

**Department of State**

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

**(NOFO):** FY 2021 Global Media Makers

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SFOP0007508

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.415

**Application Deadline:** March 16, 2021

**Executive Summary:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA, or “Bureau”) announces an open competition for the FY 2021 Global Media Makers (GMM) program. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct an innovative professional development program for film, television, and online episodic content creators from participating countries to enhance their creative skills. This program, like other ECA film program models, seeks to elevate influential voices that are building resilient civil societies by using film, television, and online episodic content to address critical local issues including, but not limited to, freedom of expression, pluralism, tolerance, women’s and youth empowerment.

GMM will connect approximately 12 to 18 mid-career film and television professionals (“Fellows”) from approximately six to eight countries with leading U.S. entertainment and media professionals (“Mentors”). These Mentors will facilitate behind-the-scenes access, bolster participants’ technical skills and creative content development, and build the foundations for lasting professional networks. This program will focus on in-development film, television, and online episodic content (“projects”) and match Fellows’ areas of interest with Mentor expertise. Fellows will travel to the U.S. for a four-to-six week residency, which will primarily take place in Los Angeles to work on projects with Mentors and receive state-of-the-art-training and industry access to support conceptual development of independent, authentic, and compelling content for distribution in their home countries. Following the residency, Mentors will travel to a select number of the Fellows’ home countries, when possible, for continued creative consultation and engagement. Both Mentors and Fellows will mutually benefit from the extended creative and professional development, which will promote critical thinking and dialogue, which will lead to greater creative and entrepreneurial connections. Additionally, GMM will support current Fellows and past alumni through professional development opportunities including, but not limited to, film festival support, micro grants, networking activities, technical and creative guidance.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

It is the Bureau's intent to award one cooperative agreement for an estimated total amount of \$1,300,000, pending the availability of funds.. Please see section B.) Federal Award Information, below for additional details. As noted in that same section below, two renewal awards may be issued, pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years.

### **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 authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

**Purpose:** The U.S. Department of State's Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) proposes an innovative professional mentoring program with leading U.S. entertainment film and television professionals ("Mentors") to enhance the capacity and creative reach of film and television professionals ("Fellows") from select countries.

The Global Media Makers (GMM) program seeks to elevate creative voices, crucial to building strong civil societies, by utilizing film and television to amplify issues such as, but not limited to, freedom of expression, pluralism, tolerance, women's and youth empowerment. With an LA-based residency and additional follow-on engagement activities, GMM seeks to create a holistic creative and professional experience through a robust exchange of ideas and training by utilizing, when relevant and required, both in-person and virtual approaches. This program will provide Fellows with creative and technical support needed to develop story concepts and works-in-progress through specially tailored mentorships, masterclasses, workshops, and other enhancement opportunities. GMM will provide substantial creative and technical insight for Fellows and includes ongoing creative counsel and support by Mentors after Fellows return to their home countries. Additionally, GMM will provide opportunities for alumni support and engagement.

For proposal planning purposes and GMM continuity, the program should primarily include participants from countries in the Middle East, North Africa, South and Central Asia, as well as Turkey. Participants from sub-Saharan Africa and other regions throughout the world are eligible to be considered in consultation with ECA. The Bureau also reserves the right to modify the target regions or to add or exclude countries from the program based on Department priorities and other considerations.

The goals and outcomes of GMM are to: (1) enable participants to more effectively harness the power of visual storytelling to explore the critical issues confronting their communities; (2) connect participants with a range of U.S. creative, business, and technical leaders through mentorships and other engagement opportunities; (3) help visual storytellers acquire the necessary skills, enabling them to create compelling content for multi-media platforms; (4) establish professional networks by linking participants with each other and with professional leaders in the U.S. entertainment industry; (5) develop business skills and connections necessary to secure film financing and increase market distribution; (6) expose filmmakers to community-based organizations that either provide media-focused training for youth and underserved populations or use film as a tool to promote critical thinking and mutual understanding; and (7) showcase films and episodic content and to organize industry panel discussions to promote the exchange of ideas and to create a professional dialogue.

**Residency Program:** The GMM residency will be the core programmatic activity. It will primarily take place in Los Angeles with possible activities taking place in other areas of the United States with a significant film and television industry presence. The applicant will design a mentoring and hands-on training program that takes full advantage of the talent range, technical skills, and business expertise found throughout the entertainment industry in Los Angeles, from individual experts, and from small, niche companies to independent studios, mid-sized production companies, and larger entertainment studios and streaming platforms.

