operations worldwide, including physical centers and advisers as well as virtual advising. In collaboration with ECA, they will formulate and implement a strategic plan to provide coordination and implementation of global communications, marketing, and outreach; adviser training and professional development; content and materials creation and distribution, including through the use of digital platforms; and special programs and events. The plan should include the management of and support for existing and new related IT, data retention, and communications systems and virtual platforms (see Section 4 Maintain IT Systems for more details). The recipient is expected to employ and manage a group of approximately 15 Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and related support staff. REACs will manage, monitor, and maintain the EducationUSA global network of EducationUSA advisers and advising centers, develop and lead adviser trainings that are responsive to the current professional development needs of advisers, and develop and distribute outreach and resource materials that reflect the local and regional context. The recipient will utilize the results of REAC monitoring and other evaluation mechanisms to provide timely monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to ECA on and across all aspects of global advising, including special events and programs

The recipient may utilize subawards or identify and contract with outside consultants as needed, in close consultation with ECA, to support programmatic resource and activity development, including print and online products and initiatives, training, and evaluation and assessment tools and resources. ECA expects that the Component A recipient will coordinate with B and C award recipient(s) in relation to EducationUSA adviser training, professional development activities, participation in broader events to build and maintain their professional skills, and other initiatives as appropriate and/or as directed by ECA in order to ensure the overall success of EducationUSA activities globally.

The Component A Global EducationUSA Services includes the following elements:

1. In consultation with ECA, the recipient will provide strategic vision and ongoing recommendations to enhance the efficacy and impact of EducationUSA advising, programming, and services globally. A worldwide strategic communications plan should build upon the unified global EducationUSA brand, while being responsive to local and country-specific needs. The plan should emphasize how to capitalize upon and further disseminate past and ongoing print and digital materials developed to support EducationUSA global strategic communications, including those associated with past and ongoing marketing campaigns. Content should be creative, timely, and in keeping with overall EducationUSA messaging; when appropriate, content should be tailored to key audiences. The plan should also propose how to emphasize web and social media branding and communications including a weekly and/or monthly social media content digest and/or toolkit for the network, templates and content to be used globally within the network, and incorporation of limited print resources.
2. The recipient will employ and manage a global network of REACs to be located in strategic countries as determined by ECA. The EducationUSA network currently supports 15 REACs globally based in Sub-Saharan Africa (three), Europe and Eurasia (three), East Asia and the Pacific (three), the Middle East, North Africa, and South and Central Asia (three), and the Western Hemisphere (three). It should be noted that, at the direction of ECA, the total number of REACs and regional location may be adjusted based on the overall network needs and the availability of funds. Recipient will provide REAC salaries, benefits, employment contracts, orientation, training, and transportation; assist with the logistics of securing housing for the REACs as relevant, as well as travel, conference, and other work-related expenses as deemed relevant, in consultation with ECA. Recipient will monitor REAC safety and security in both their country of employment and during REAC travel, and consult with ECA on areas of concern. Sufficient REAC administrative support, in the form of REAC assistants or other support staff as needed, should be employed to optimize REAC work.

REAC duties and qualifications include:

- a. REACs are experts in higher education in the United States and internationally, preferably in one or more countries of the region of assignment; knowledge of a regional language is preferred. REACs provide professional leadership and support to the EducationUSA network of advising centers to foster international student mobility with the United States and advance the U.S. government's public diplomacy efforts. REACs supply ECA with regular updates on student mobility-related issues and relevant programming in their regions through formal and informal communications as well as timely submissions of site visit reports (see below regarding travel).
- b. REACs counsel U.S. higher education institutions and Public Affairs sections on student mobility issues and advising programs, and liaise with and advise EducationUSA advising center host institutions on adviser training and center operations.
- c. REAC's receive policy guidance from ECA/A/S/A and U.S. embassy/consulate Public Affairs sections, and train advisers on U.S. higher education trends, advising methodology,

center management, and strategic planning. REACs provide and coordinate training and content within the assigned region, and globally as relevant.

- d. REACs will monitor each EducationUSA center in their portfolios as per guidance contained in the REAC Handbook, including through in-person visits, as feasible. Current REAC Handbook guidance stipulates visits no less than approximately once every three years to each center for monitoring, evaluation, and training. On average, REACs currently host approximately one sub-regional adviser training workshop, and attend approximately one international conference per year. Total REAC travel costs should average approximately 3% of the total proposed budget. REACs monitor advising centers through regular communications and semi-annual site visits to ensure centers are functioning properly and at their designated level (Reference, Standard, or Comprehensive, as defined below). Note: should travel restrictions be in place preventing required travel to EducationUSA centers, the award recipient will be required to provide an alternative monitoring plan for ECA's input and approval.
 - e. The award recipient will evaluate the performance of REACs with feedback from ECA and other relevant parties (U.S. embassies and consulates/Fulbright Commissions/HEIs/colleagues/etc.). Performance metrics will include, but are not limited to, the quality of communications with colleagues and stakeholders and the quality and timely submission of all work products and reporting. The award recipient is responsible for alerting ECA when REACs do not meet performance metrics and/or upon reports of misconduct. The recipient will notify ECA of action(s) taken to respond to and correct the infractions and/or poor performance as relevant.
3. Virtual EducationUSA advising. As determined in consultation with ECA, the recipient will employ one or more virtual advisers for one or more countries and, in consultation with ECA, may expand virtual advising to other countries. The recipient should demonstrate the ability to directly manage and provide administrative support as determined to meet the needs of EducationUSA advisers.

Virtual advisers provide advising and advising content in designated target languages for designated target populations to maximize the effectiveness of outreach and/or to provide outreach in locations where it may not be feasible or efficient to operate an EducationUSA center. The recipient will develop dedicated resources for online EducationUSA advising outreach in Farsi, English, or other languages used in countries for which virtual advising services are provided. ECA reserves the right to expand virtual advising services to respond to growing global advising needs in accordance with foreign policy goals and availability of funds.

4. The recipient will plan for, oversee maintain, and adapt technology systems and infrastructure that supports the current and future work needs of EducationUSA. The award recipient must have staffing capacity, infrastructure, and expertise to:

- a. Maintain IT Systems (content platforms / data / email /digital asset management) and related services and service provider contracts. Costs to manage the current suite of IT systems should be approximately 3% of the total proposed budget. The recipient will:
- Write and manage contracts for technical resources, such as pertinent software licenses for social media, communications, and design use. Current vendors include Adobe Creative Cloud, Calendly, Canva, Cvent, Hootsuite, iStockPhoto, LinkedIn, MailChimp, Survey Monkey, vFairs, Zerion, Zoho, Zoom, and bit.ly. The proposal may include other vendors as long as proper vetting is completed, the cost is reasonable and allocable, and it is available in a global market.
 - Manage the ongoing operations, website hosting, and maintenance of an online EducationUSA fair registration and payment portal, to be utilized for all EducationUSA fairs, forums and events. The recipient will report basic event analytics, including event registration and attendee statistics, and other information as specified and according to a schedule determined by ECA.
 - Create, manage, and maintain the creation and implementation of one or more virtual event platforms, to be utilized by the EducationUSA network according to global and regional strategic outreach priorities. Please see additional detail in Section 7 Special Events and Outreach.
 - Oversee and maintain an online learning platform to host current and to-be-developed presentations, and other professional development resources for EducationUSA advisers, REACs, REAC assistants, Washington D.C. staff, representatives of accredited U.S. higher education institutions, and others as designated by ECA. Current courses consist of Google Slide decks (originated on the current award recipient's Google Suite system and ultimately will be migrated with the EducationUSA.org domain) and static course materials hosted on the U.S. Department of State Box.com account. The award recipient should be prepared to identify and collect data analytics regarding advisor training engagement as deemed necessary by ECA.
 - Identify, implement, and manage a digital asset management system (a web-based database for other digital assets, e.g. image files, audio files, video files, graphic design files, etc.) for all REACs, REAC assistants, Washington D.C. staff, EducationUSA advisers and others as designated by ECA. EducationUSA does not currently have such a system.
 - Implement and manage EducationUSA.org's Google G Suite cloud computing, productivity, and collaboration tools (Google G Suite: Gmail, Calendar, Drive, Docs, Meeting, Sheets, Slides, Hangouts, etc.) for all REACs, Washington D.C. staff, REAC assistants, and EducationUSA advisers and centers. Recipient will maintain Google G Suite in accordance with established terms of use and security protocols. Recipient will maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of approved users. Applicants are required to ensure that all users have submitted written agreement to abide by ECA's terms prior to receiving access. ECA will supply the established terms of use and update terms in consultation with Department and Recipient as needed.

- Provide day-to-day management of EducationUSA flagship social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and other relevant platforms that may emerge in accordance with ECA guidance.
 - Implement, and manage a Slack messaging platform built for teams, for all EducationUSA advisers, REACs, REAC assistants, Washington D.C. staff, and others as designated by ECA.
 - Maintain and update a Data Reporting System (DRS) for EducationUSA advisers, REACs, Washington D.C. staff, and others as designated by ECA, for use as needed in relation to all EducationUSA programming and network activities. The current DRS system is a Xerion.com platform.
 - Provide technical support to REACs, EducationUSA advisers, accredited U.S. higher education institutions, and program staff who are experiencing difficulties utilizing EducationUSA platforms or tools.
- b. Create, manage, maintain and disseminate publications, promotional materials, design elements, online materials, and templates, including in support of global marketing efforts. All materials must be submitted to ECA for final approval. ECA will retain copyright use of materials and will determine how and where to distribute EducationUSA and/or international student mobility materials.
- Develop and manage contracts for the creation of any future EducationUSA promotional materials. Materials should, where possible, complement existing print and digital resources that have been developed to support EducationUSA global marketing and communications. The development of materials and resources may include, though not be limited to, exhibit installation, signage, and related design elements, event program books, and other promotional resources and designs as determined in consultation with ECA and subject to ECA approval.
 - Design, edit, print, and distribute an annual [Global Guide](#) with content solicited from REACs and award recipient staff in accordance with ECA guidelines. The Global Guide assists HEIs in identifying successful international student recruitment strategies, listing opportunities, challenges, and trends in each world region, and including information such as outreach means, economic and demographic considerations, and foreign government and other scholarships.
 - Compile and produce a monthly electronic newsletter and/or other relevant resources to highlight EducationUSA programs and resources for the U.S. higher education community.
 - Moderate content submissions pertaining to higher education news, school promotional videos, and financial aid and scholarship opportunities, as well as other content from accredited U.S. higher education institutions for inclusion on the EducationUSA website and EducationUSA YouTube channel. Ensure posted information is reviewed regularly for accuracy.
 - Manage and enhance communications and outreach to and on-behalf of the U.S. higher education community. Approve higher education institution HEI login requests to the EducationUSA website, moderate HEI content submissions to the website, and provide

technical support to HEIs experiencing difficulties utilizing the EducationUSA platforms or tools.

- Provide technical and social media support for existing and new virtual events such as virtual U.S. higher education fairs. Secure advisers for live presentations, manage session scheduling, and liaise with partner organizations to coordinate technology set up for domestic- and international presenters.
 - The award recipient may wish to combine or maximize outreach efforts across platforms in order to expand engagement with international students, U.S. higher education, non-governmental partners, foreign governments, and other stakeholders. As necessary, the recipient will be expected to coordinate with the previous cooperating agency to transition EducationUSA content and platforms to ensure the continuity of messaging and engagement across platforms.
5. The recipient will design and implement in-person EducationUSA adviser training and related events to build capacity for EducationUSA centers, outreach, and virtual advising in order to support uniform approaches to the delivery of EducationUSA advising center services. The recipient should also demonstrate the capacity to implement adviser training and related events in a virtual format as deemed necessary by ECA. The recipient will develop content and deliver in-person and/or virtual trainings locally, regionally, internationally, and in the United States, including on the periphery of major events such as professional conferences and EducationUSA Forums, as well as through formal and informal shadowing/mentoring and small group meetings, often utilizing REACs as trainers and content creators. REACs will recommend advisers for attendance at relevant conferences, events and other trainings, based on a regular assessment of country and center professional development needs through informal communications, site visits, and the annual EducationUSA Strategic Planning process with Public Affairs sections and ECA program officers.

Should in-person trainings shift to hybrid or virtual models due to travel restrictions, the recipient will be expected to submit an alternative training plan including hybrid or virtual programming for ECA's review and approval. The recipient will also consult with ECA to determine how to realign funding in line with the overall award objectives and priorities. The recipient would be required to submit an updated budget narrative and budget for review and approval.

The recipient will organize and deliver the following:

- Approximately six or more overseas sub-regional or thematic training workshops, covering a total of 18 or more days for EducationUSA advisers from relevant regions, as determined in consultation with ECA, and designed to maximize adviser attendance through an in-person and, where relevant, a hybrid or virtual format. Workshops are conducted annually by REACs, with content developed in consultation with ECA/A/S/A. The recipient will also oversee travel in consultation with ECA/A/S/A for participating EducationUSA advisers-- both Locally Employed Staff (LES) advisers who are U.S. government employees of

embassies and consulates and non-Locally Employed Staff (non-LES) advisers hired through non-State Department EducationUSA host institutions such as Fulbright Commissions, local NGOs, and more-- and organize and fund travel including insurance for advisers who are non-LES Staff.

- Coordination of REAC and HEI-led professional development sessions for advisers at each of the EducationUSA regional forums annually. Regional forums typically bring together approximately 80-100 EducationUSA advisers from the region with an equal or greater number of fee-paying U.S. higher education institutions for a two-to-three day event focused on increased student mobility from the region.
- Approximately two EducationUSA Adviser Training Institutes (ATI) designed for approximately 20-25 advisers each year, with the goal of increasing the number of trained advisers where possible. ATIs combine one week of Washington, DC residency to deepen advisers' understanding of U.S. public diplomacy and to share best practices in reaching youth audiences with one week of campus residency to broaden advisers' knowledge of U.S. higher education. ATIs are offered at one of three levels of proficiency (further described below). ATI training content should incorporate both virtual and in-person programming designed to build substantive hard and soft skills that are responsive to the needs of EducationUSA advisers and strengthen strategic engagement with the U.S. higher education community. Training design should include approximately one week or more of U.S.-based training that provides exposure to U.S. higher education institution campuses and includes a professional development visit to Washington, DC.

