Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY 2018 Survey of International Educational Exchange Activity in the United States
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAS-18-002
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.432
Key Date/Application Deadline: June 22, 2017

Program Description/Executive Summary: The Educational Information and Resources Branch (ECA/A/S/A), located in the Office of Global Educational Programs of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), announces an open competition for the FY 2018 Survey of International Educational Exchange Activity in the United States. 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 a statistical survey (census) of foreign nationals enrolled in institutions of higher learning in the United States, foreign scholars at U.S. institutions, and U.S. students participating in study abroad programs and collaborate with international partners to extend research and reporting on global student mobility patterns.

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.

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: To gain an accurate and current picture of international educational exchange activity in the United States in fulfillment of ECA's mandate, under the Fulbright-Hays Act, to promote mutual understanding through international educational exchange. In order to assess and analyze international educational exchange to and from the United States, the recipient organization, in consultation with ECA, will administer a series of sequential surveys to accredited U.S. higher education institutions focusing on four main sectors: 1) foreign students, 2) foreign scholars, 3) U.S. students studying overseas in credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs, and 4) foreign enrollees in intensive English language programs in the United States. The recipient should also include data on numbers of foreign students

enrolled at minority serving institutions. To obtain data on global student mobility, the recipient will also carry out work with foreign agencies and academic mobility researchers from around the world to collect and report accurate, timely and comprehensive data, which provides an important comparison point for U.S.-focused educational exchange activity.

A requirement for the execution of this survey is working, under ECA's guidance, with the Department of State's EducationUSA network, which promotes U.S. higher education in countries around the world. This includes verification and sharing of data to include numbers of students enrolled at U.S. institutions by state, academic level and field of study, with EducationUSA Program Officers, Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and EducationUSA advising centers. It also includes collection of data on foreign student perceptions of study abroad. Centers exist in a variety of locations including U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright commissions, binational centers, non-governmental organizations, universities and libraries. A complete list of centers is located at http://educationusa.state.gov.

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

ECA/A/S activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

1. Provide policy guidance and direction to the award recipient;
2. Facilitate communications with EducationUSA REACs and advisers, U.S. embassies, and offices within the U.S. Department of State, related to the annual dissemination of related data and reports;
3. Review and approve plans pertaining to recipient's collaboration with foreign entities/governments in the collection of data on global mobility;
4. Review and approve the recipient's public presentations and materials before dissemination;
5. Consult with recipient organization staff regarding substantive data collection issues; and
6. Participate in meetings with relevant exchange organizations on international educational exchange activity.

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Create on-line surveys and mailing lists to collect data on four main sectors: 1) foreign students, 2) foreign scholars, 3) U.S. students studying overseas in credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs, and 4) foreign enrollees in intensive English language programs in the United States;
2. Prepare a timeline of work to be approved in advance by the Bureau, beginning with survey development and creation of mailing lists in item 1 listed above, in October FY2018 and including tasks listed in items 3-21 below;
3. Collect, organize, analyze and present data on international students and scholars and on U.S. study abroad participants, as well as global student mobility;

4. Implement the collection and analysis of detailed individual-level data on international students to allow for cross-tabulations by place of origin, field of study, academic level, and other relevant variables;
5. Implement overseas surveys to collect contextual information, in cooperation with EducationUSA centers and with approval from ECA, on international students' decision making processes as well as attitudes toward U.S. higher education and to gauge their satisfaction with their U.S. experience;
6. Produce a publication and present data survey results clearly and succinctly in print and electronic media; scholarly analyses of survey data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included, taking into consideration a wide range of prospective readers and policy-makers in government, academia, and private and nonprofit sectors;
7. Enhance data analysis by using SEVIS data from the Department of Homeland Security if available, to conduct policy-relevant analysis of emerging issues in consultation with ECA and to provide trend data pertaining to international students in the United States;
8. Report on participation rates by disabled U.S. student populations in study abroad;
9. Report on higher education trends on a regional basis, following Department of State-defined overseas regional breakdowns, in addition to individual country data, and on country-by-country rankings according to academic level and type of institution, in consultation with ECA;
10. Report on trends in Intensive English Language program enrollments by foreign students in the United States.;
11. Report on foreign students' use of benefits such as Optional Practical Training;
12. Provide suggestions for additional data collection and research for ECA approval;
13. Collaborate with international partners to expand data collection, research and reporting on global student mobility patterns;
14. Conduct research on global student mobility patterns, placing the analysis of international student populations in the United States into a global context;
15. Present a plan to create and share a data collection mechanism that will allow online standardized data collection from international institutions;
16. Convene an Advisory Board consisting of ECA representatives and appropriate educational organizations to identify and frame policy issues that may need to be addressed by policymakers or that may have ramifications for the survey;
17. Ensure the utility and accessibility of data and reports for use by Department of State staff and EducationUSA partners;
18. Conduct media outreach to ensure that data and reports are broadly available, in coordination with ECA;
19. Conduct a public event, in coordination with ECA, to announce survey results timed to coincide with the opening of International Education Week in November 2018.
20. Ensure program branding and attribution for all presentations and on all websites, social media, and press according to ECA's Communications Guidance, and
21. Deliver 1,100 printed copies of the survey report to ECA for use as the Bureau deems appropriate by January 31, 2019.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Proposals should include a careful description of the methodology to be used to obtain the data called for in this solicitation. Applicant organizations should include in their proposals an efficient and economical approach to gathering data, and how they will ensure an adequate response rate from institutions surveyed. Applicants should also propose how and when the information will be published and made available to the public, working in close coordination with ECA. Since the project is publicly funded, primary data and associated analyses must be made available to the public at no charge with as wide a distribution as possible and must carry all relevant branding and association with the U.S. Government as described in ECA's Communications Guidance. The recipient organization should consult with ECA on what data must be available to the general public and an initial public release of this data should correspond with "International Education Week," a joint initiative of the Department of State and Department of Education that is expected to be held in November 2018. Applicant organizations may charge fees for hard copies of data and detailed and/or time-intensive research responses, as well as to cover costs associated with convening conferences or workshops on student mobility. Any fees charged for providing this information and proceeds from sales of electronic or print materials, as well as registration fees, should be considered program income.

