

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2016 Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program

Funding Opportunity Number ECA-ECAAS-16-009

Office of Global Educational Programs / U.S. Study Abroad Branch (ECA/A/S/Q)

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Global Educational Programs, U.S. Study Abroad Branch for the FY 2016 Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program. Proposals must conform to the NOFO, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying NOFO, the NOFO is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

This project is to administer and implement the FY 2016 Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program. Pending the availability of funds, it is anticipated that the agreement will begin on/about April 15, 2016 and will run through approximately October 30, 2017. **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 two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.** This solicitation includes both the administration and program portions of the Gilman Program.

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

The ECA/A/S/Q program office's activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

- 1) Oversee the design and direction of all program activities;
- 2) Approve key personnel;
- 3) Guide execution of all program components;
- 4) Approve decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout duration of program;
- 5) Review all print and online materials, including award letters, for the Gilman Program before publication and dissemination;
- 6) Review and approve the recruitment and outreach strategy;
- 7) Work with the administering organization to publicize the program through various media outlets; ECA must review and approve all publications and interview requests;
- 8) Review and approve the forms used in the Gilman application;
- 9) Observe, but not participate in, selection panels;
- 10) Work with administering organization to plan and implement virtual pre-departure and re-entry modules;
- 11) Assist with participant emergencies;

- 12) Provide substantive input on alumni activities and follow-up events;
- 13) Perform an annual performance evaluation/review. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all renewals.

Responsibilities of the award recipient for administration of the Gilman Scholarship Program are as follows:

The Gilman Program has three distinct application cycles: fall, spring and summer. The selected administering organization will be expected to conduct the following activities separately and/or collectively for each cycle as appropriate:

1. Conduct a nationwide competition for participants with special emphasis on students from Minority-Serving Institutions and community colleges.
 - Develop and implement plans for nationwide outreach and recruitment that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates with documented financial need, who collectively represent the broad diversity of the United States. Particular attention should be given to Minority-Serving Institutions and community colleges.
 - Manage and enhance Gilman Scholarship website and social media accounts. In close consultation with ECA, publicize the program through various media outlets and other avenues.
 - Respond to and manage a significant volume of inquiries about the program from members of the public, academic institutions, study abroad organizations, and others.
2. Develop and oversee application and selection processes for participants.
 - Conduct a merit-based selection process for U.S. participants with clearly identified criteria for the selection, including those specified in this solicitation.
 - Convene selection panels of higher education faculty and administration experts in the fields of financial aid, study abroad, and academic advising to select scholarship recipients. Selection panels must take place at least three times a year following each of the three distinct application cycles, and include experts from Minority-Serving Institutions and 2-year institutions. Include Gilman alumni when possible.
 - Consult with ECA on a plan for notification of final participants, alternates, and non-selected applicants. All award notification letters for recipients and alternates *must* be signed by the ECA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs or other designated ECA official.
 - Consult with ECA on a plan to create and distribute press release notifications to institutions that have a student who is a Gilman scholarship recipient.
3. Disburse scholarship payments to students for overseas study.
 - Implement participant program requirements: enrollment in Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), verification of international insurance, development and execution of terms and conditions. All steps must be verified as complete *before* funding is dispersed. Terms and conditions must be developed in consultation with ECA.
4. Develop and manage virtual pre-departure and re-entry modules for participants.
 - Propose a mechanism for offering at least one pre-departure and one re-entry module; modules may be offered for optional academic credit.

5. Monitor program participants and provide assistance, as needed, during emergencies;
6. Organize and host an annual National Review Panel meeting in Washington, DC.
 - The National Review Panel should conduct an annual review of the program and its alignment with program goals, and provide guidance and recommendations for future programming.
7. Evaluate the program.
8. Support, monitor and oversee compulsory follow-on service project for all Gilman Scholars upon return to home institution.
9. Provide regular reporting to ECA.
 - Provide regular and ad-hoc reporting on program statistics in print and electronic formats.
 - In consultation with ECA, prepare an annual report to Congress that highlights program achievements by October 1.
10. Provide and oversee virtual and in-person alumni outreach and engagement activities.
 - Create and maintain a database of participants and alumni; and photos and stories of participants and alumni.

In FY2016, ECA will support no fewer than 2,850 scholarships for undergraduate study or credit-bearing internships for a minimum of 14 days for students from 2-year institutions and 28 days for students from 4-year institutions, and up to a maximum of one academic year. ECA reserves the right to modify program duration requirements.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Proposals should describe in detail the capacity of the applicant organization to fulfill all requirements of the NOFO and POGI. Proposals should offer strategies for the recruitment of U.S. students, particularly to ensure strong diversity, and plans to enhance the visibility of the program. Applicant organizations should also address their programmatic or other expertise that would contribute to the administration of the program.

All statistical information gathered and compiled by the administering organization on the program participants should be electronically transferable to the databases maintained by ECA. Therefore, each applicant must confirm that its system for collecting and storing data on participants is compatible with ECA systems. After the assistance award is made, the administering organization may contact ECA for additional information on the technical requirements for data updates.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

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

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

requirements.