The recipient will manage the selection of U.S. campus hosts in consultation with ECA to maximize EducationUSA adviser exposure to the breadth of accredited U.S. higher education options. The award recipient will consult with ECA to determine which level of trainings to offer each year in order to provide the appropriate training content. The award recipient will monitor and evaluate the quality of each Adviser Training Institute.

- The recipient will manage pre- and post-ATI virtual components to prepare advisers for U.S. training and to facilitate follow-on activities.

The following is additional information on administering the U.S. based Adviser Training Institutes (ATI) for advisers at various levels of proficiency:

- Level 1 training focuses on working with students and building their knowledge of U.S. higher education, issues related to students' academic experiences in the United States, the U.S. State Department, and EducationUSA policies and procedures.
- Level 2 training includes aspects of Level 1, as well as topics including advising center management, strategic planning, and advocating for U.S. higher education and representing EducationUSA.
- Level 3 training focuses on enabling advisers to serve as a resource for their peers, develop specific areas of expertise, deliver training, and contribute to the knowledge base of the network.

6. **Online EducationUSA Adviser Training Modules.** The recipient will maintain, update, and manage a suite of both mandatory and optional training modules on a centralized platform (currently housed on the award recipient's Google Suite system and ultimately will be migrated with the EducationUSA.org domain) and ensure that advisers successfully undertake all required online trainings in a timely manner, based upon their REAC-assessed skill level (1, 2, or 3). Content should include an introduction to EducationUSA advising, an in-depth course on advising practices, technical training on social media and web tools, and other online professional development and training as identified in conjunction with ECA to ensure continuing education and professional development of the adviser corps. The award recipient should work with ECA/A/S/A, REACs and Level 3 advisers to ensure that the adviser training materials are updated as needed and available in a web-based course format. The recipient may also rely on outside consultants and experts as necessary.

Completion of the online advisers' course will be a requirement for participation in the ECA-funded professional development programs. The course material should be available for use as a reference for all overseas advisers. The recipient will work aggressively to ensure that award recipients administering Component B and C receive all materials as well to ensure full integration of this information by the overseas network.

The recipient should ensure existing advising professional development resources are consistently updated, including developing and revising key advising print and video resources, as requested and in close consultation with ECA/A/S/A. Resources include the adviser's welcome packet, the REAC handbook, the "If You Want to Study in the United States" series and others. The recipient should facilitate uploading completed resources on the aforementioned intranet site, the public EducationUSA website, and EducationUSA center websites as directed by ECA/A/S/A. The recipient should be prepared to assist in the translation of key advising materials or messages into priority languages in consultation with ECA/A/S/A.

7. **Special events and outreach.** With guidance from ECA, the recipient will organize and host several EducationUSA events throughout the year, and will organize and manage EducationUSA representational space and participation at key international and domestic conferences and events. With ECA approval, the recipient may charge a registration fee; all income generated must be used to directly offset relevant EducationUSA program costs including, but not limited to, adviser travel and per diem, venue rentals, etc. During a typical year of network events, past revenue generation has produced significant programmatic funds. The applicant may find it practical to budget for approximately 7% of the overall budget submission for revenue generated from initiatives listed below (Section 7).

The recipient will provide support for the following events and services:

- The EducationUSA Forum, an annual two-and-a-half day symposium in Washington, DC, hosts approximately 700 participants total for an in-person event, including accredited HEI

representatives and approximately 50 EducationUSA advisers. The recipient is responsible for managing the overall Forum budget and coordinating content and reporting to ECA. The award recipient will secure in advance the hotel and meeting venue for this event in Washington, including contracting for relevant break-out rooms, audio visual equipment and internet access, and catering. The recipient will offer an online registration system and manage the collection of registration fees, develop and distribute promotional materials, and provide a conference mobile app for attendees. The recipient should also demonstrate the capacity to implement components of the Forum in a fully virtual format if deemed necessary, pending consultation with ECA. If a hybrid or virtual format is approved, the recipient will be expected to submit an alternative plan for ECA's review and approval. The plan must include an updated budget and budget narrative highlighting adjustments to the original budget submission.

The recipient will also oversee travel for participating EducationUSA advisers and organize and fund travel for non-LES advisers, in consultation with ECA/A/S/A. The award recipient should also be prepared to assist, at ECA's request, with logistics surrounding possible side meetings with international education stakeholders before and/or during and after the Forum.

- Approximately two regional EducationUSA forums each year held outside the United States. Each forum will take place approximately over three days and will attract approximately 100 fee-paying HEI representatives and include an equal number of non-fee-paying EducationUSA advisers, as well as stakeholders from the relevant world region. The recipient will be responsible for organizing the hotel and meeting space and related event costs, coordinating content (to be provided by REACs, ECA program officers, advisers, and volunteer higher education institution representatives), and soliciting participant feedback for evaluation and reporting. The recipient is responsible for managing overall forum budgets and reporting to ECA. The recipient will also oversee travel in consultation with ECA/A/S/A for participating EducationUSA advisers and organize and fund travel for non-LES advisers.
- Conference and Exhibition Representation events: The recipient will be responsible for organizing and funding travel and support costs for selected EducationUSA REACs and advisers to participate in approximately two to three international, and six to eight domestic, higher education conferences. The recipient will be responsible for securing registration, paying necessary registration fees or higher education organization membership costs, and securing and managing conference exhibition space to showcase the EducationUSA network. Conference and/or membership benefits will be utilized primarily by the recipient and its staff, REACs, and EducationUSA advisers to advance EducationUSA outreach priorities and showcase the network's global advising capacity and resources. The recipient is responsible for ensuring that EducationUSA is well-represented at industry events. Should there be remaining conference or membership benefits, the recipient should consult with ECA on how to leverage the benefits to maximize EducationUSA global outreach including, but not limited to, utilization by ECA staff focused on international student mobility.
- Virtual Events/Fairs: In recognition of the existing and increasing need for virtual and online engagement, especially with regard to virtual student fairs, the recipient should propose how they would develop internally, or through a subaward, the creation and implementation of

one or more virtual event platforms. Proposals should illustrate how a virtual event platform would be utilized to maximize global EducationUSA programming and outreach, as well as indicate appropriate coordination with the recipient(s) of Component B and C, who will also be able to utilize the platform. If travel restrictions require a proposed in-person workshops or trainings to be delivered virtually, the recipient will be expected to submit an alternative training plan including hybrid or virtual programming for ECA's review and approval.

8. Special Programs. EducationUSA runs two special exchange programs that complement its advising activities, and which require varying degrees of support from the implementing partner. Further details of responsibilities are enumerated under responsibilities of the recipient organization for Component A.

- EducationUSA Academy for International High School Students

The Academy is a pre-college academic enrichment program for international high school students aimed at preparing them to successfully apply to U.S. colleges and universities. The Academy is currently comprised of a network of approximately 15 diverse participating U.S. higher education institutions, which may change over time. Most institutions host one four-week Academy in the summer; some institutions host a winter Academy program. The Academy provides an immersive English language experience and students complete U.S. higher education preparatory content, participate in cultural exchange activities, and visit neighboring college and university campuses to gain exposure to the diversity of U.S. higher education. The program is designed for self-funded students who pay directly to their program of choice. Some U.S. embassies support scholarships for low-income students.

