

Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO): FY 2015 EducationUSA Academy
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAS-15-006
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.432
Key Date/Application Deadline: May 29, 2015

Program Description/Executive Summary:

The Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State is seeking proposal submissions for one cooperative agreement to administer a new education initiative, the FY 2015 EducationUSA Academy, which would take place in the summers of 2016, 2017, and 2018, with the expectation that it will become self-sustaining beyond the conclusion of this award. EducationUSA Academy will support EducationUSA's overall goal of promoting U.S. higher education abroad. The long-term goal of EducationUSA Academy is to create a new recruitment pipeline for international high school students who may not have considered undergraduate study in the United States by creating a network of summer programs at participating U.S. colleges and universities, each aimed at providing a combination of intensive English language training and college-preparatory content. Over time, it is expected that many accredited U.S. colleges and universities will apply to become part of the EducationUSA Academy network, and the program will increase and diversify international enrollment at two- and four-year institutions across the country.

The EducationUSA Academy award recipient will be responsible for building an initial network of Academy host institutions in the United States for students between the ages of 15-17 years, who are non-native English speakers and reside in other countries. The recipient will be responsible for launching an open call for applications in fall 2015 to select the initial 10-15 U.S. campuses to host an EducationUSA Academy in summer 2016, for at least 200 students, and coordinating with those campuses to refine the design of the EducationUSA Academy programs, based on established minimum requirements and best practices gleaned from the summer 2015 pilot Academy¹. The recipient will expand this network to an additional 10-15 campuses each summer for a total of approximately 30-45 host campuses by summer 2018. The recipient will also be responsible for monitoring the Academy host institutions for consistency of program content and quality, as well as for making recommendations on admissions processes, curricula, other program components, and general administration of the Academy during its first three years. Each host institution will be responsible for creating and managing an admissions process for its EducationUSA Academy, selecting students for its respective campus, and designing and

¹ In summer 2015, ECA will pilot the EducationUSA Academy, with two U.S. campuses and approximately 60-80 students primarily from Western Hemisphere countries in support of the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative. The recipient is expected to work together with ECA to use the 2015 pilot Academy to observe best practices and refine minimum requirements for the larger Academy beginning in 2016 (and continuing for the next two summers). The recipient will also be expected to develop and implement an evaluation tool to monitor attitudinal changes of 2015 pilot Academy participants (see POGI for more details).

implementing all components of the Academy, following established minimum requirements. The recipient will also be required to propose a framework for a self-governing board of representatives of participating U.S. institutions and then work to establish this board during the three-year period of performance so that by the end of this period (September 30, 2018), the board will become responsible for overseeing adherence to program rules and standards as the EducationUSA Academy network grows to include more host universities and increasing numbers of international students. (See the accompanying Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) for more information).

The recipient will ensure that each prospective host institution meets minimum requirements (as determined in consultation with ECA) to be considered eligible to be a member of the EducationUSA Academy network. These minimum requirements include the following: Each EducationUSA Academy should be three-to-four weeks long. Each Academy host must offer at least one of two levels and themes but is encouraged to offer both: Level 1: Intermediate English/Exposure to U.S. Higher Education, and Level 2: Advanced English/Preparing to Apply to a U.S. College/University, with no more than 20 students per cohort/level. Each Academy must take place at an accredited U.S. academic institution and should include relevant cultural programming at the host campus as well as at least three visits to neighboring college/university campuses to increase exposure to U.S. higher educational opportunities visits and cultural enrichment activities. The network of Education Academy host institutions should represent the diversity of U.S. higher education, including public, private, urban, rural, and minority-serving institutions.

Applicants should submit a proposal to refine minimum Academy requirements based on the 2015 pilot project, and to establish, monitor, and administer a network of 10-15 EducationUSA Academy host campuses in summer 2016 (including a plan to expand the network by 10-15 each year over the three-year performance period). ECA will award one cooperative agreement for these activities. While each Academy will be slightly different, based on the each institution's individual strengths, the main program components and overall quality and goals of each Academy will be the same. Each institution must demonstrate the capacity and expertise to host an EducationUSA Academy by proposing a high-quality English language curriculum coupled with college preparatory content, a cohesive plan for college visits, and an enriching cultural program, as well as ensure high safety standards, a manageable admissions process, safe and affordable housing (should include dorm or homestay options), ability to administer F-1 (for self-funded students) and J-1 visas (at least for ECA-funded students), and other program requirements as stated in the POGI.