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

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

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

Online Forms

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

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

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

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

Narrative

In a maximum of 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project. In the narrative the applicant organization should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices. We recommend using the following outline to organize your narrative. Refer to the proposal review criteria in this document for further guidance.

- 1. Vision:** Describe the project objectives and the desired outcomes.
- 2. Recruitment and Publicity:** Applicant organizations should develop plans for outreach and recruitment that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates that have the ability to succeed in the program and represent the diversity of the United States. The administering organization will be requested to provide publicity materials to ECA for approval. The administering organization must ensure that ECA and the Department of State are prominently identified as the program sponsor in all publicity and other scholarship program materials. *All materials and correspondence related to this program will state that the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a program of the U.S. Department of State supported in its implementation by (administering organization).*

In consultation with ECA, recruitment materials and any publicity should provide all relevant information to potential applicants. The key conditions, benefits, and terms of the program should be fully described to candidates and nominees before they accept an award. Sample publicity materials should be included in the proposal attachments section.

- Outline your recruitment plan. This plan should include regional workshops for college and university study abroad advisors (responsible for student guidance and academic advising) to provide training on program criteria and procedures and encourage participation from a large diverse pool of schools and students; other university visits; publicity and media relations.
 - With respect to media relations, the administering organization should develop a strategic communications plan and devote time and resources to garnering media attention for the Gilman Program through press releases, websites, social media platforms. In addition to media engagement, the strategic communications plan should outline a strategy for eliciting impact stories from participants and alumni, as well as a strategy for disseminating these anecdotes. The plan should include a cost estimate for each component, and should be included as a separate budget annex. ECA must approve the plan before implementation.
 - Plan to produce at least two high quality promotional videos in accordance with ECA's priority to develop more program-related video content. Production timeline and themes should be discussed in advance with ECA.
- 3. Screening and Selection:** Applicant organizations should outline selection criteria and a transparent process for selecting nominees from the pool of applicants. A corresponding statement of the selection criteria should be included in the program announcement for potential applicants. The administering

organization should work closely with ECA in developing the selection criteria.

Applicant selection panels should be convened at least three times a year (usually in May for the following fall cycle; November for the following spring cycle; and January for the following summer cycle) to review and rank applicants. Selection panels should include higher education administration experts in the fields of financial aid, study abroad, and academic advising to select scholarship recipients. Include Gilman alumni as panelists when possible. Careful attention should also be given to ensure inclusion of experts from Minority-Serving Institutions and two-year institutions.

Eligible participants are U.S. citizen undergraduate students who exhibit documented financial need as Pell Grant recipients and who are enrolled in a degree-seeking program at a U.S. college or university. Participants should demonstrate academic promise, as well as personal qualities that will enable them to be successful study abroad participants, including maturity, strong social skills, adaptability, flexibility, and open-mindedness. All participants must have strong demonstrated motivation to study abroad and be committed to complete their selected program. Selected students should represent the diversity of the United States. Applicant organizations should present a plan to identify such students and ensure that participants selected reflect this diversity.

- Describe how the applicant organization will manage and conduct a technical review of applications for eligibility and completeness (biodata, transcripts, recommendations, follow-on service projects), and obtain missing documentation from applicants before Selection Panel meetings.
- Outline in your proposal plans for a transparent review process, with clearly identified criteria for assessing applications. Propose procedures for organizing selection panels to recommend and rank applicants. Include Gilman Program alumni as reviewers when possible. Include ECA program officers as resources at panel meetings and ensure that they receive information about the scheduling and make-up of all review committees at least one month prior to the meetings. Please consult with ECA on any formulas used to determine the number of candidates ultimately recommended from any given panel.
- Propose a plan to notify applicants of their status after meetings of Selection Panels.

4. Program & Alumni Activities: Describe in detail the major components of the program, including project planning, advertisement, orientation, pre-departure/re-entry module, participant monitoring, and alumni engagement activities.

We welcome proposals that outline creative planning ideas for the following:

- Design and implementation of virtual pre-departure and re-entry learning modules. The modules should emphasize United States Government support for the Gilman Scholarship, and focus on cross-cultural communication, culture shock, and best practices for presenting their overseas experience and promoting study abroad upon their return. Applicants who wish to propose optional for-credit pre-departure and/or re-entry module(s) will also be considered.

5. Alumni Engagement: Alumni Engagement:

We encourage applicant organizations to use virtual and in-person events and activities to grow and magnify awareness of the Gilman Program and brand, including by providing support for networking opportunities for alumni such as the following: Creation and management of a database of participant and alumni photos and stories accessible by ECA; Creation and implementation of a mentoring program between prospective Gilman scholars and alumni; Administering a series of photo and video contests; Management of an Alumni Development Fund small grants competition; and/or Planning and executing a national and/or regional alumni workshop or conference that would provide leadership training and networking opportunities.

6. Follow-on: Outline in your proposal plans to ensure Gilman Scholars complete the required follow-on service project.

- Plans should include providing guidance and consultations to students in the selection of a project, approval of the proposed project, and reporting on project results and impacts.
- Plans that include best practices and/or a selection of structured service project options for students are encouraged.
- Detailed results and analysis of follow-on projects should be included in the annual report.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation: The program should be monitored closely and ECA must be kept informed of activities. In the proposal, applicant organizations should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported. ECA requests that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or outline of other techniques to be used to evaluate the impact of the program.