The applicant will need extensive expertise regarding the on-ground realities of production and distribution in select countries in order to match Fellows with Mentors and to design training that can be transferable and relatable. To that end, the first program component will include overseas visits by a U.S. team to meet and learn from sources including, but not limited to, local filmmakers, film educators, TV broadcasters, arts organizations, online content makers, research groups, and other media organizations to assess the media landscape in each participating country. This information will inform the program design, allowing for tailored programs for participants with Mentors and film education and training that meet Fellows' needs. In some cases, working with independent and/or lower budget productions may be more relevant for Fellows.

The applicant should provide facilities that are accessible, well-maintained, safe, and conducive to the creative needs of the Fellows.

Fellows will be in L.A. together at the same time, creating an opportunity to build a community of socially engaged filmmakers and content creators who will maintain connections once they return home. To this end, the program design should allow for a common workspace or hub where filmmakers can congregate each day to work on their projects or hold meetings and consultations with experts.

The residency should begin with an orientation session, either in-person or virtually, in order to outline various points, including, but not limited to, residency expectations, cultural sensitivities to be aware of, rules of decorum, and safety guidelines and practices.

Approximately 12 to 18 mid-career Fellows from six to eight countries will participate in a residency program that will refine storytelling techniques, to include new technologies, establish professional networks, and expand business skills by offering training in development, financing, distribution, and promotion.

Qualified Fellows will be mid-career filmmakers between approximately 21 to 45 years of age, and will be required to come to GMM with a project in development, preferably, but not required, one that is already supported by film, television, and other media partners. Fellows will have a proven track record of having written, directed, or produced content in their home countries. The projects in development should explore civil society themes in an organic, compelling way. Projects could include documentary films, narrative features, and episodic content in any genre. Fellows will outline goals at the outset of the program, including production and distribution plans for their projects, upon completion of the residency.

Ideally, the program will invite multiple participants from a single country, with each participant bringing different but complementary creative skills. Fellows also have the option to partner as a creative team, no more than two people, working on a project together. Multiple Fellows from one country will ideally amplify the creative exchange experience and increase potential for a transfer of skills.

The Mentor and Fellow matching process will be critical, and each participant and/or team may have different needs. Once Fellows are identified, the applicant will ensure that Mentors possess the relevant skills and experience to meet each Fellow's needs and interests. Additionally, Mentors and Fellows will work together to develop a project plan during the residency, as well as an action plan for the Fellow to implement once they return home.

Program design will allow Fellows to take full advantage of the range of professional expertise in the U.S. Fellows will be paired with a team of creative, business, and technical Mentors in the film and television entertainment industry. Mentors will represent a spectrum of expertise from the creative, financial, and technical sides of

storytelling. Mentors will be carefully matched to offer Fellows a broad range of individualized and close-up professional experiences such as, but not limited to, access to pitch sessions, writers' rooms, production lots, editing bays, sound mixing studios, production budget meetings, costume and set design, and marketing and distribution planning. Through diverse access and relationship-building with multiple Mentors, Fellows will experience the many different stages of creative development, production, and distribution. This range of expertise will allow Fellows to refine skill sets and learn new ways to connect with audiences, especially younger audiences who access stories on a range of platforms. Mentors should represent a wide range of expertise from independent film and digital media to larger film and television productions, including, but not limited to, writing, directing, producing, editing, cinematography, audience engagement, physical production, film financing, and distribution. Fellows can be connected with Mentors in-person and through virtual sessions.

The applicant will be expected to identify and recruit established U.S. film and television professionals to serve as Mentors, as well as technical experts to create unique, tailored activities and present workshops for Fellows. The applicant will match Mentors with Fellow's and/or creative team's needs, according to their needs. Some Mentor engagement may be longer and more substantial than others. Proposals should also include letters of intent and/or commitment from established individual film and television professionals and/or U.S.-entertainment and media companies that would be willing to mentor participants.

Applicants must identify U.S. and foreign partners with whom they are proposing to collaborate. Proposals should contain letters of commitment or support from any prospective partners. Applicants should clearly outline and describe the roles and responsibilities of all partners in terms of project logistics, management, and oversight.

Residency activities will also include additional networking opportunities and enhancement activities to take advantage of the educational, cultural, and professional opportunities in Los Angeles. For example, each week Fellows could attend seminars on funding, marketing and distribution, film festivals or television markets, pitch sessions, and/or discussions with established filmmakers, television writers, and other professionals.