The recipient will support ECA management, coordination, virtual outreach, and promotion of the program. No funding for program activities is required. In collaboration with ECA, the recipient will oversee and manage the current and future network of Academy partners, and maintain, update, and manage relevant online platforms. The recipient will coordinate with ECA to manage the placement of students funded through U.S. embassy support scholarships, and will develop, execute, and oversee new and existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that outline Academy requirements and expectations with participating institutions.

The recipient should also demonstrate the capacity to support ECA management of the EducationUSA Academy if a hybrid or fully virtual format is deemed necessary, pending consultation with ECA. If a hybrid or virtual format is approved, the recipient will be expected to adjust existing plans and implement new host institution MOUs as needed, in consultation with ECA.

- Opportunity Funds for Students

The Opportunity Funds Program, managed by ECA/A/S/A in collaboration with REACs, advisers and Public Affairs sections of U.S. embassies, is a cohort advising program for high-achieving, financially-disadvantaged international students. In addition to providing specialized advising, the program pays the up-front costs for students to apply to U.S. colleges and universities, with the expectation that participants will be able to gain admission and secure

scholarships from U.S. institutions. Proposals should also include administration of the Opportunity Funds for the region in countries approved by ECA during the annual Strategic Planning process. The proposal budget should include funding for this program based on maintaining a consistent number of participating students and centers in each country that currently has a program. In the past, funding comprised approximately 14% of the overall budget submission. The proposal narrative should give a detailed description of the program's administration based on the EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Handbook.

The recipient will also support the management and collection of Opportunity Funds program data through the Data Reporting System (DRS). The recipient will coordinate with recipient(s) of Component B and C to ensure required Opportunity Fund program data is entered into the EducationUSA Data Reporting System.

9. Program evaluation of all activities. The recipient will incorporate feedback, evaluation/assessment, and reporting into all aspects of program activities. Surveys and feedback mechanisms should be built into all relevant events, including adviser training. The recipient will be responsible for gathering, collecting, consolidating, and reporting, through required quarterly reports, formal and informal feedback, and assessments of all relevant activities from that quarter, and for ensuring that REACs undertake all relevant monitoring visits and submit reports in a timely manner, in addition to ad hoc reporting requested by ECA as necessary. The award recipient will be expected to ensure that their evaluation framework is in keeping with the Bureau's requirements and expectations for overall reporting and should be prepared to work with the Bureau's monitoring and evaluation team as appropriate.

This relates to all program components: communications, REAC monitoring and training activities, events including fairs, special programs including opportunity funds, and adviser training. Evaluation activities will include:

- Ongoing review of REAC functions and responsibilities as provided in the REAC Handbook.
- Monthly report on principal EducationUSA social media properties and web metrics.
- Annual review and evaluation of REACs' performance and accomplishments.
- Evaluation of EducationUSA training and signature events (including the Washington, D.C. and Regional Forums).
- Annual evaluation of above program components in conjunction with ECA.

ECA encourages applicants to propose innovative strategies for all aspects of the Global EducationUSA Services program. The award recipient will have sufficient staff to ensure in-depth support for the above programmatic activities. Proposals should also describe the roles of REACs, REACs assistants, and headquarters program staff in program design and delivery.

A1. Substantial Involvement:

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

ECA/A/S/A's activities and responsibilities for Component A: Global EducationUSA Services under the NOFO are as follows:

1. Provide policy guidance and direction to the award recipient, including providing policies and direction to REACs and recipient organization staff regarding substantive advising issues.
2. Approve key personnel staff selections. Key personnel determined to include REACs and domestic staff contributing 50% or more Level of Effort (LOE).
3. Approve selection and hiring of EducationUSA virtual adviser(s) in conjunction with REAC(s).
4. Assist REACs in obtaining access to and related support from, as relevant, U.S. embassies/consulates, and facilitate REAC and recipient communications with the U.S. Department of State, including Public Affairs sections, as well as with Binational Centers, Fulbright Commissions, and American Spaces where relevant.
5. Review and approve annual EducationUSA advising strategic plans and corresponding budgets from Public Affairs sections of U.S. embassies/consulates, and soliciting input from REACs.
6. Approve annual strategic communications and marketing plan and establish guidance for all program design templates, written products, technology resources, and social media platform management to ensure that materials and resources align with EducationUSA's coordinated global communication and marketing strategy and U.S. State Department requirements.
7. Review and approve plans for REAC and EducationUSA adviser travel requests, professional development nominations, and workshop venues and agendas.
8. Approve plans and content for and participate in EducationUSA forums and other special events.
9. Oversee and monitor the quality of global advising services through a review of REAC site visit reports in consultation with Public Affairs sections at U.S. embassies/consulates, and utilize recommendations from the recipient and REACs to review and approve all proposals for the closure of existing EducationUSA centers or the opening of new ones.
10. Approve annual EducationUSA adviser professional development plan and review EducationUSA adviser professional development curricula and program location, content, and scheduling.
11. Oversee program administration under the cooperative agreement, including the review of all programmatic performance reports, and the implementation of quarterly meetings as needed to review outstanding programmatic activities. Satisfactory performance in the current award year is a condition for the invitation to submit a proposal for a non-competitive renewal award in the subsequent fiscal year.

12. EducationUSA Academy. ECA/A/S/A collaborates with award recipient to oversee program management and the evaluation of host campus programs, secure scholarships from U.S. missions, and communicate with relevant internal and external stakeholders.
13. Opportunity Funds. ECA plays a coordinating role between recipients of Components A, B, and C herein involved in Opportunity Funds Program management, coordinates policy and messaging related to the Opportunity Funds Program, and liaises with REACs regarding data entry by all participating EducationUSA centers.
14. It should be noted that ECA/A/S/A will review and approve substantive changes to program delivery methods due to travel restrictions that prevent in-person events from implementation in coordination with the Bureau's Grants Division.

A2. Recipient Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the recipient organization for Component A: Global EducationUSA Services are listed below. ECA expects that the Component A recipient will coordinate with B and C award recipient(s) as needed for relevant program activities.

1. The recipient will employ all REACs, and sufficient REAC administrative staffs needed to provide equitable support globally to support REACs in performing their primary duties, while ensuring that REACs are legally employed to work in their respective locations. The recipient will develop annual REAC work and travel plans, coordinate and ensure timely collection of REAC reporting, and conduct end-of-year REAC evaluations. REAC positions may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA. Employment support encompasses:
 - REAC and REAC assistant salaries and benefits;
 - REAC office costs;
 - REAC travel for in-person (where feasible) monitoring, evaluation, and training visits to all regional EducationUSA advising centers no less than approximately once in three years., per guidance stipulated in the REAC Handbook; and
 - REAC training and professional development.
2. The award recipient will provide sufficient support (including providing REAC assistants or other support services) and monitoring for REACs to ensure that they are able to fulfill the following expectations:
 - Engage ECA, U.S. embassies/consulates, heads of advising center host institutions (including Fulbright Commissions, Binational Centers (BNCs), American Spaces, etc.), and advisers in relation to advising center and program management, to ensure productive collaboration among all stakeholders, promote the EducationUSA brand, and further the U.S. Department of State's public diplomacy goals related to the promotion of U.S. higher education.
 - Serve as higher education experts/consultants for ECA, U.S. embassies/consulates, and with accredited HEIs, higher education associations, foreign governments, and others.