Applicant organizations are also encouraged to include in their proposals information about their capacity to carry out, at the request of ECA, electronic surveys that would focus on specific critical issues in international educational exchange that may arise during the period in which census data is being conducted for the larger survey.

Collection of data regarding U.S. study abroad participation should address the demographic composition in a detailed manner, and should include participation by program length, student demographics, destination, home institution, field of study and academic level.

To provide for a more detailed analysis and cross tabulation of the characteristics of foreign students and scholars studying in the United States, individual student and scholar profile data should also be collected. The survey, which should be conducted in the most cost-effective way possible, should identify the number of foreign students and scholars studying, conducting research, and/or teaching at all accredited universities and colleges in the United States during the 2017/2018 academic year (fall 2017 through summer 2018). This data should include country-specific aggregate information that should list the numbers of foreign students from a given country enrolled for academic credit in individual U.S. institutions and foreign scholars affiliated with U.S. institutions, which should include scholars conducting research and/or lecturing. In addition, the report should include information about first-time enrollments to facilitate the analysis of enrollment trends. Finally, the report should also include data about the number of U.S. students studying abroad in non-credit-bearing programs and credit-bearing programs of all types during 2016/2017 by academic year (fall 2016 through summer 2017), semester (fall 2016 or spring 2017), short-term (dates in fall 2016 through summer 2017) and summer (2017). To the extent possible, reporting on the composition of U.S. study abroad should include breakdowns by program length, student profile, destination, home institution, field of study and academic level. Proposals should

describe the methodology that will be used to collect the data and how the material will be analyzed and presented to the public.

ECA seeks a clear presentation and rigorous analysis of the data collected that will draw conclusions about trends in foreign student enrollments, numbers of foreign scholars on U.S. campuses and U.S. students studying abroad that can be used to guide policy discussions for both government and the educational community.

Scholarly analyses of survey data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included in the final report, which will be read by policy-makers in government, the educational community, and the private and nonprofit sectors, as well as practitioners in the field of international educational exchange. The proposal should include a thorough plan to make data and analyses available widely through national and educational media organizations. The report should include a narrative on the mechanics and uses of data analysis, highlighting how conclusions can be drawn from the data collected, the limitations of the data, and how the data can be of benefit to the educational institutions that supply it; for example, as a campus advocacy or recruiting tool. Applicants should include with the proposal a complete list of proposed chapter headings and sample analyses.

Proposals must include plans to establish an advisory board to provide assistance in identifying and framing policy issues that may need to be addressed by policy makers. Board members would likely be drawn from a broad range of educational associations and organizations and would be appointed in consultation with ECA. Members should meet at least once a year and would be expected to provide perspectives on topics that are related to the internationalization of higher education. ECA representatives should be invited to attend advisory board meetings.

ECA welcomes innovative approaches to the presentation of material, including possible breakdowns for minority-serving institutions. ECA also encourages applicants to consider reporting on other topics of current interest in the final report, to be determined in coordination with ECA, such as:

1) How efforts of other countries to attract foreign students may have affected student flows to the United States.
2) How political and economic trends in other countries are reflected in student flows to the United States.
3) How economic trends in the United States, including tuition levels and the cost of living, may have affected student flows to the United States.
4) How the international exchange population is affected by visa policies of the United States for international student and scholar mobility and of other countries for U.S. study abroad.
5) The impact of international students and scholars and/or of U.S. study abroad on the academic offerings of U.S. institutions and departments.
6) The number of international students participating in non-degree, exchange or inbound study-abroad programs on U.S. campuses as full-time, non-matriculated

undergraduate or graduate students while continuing to be enrolled in their home institution.