As an important part of the cultural exchange aspect of GMM, Fellows should also have the opportunity to observe and engage with U.S. non-profit community-based groups who use film, television, and online content to enhance understanding and raise awareness of social issues. Participants should receive an understanding of these advocacy techniques to civil society groups upon return to their home countries.

Upon program completion, Fellows should have exposure to leading practices for creating and developing engaging film, television, and/or episodic content. GMM seeks

to enable Fellows to develop, shape, and amplify their compelling creative content for their local markets and beyond. All Fellows will maintain full editorial and creative control of their projects.

The Los Angeles residency will conclude with a closing session with the Fellows, Mentors, and other participating industry leaders discussing and summarizing core successes of the residency and areas where collaboration and skill sharing need to continue. The Fellows will share and receive feedback on action plans for developing their projects once they return home and establish specific ways for continued engagement with the Mentor networks. Similarly, Fellows will discuss how they plan to share the skills they have acquired with emerging filmmakers and local creative communities in their home countries.

After the Los Angeles residency, the applicant will propose ways Fellows and Mentors will maintain contact and how GMM, in general, will support alumni.

**GMM Fellows and Overseas Participants:** Individuals accepted to be part of the L.A. residency will be known as “Fellows”. Fellows will be mid-career film, television, and online content creators, specifically who are writers, directors, and producers. “Filmmaking” should be interpreted broadly to include – but not be limited to – storytelling across traditional and digital media platforms and to include the fields of writing, producing, and directing film, television, and streamed content.

Prior to being accepted into the L.A. residency, individuals will be known as “candidates.” Candidates applying for the L.A. residency must have an established track record within their respective media markets; submit work for review; submit professional letters of support; and come with works in progress that incorporate a creative narrative that explores issues and themes of local importance (e.g. pluralism, tolerance, women’s and youth empowerment).

Candidates should outline their production and distribution plans for proposed works in progress and how their content will facilitate and contribute to dialogue within their communities. Candidates should outline their intended goals for participation and outline areas of support and training needed. Candidates should identify general challenges filmmakers face in local markets and how participation might address some of these challenges.

Multiple Fellows can come from one country, with each Fellow potentially bringing a different but complementary creative skillset from writing, directing, and producing. Candidates can submit applications independently or as creative teams, no more than two individuals.

All Candidates applying for the L.A. residency must be proficient in written and spoken English. Additionally, all participants should be approximately between the ages of 21 to 45.

Apart from the L.A. residency, other follow-on programs will take place. Individuals participating in these follow-on programs will be known as “overseas participants”. Application requirements for overseas participants in follow-on programs are more flexible, in comparison to those for the L.A. residency program, in areas such as level of filmmaking experience, age, and English proficiency. Application flexibilities can be determined by the applicant for each overseas program.

Applicant proposal’s should include a description of the recruitment and merit-based application and selection processes for both Fellows and overseas participants. Participant recruitment for GMM programs should primarily be a nomination-based process, with participation from relevant U.S. Embassies, Consulates, GMM alumni, and other industry partners. Selection of all Fellows and overseas participants will be done in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates.

**Additional Activities:** Following the L.A. residency, U.S. Mentors can re-connect with Fellows either through in-person activities in their home countries or virtually. For each visit Mentors will work with Fellows on their projects and also lead discussions, workshops, masterclasses, and other activities, for local audiences and emerging filmmakers.

In their proposals, the applicant should include additional follow-on activity ideas to further connections between Mentors, Fellows, and alumni. For example, the applicant could propose a micro-grant program for the Fellows to enable continued support of their work and professional development.

GMM can also support participants in addition to the L.A. residency. In their proposal, the applicant should outline ideas for additional activities, which can include, but are not limited to, attending film festivals, creative labs, and both in-person and virtual screenings. Selection of these participants will also be done in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates. These activities can be in-person and/or virtual.

In consultation with ECA, GMM can support in-person and/or virtual film screenings and discussions, in association with posts, that further professional development and showcase stories that elevate creative voices, crucial to building strong civil societies. Films can be directed/produced by both U.S. and international filmmakers.