It is anticipated that the total amount of funding available for this cooperative agreement will be approximately \$300,000, which will be awarded to the award recipient for EducationUSA Academy management and oversight. The recipient will use this funding to select 10-15 EducationUSA Academy new host institutions per year (for a total of up to 45 host institutions by summer 2018), based on a transparent and open call for applications, ensuring that all prospective host institutions have met the minimum requirements defined. The recipient will also use these funds for monitoring the programs during their first three years: summer 2016, summer 2017 and summer 2018 as well as the 2015 pilot program. No additional funding will be

provided to the individual institutions to run the EducationUSA Academy, as it is expected that the majority of the students will pay their own tuition, travel expenses, and other costs. U.S. colleges or universities that are selected to participate will be authorized to use the title of EducationUSA Academy, and the U.S. Department of State will include the Institution's name among other Academy host institutions on relevant EducationUSA websites and promotional materials, which are distributed at 400 advising centers and reach millions virtually. Resources permitting, the Educational Information and Resources Branch of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs will also make its own funds available for scholarships for high-achieving students who lack the financial resources to attend an Academy. Scholarship recipients will be identified and nominated by Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies in participating countries and placed at various Academy campuses by ECA, who will manage the funds. Each of the participating host institutions will also be required to provide at least one scholarship per cohort in order to further diversify the pool of EducationUSA Academy participants.

ECA welcomes applications from public and private non-profit organizations, consortia of organizations, and accredited post-secondary U.S. education institutions. Note that this is a one-time award with a three-year period of performance. The administration of the EducationUSA Academy would be funded by ECA for a period of performance from approximately July 1, 2015 - September 30, 2018, with a goal to triple the number of Academy students to at least 600 students nationwide, by year three. The vision for the EducationUSA Academy network is that it will become self-sustaining with its own governing body and will eventually include dozens of host campuses and thousands of students from around the world.

Note: ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposed participant numbers, budgets, Academy language levels, themes, and other program components in subsequent fiscal years to meet the demands and needs of the program (see Eligibility Information, section C).

It is the Bureau's intent to award one cooperative agreement for an estimated total amount of \$300,000, which will cover three years of activity. Please see section B.) Award Information, below for additional details.

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 EducationUSA Academy will build and sustain a prestigious network across the United States of high-quality, intensive summer English language institutes infused with college preparatory content. The Academy will inspire and prepare international high school students

who might not otherwise consider study in the United States and increase international enrollment at two- and four-year institutions.

Overview of the Academy:

The EducationUSA Academy will be a three-to-four-week summer program initially held on approximately 10-15 U.S. college and university campuses (starting in summer 2016 and continuing for the next two summers), for 15- to 17-year-old students who are non-native English speakers and reside in other countries. Each campus will host at least one EducationUSA Academy cohort of up to 20 students, who will study intensive English, learn about the process of applying to U.S. higher education institutions and strategies for success in a U.S. academic environment, and experience U.S. campus life. The program will also include tours of at least three additional and diverse college and university campuses. Two levels of curricula will be offered: Level 1 (Intermediate): “Exposure to U.S. Higher Education;” and Level 2 (Advanced): “Preparing to Apply to a U.S. College/University.”

Students will apply directly to the institution of their choice and pay their own tuition. The cost per student should be between \$4,000 and \$6,000 and should include tuition, fees, health insurance, books and supplies, housing, meals, and incidentals (airfare not included). In addition, ECA will select a limited number of high-achieving students who lack the financial resources to pay their own tuition and other program-related costs through a separate process together with Embassy/Consulate Public Affairs Sections; these students will be eligible for ECA scholarships to cover some or all of the costs (note, approximately 7-10 scholarships will be offered each year depending on final program costs).

