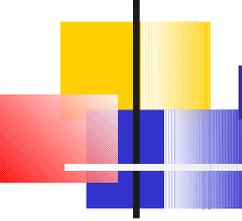


# Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

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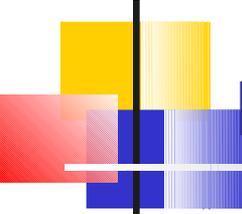
Making your Grant  
Proposal Competitive



## Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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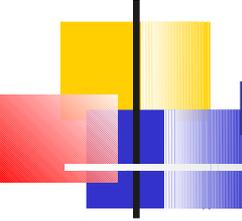
- Read the Request for Grant Proposal (RFGP) and application instructions thoroughly before writing proposal.
- Understand what you read.



## Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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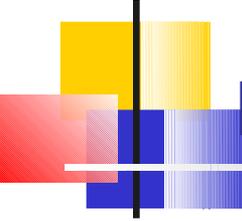
- During the RFGP open period, discuss any questions that fall within the confines of the RFGP with the ECA program officer identified in the solicitation.
- During the RFGP open period, consult with the Public Affairs Section representatives at U.S. Embassies in the participating countries about specific issues outlined in the RFGP regarding overseas programming (i.e. vetting of in-country partner)



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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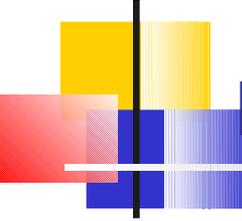
- Tailor your proposal to the RFGP.
- Review stated goals and objectives of the program:
  - Do they complement your organization's goals and objectives?
  - If yes, explain how the program will complement your efforts and why the program would be of benefit to the Department of State.



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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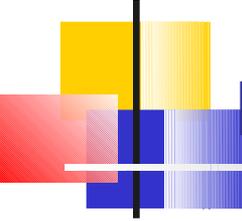
- ECA believes successful “Exchange Programs” benefit both foreign & U.S. audiences.
- If you can demonstrate this, your proposal will likely be viewed more competitively.



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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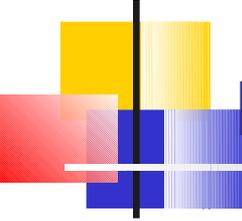
- Write your proposal clearly –rambling, misspellings, bad grammar all leave a bad impression.
- If using a boilerplate, check to make sure all parts are relevant to the specific competition for which you are applying.
- Have someone not associated with the writing of the proposal review it.



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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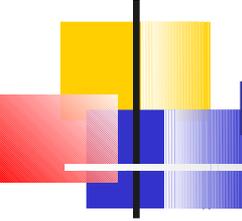
- Make your proposal stand out. Be creative when addressing the objectives.
- Show your commitment.
- Show your enthusiasm.
- Show your good ideas.
- Show your vigor.



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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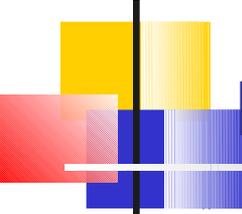
- Avoid:
  - Platitudes
  - Generalities
  - Self-promotion
- Be Specific –identify and address:
  - All required program components
  - Orientations
  - Training agendas
  - Sample schedules
  - Letters of endorsement



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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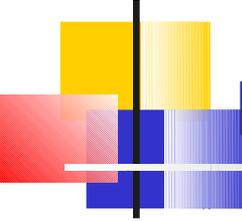
- Demonstrate your experience & expertise:
  - List accomplishments
  - Show a positive track record
  - Be honest about “lessons learned” from coordinating past exchange or international training programs
  - Take credit for problems encountered and addressed



## Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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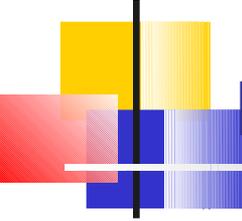
- If a competition is specific to a geographical region or program theme:
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the regional and/or issues in your narrative
  - Highlight institutional expertise
  - Highlight staff expertise