- Provide recommendations to ECA and U.S. embassies/consulates during the annual strategic planning process.
- Maintain expertise (through meetings and outreach and conference attendance) on higher education and student mobility trends within and across the assigned region and with the United States.
- Stay abreast of the latest visa regulations and ensure advising centers work with Public Affairs and Consular sections of U.S. embassies/consulates to inform students about the visa application process.
- Plan and conduct outreach and expand awareness of EducationUSA through meetings, conference presentations, and external publicity and communications (print and digital), to promote EducationUSA services and resources and to encourage study in the United States. Increase public knowledge abroad of U.S. higher education through participation in college and university fairs, media programs, international education conferences, and other education events, and ensure effective outreach to prospective international students, their families, high school counselors, and home institutions.
- Act as an expert resource to accredited U.S. higher education institutions to support their international student recruitment efforts, campus internationalization goals, international partnerships, and support for U.S. study abroad. Participate in EducationUSA forums and other events and conferences to disseminate relevant knowledge and expertise among the U.S. higher education community.
- Submit periodic and timely content for reports and relevant print and electronic sources, including but not limited to weekly reporting highlights, periodic newsletters, EducationUSA country-specific student mobility fact sheets, and the annual EducationUSA Global Guide.
- Maintain and update relevant lists, including contact information, of advising centers and advisers. Ensure that advisers maintain updated profiles on the EducationUSA website and other digital and print properties as relevant.
- Monitor advising centers through periodic site visits (at least once every three years) and timely reporting (as per REAC handbook). Certify and maintain updated certification of advising centers at the relevant designation level (reference, standard, or comprehensive).
- Provide training both in-person and virtually to ensure that all advisers within the assigned region and centers possess the relevant knowledge and expertise to successfully function at their designated advising level. Recommend advisers for ECA approval to take part in additional training and professional development opportunities, including through participation in ATIs, conferences, and other activities, to continuously enhance advisers' knowledge and skills and to enable advisers to advance to higher advising levels, up to Level 3 (senior advisers);
- Monitor and provide support to advisers and advising centers, alerting ECA as relevant of any significant or sustained challenges with individual advisers or advising centers.
- Coordinate and ensure that advisers regularly submit data required to track EducationUSA network programs and activities into the EducationUSA Data Reporting System (DRS).

3. In order to enable selected advisers to travel to and participate in relevant meetings, training, and conferences (both virtual and in-person) the award recipient should oversee travel and logistics for participating EducationUSA advisers, organize and fund travel and registrations and process payments for non-LES advisers, and provide other required logistical and administrative support. This includes supporting ECA/A/S/A in arranging campus visits for advisers before and/or after conferences.

The recipient, in consultation with REACs, will provide a proposed list of both events and advisers to ECA/A/S/A for final approval. The recipient will maintain communication with posts, advising centers, and participating advisers to ensure seamless coordination of travel plans and logistics in advance of and during travel and throughout participation at selected events and activities.

4. In addition to the annual EducationUSA Forum held in Washington, D.C. and EducationUSA regional forums, conferences may include, but are not limited to, the following the conferences listed below (numbers of advisers to attend are estimates). It should be noted that ECA reserves the right to adjust attendee numbers and approve alternative and/or additional conferences, in line with the final approved award budget in light of the ongoing pandemic and potential travel restrictions.
 1. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 4 advisers
 2. Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE), 6 advisers
 3. European Association for International Education (EAIE), 4 advisers
 4. International Association for College Admission Counseling (International ACAC), 12 advisers
 5. NAFSA: Association of International Educators national conference, 18 advisers
 6. National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC), 3 advisers
 7. National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP), 5 advisers
 8. Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), 2 advisers

The award recipient should be prepared to facilitate advisers' attendance in the following ways:

- Support the work of ECA/A/S/A to facilitate adviser participation in conference sessions and relevant pre- or post-conference workshops, assist with conference registration (including advisers who attend the conference with funding from sources other than this agreement), and facilitate communication with advisers regarding travel, hotel reservations/lodging and meals. Ideally, all overseas advisers should stay at the same conference hotel. Arrangements may include identifying roommates for advisers to save lodging costs.
- Provide supplemental per diem for additional travel days to/from the relevant campus if circumstances require (as requested and in consultation with ECA/A/S/A). All costs on

site during campus visits, including meals and accommodations are borne by the host campus.

- Provide insurance. The award recipient must ensure that non-LES advisers attending international education conferences, campus visits and other professional development opportunities have travel insurance which covers medical expenses incurred in the United States, and that is valid during the event and related periods of travel. Insurance will include a minimum of: \$250,000 (USD) in accident and sickness expense benefits, medical or surgical treatment, services and supplies, hospital services, local ambulance, visits to a physician's office, medical evacuation and repatriation, and that covered expenses have a deductible of no more than \$100 (USD). Policies should also include an Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit.

5. The award recipient should support EducationUSA's Special Programs through the following responsibilities:

- EducationUSA Academy for International High School Students

The recipient should:

- Maintain and update Academy website, in compliance with Department of State and ECA guidance.
- Maintain coordination with ECA, manage and maintain the network of current Academy institution of higher education hosts (approximately 15) and any additional Academy hosts.
- As part of wider communications responsibilities, develop a strategic marketing plan and manage social media outreach for the Academy, collaborating with Academy Network members and ECA.
- With guidance from ECA, develop and sign MOUs with U.S. host campuses that outline expectations of hosting the Academy under the EducationUSA brand, including the capacity to host virtual programming if a U.S. host campus will be delivering the Academy in a virtual format (whole or in part). The MOU should also include processes for the termination by either party if desired or needed.
- Coordinate RFP process for incorporating new HEI's into the Academy Network.
- Issue DS-2019 forms to support J-1 visa applications for international students participating in the program through USG-funded scholarships (approximately 30 per year).
- Communicate with host campuses regarding the safety and security of program participants and inform ECA in a timely matter should complications arise.
- Be able to accept funds from U.S. missions, ECA, or other outside sources to distribute to host campuses for scholarship payment.

- Opportunity Funds for Students

The recipient should:

- Support the management and collection of data through the Data Reporting

System (DRS); liaise with system designers on updates as needed, and coordinate with ECA on policy and messaging.

Components B and C:

In cooperation with ECA, one or more award recipient(s) will manage EducationUSA advising centers in the following regions:

Component B for EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia, to support advising in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.

Component C for EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa, to support advising in Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen.

The location of centers in these regions may be affected by political considerations and could be based remotely, as appropriate. ECA will decide, in consultation with the award recipient(s) and officers at post, such as the Regional Security Officer, on center relocations for the safety and security of advisers and students. Recipient organizations may propose EducationUSA advising activities in additional regions/countries; however, additional regions and countries will only be funded based on ECA's needs and resources, as determined by ECA. Note: ECA reserves the right to increase, add, or reduce countries and regions based on U.S. foreign policy priorities and the needs of the program.