**Communications and program materials:** The production and publication of print and online program materials should be designed and arranged in collaboration with ECA and

the relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Relevant materials should include those to advertise and promote the program (both in the U.S. and overseas), orientation materials, mentoring guidelines, and materials for activities conducted in the participants' home countries. Materials and website designs must be approved by ECA prior to publication and/or distribution (allowing ECA a minimum of three weeks for this review process).

The applicant must be prepared to coordinate all public announcements regarding GMM (including press releases, website updates, media notes, etc.) with ECA's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications (PASC). Printed materials and websites must prominently display the U.S. flag, the U.S. Department of State seal, and the GMM logo. All official documents and materials developed for promotional purposes must use the GMM logo and acknowledge the U.S. Department of State's role as the program's sponsor. All materials and website resources paid for by funding through the cooperative agreement will become the property of the U.S. Department of State. Please refer to **D.3k. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients** in the **Application and Submission Section** below for further information.

**Program Tracking:** The applicant should create and provide ECA with a living document, such as a Google doc, in order to communicate and track all LA residency components, follow-on programs, and other related GMM activities. This document should provide program details, such as, but not limited to, dates, progress, status, and outcomes.

**Virtual Programming:** While ECA's goal is the safe return to normal in-person program operations, it is not clear when current travel restrictions and health advisories will permit. As such, FY 2021 proposals should include language to demonstrate maximum flexibility, creativity, and a rapid response factor for program planning and administration given the ongoing global crisis presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposal should also address the steps taken to ensure continuity of services should the current situation continue for an extended period of time.

As relevant, the proposal should present innovative options for virtual activities to augment, and/or substitute for, in-person engagement with all program stakeholders, if exchange travel continues to not be possible. The crisis may create significant challenges to normal or routine program activities in all areas, including, but not limited to, alumni engagement, film screenings, masterclasses, media landscape assessment trips, participant recruitment and travel, professional development residencies, program orientation, selection processes, and workshops.

Any new approaches to alumni programming must continue to promote alumni engagement and networking, as well as professional development and/or provide benefits to the home communities of alumni grant recipients.

**Approximate FY 2021 GMM Timeline:**

- *September -- December 2021:* Program start-up and research.
- *January -- April 2022:* On-the-ground media landscape assessments for participating countries. Identify nominating organizations and individuals. Nomination process begins.
- *May -- June 2022:* Selection process of 12 to 18 foreign participants, alternates and mentor teams. Residency logistics.
- *June -- September 2022:* Visa submissions for participants and travel and residency logistics.
- *September -- October 2022:* Travel to the U.S. by foreign participants and Los Angeles residency
- *November 2022 -- June 2023:* Mentors and Fellows continue creative engagement through in-person and virtual exchange. Simultaneously, other alumni and follow-on activities will continue throughout this time.
- *July -- August 2023:* Final evaluations of the program will be conducted and released.

**Competitive Proposals Should Include and Demonstrate the Following:**

- Demonstrate required experience in managing an international cultural exchange mentoring program, both in-person and virtual.
- Offer a program design that is flexible and responsive to the different creative teams' needs, as well as professional workshops and seminars that address more general interests. This program design should reflect both in-person and virtual components.
- Demonstrate virtual contingency planning for planned in-person activities, should travel restrictions not allow for in-person programming.
- Identify qualified and established partner organizations overseas to identify and recruit applicants to GMM, in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates.
- A description of a program that will build capacity and expand professional networks through tailored mentorships, masterclasses, workshops, and networking events.
- A description of how the applicant will ensure the experience and skills are transferable to different cultural media landscapes.
- A plan for developing background and assessment briefs for mentoring teams that outline the entertainment and media landscapes for each participating country and the on-ground realities and challenges participants face in different media environments.
- An in-person and/or virtual plan for participants to have pre-departure information, a group arrival orientation, and an evaluation session at the conclusion of the program.

