

Department of State

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

(NOFO): FY 2022 Fulbright Scholar Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0007707

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.401

Key Date/Application Deadline: June 1, 2021

Executive Summary: The Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA/A/E), U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for a Cooperative Agreement to assist in the FY 2022 administration of the worldwide Fulbright Scholar Program, pending the availability of funds. The Fulbright Scholar Program is a major component of the overall Fulbright Program.

For 75 years, the core Fulbright U.S. and Visiting Scholar Programs have offered awards for college and university faculty, including early career scholars, and for non-academic professionals (such as attorneys, artists, journalists, and business professionals), to lecture and conduct research abroad. More than 100,000 U.S. and visiting (non-U.S.) scholars and professionals have participated in these exchanges since the Fulbright Program's inception in 1946.

The core Fulbright Scholar Program currently sends, each year, approximately 958 U.S. scholars and professionals abroad to lecture, conduct research, and provide academic consulting at overseas institutions. Reciprocally, the program brings approximately 1,037 visiting scholars from more than 100 countries to the United States for similar activities hosted primarily, but not exclusively, at U.S. colleges and universities.

Responsibility for the management of the Fulbright Scholar Program will be shared between the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., 49 binational Fulbright commissions abroad, approximately 100 U.S. embassies, and the award recipient in the United States solicited through this NOFO. Overall policy and selection guidelines for the Fulbright Scholar Program are determined by the Presidentially-appointed J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB).

The organization that is awarded the Cooperative Agreement under this competition will be responsible for the recruitment, selection, placement, monitoring, and organization of enrichment activities for participants (including pre-departure orientations for U.S. scholars, and also for U.S. Fulbright students, whose other program activities are not included in this NOFO), program promotion, disbursement of funds, and record keeping for both the Fulbright U.S. and Visiting Scholar Programs. This work will be supervised under the auspices of a Cooperative Agreement by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Should the Fulbright Scholar Program be awarded to an organization that does not currently administer the Program, the new organization and the current administrator of the Fulbright Scholar Program will be required to collaborate closely to ensure a successful transition.

The Fulbright Scholar Program offers a range of activities in response to program priorities and changing conditions and needs within the U.S. academic community and in overseas academic environments. The award recipient should be proactive in providing expertise, intellectual input and innovative thinking on current research, pedagogical, administrative, institutional, and other academic issues and concerns to promote the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the Fulbright Scholar Program in the United States and abroad. The award recipient should also be prepared to advise the Office of Academic Exchange Programs on strategies to address U.S. foreign policy priorities as defined by ECA through engagement with higher education in the United States and internationally.

A. Program Description:

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 for the program above is provided through an annual Congressional appropriation. The Fulbright Program also receives significant annual funding and other support from partner governments, the academic community, and private donors worldwide.

The Bureau, as sponsor and manager of the Fulbright Scholar Program, plays a significant role in the planning and implementation of all program initiatives, publicity, promotion, and enrichment activities, and in communication and coordination with U.S. embassies, binational Fulbright commissions, and foreign governments. The Office of Academic Exchange Programs will work closely with the award recipient organization on participant selection procedures, development of selection panels, and stipend and benefit issues. Ongoing contacts with Office of Academic Exchange Programs managers will be required throughout the program year. Through this NOFO, the Bureau seeks high quality recruitment plans that reflect changing conditions in U.S. academia, proposals for significant outreach about the Fulbright Scholar Program in the United States and overseas, and innovative program models for scholarly exchange.

Purpose:

The Fulbright Program was created by the U.S. Congress at the end of World War II to provide future leaders the opportunity to observe and better comprehend the political, economic, and cultural institutions and societies of other countries and people. In the intervening years, the Fulbright Program has evolved into the premier educational exchange program sponsored by the people of the United States through their federal government, and an important component of U.S. foreign affairs. The Fulbright Program, which now extends to more than 150 foreign countries and involves approximately 8,000 participants per year, has helped to form and inform

many of the world's leaders in every academic and professional field. More than 400,000 Fulbrighters have participated in the Program since its inception 75 years ago.

One hallmark of the Fulbright Program is its binational character. The U.S. government and foreign governments, educational institutions and other public and private entities are all partners in this enterprise. In many countries of the world, financial contributions from governments or public/private sources match or exceed those of the U.S. government. Because of its binational nature, the profile of the Fulbright Program worldwide reflects a range of objectives and interests.

