

Department of State

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

(NOFO): FY 2016 Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program Placement Components

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-16-024

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: May 9, 2016

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for cooperative agreements for the FY 2016 Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program Placement Components. The YES program advances the U.S. foreign policy goals of engaging youth populations and building civil society by providing physical exchanges and building lasting ties between high school students from countries with significant Muslim populations and the people of the United States. The YES program will provide scholarships for international high school students to live in American society for an academic year (a semester for Malaysian participants) and attend a U.S. high school. In turn, these students will expose U.S. citizens to the culture, traditions, and lifestyles of people in their home countries. 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 identify host schools; vet, select, and monitor host families; and place and monitor a portion of the students participating in the YES program during the 2017-18 academic year.

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

It is the Bureau's intent to award approximately 10-15 cooperative agreements (one base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuations (NCCs)) for an estimated total amount of \$26,250,000. Please see section II. 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 YES program seeks to provide approximately 900 high school students from countries with significant Muslim populations, between the ages of 15 and 18.5 at the start of the program, an opportunity to live in the United States for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding between our countries. Participants will reside with American host families and attend high school during the 2017-18 academic year. Qualified organizations may submit proposals to administer this cooperative agreement. This solicitation refers only to YES high school students who may be recruited from: Albania, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Egypt, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel (Arab Communities), Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank, and Yemen.

Note: The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposed project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the program's needs and availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust and/or add additional countries and/or regions should conditions change in a partner country and/or if other countries and/or regions are identified as viable alternatives and/or Department priorities.

An organization must be able to dedicate key staff to this program who possess a thorough understanding of the secondary school student Exchange Visitor (J-1 Visa) Program regulations.

Administration of the program must be in compliance with federal, state, and local tax reporting and withholding regulations as applicable. Recipient organizations must demonstrate regulation adherence in the proposal narrative and budget.

Your proposal must include a plan to place and monitor a minimum of 30 YES students; there is no maximum number of students that may be placed by one organization and your organization may work with subaward recipients. A subaward recipient may place fewer than 30 students, as long as the organization applying for a cooperative agreement will itself place at least 30 students. The applicant's proposal must explain how it will provide mentoring, training, oversight, and additional monitoring of students placed by its subaward recipients. Placements may be in any region of the United States. Strong preference will be given to organizations that choose to place participants in clusters of at least three students (these students should be from different countries, when possible) in a particular Local Coordinator's area of responsibility under review criterion "Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Program Objectives", as listed in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document.

Please refer to the POGI for details on essential program elements, permissible costs, and criteria used to select and place students.

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

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations (formerly referred to as option years), pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two non-competitive continuations are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a non-competitive continuation will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds are conditions of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuations.

Applicants are encouraged to view the program's websites at <http://www.yesprograms.org/> and <http://exchanges.state.gov/youth/programs/yes.html>, and to contact the Youth Division Program Officer listed in this solicitation with any questions.

B. Award Information:

Type of Award: New Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2016 – base year: \$8,750,000; FY 2017 – NCC year one (pending successful performance and availability of funds)- \$8,750,000, FY 2018 – NCC year two (pending successful performance and availability of funds) - \$8,750,000.

Approximate Total Funding: \$26,250,000 - This figure represents base year plus two NCC years, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: Approximately 10-15 cooperative agreements

Approximate Average Award: Amount will vary based on the number of student placements being proposed.

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2016.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2020; this date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two NCC years.

Additional Information: Cooperative agreements will be awarded for a period of 18 months (base year) with options for one additional 18-month period (NCC year one) and one additional 14-month period (NCC year two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise an NCC year at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise option years will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

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 exchange programs will be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates issuing approximately 10-15 awards that will exceed \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with fewer 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 be declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process:
 - Your proposal must comply with the requirements stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), or it will be declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
 - Proposed programs may not involve multiple academic year exchanges or exchanges to take place other than between the dates of July 2017 and June 2018;
 - Proposals that identify partners critical to the implementation of the program must include letters of commitment from those partners.
 - 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 Instruction (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 Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/I, SA-5, Floor 3, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037; Kevin Baker at (202) 632-6073; fax (202) 632-9355; or email BakerKM1@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

The Solicitation Package contains the 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 Kevin Baker 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 the 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.3. 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 Methods 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 PSI document and the POGI 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. 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 Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this NOFO, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a cooperative agreement or subawards) under this NOFO will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their 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 Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-44, Suite 668

301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

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**, 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. The budget must reflect costs for a minimum of 20 participants. Please indicate clearly the number of students funded. 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.

For competitions that will be renewed through a Non-Competitive Continuation applicants must submit:

1. the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
2. a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (please refer to the PSI Document for general budget guidance). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional NCC years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
3. an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two NCC years).

To exercise the Non-Competitive Continuation mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;

2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year;
3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested NCC year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

1. Closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional NCCs. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)
2. Review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;
 - a. All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional NCCs.
 - b. Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
 - c. The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent NCCs.
3. Prior Grants Officer approval is required to carry forward an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to carry forward the unobligated balance.

The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to carry forward funds. A final determination and approval to carry forward any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

The request to carry forward an unobligated balance must include:

- a. A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,
- b. A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program and additional budget guidance are outlined in detail in the POGI document. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

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

Application Deadline Date: Monday, May 9, 2016

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. Award Administration Information

E.1a. 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 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.

E.1b. The following additional requirements apply to this project:

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 Kevin Baker, Program Officer, telephone (202) 632-6073 or email BakerKM1@state.gov for additional information.

E.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>

E.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 USA Spending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
4. Electronic quarterly program and financial reports, which should include both quantitative and qualitative data.

5. Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (formerly referred to as option years), applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

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.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Office as instructed above and to the ECA Program Officer listed as the Grants Officer Representative in the final assistance award document.

E.4. Program Data Requirements:

Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required.

At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

F. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Kevin Baker, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PY/F, SA-5, Floor 3, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037; by telephone: 202-632-6073; or by email BakerKM1@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.

G. 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 E3. Reporting Requirements above.

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

Date