- A description of the recruitment and merit-based selection processes for approximately 12 to 18 Fellows. Fellows can be considered individually or can identify as creative teams, no more than two individuals. The selection process should reflect how this might work and should also allow multiple participants from the same country.
- A description of the recruitment process for the securing of mentorships and Mentors from U.S. entertainment, media and content streaming companies, and how Fellows will be matched with appropriate Mentor teams.
- An outline for Mentor teams and how these teams would provide Fellows with a broad and in-depth exposure to industry practices.
- A description of how Fellows will work individually and collectively during the residency.
- A description of proposed participant workshops/labs/masterclasses that will address individual and group needs, including topics such as film financing, pitching, and marketing and distribution.
- A description of weekly activities to show how Fellows would spend time with Mentors in creative discussions or participate in cultural or networking events. The program design will be flexible enough to meet individual participant needs while accommodating group interests.
- A plan for monitoring and evaluation of participants during the Los Angeles residency and when participants have returned to their home countries. Please refer to **D.3i. Program Monitoring and Evaluation** in the **Application and Submission Section** for further information.
- A description of how the applicant will work with Fellows to identify individual and project development goals for GMM.
- A description of how the applicant will assist Fellows to develop and execute action plans after they return home.
- A plan to assist Fellows with delivering new skills and expertise to aspiring filmmakers and creative content developers in their home countries.
- A description of how Fellows and Mentors will maintain contact after the U.S.-based program concludes, and how participants/creative teams can consult experts as their projects develop.
- Resumes of staff that have experience and understanding of the entertainment industry, film education, and have relevant experience required to implement and monitor international exchange projects and ensure outcomes.
- A proposed timeline detailing GMM activities
- Letters of commitment from U.S. entertainment and media companies, film and television professionals, and experts to serve as Mentors.
- Letters of commitment from any proposed partner organizations/sub-recipients that will assist the applicant in implementing GMM. Applicants should clearly outline and describe the roles and responsibilities of all proposed partner organizations/sub-recipients in terms of project logistics, management, and

oversight. Additionally, applicants should justify why they have selected partners organization/sub-recipients to help implement GMM.

- A plan that demonstrates how the applicants will facilitate contact between Mentors and Fellows and overall alumni communications.
- Promote mutual understanding and partnerships between key professional groups in the U.S. and counterpart groups in eligible countries.
- A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan to evaluate the outcomes of the residency and all follow-on activities to measure for programmatic goals and achievements. Please refer to **D.3i. Program Monitoring and Evaluation** in the **Application and Submission Section** for further information.
- A plan for collecting, updating, and making available for consumption by the public and State Department representatives narrative stories, anecdotes, and any quantifiable data that illustrates the impact and multiplier effect of GMM both overseas and in the U.S.
- A plan for managing the production and publication of print and online program materials designed and arranged in collaboration with ECA and the respective U.S. Embassies.
- A budget reflecting a cooperative agreement request not to exceed \$1,300,000 for the FY 2021 program.

Before submitting a proposal, all applicants are encouraged to consult with the GMM program officer as noted in section **G. Agency Contacts** below.

### **Additional Information**

#### **A1. Substantial Involvement:**

In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The U.S. Department of State will be represented by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Cultural Programs Division.

U.S. Embassies and Consulates will also be actively involved in GMM. In consultation with ECA, the applicant will work with relevant U.S. Embassies for the media landscape trips, the nomination and final selection of all participants, and all follow-on programs with Fellows and alumni.

#### **ECA Responsibilities:**

- Advise, assist, and approve in the execution of all program components.
- Identify and approve all participating countries.
- Work closely on the outreach and selection of Fellows and Mentors.
- Approve the final selection of Fellows and Mentors,
- Approve additional GMM participants for other activities.

- Approve all micro grants.
- Review and approve all program publicity and other materials (digital and print).
- Assist with participant emergencies.
- Approve film selection for GMM screenings.
- Liaise with relevant U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and country desk officers at the U.S. Department of State, particularly in terms of recruitment and selection efforts. This is a collaborative process between ECA, posts, and the applicant.
- Work with applicant to publicize the program, when relevant, through various traditional and social media outlets.
- Provide an initial review and approval of all media and outreach plans.
- Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants and assist with SEVIS-related issues. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.
- When possible, represent the U.S. Government at exchange events.

**U.S. Embassy and Consulate Responsibilities:**

- Identify local partner organizations to nominate candidates, according to the nomination procedure guidelines provided by the applicant,
- Nominate candidates to participate in a U.S. based four-to-six week mentoring program and follow-on activities.
- Identify local partners and sites for workshops, master classes, screenings, discussions, and other in-country activities.
- Advise on in-country travel and logistics, as well as on safety and security protocols.
- Participate in the final participant selection process.
- Arrange pre-departure orientation and post program debrief with Fellows.
- Arrange any relevant in-country media and press engagements for the Fellows and Mentors.
- Provide final review and approval of all relevant program materials.
- When possible, represent the U.S. Government at exchange events.