The scholar component of the Fulbright Program will engage approximately 1,995 scholars and professionals in FY 2022. The Bureau will provide funding to the award recipient to assist with in the administration of both the Fulbright U.S. and Visiting Scholar Programs.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA activities and responsibilities for this program include the following:

- Participating in the design of, and providing direction for, all program activities;
- Approving key personnel of the award recipient;
- Approving and providing input on program timelines, agendas, and administrative procedures;
- Providing guidance on the execution of all program components;
- Reviewing and approving all program recruitment, publicity, and outreach materials;
- Reviewing proposed selection of participating scholars, in cooperation with Fulbright commissions and U.S. embassies, subject to final selection by the FFEB;
- Approving changes to scholars' proposed field, program, or host institution;
- Approving decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout the duration of the program;
- Assisting with non-immigrant visa status and other SEVIS-related issues;
- Assisting with participant emergencies, including, but not limited to, serious physical and mental health issues and emergencies, evacuation, and repatriation;
- Liaising with relevant U.S. embassies, Fulbright commissions, and country desk officers at the U.S. Department of State;
- Responding to media queries and communicating with the press.

The responsibilities of the award recipient for the administration of the Fulbright Scholar Program are as follows:

For the core U.S. Scholar Program:

Approximately 958 U.S. citizens are awarded Fulbright Scholar grants each year, through a merit-based, competitive process, to teach undergraduate or graduate courses at host universities overseas, collaborate with foreign colleagues on projects, pursue individual research, conduct seminars, consult with foreign government ministries and educational institutions, advise on

curriculum development and guest lecture at foreign universities other than their host institutions abroad.

The award recipient administering the Fulbright Scholar Program is responsible for advertising awards and recruiting applicants in the United States for all available grants/opportunities.

The award recipient administering the Fulbright Scholar Program is responsible for organizing and managing a merit-based academic peer review process to recommend candidates for participation in the program. The integrity and independence of that review process is a hallmark of the Fulbright Program.

For the core Visiting Scholar Program:

Approximately 1,037 visiting scholars and professionals receive grants each year for research, teaching, guest lecturing and academic consulting in the United States. These participants are chosen through open, merit-based competitions in each country, which are conducted by a binational Fulbright commission or, in the absence of a commission, by the U.S. embassy.

While not responsible for recruitment or selection of visiting scholars, the award recipient administering the Fulbright Scholar Program is responsible for monitoring all visiting scholars while on their program in the United States, including providing enrichment opportunities, and production of DS-2019s for all visiting scholars and their dependents.

For the Special Regional and Smaller Cohort Based Programs:

In addition to core long-term exchange activities, the program includes shorter-term grant opportunities for both U.S. and visiting scholars, opportunities for collaborative research, and support for follow-on activities to build lasting links between U.S. and foreign academic institutions. These initiatives help make the scholar program responsive to academic environments and to addressing long-term U.S. foreign policy priorities and regional and world-wide concerns. The award recipient must demonstrate flexibility to help identify and respond quickly to changing priorities and global circumstances when administering and developing academic exchange programs.

Through the Scholar-in-Residence component of the Fulbright Program, the Bureau brings visiting scholars and professionals for an academic semester or academic year to U.S. campuses that are infrequent hosts for visiting scholars. These campuses are selected through a competition managed by the cooperating organization.

The Bureau currently sponsors collaborative research through programs such as the Fulbright Arctic Initiative and comparable regional or thematic research programs. These programs, which are directed by a lead scholar recruited by the award recipient, organize U.S. and visiting scholars in thematically based cohorts, often last more than one year, and require the award recipient to organize multiple group-based meetings, in addition to short-term individual exchanges.

The award recipient will also be responsible for administering a number of related special programs and activities as directed by the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, including but not limited to the Fulbright Public Policy Fellowship, International Education Administrator seminars, and the Fulbright Outreach Lecturing Fund.

These programs require close collaboration between the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, the award recipient in the United States, Fulbright commissions and U.S. embassies overseas. Based on this program's direct relevance to current world issues, the award recipient is expected to provide expertise on how academic research collaboration can most effectively address international policy issues and encourage academic and other private sector involvement and support to supplement government funds.