8. Program Reporting: The administering organization will be required to provide periodic reports analyzing their evaluation findings. All reporting should be impact focused.

- *Quarterly Reports:*
Following the fall, spring, and summer selection panels, the administering organization will submit timely reports to ECA on the number of applicants,

the number of participants selected, the names of the institutions of higher education in the United States that applicants and participants were attending at the time of application, the names of the institutions sponsoring the study programs abroad, the names and locations of the institutions of higher education outside the United States that participants will attend during their study program abroad, the award amounts for each participant, the fields and academic periods of study that participants intend to study abroad. Because diversity is an important program goal, the administering organization should attempt to collect age, ethnicity, gender, and disability data from scholarship applicants and recipients, while respecting Federal guidelines on the solicitation of such information.

- *Annual Congressional Report:*
The administering organization shall also prepare and submit to ECA program information and data to be included in the program's annual end-of-year report to Congress by October 1 of each year. This report should contain comprehensive statistics and a narrative developed in consultation with ECA.
- *Financial reports:*
The recipient organization should provide detailed "status of funds" reports for student programs, organized by program term (fall, spring, summer). All student participants should be listed, including the term of their program start. These reports should capture the amount transferred to the student, date of transfer, and confirmation of the student's participation in their chosen study abroad program. These reports should also capture cases in which funds were dispersed and the student did not study abroad – amount of funding recuperated and/or lost, and include a brief statement explaining how recuperated funds will be utilized. The reports are due approximately two months after the start of each term (fall – October 30; Spring April 30; Summer August 30).
- *Other reports:* Additionally, ECA may request other periodic and ad hoc reports. These may include separate breakdowns for students studying in regions or countries of strategic interest, internship placements, and students studying critical languages; and summary reports on the applicant pool (number of applications, trends, distribution of applications by region, fields of study, institution types), statistics, expenditures, or other program information as necessary.

8. **Diversity:** Applicant organizations must explain how the program managers will be pro-active in supporting diversity in the selection of Gilman Scholars. Diversity should be defined broadly and should include geographic, ethnic, racial, institutional, first generation, and socio-economic diversity.
9. **Institutional Capacity and Project Management:** Outline the

applicant organization's capacity for implementing programs of this nature. Describe the program staffing (individuals and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources.

- 10. Participating Organizations:** If applicable, identify partner organizations for the program, their roles, and the applicant organization's reasons for including them.
- 11. Work Plan/Schedule:** Outline the phases of project planning and implementation for the entire grant period. Provide a proposed schedule highlighting the implementation of significant activities.

Additional Information to be Submitted

Detailed Budget

The anticipated level of base-year funding available for the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program is \$12,500,000.

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. In addition, it reserves the right to accept proposals in whole or in part and to make an award in the best interest of the program.

The available funding may be used to support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included.

Allowable Costs:

a) Allowable administrative costs include items such as:

- Staff salaries and benefits;
- Staff travel and per diem;
- Rent and facilities;
- Furniture and equipment;
- Meetings and conferences;
- Communication costs;
- Network charges;
- Administration of tax withholding and reporting as required by Federal, state and local authorities and in accordance with relevant tax treaties;
- Indirect costs; and/or

- OMB Circular 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F Audits.

Applicant organizations should also provide a detailed explanation of administrative overhead. Provide a list of staff to administer the FY2016 Gilman program, including amounts of time, salary and benefits attributed to each.

b) Allowable program costs to be funded by the Cooperative Agreement award include items such as:

- Publicity, pre-departure, re-entry and orientation materials and expenses;
- Costs of national review committees, including travel and per diem;
- Website/on-line applications/database management;
- Program materials;
- Alumni engagement in-person event costs;
- Evaluation; and/or
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities.

Significant cost sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, ECA urges applicant organizations to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant organization and other sources.

Please refer to the PSI for more information on allowable costs and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Calendar of activities/itinerary

Letters of Endorsement

Resumes and CVs

Resumes of all program staff that will receive compensation under the Cooperative Agreement should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages

Outreach Plan

Include a comprehensive outreach plan to advertise the program at U.S. colleges and universities, conferences, and partnerships with organizations nationwide.

Sample information packets

A sample of the information packet to be provided to participants before departure should be included. The packet should include general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training.

First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

Note: Applicant organizations should limit attachments to what is essential. Manuals, promotional material on the organization, articles, tables, and the like are generally not helpful to the applicant organization making a case for the proposed program.

Please note: All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

As part of final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

- 1. *Quality of the program idea:*** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.
- 2. *Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives:*** 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. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

3. *Multiplier effect/impact and Follow-on Activities:* Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages. Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

4. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should show substantive support of ECA'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 program's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended.

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.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The NOFO indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the competition, call Jacqueline Mourot at (202) 623-9463, ECA/A/S/Q; Fax: (202) 632-6350; email: MourotJD@state.gov.