Component B and C recipient(s) should demonstrate a deep area and regional expertise in and across the countries within the particular component. Proposals should highlight regional networks including, but not limited to, government organizations, institutions of higher education, and other higher education stakeholders. Proposals should indicate that the organization has the institutional capacity to host and support advising centers abroad, and should describe in detail for each country the entire range of EducationUSA advising activities, including group and individual consultations, and the use of virtual outreach platforms. Proposals should provide a clear table indicating level of engagement with the target audience via in-person, virtual, and hybrid programming. Due to increased and continued virtual engagement, applicants should outline how in-person centers will ensure that the necessary equipment and platforms are accessible for students to fully utilize center resources, engage with U.S. institutions, and participate in EducationUSA virtual events.

Proposals for Components B and C should also explain how the ECA-funded EducationUSA program would be implemented alongside any non-EducationUSA educational advising activities, other ECA-programs, or the recipient organization's proprietary programs to the best effect. Proposals should include information about any homepages or websites developed by or for centers.

The use of the current EducationUSA logo and branded marketing materials is critical to the identity of the network. Proposals for Components B and C should explain how recipients will ensure that all centers funded under a cooperative agreement for Components B and C use the logo consistently and follow guidelines laid out in the EducationUSA brand identity guide provided by ECA and adhere to ECA/PASC guidelines. The plan should emphasize how to capitalize and distribute past and ongoing digital and other materials developed to support EducationUSA global strategic communications.

Proposals should outline a comprehensive staffing plan that covers all geographic regions included under the proposal with sufficient level of effort to fully support the proposed advising and public engagement activities. The staffing plan should provide locally competitive adviser salaries commensurate with all required skills for the position. Adviser salaries should be sufficient to recruit and retain qualified advisers that are able to meet all advising requirements outlined herein. Proposals should also outline a plan for staff evaluations, including the evaluation cycle, and the framework and process for providing salary increases.

Applicants should describe adviser duties and responsibilities pertaining to the award, a description of activities pertaining to duties outside the scope of the award if relevant, and should also describe how information would be shared with advisers. Where relevant, the recipient may choose to differentiate between levels of advisers, to include senior advisers and country coordinators in consultation with ECA.

The proposal should describe an appropriately-tiered professional development plan for each field office, including a general training plan for advisers. The training plan should clearly define the adviser training needs according to the region, which leverages the use of all available training resources specific to the regions in Component B and C, and also includes, where relevant, collaboration with Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) who provide and coordinate regional adviser training and training content under Component A (as illustrated in Section A. 2(c)). Proposals may include more substantive appendices addressing training needs should sufficient space not be available within the executive narrative.

Proposals should include estimated budget details for each office, including infrastructure and support for virtual advising. Fee-based services should be listed, including the amounts charged, to ensure compliance with EducationUSA practices and standards. All EducationUSA centers must provide free basic advising services to all students, as follows and without alteration.

EducationUSA Required Free Services

EducationUSA centers provide the following services to all students free of charge:

- Regular introductory group sessions, utilizing an in-person and/or virtual format as deemed necessary, in consultation with ECA. Sessions should be comprehensive and responsive to local needs and demand that overview the U.S. higher education system, the application process for undergraduate and graduate admission, and targeted resources for U.S. higher education research.

- Appropriate space and technology to access and research the EducationUSA website.
- Introduction to the advising library and center resources.
- Basic reference materials on U.S. higher education. The recipient is not responsible for covering the cost of these resources. Some materials may be funded through the annual ECA/A/S/A Strategic Planning process.
- Pre-Departure Orientations (although a fee for venue rental and/or refreshment can apply).

All EducationUSA Centers offer the following services free of any charge to accredited U.S. colleges and universities:

- Information about international student mobility.
- Information about the local education systems.
- Contact information and listings of major local-high schools and accredited or government-recognized universities.
- Facilitate local outreach.
- Resources for HEIs to plan for and implement international student recruitment trips.
- A space for access to the equipment necessary to conduct research and engage with U.S. institutions of higher education and submit applications, utilizing an in-person and/or virtual format as deemed necessary.
- Opportunity to display materials, if space permits.

If the recipient plans to charge students for additional services, a detailed justification and fee schedule should be included in the proposal, along with a statement indicating the anticipated revenue from such fees. If these fees are related to advising activities supported by this cooperative agreement, i.e. not placement services or administration of Fulbright or other scholarship programs, income must be reported under this program and contributed as cost-sharing in the cooperative agreement budget. The fee structures should allow applicant(s) to reach students from a variety of economic backgrounds, with and without the means of paying full tuition and fees, and to advise students to find their best-fit institution. Fees should be at or below area market rates for the same or similar services. Proposals for Components B and C should include a statement regarding the level and accessibility of information available to those unable to use paid advising services. ECA reserves the right to determine which services are to be included under the EducationUSA banner.

ECA expects that the Component B and C recipient(s) will coordinate with the recipient of Component A as needed for relevant program activities, including but not limited to, adviser training, EducationUSA outreach at in-person and virtual events, fairs, and forums as necessary, and social media messaging.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A (EducationUSA) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

ECA/A/S/A's activities and responsibilities for Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia and for Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa are as follows:

Provide policy guidance and direction to the award recipient(s).

1. Approve key personnel staff requirements and selections. Key personnel determined to include domestic staff contributing 50% or more Level of Effort (LOE).
2. Approve selection and hiring of new EducationUSA advisers and EducationUSA in conjunction with REACs.
3. Provide guidance on regional virtual advising priorities; to include specific product and resource development, target audience engagement, and language focus.
4. Monitor REACs' relationships and facilitate REAC communications with advisers, Public Affairs Sections, DOS/ECA offices, Binational Centers, American Spaces, U.S. universities, Fulbright Commissions, cooperative agreement recipients, adviser host organizations, and other institutions.
5. Review and approve annual EducationUSA advising strategic plans from Public Affairs sections of U.S. embassies/consulates, soliciting input from REACs as relevant.
6. Review and approve EducationUSA plans for adviser travel requests and professional development nominations.
7. Work with REACs and award recipient staff on substantive advising issues.
8. Encourage regular and open communications among REACs, EducationUSA advisers, adviser host organization supervisors, Public Affairs sections, Department of State/ECA offices, Fulbright Commissions, and cooperative agreement recipient organizations.
9. Oversee and monitor the quality of global advising services, including through review of REAC site visit reports, and, in consultation with Public Affairs sections at U.S. embassies/consulates and with recommendations from the recipient and REACs, review and approve all proposals for the closure of existing or the opening of new EducationUSA centers.
10. Establish guidance for all program design templates, written and digital products, and technology resources, and social media platform management to ensure that materials and resources align with EducationUSA's coordinated communication and marketing strategy and State Department requirements.
11. Perform quarterly review of program administration under the cooperative agreement. Pending satisfactory performance in the current award year, the award recipient may be invited to submit a proposal for a non-competitive renewal award in the subsequent fiscal year.
12. Opportunity Funds: ECA plays a coordinating role between recipients of Components A, B, and C herein involved in Opportunity Funds Program management, coordinates policy and messaging related to the Opportunity Funds Program, and liaises with REACs regarding data entry by all participating EducationUSA centers.
- 13. For Component C only:** Approve selection and hiring of EducationUSA virtual adviser(s) in conjunction with REAC(s).