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and binational Fulbright commissions and U.S. embassies abroad will determine the structure and specific award opportunities of the Fulbright Scholar Program, under the guidance of the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. The Bureau welcomes proposals from applicant organizations proposing additional new and innovative scholarly exchange activities, consistent with Fulbright principles, which respond to changing circumstances in the global academic community, emerging U.S. and global priorities, and technological advances.

The Bureau seeks innovative recruitment approaches and creative strategies to recruit diverse participants, to attract U.S. scholars to parts of the world that have been underrepresented in the program, and to increase participation of scholars from priority underrepresented academic disciplines and professionals fields.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2022.

Approximate Total Funding: \$6,300,000, pending the availability of funds

Approximate Number of Awards: One.

Approximate Average Award: \$6,300,000, pending the availability of funds.

Floor of Award Range: None.

Ceiling of Award Range: \$6,300,000, pending the availability of funds

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

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2026

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 cooperative agreement for no more than four 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 cooperative agreement, in an amount of \$6,300,000 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.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

c.) To facilitate effective communication between ECA's Office of Academic Exchange Programs and the cooperating organization, preference will be given to award recipients with offices and program staff located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area dedicated to working on the Fulbright Scholar Program, to allow for the resumption of in-person planning meetings following the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants that do not currently have offices with program staff in the Washington, D.C. area should include in their proposals a plan for maintaining direct contact with ECA on a regular basis or establishing a presence in Washington, D.C. by October 1, 2021. The award recipient bears the costs of establishing the offices and program staff. No such costs may be included in the budget submission for this program. The award recipients must also have the ability to work electronically with all partners involved in the management of the Fulbright Scholar Program.

d.) 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 Contact Information to Request an Application Package: Please contact the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, ECA/A/E SA-5, 4th Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-3258, MoneySD@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Stephen Money and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3n. "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.

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.servicenow.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. 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. Pending the availability of FY 2022 funds, up to \$6,300,000 in U.S. government funding will be available to support the administration of the Fulbright Scholar Program worldwide in FY 2022. Applicants should provide separate administrative sub-budgets, and unit costs, for each program component or activity as outlined in the POGI to provide clarification. *[Note: In addition to the administrative funds provided in response to this NOFO, an estimated total of \$30,000,000 in program funds will be transferred to the award recipient organization in approximately three installments per fiscal year to cover individual participant costs. Prior to the transfer of funds, the award recipient must provide programmatic summary budgets by region, by country and/or global program as well as financial reports reflecting both administrative and program costs to date.]* ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase funding amounts and participant numbers pending the availability of funds, the needs of the program, and U.S. Department of State foreign policy priorities.

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

- 1) Staff salaries and benefits;
- 2) Office rent, furniture, and equipment;
- 3) Staff travel;
- 4) Communications, printing, and publishing; and
- 5) Other fees associated with the normal administration of exchange programs.

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

D.3m. Key Personnel

ECA recommends that the applicant identify proposed key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget and include resumes of key personnel in the proposal submission. Key personnel will include responsible signatories on the award as well as senior staff responsible for program oversight and implementation. 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.3n. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Tuesday, June 1, 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.3o. 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.3p. 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:* The proposal should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's priorities and mission. Proposed programs should strengthen mutual understanding and the establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
2. *Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the applicant will meet the program's objectives and plans, while demonstrating innovation, productivity, and a commitment to academic excellence. The proposal should demonstrate a capacity for flexibility in the management of the program.
3. *Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's goals. The applicant should demonstrate well-established links to the scholarly and professional community in the U.S. and knowledge of other educational environments as they apply to academic and professional exchange programs. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Grants Division. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
4. *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. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

5. *Support of Diversity:* The proposal should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. The proposal 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.
6. *Project Evaluation:* The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program'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.

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. 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 Danielle Spitzer at 202-320-6036 or SpitzerDM@state.gov for additional information.

F.3b. Special Provision For Performance In A Designated Combat Area And Future Contingency Operations (Currently Iraq And Afghanistan): Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over \$150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment. The DoS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number". The following information shall be provided:

1. Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:
 - a. Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
 - b. Total Number Host Country Personnel:
 - c. Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, Recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

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;

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.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Stephen Money at MoneySD@state.gov or 202-632-3258 or Leigh Sours at SoursLA@state.gov or 202-255-3687, U.S. Department of State, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, ECA/A/E, SA-5, 4th Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

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

February 25, 2021