**A2. Recipient Responsibilities:**

- Design a responsive program for participants to include individual mentoring, workshops/labs/masterclasses, and follow-on activities to meet individual and group needs
- Develop a timeline and design an inclusive selection process for participants. Obtain ECA approval of the selection process.
- Identify qualified and established partner organizations overseas to identify and nominate applicants to GMM, in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S.

## Embassies and Consulates

- Conduct a comprehensive selection process of approximately 12-18 foreign participants from eligible countries. Fellows will be mid-career writers, directors, and producers between the ages of approximately 21-45, and will come to GMM with a project in development. The projects should explore civil society themes in an organic, compelling way. Projects could include documentary films, narrative features, and/or episodic content in all genres.
- Conduct a comprehensive selection process for GMM Mentors who will represent a spectrum of expertise from the creative, business, and technical sides of storytelling. Once Fellows are identified, the applicant will ensure that Mentors possess the relevant skills and experience to meet individual Fellow's needs and interests. U.S. participants should represent the full range of diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, culture, race, and disability.
- Support robust engagement with the wider private sector to expand networking opportunities.
- Conduct a pre-residency orientation to discuss issues such as, but not limited to, program expectations, housing and travel logistics, safety and security, local cultural awareness, and professional standards and codes of conduct.
- Provide cultural outreach activities during the course of the residency to take full advantage of the educational, cultural, and professional opportunities in Los Angeles.
- Provide opportunities to engage with local Los Angeles-based community groups or schools that work with film to reach local communities on relevant local issues.
- Maintain liaison with ECA and program participants to ensure the program schedule is compatible with needs and objectives.
- Arrange for all Fellows and Mentor travel, immunizations, and other pre-travel preparations. Purchase round-trip international travel (complying with the Fly America Act) for the participants. The applicant is responsible for making travel and housing arrangements for all of the participants in the United States and overseas.
- Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program, issue health benefits identifications cards, and provide instructions on host claim forms. More information on ASPE is available at [www.usdos.sevencorners.com](http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com).

- Provide Mentors with background and assessment briefs that outline the entertainment and media landscapes for participating countries and the on-ground realities and challenges participants face in different media environments.
- Organize and hold a one-to-two day closing-session after the conclusion of the residency for all the GMM Fellows and Mentors to discuss the program, and summarize core successes and areas where collaboration and skills sharing needs to continue. Fellows will develop plans for how they will share information and lead film workshops with emerging filmmakers in their home countries.
- Provide ECA with regular program highlights and summaries during and after the residency and other GMM programs.
- Provide ECA with an ongoing document to track program plans, status, and updates.
- Ensure that foreign participants are nominated and vetted by overseas U.S. Embassies and Consulates. All foreign participants should be at least 21 years of age and must travel to the United States on J-1 visas. (Please see separate section for J-1 visa requirements.) Like U.S. participants, foreign participants should represent the full range of diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, culture, race, and disability.
- Work closely with ECA and U.S. Embassies and Consulates to develop programs that provide follow-on engagement and further professional development of international participants. Determine the program length in consultation with ECA and U.S. Embassies and Consulates.
- Propose film titles for GMM in-person and/or virtual screenings
- Develop a robust program evaluation to measure the short-term and long-term effects of the program, including, but not limited to, trip reports, program highlights, blog posts, social media, local press, photographs, and by any other means or metrics.
- Develop a comprehensive media and public relations strategy that includes outreach to international and U.S. media. The applicant will incorporate social media and other online platforms into the outreach strategy. All final public relations strategies will be developed in consultation with and approved by ECA.
- Ensure that both the credit language, the U.S. flag, and the Department of State seal are used on all print and web materials related to the cooperative agreement. Please see Communications guidance in this solicitation for more information.

**B. Federal Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2021

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$1,300,000, pending the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** One

**Approximate Average Award:** \$1,300,00, pending the availability of funds

**Floor of Award Range:** None

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$1,300,000, pending the availability of funds

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 30, 2021, pending the availability of funds

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** August 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 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 award, in an amount up to \$1,300,000, 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, 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.) 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 required for this competition; however, ECA 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 will 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 Catherine Collins in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Citizen Exchanges (ECA/PE/C/CU), SA-5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, Tel. (202) 632-9301, Fax (202) 632-9355, Email: collinacs@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.

Please specify Catherine Collins 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 <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://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.3p. "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](http://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 SAMS, 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. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Report:** In

addition to final program reporting requirements, applicants will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their award activities. For applicants, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of program 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.