In addition to improving English language ability, the Academy will provide a better understanding of the U.S. university application process and of the diverse educational opportunities available in the United States. In this context, the academic programs should include seminars, workshops, and activities that focus on topics such as leadership, teambuilding, collective problem solving skills, and effective communication. Each Academy should foster ECA’s mission to promote mutual understanding between citizens of other countries and citizens of the United States. Thus, throughout the program, students should have opportunities to interact with Americans and other international students. Such interactions could take place in the classroom, dormitories, local community, or a home-stay experience. The program should also include cultural and civic activities, weekend trips, service learning projects, and other engaging activities appropriate for this age group.

Minimum Requirements

While ECA has created an initial list of minimum programmatic requirements, the recipient will be responsible for working in partnership with ECA to refine these curricular and program requirements for host campuses in order to promote a consistent level of quality and related content in each Academy.

Programmatic components:

- 20-25 hours per week of English instruction, combined with college preparatory content.

- Courses should develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for an academic setting.
- Classes should be no larger than 20 students, with the ideal being 10-15 students.
- While some traditional in-class instruction is expected, host campuses are also encouraged to provide interactive workshops on a variety of topics such as the college application process, TOEFL preparation, resume writing and academic/career pathways, conversational English, as well as other creative topics and cultural activities.
- At least one writing course (for advanced English students) should be dedicated to writing college essays.
- Listening and speaking should help students develop skills needed to be successful in the classroom such as note taking, outlining, presentation skills, paraphrasing, researching, avoiding plagiarism, class participation (i.e., raising hands, asking questions, etc.), interviewing, and debate skills.
- Three-to-five cultural activities should be provided per week, including attending local events, visiting regional tourist destinations, taking field trips, service learning and civic activities.
- During or following the academic program, the host institution will organize visits to at least three college or university campuses of different types and sizes. Instructors should prepare students before and debrief with them after the tours to enhance their learning.

Host campuses are encouraged to include the following optional components when possible:

- peer language partners,
- brief homestay or friendship families,²
- individualized advising sessions, and/or
- college fair(s).

It is recommended that English Language Departments or English as a Second Language (ESL) Institutes (or the equivalent) partner with Admissions Offices at each host institution to offer college preparatory content.

² Each Academy host institution must have a clear and detailed host family recruitment, screening, and selection process. They must also provide the families with an orientation prior to their exchange participants' arrival which emphasizes the program's goals. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in host family recruitment and selection. Host families may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. Exchange participants should be afforded private space in the home. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations.

Policy Regarding Minors

Campuses should specifically address how they will ensure the safety, health, and well-being of minors, as well as how they will handle support issues and communications with parents/guardians. For example, campuses may require parental waivers, behavioral contracts, curfews, chaperones, and/or resident advisers or graduate assistants to supervise students in residence halls. It is expected that host campuses will follow their respective institution's regulations regarding minors. It is strongly preferred that students be housed in on-campus residence halls when possible, but homestays (either long- or short-term) are also acceptable, particularly if residence halls are not accessible for minors (see previous footnote regarding host family vetting process). All meals should be included in the total program cost and should be provided on or within walking distance of Academy housing.

Overview of Recruitment and Selection

The recipient will be responsible for creating a webpage listing all of the EducationUSA Academy host campuses, application deadlines, program dates, costs, and noting when a program has reached capacity. As a part of that webpage, the recipient will create an online form that will help students find the Academy that best fits their needs. Once the student has indicated their available dates, preferred cost range, and other preferences, a list of Academy locations that fit their criteria will appear with links to each campus application (note, each host campus will develop its own Academy application and admissions process). Scholarship students will be nominated by Public Affairs Sections at the U.S. embassies in participating countries. ECA and PAS will place these students at various Academy campuses and will manage all financial transactions to cover the full cost of attendance and provide roundtrip airline tickets. Academy host campuses should reserve space for ECA-funded students. However, students will still be expected to meet the admission standards.

While each EducationUSA Academy host campus will be responsible for recruiting their own students, EducationUSA Advisers in participating countries will also assist in promoting the Academy and will provide accurate, comprehensive, and current information about each host campus to interested students.