The responsibilities of the award recipient(s) for Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia and for Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa are as follows:

1. Establish and manage EducationUSA advising centers in specified countries/ locations to provide educational advising on U.S. study opportunities at accredited U.S. institutions of higher education. Applicant organizations may propose specific center locations within the countries and regions listed above based on the organizations' knowledge of local environments and educational systems, which will be subject to ECA approval.
2. **For Component C only:** Pending the availability of funds, the recipient will employ at least one virtual Arabic adviser to coordinate regional virtual engagement using a variety of platforms across the region to engage key audiences. Plans should include support for a virtual Arabic adviser to be located in the region and to oversee a regional virtual strategy. Other virtual advising may be included to support one or more countries and will be contingent upon the availability of funds and regional needs.

Virtual advisers provide advising and advising content in designated target languages for designated target populations in locations where it may not be feasible or efficient to operate an EducationUSA center. The recipient will develop dedicated resources for online EducationUSA advising outreach in Arabic, French, English, or other languages used in countries or regions for which virtual advising services are provided. ECA reserves the right to expand virtual advising services to respond to growing global advising needs in accordance with foreign policy goals and availability of funds. The recipient should demonstrate the ability to directly manage and provide administrative support as determined to meet the needs of EducationUSA advisers.

3. Proposals should describe each proposed center's operations. The description of each proposed center should include the location and hours of operation, a staffing pattern with a clear outline of virtual coverage and infrastructure, a clear explanation of the percentage of time each employee would devote to advising activities, as well as to non-advising activities (including, but not limited to, work on behalf of other ECA assistance awards, if applicable), employee functions and responsibilities, an estimated center budget, and a delineation of all services provided by that center.
4. Proposals should describe the plan for training staff to anticipate and handle safety and security situations that arise at an advising center. Proposals should also describe the safety and security measures in place to help assure the well-being of advisers, stakeholders, and visitors at advising centers.
5. Proposals should demonstrate each center's ability to provide basic educational advising services that follow EducationUSA's "Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study", and other specific EducationUSA and ECA higher education programs, campaigns, and initiatives to international students and scholars without cost.
6. Proposals should describe the award recipients' ability to provide additional resources at advising centers free of charge to students, such as:
 - Student-accessible comprehensive college and university information in print or digital format and an extensive collection of key reference materials on U.S. higher education

institutions and programs, including college preparatory and standardized testing information.

- Computers available for student use. The number of computers in each center should be commensurate with the anticipated volume of student traffic. Computers should have relevant EducationUSA websites bookmarked, especially educationusa.state.gov, as well as other relevant websites to assist students in the college search.
 - Office equipment, software, high-definition cameras and/or personal communication devices that expedite the processing of inquiries, facilitate educational advising, and increase communication among EducationUSA centers and the REAC, ECA, Public Affairs sections of U.S. embassies and consulates, and the U.S. headquarters of the award recipient/s.
 - Use of virtual advising, social media, and other electronic tools that advance the advising centers' ability to reach and assist target audiences, and that allow students to connect with prospective HEI contacts. Proposals should also highlight any region-specific tools that can maximize outreach.
 - Internet connected space suitable for conducting group advising sessions with projected presentations (PowerPoint/Google Slides), and space suitable for private, individual advising consultations.
7. Recipients will organize, run, and evaluate EducationUSA fairs in consultation with the REAC, Public Affairs Sections at embassies and consulates, and ECA/A/S/A.
 8. Utilize the online EducationUSA Fair Portal (to be fully operational by 2022) to announce, register, and accept payments for all EducationUSA fairs. Serve as primary point of contact for U.S. institutions registering for EducationUSA fairs through the online fair portal, and for additional details regarding fairs. The recipient will be responsible for reporting fair-related data collected through the fair portal including, but not limited to, HEI participation numbers, revenue generated, number of fairs by region and globally, and year-over-year comparative reports. ECA expects that the Component B and C recipient(s) will coordinate as needed with the recipient of Component A, which has operational management of the EducationUSA Fair Portal.
 9. Manage and serve as primary point of contact for the provision of U.S. W8-BEN tax forms as required for REACS.
 10. Prioritize the use of a new EducationUSA Virtual Event Platform, to maximize professional virtual event and fair delivery and coordination. The virtual event platform will be developed as part of Component A, and will be accessible for recipients of Component B and C.
 11. Coordinate fair services with EducationUSA advisers or field office staff, providing clear direction, monitoring and quality control.
 12. Coordinate fair logistics such as hotel contracts and materials shipping.
 13. Provide online registration support to assist when local EducationUSA host institutions are unable to provide the needed logistical framework to support EducationUSA fairs.
 14. Supervise and coordinate adviser contributions to fair marketing campaigns and social media.

15. Track project budgets. Fair income may offset cost of administering fairs and support EducationUSA related activities, such as professional development of EducationUSA advisers or other priorities, in consultation with ECA.
16. Evaluate fairs using feedback from participants and integrate lessons learned.
17. ECA will offer appropriate professional development opportunities, such as workshops and other training programs for EducationUSA advisers; ECA will review and select adviser participants. Many of these services will be financially supported by ECA through Component A: Global EducationUSA Services. ECA expects that the Components B and C award recipient(s) will coordinate with recipient of Component A in relation to professional development activities and support adviser participation in broader events to build and maintain their professional skills, in alignment with their adviser training plan. While providing coverage for daily advising activities, ECA encourages the recipient(s) of Components B and C to support additional engagement or professional development opportunities through direct funding or cost-share.
18. **For Components B and C:** Proposals should include administration of the Opportunity Funds for the region in countries approved by ECA during the annual Strategic Planning process. Opportunity Funds promotes the Department's objectives of broadening outreach to youth and underserved audiences who are future leaders, and advancing mutual understanding between the people of United States and the rest of the world.

The program assists highly qualified students who are likely to receive full financial aid from U.S. colleges and universities but lack the financial resources to cover the upfront costs of obtaining admission, such as testing, application fees, or airfare to commence their studies. The proposal budget should include funding for this program based on maintaining a consistent number of participating students and centers in each country that currently has a program, and the proposal narrative should give a detailed description of the program's administration based on the EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Handbook which is updated by ECA/A/S/A. In the past, funding comprised approximately 8% of the overall budget submission for Component B and 3% of the overall budget submission for Component C. The recipient will work closely with ECA to adjust Opportunity Funds programming and budgeting, as needed, if country participants or priorities change. Award recipient(s) of Component B and C should coordinate with the award recipient of Component A herein to ensure required Opportunity Fund program data is entered into the EducationUSA Data Reporting System.

19. Coordinate and ensure advisers' submission of statistical information (in-person, outreach, virtual contacts, and other information) via the electronic Data Reporting System (DRS) managed by the recipient of Component A, on a monthly basis or as directed by ECA.
20. Facilitate regular and open communication among EducationUSA advisers and the REAC, as well as among adviser host country and organization leadership and the REAC.
21. Support communication between EducationUSA advisers and Public Affairs Sections of U.S. embassies and consulates, as appropriate and in consultation with ECA/A/S/A,

ensuring that educational advising activities meet the needs of the public affairs sections and follow embassy mission strategic objectives.