**D.3f. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic:** All ECA applicant 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 applicant 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://afsism.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](mailto: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.3g. 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 applicants 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.

ECA 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.3h. 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.3i. 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.3j. 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.3k. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients:** All ECA Grant 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.3l. 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.

The below budget format is provided as an aid in organizing the budget, it is suggested but not required as a submission format for your proposal budget.

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

1) International and domestic airfares, visas, transit costs, ground transportation costs and airline baggage, and seat fees. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in ECA-sponsored programs.

2) Per Diem. For U.S.-based programming, organizations should refer to the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.

ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates for overseas activities can be accessed at [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

3) Housing in the U.S. The applicant will be responsible for providing clean, safe, and reasonably located housing for the Fellows during their stay in the U.S.

- 4) Transportation. The applicant will be responsible for providing methods of transportation for Fellows during their stay in the U.S.
- 5) Pre-planning trips to participating countries to assess media landscape and/or outreach for approximately five to 10 days. The applicant will be responsible for travel and in-country costs such as hotel and per diem. Costs for interpreters/translators may also be included in the budget.
- 6) Orientation Costs. The applicant will provide informational materials about GMM and the logistics involved in traveling to the U.S. This information will be used by U.S. Embassies and Consulates to conduct pre-departure orientations for the GMM participants in each country. The applicant will conduct a comprehensive orientation for all of the GMM participants upon their arrival in the U.S.
- 7) Closing Session Costs. The applicant will be responsible for organizing and paying for a closing session at the end of the residency for Fellows and Mentors.
- 8) Accident and Sickness Coverage. The GMM participants will be covered under the terms of a U.S. Department of State-sponsored healthcare coverage . Please see section E of the Proposal Submissions Instructions document for more information. The Bureau's coverage may cover medical costs, such as, but not limited to, vaccinations and medications as necessary when traveling overseas.
- 9) COVID-19 Related Costs. Organizations should budget for reasonable expenses related to COVID-19 accommodations of exchanges. Proposals should include costs associated with a-symptomatic testing if required for the start of exchange programs to/from the U.S. Proposals may include funding to allow for smaller exchange groups: single occupancy lodging, smaller group meetings, transportation that allows for social distancing, and other social distancing measures. Proposals may include costs associated for medically required quarantine (outside of medical facilities covered under ASPE insurance) during the course of the exchange program.
- 10) Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria amounts for consultants and Mentors can be up to \$300. This honoraria amount limit can be higher to accommodate special circumstances. However, ECA review and approval will be needed in those special circumstances. Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective applicant and the subcontractor should be included in the proposal. Subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.
- 11) Room Rental. Room rental rates will need to be reviewed and approved by ECA.
- 12) Materials Development. Proposals should contain costs to purchase, develop, and print brochures, and other promotional materials

13) Engagement and Follow-On Activities. Proposals should contain costs for engagement and follow-on activities such as, but not limited to, alumni summits and retreats, film screenings, micro grants, networking dinners, tickets to cultural activities, including film festivals, and other relevant events.

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

15) In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with visa interviews or DS-2019 pick-up.

16) Costs involved in GMM overseas follow-on programming (approximately five to 10 day trips) in GMM participating countries, including accommodations, visas, and other travel costs.

17) Administrative Costs. Costs necessary for the effective administration of the program may include salaries for recipient organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs detailed in the Application Package. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, applicants are strongly encouraged to keep administrative costs as low as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant and other sources.

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Tuesday, March 16, 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](mailto: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 (**GRANTXXXXXXXXXX**) 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. Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.
- 2. Multiplier effect/impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Institutional Capacity/Expertise and Intuition's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should directly possess an adequate and appropriate level of subject matter expertise 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.
- 5. 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.

**6. Cost-effectiveness:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

## **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](http://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 the Cultural Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges – Catherine Collins at (202) 632-9301 or [collinscs@state.gov](mailto:collinscs@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 the Cultural Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges – Catherine Collins at (202) 632-9301 or [collinscs@state.gov](mailto:collinscs@state.gov) for additional information.

**F.3d. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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; 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](mailto: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.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: [FFATAECA@state.gov](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USAspending.gov](http://USAspending.gov) website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Applicants will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. 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:** Applicants 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: Catherine Collins, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/CU, SA-5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-9301 (tel); (202) 632-9355 (fax); collinacs@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.

Marie Royce  
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

December 16, 2020