Overview of the Academic Program

There are two levels/themes of EducationUSA Academy: Level 1 (Intermediate): "Exposure to U.S. Higher Education;" and Level 2 (Advanced): "Preparing to Apply to a U.S. College/University." Campuses are encouraged to host one group at each level in order to better place students at their appropriate English language levels and to allow an opportunity for intermediate students to return for the advanced level Academy the following year.

Students should be given verbal and written English proficiency tests upon arrival on campus in order to ensure the most appropriate placement. The two levels may have similar and overlapping content, but will be taught to different degrees of detail/depth. For example, an academic writing course at each level would include some grammar instruction or review, and

while an intermediate class might focus on composing paragraphs or letters, an advanced class would practice writing longer compositions such as essays.

All courses should be focused on English language acquisition with college preparatory themes integrated throughout. Possible topics to cover include: the college application process, academic writing, critical thinking, study habits, communication skills, class participation, note taking, outlining, problem solving, introduction to libraries and basic research skills, exam taking, interviewing, and admissions testing (SAT, ACT, TOEFL preparation). Students should also be taught about the U.S. education system as well as different types of higher education institutions in the United States, including large public research universities, private research universities, private liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and minority-serving institutions. Students' understanding of these types of institutions will be reinforced through college tours, offered during or at the end of the academic program, which should include a selection of different types of institutions.

A large component of the Academy should be experiential. Students should get a taste of life on a college/university campus, classroom, and residential halls. They should be exposed to American academic culture, American students, and American college life to the fullest extent possible, within the parameters of a short-term program and while maintaining their safety and well-being as the top priority. Activities should be highly structured and also highly experiential to maintain the engagement and interest of this age group.

Creative topics that demonstrate English in action are encouraged for afternoon or evening workshops. Examples include debate, English in film or theater, American music, slang, and art appreciation.

Overview of Campus Visits

Either during or at the conclusion of the academic program, each host institution will organize tours of a minimum of three additional higher education institutions. Academy host institution staff should accompany students to each campus in appropriate ratios. Staff/faculty should also prepare students for the tours by giving them observation tools and tasks, preparing them to ask questions, and discussing the differences of each type of institution. Staff should also facilitate post-visit discussions with the students in order to synthesize their observations and learnings. Host campuses should submit a list of institutions they plan to tour included in their proposal to host an EducationUSA Academy. Arrangements should be made in advance with those institutions. To keep costs down, these tours will most likely be the tours regularly offered to any prospective students. The tours should include opportunities to see the main components of the campus, including several academic buildings, the student union, library, cafeteria/on-campus restaurants, sports and arts facilities, and bookstore. Campuses providing tours are encouraged to offer short classroom observations and a chance to talk with current students if at all possible. There should be no more than two campus tours per day, depending on the distance between campuses and the length of each tour.

Post-Academy Program

Host institutions are encouraged to create cohort social media sites to keep the students connected to each other and to the instructors. These online communities would provide a venue for students to continue practicing English and learning about U.S. higher education after they complete the Academy.

Sustainability

The recipient will be required to propose a framework for a self-governing board of representatives of participating U.S. institutions and then work with them during the three-year period of performance so that by the end of this period (September 30, 2018), the board will become responsible for overseeing adherence to program rules and maintaining quality as the EducationUSA Academy network grows to include more host universities and increasing numbers of international students. Continued use of the EducationUSA Academy brand shall be contingent upon ECA's approval (an ECA staff member will serve as an "ex-officio" member of this board. Additionally, Academy host campuses will continue to offer at least one scholarship per cohort.

Recipient:

ECA is seeking detailed proposals from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations, consortia of organizations, and consortia of accredited post-secondary U.S. education institutions meeting the eligibility requirements outlined below.

ECA intends to issue one award and is seeking proposals from organizations with the ability to build an initial network of 10-15 institutions and then expanding to approximately 10-15 additional institutions each year for a total of up to 30-45; develop and oversee the Academy at host universities around the country; support and monitor Academy host campuses (to ensure adherence to minimum requirements, particularly concerning the safety and well-being of the participants); and assist participating host institutions to develop a board of directors, among other responsibilities. The recipient will serve as the lead administrator and will be responsible for the oversight of all aspects of this project, with the exception of the ECA scholarship funds which will be managed by ECA (Please see the attached POGI for more information).