7) The number of international students taking part in U.S. study abroad programs overseas.
8) Current trends in study abroad programming, for example including length, destination, student profile, academic level, and/or field of study of program.
9) The percentage of graduating students who have participated in short-term or long-term study abroad programs, broken down by state, region, institution type or other factors.
10) U.S. institutions' activities to educate foreign students in their home countries, through, for example, overseas campuses or distance education programs.
11) The numbers of foreign students studying in intensive English language programs in the United States.
12) The geographic distribution of international students in the United States in comparison with the distribution of U.S. student and overall student populations.
13) The number of U.S. students directly enrolling and pursuing degree programs in institutions of higher education outside of the United States, in selected countries.

In addition to the above, proposals should explain how the following activities might be undertaken:

- Use SEVIS data (if available) to conduct policy-relevant analysis of emerging issues in consultation with ECA and to provide trend data pertaining to international students in the United States (for example, key places of origin, including countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East).
- Conduct surveys of international students' attitudes toward U.S. higher education in cooperation with the Department of State's network of EducationUSA centers. These surveys might include a study of international students from key places of origin to determine their attitudes toward the United States and their perceptions of study in the United States, or an overseas survey of the attitudes and perceptions of international students enrolled in U.S. branch campuses in selected countries.
- Conduct overseas surveys to collect contextual information on international students' decision making process in choosing to study abroad.
- Report on higher education trends in key regions.
- Conduct research on global student mobility patterns.
- Conduct detailed analyses of the foreign student population. Analyses should include profiles of foreign students that contain comparative and cross-tabulated data that provide a deeper understanding of student flows and detailed information about sub-groups, especially by field and level of study, gender, and national origin.

ECA reserves the right to determine the focus of reporting based on U.S. foreign policy goals.

The proposal should explain the survey's counting methodology, the benefits of the chosen methodology versus other methods, and what potential discrepancies might be expected; it should also describe how the methodology will be explained to institutions invited to respond to the survey. Proposals should also include how proposed methodology will build on previously available analyses of longitudinal data and should show how proposed methodology can be included in a comparison of data over time. Proposals should reflect established policies, procedures, and standards regarding data collection, security and privacy protection, data inventories, data quality control, data access, and data sharing and dissemination.

Proposals should explain how institutions should respond to the survey regarding international students and scholars who are enrolled or affiliated but are not sponsored by the respective institutions. Proposals should also explain how institutions should respond to the survey regarding students whom they sponsor but who have employment authorization (such as F-1 Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training, and J-1 Academic Training) and who are not currently enrolled. In addition, proposals should explain how fields of study will be defined to ensure, to the extent possible, consistent reporting by responding institutions.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

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

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2018

Approximate Total Funding: $500,000, pending the availability of funds

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: $500,000, pending the availability of funds

Floor of Award Range: $500,000, pending the availability of funds

Ceiling of Award Range: $500,000, pending the availability of funds

Anticipated Award Date: Pending the availability of funds, October 1, 2017

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2019

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.

C.) Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges will be limited to $130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount of $500,000, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

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.

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 Dorothy Mora in the Educational Information and Resources Branch, ECA/A/S/A, SA-5, 4V17, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone: 202-632-6347, fax number: 202-632-9479 and email address: MoraDD@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 Bureau Program Officer Dorothy Mora 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.

Please read all information before downloading.

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. 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 (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

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

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

D.3c. 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 current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. 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.

D.3d. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. **All ECA awards recipient organizations** must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM Washington, DC time, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. **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.3j. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

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.

The following information is provided for informational purposes only:

D.3k. **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.3l. **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.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

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

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program include the following:
1) Salaries and fringe benefits; travel and per diem;
2) Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, etc.;
3) Overhead expenses and auditing costs

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

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:
Application Deadline Date: Thursday, June 22, 2017
Method of Submission:
Applications may only be submitted electronically
through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

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.

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

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

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 "For Applicants" 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.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission 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

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.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 midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application

deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

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 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: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. Program planning/Ability to achieve program objectives: Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

4. Support of Diversity: Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

5. Institutional Capacity/Institution's Record/Ability: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or

cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
6. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program.
7. Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.
8. Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations: Proposed projects should receive positive assessments by the U.S. Department of State's Regional Bureau(s) and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

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 identified in the application.

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

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

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

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/
https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:
Mandatory:
1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days

after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the 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 GrantSolutions.gov, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;

3.) 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. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients 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.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Dorothy Mora, U.S. Department of State, Educational Information and Resources Branch, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/A, SA-5, 4v17, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, Phone: 202-632-6347, Fax: 202-632-9479, E-Mail: MoraDD@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 made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Mark Taplin April 24, 2017
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State