22. Conduct outreach sessions to the full range of potential international students interested in U.S. study, including to underserved populations and locales outside capital/major cities, whenever possible in collaboration with Public Affairs and Consular staff, to inform them of U.S. study opportunities and the services available at the EducationUSA advising center.
23. Provide services to accredited U.S. colleges and universities, and maintain an unbiased representation of the full range of U.S. academic institutions. Funding under this agreement may not be used to support the fee-based placement services of students at specific universities, though EducationUSA may engage with and support individuals, organizations, or higher education institutions that provide fee-based placement services or work with those who do, within the parameters of existing EducationUSA policies.
24. All EducationUSA centers must make free basic services available to all students, which cannot be altered; if the award recipient plans to charge students for services, a detailed justification and fee schedule should be included in the proposal, along with a statement indicating the anticipated revenue from such fees. If these fees are related to advising activities supported by this cooperative agreement, as stated in the above paragraph (i.e., not placement services or administration of Fulbright or other scholarship programs), income must be reported under this program and contributed as cost-sharing in the cooperative agreement budget. The fee structures should allow applicant(s) to reach students from a variety of economic backgrounds, with and without the means of paying full tuition and fees, and to advise students to find their best-fit institution. Fees should be at or below area market rates for the same or similar services. ECA reserves the right to determine which services are to be included under the EducationUSA banner. Quarterly financial reports should show the actual amounts generated and that these funds are applied to support advising services.
25. The applicant should be prepared to assist and support educational outreach activities of U.S. embassies/consulates by developing a network of contacts with local ministries of education, universities, and other appropriate institutions.
26. Centers should provide information to all interested persons on the application process to U.S. colleges and universities (following EducationUSA's "Five Steps to U.S. Study"), issues of accreditation, up-to-date information on student visa regulations and requirements, standardized tests, scholarships and grant opportunities (including U.S. government-sponsored programs), information about life as a student in the United States, and pre-departure orientations. Special topic lectures and expert speakers are encouraged to provide students with up-to-date information. Centers are encouraged to work with local alumni of U.S. educational institutions to help answer students' questions and provide useful pre-departure information.
27. EducationUSA advisers should follow policy guidance as established by ECA; the award recipient is responsible for outlining and reinforcing EducationUSA policy with its advisers and for coordinating with the REACS, ECA, and the award recipient of Component A as necessary to ensure the overall successful implementation of EducationUSA policies across the network.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Component A: Global EducationUSA Services

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY2022

Approximate Total Funding: \$6,375,000 pending the availability of funds. **Approximate**

Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$6,375,000 pending the availability of funds.

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$6,375,000 pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: October 1, 2021, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2023

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this grant or cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

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

Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY2022

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,460,500 pending the availability of funds. **Approximate**

Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$1,460,500 pending the availability of funds.

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$1,460,500 pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: October 1, 2021, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2023

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this grant or cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

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

Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY2022

Approximate Total Funding: \$765,000 pending the availability of funds. **Approximate**

Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$765,000 pending the availability of funds.

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$765,000 pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: October 1, 2021, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2023

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this grant or cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

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

C.) Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D3a and D3c below).

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one grant/cooperative agreement, in an amount over \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition.

If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing 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 Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution may be reduced in like proportion.

D.) Application and Submission Information:

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

D.1. Solicitation Package Location: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

D.2. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3o. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which

is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

D.3b. Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM): All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain a current registration in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting is completed on any issued award. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

D.3.d. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS): Prior to making a Federal Assistance award over \$250,000, the Federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIIS, they can comment on any information about its organization that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

D.3e. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the

organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

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

D.3f. FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY - ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient 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-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3g. Diversity, Freedom, and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance

the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

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

D.3h. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Please Note: The Bureau plans to add standardized indicators and corresponding data collection questions for performance monitoring during the period of performance of this award. Therefore, proposed performance monitoring plans and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established. Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D.3k. Budget Format: Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.3l. Key Personnel

ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department’s Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>).

D.3m. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.3n. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

Component A: Global EducationUSA Services

1. Salaries and benefits for Global EducationUSA Services Director, Assistant Director, Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs), REAC assistants, and virtual/distance EducationUSA advisers.
2. Salaries and benefits for Global EducationUSA Services staff, as decided upon in conjunction with ECA, to support functions listed in Section A.
3. Funds for REAC professional development and for facilitating communication and information flow.
4. REAC, REAC assistant, adviser, and recipient staff travel.
5. Relevant costs associated with IT systems and platforms, including virtual platforms, including the EducationUSA Data Reporting System and event management platforms. Costs related to contracting with experts/consultants for relevant content creation.
6. Office supplies and expenses, including rent, equipment, communications, postage, and shipping.
7. Overseas EducationUSA adviser professional development workshops and forums.

8. Professional development participant program costs, i.e. international/domestic travel, visas, and per diem for EducationUSA advisers that are not employed by U.S. embassy or consulate, conference registration and lodging reservations for all participating EducationUSA advisers.
9. Campus visit logistics for professional development activities.
10. Logistical support for domestic and international education fairs and conferences, as described in Section A.
11. Tools, resources, and staff support for any expanded virtual advising, including adviser professional development, EducationUSA advising delivery, brand promotion, and global network communications.
12. Course development and delivery for EducationUSA adviser professional development.
13. Outreach, publicity, and special project costs, including annual design packet and website development and/or maintenance.
14. Expenses related to the Opportunity Funds advising program.
15. Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program costs.

Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia Countries and Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa

1. Advising center staff salaries and benefits.
2. Relevant costs associated with virtual advising.
3. Local transportation.
4. Expenses related to the Opportunity Funds advising program.
5. Resource materials and computer equipment for centers and coordinators.
6. Office supplies and expenses, including rent, equipment, communications, postage, and shipping.
7. Outreach, publicity, and special project costs.
8. Fair organization: venue, publicity and related costs.
9. Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, and related expenditures.
10. Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program costs.

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

D.3o. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Friday, July 2, 2021

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

D.3p. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone:800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

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

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error

messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3q. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. 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 U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. 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. A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- 2. Ability to achieve program objectives:** The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 3. Cross-cultural sensitivity and area/regional expertise:** Proposals for Components A, B, and C should demonstrate a depth of knowledge, expertise, and established networks in the countries/regions supported by each Component.
- 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 Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** 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 successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- 6. Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports.
- 7. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:** 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.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Award Notices: Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed

by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer as identified in the application.

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

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>
<https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

F.3. Region and Topic Specific requirements: The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3a. Iran Programming: A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact Robin Lathrop at 202-368-3512 or e-mail: LathropRT@state.gov for additional information.

F.3b. Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza Programming: All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must

consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Robin Lathrop at 202-368-3512 or e-mail: LathropRT@state.gov for additional information.

F.4. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the cooperative agreement year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#).
- 2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 120 days after the expiration or termination of the award.
- 4.) The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.
- 5.) Quarterly program and financial reports should document any income earned from program activities.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3h. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

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

F.5. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Program Officer Robin Lathrop, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S, SA-5, 4th floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 368-3512, LathropRT@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

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

H. Other Information:**Notice:**

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

Matthew Lussenhop
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

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