Program Guidelines:

It is essential that proposals provide a detailed and comprehensive narrative describing how the recipient will work with ECA to build the Academy network and meet the objectives of the overall program; details on the proposed host institution selection process, and plans for monitoring, evaluation, and program sustainability at the conclusion of the three-year period of performance. The proposals should reflect the recipient's intention to recruit and select Academy host colleges or universities that reflect regional and other diversity and include public, private, urban, rural, and minority serving institutions.

Overall, proposals will be reviewed on the basis of their responsiveness to NOFO criteria listed in Section E. The accompanying Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document provides program-specific guidelines that all proposals must address fully.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined in the attached POGI.

Proposal narratives should include a commitment to implement the program for a period of performance ending September 30, 2018.

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 2015

Approximate Total Funding: \$300,000. This figure represents a period of performance beginning approximately July 15, 2015 and ending September 30, 2018.

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$300,000

Floor of Award Range: \$300,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$300,000

Anticipated Award Date: July 15, 2015

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2018. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award. It is expected that the recipient will implement the EducationUSA Academy in summers 2016, 2017 and 2018 and observe the pilot program in summer 2015.

Additional Information:

A It is anticipated that the recipient will begin program activities no later than the last week of the 2015 Pilot Academy. Cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of performance ending September 30, 2018. This one-time award will cover three years of activity.

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 Circular 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 be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount (\$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 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 the Educational Information and Resources Branch, ECA/A/S/A, SA-5, 4R16, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone: 202-632-6190, fax number: 202-632-9479 and email address: BrownJL6@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

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

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

Please specify Bureau Program Officer Jennifer Brown 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 and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document" for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations 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. Failure to register in SAM 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 EST, 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:

D.3h. **ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The host universities will be responsible for issuing I-20s or DS-2019s for self-funded students and DS-2019 forms for ECA-funded participants in this program. For more information about regulations for F-1 visas, please visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools>.

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-44, Suite 668
301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

Please note that ECA will not provide any special assistance to the visa processes for Academy students.

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**, 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.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. Budget requests may not exceed \$300,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Note that \$300,000 will be used to establish, administer and monitor the network of Academy host institutions. Note, ECA intends to contribute an additional \$50,000 per year for summers 2016, 2017, and 2018 to fund a small number of scholarship participants. The scholarship funding will be outside of this award. ECA will work with Public Affairs Sections overseas to pay the travel expenses, tuition, and other program-related costs for the sponsored participants.

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

(1) Administrative Costs. Costs necessary for the effective administration of the program may include salaries for grantee organization employees, fringe benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the Application Package. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources.

(2) Domestic travel and per diem for recipient monitoring of Academy programs. Organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed

Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at:

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id

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

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

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Friday, May 29, 2015

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. Program planning and Ability to achieve program objectives:** Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 2. 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. Note, for this competition, the concept of diversity will be focused on the type of host institutions recruited. The recipient should provide a plan to recruit a broad variety of types of host institutions across the United States including, but not limited to: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), research universities, public and private colleges, and community colleges.

3. Institutional Capacity/ Institution's Record/Area Expertise: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including area expertise, 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.

4. 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. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended.

5. 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.

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 an 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 mailed 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.

The following additional requirements apply to this project:

For assistance awards involving Iran:

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 (Program Office - Iran Coordinator at telephone or e-mail.) for additional information.

For assistance awards involving the Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza:

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 (insert program office contact name, telephone and e-mail) for additional information.

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 Circular 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 circular 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:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<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). The first page of the Performance Progress Report

- form (SF-PPR) 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](http://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 SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
 - 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 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. 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). Application and Submission Instructions above for 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: Jennifer Brown, U.S. Department of State, Educational Information and Resources Branch, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/A, SA-5, 4R16, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, Phone: 202-632-6190, Fax: 202-632-9479, E-Mail: BrownJL6@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.

Evan Ryan
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

March 26, 2015