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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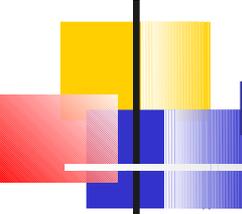
- If your organization is new to exchanges or lacks expertise:
  - Consider a partnership with a more experienced organization
  - But remember to delineate each partner's responsibilities in the proposal
- Include samples of past program:
  - Outlines
  - Schedules
  - Evaluations/endorsement



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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- Make sure your narrative addresses each of the published review criteria. Sample criteria may include:
  - Diversity
  - Program evaluation
  - Cost-effectiveness/cost sharing
  - Follow-on activities
  - Project planning/ability to achieve program objectives

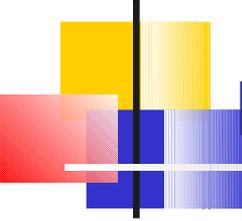


# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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## 1. Diversity—Does your proposal:

- \* Advance the principle of diversity? "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.
- \* Include a program topic related to diversity?
- \* Include diverse participants, employees, program volunteers?
- \* Discuss diversity matters?
- \* Represent your program's geographic, cultural, and ethnic diversity? Think broadly & creatively.

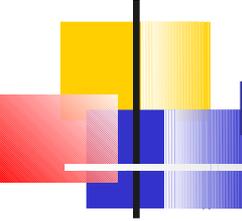


# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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## 2. Program evaluation plan should include:

- \* What is measurable?
- \* What are the proposed outcomes?
- \* Who will measure or evaluate these outcomes and what are their qualifications?
- \* Does evaluation take place both during the project and after its completion?
- \* How will the evaluation be reported to the Bureau?
- \* Does your proposal include sample evaluation forms?

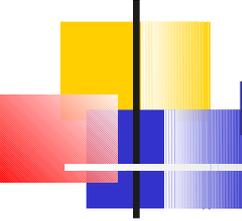


# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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## 3. Cost-effectiveness/cost sharing:

- \* Keep administrative funds to a minimum.
- \* Contribute as much-cost sharing as possible, including “non-cash” contributions. If the RFGP requires a minimum amount of cost-sharing and a maximum limit on admin, make sure your budget meets these requirements.
- \* Make sure your budget submission is clear and specific, and totals up correctly.
- \* Submit your budget in the proper format. The Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) contains information on budget format and allowable expenses.



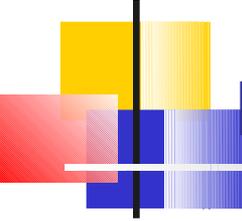
# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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## 4. Follow-on activities

Have you clearly demonstrated how your project will continue after Federal support has ended?

How will you continue to engage the program participants?



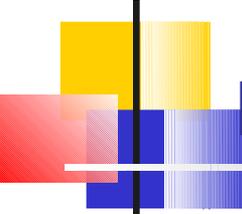
# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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## 5. Project planning/ability to achieve program objectives:

Be sure to explain how you will undertake the necessary tasks to fulfill the project's goals. These include but are not limited to participant selection and placement, program monitoring, language issues, and fiscal management.

A commitment in the proposal narrative to work with the U.S. embassy on program implementation (e.g. recruitment) upon issuance of an award, strengthens the proposal.

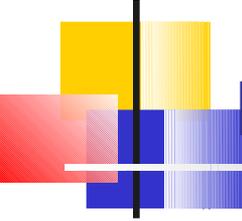


# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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Does your proposal meet all the technical requirements of the RFGP? Did you...

- Complete the required application forms?
- Include current resumes?
- Include financial reports? (IRS tax-exempt status?)
- Include supporting recommendations/letters of reference?
- Obtain necessary organizational sign-offs/signatures?
- Keep your narrative within the allowable page limit?



# Making your Grant Proposal Competitive

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## REMEMBER:

- Funding for most ECA grant competitions is limited and the number of eligible proposals usually exceeds available funding.
- Competition is Stiff – If your proposal is not funded, the ECA program office will provide you with details on why your proposal was unsuccessful. Many unsuccessful proposals are improved upon and funded the second time around.