

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for

Grant Proposals: FY 2014 American Youth Leadership Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-036

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: Friday, April 4, 2014

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the American Youth Leadership Program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to implement an exchange program for American high school students that will enable the participants to gain firsthand knowledge of foreign cultures and to collaborate on solving global issues. The award recipients will recruit and select participants from the United States and provide them with a three- to four-week exchange program in select countries abroad focused on dialogue and debate, leadership development, and community service. Upon returning home, the students will apply what they have learned to serve their schools and communities. It is the Bureau's intent to award multiple cooperative agreements for one base

year plus one option year for an estimated total amount of \$2,700,000. Please see section II 'Award Information' below for additional details.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

Authority:

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.

Program Overview:

The American Youth Leadership Program provides high school students from the United States with an opportunity to travel

abroad on a three- to four-week-long exchange program to gain firsthand knowledge of foreign cultures and to collaborate on solving global issues. The participants will have an academic and experiential education program focused on dialogue and debate, leadership development, and community service.

The Bureau seeks to accomplish the following goals through the implementation of this program:

1. Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of the partner country(ies).
2. Prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities.
3. Spark an interest in learning about foreign cultures among American youth.
4. Develop a cadre of Americans with cultural understanding who are able to advance international dialogue and compete effectively in the global economy.

The program activities will also focus on one of the following four themes that can be examined for both local and global impact:

1. The role of the media
2. The environment and climate change
3. Food security and nutrition

4. Science and technology

Applicants should choose one of the four global themes listed above and narrow down the selected theme to include a more specific topic or topics within the subject area.

The exchange participants will engage in a variety of activities that provide an introduction to the civic, cultural, and educational institutions of the host country through workshops on leadership and service, community site visits related to the program themes, interactive training, simulations, debates, presentations, visits to high schools, cultural activities, and other activities designed to achieve the program's stated goals. It is essential that applicants engage local youth in a substantive and meaningful way in activities with the American students; applicants should describe how they will identify local youth to participate in the exchange activities. Follow-on activities with the participants are an integral part of the program; the students will apply the knowledge and skills they acquired on the exchange in their home communities. Exchange activities will be conducted in English, though participants should receive basic language instruction a few hours per week during the exchange.

Using these goals and themes above, applicant organizations should identify their own specific objectives and measurable outcomes based on these program goals and the project specifications provided in this solicitation.

Eligible Countries:

The FY 2014 American Youth Leadership Program is limited to the specific countries and groupings listed below.

- Bangladesh
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Cyprus
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Ghana
- Guyana
- Malaysia
- Marshall Islands
- Senegal
- Thailand
- Ukraine
- Bulgaria and Macedonia*
- Hong Kong and South China (limited to Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian Provinces)*

- Israel and the Palestinian Territories*

*In these three projects, applicants should propose one three- to four-week exchange where participants spend approximately half the exchange period in each location and experience balanced and diverse perspectives.

ECA plans to award multiple cooperative agreements for the management of the American Youth Leadership Program. Applicants may propose to conduct only one exchange project under this competition and should choose from the list of projects above. Each project should cost a total of approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 for a group of 15 to 20 youth participants, as well as 2 to 4 travelling adults (see below section for additional details on the participants). Applicants that commit to including at least 40 percent of participants with disabilities can budget an additional \$50,000 for reasonable accommodations for a total of approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000 per project. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

Participants:

All participants must be U.S. citizens and must be selected through a merit-based competition. Preference should be given to individuals who have not previously traveled abroad (especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program) nor would have the opportunity to travel abroad if it weren't for this program. The youth participants must be high school students aged 15 to 17 years old, with at least one semester of high school remaining after the exchange. Additional criteria for selection will include leadership skills, an interest in community service, strong academic and social skills, openness and flexibility, and a demonstrated interest in the partner country and/or the project themes. Recruitment efforts do not need to take place at a national level, but should be designed to attract quality applicants that represent the diversity of the selected region. Diversity addresses, but is not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. It is desirable that a few participants live in the same community to facilitate future collaboration upon their return to the United States.

Extending opportunities to disabled and disenfranchised people around the world is a 21st-Century policy priority for the Department of State. It is also a goal of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to ensure that individuals with disabilities have opportunities to actively

participate in Bureau-sponsored programs. Applicant organizations must make special efforts to ensure that individuals with sensory impairments, intellectual and physical disabilities, or cross-disabilities are aware of the program and encouraged to apply. This does not preclude able-bodied individuals from applying for or participating in the program. Organizations with little experience working with young people who have disabilities may look to ECA's National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange, administered by Mobility International USA (<http://www.miusa.org/ncde>) as a resource and should explain in the proposal how they plan to build their capacity in this area. Applicants that commit to including at least 40 percent of participants with disabilities can budget up to an additional \$50,000 for reasonable accommodations for a total of approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000 per project.

Applicants should detail in their proposals plans for providing appropriate adult accompaniment. The adults travelling on the exchange should be U.S. citizens and may include competitively-selected participants (teachers, trainers, school administrators, and/or community leaders who work with youth); staff of the award recipient organization; and/or consultants. In addition, it is expected that staff of the in-country partner organization will assist with the exchange activities. The role

of the adults will vary depending on their position. Please refer to the POGI for further information.

Once the cooperative agreements are awarded, the award recipients must consult with ECA to expand on what was provided in the proposal by reviewing their recruitment plans in detail, any specific selection criteria, and the screening and selection process.

Organizational Capacity:

Applicants must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international youth exchanges, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of programs that address the goals and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working on programs in the partner country and/or region. In addition to their U.S. presence, applicants must have the organizational capacity in the relevant country - or they must partner with an organization or institution with the requisite capacity - to provide a content-rich exchange program for the American participants. The importance of a viable, experienced in-country partner cannot be over-emphasized. The partner organization must have a functioning office in the host country and an established track record working with youth. Applicants

should consult with their in-country partners and involve them in the preparation of the proposal. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassies in the country(ies) proposed for the exchange concerning the selection and reliability of the in-country partner organization(s) and potential locations for programming prior to submitting their proposals. Please e-mail ECA Program Officer Jennifer Philips at PhillipsJA@state.gov for Embassy contact information.

U.S. Embassy Involvement:

It is important that the proposal narrative clearly state the applicant's commitment to consult closely with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the host country once a cooperative agreement has been awarded. Since this program involves U.S. citizen minors, the U.S. Embassy will provide oversight and monitoring; concur on housing arrangements, including host family locations (regions, neighborhoods); represent the U.S. Government while the exchange activities are taking place in the host country; and assist program staff and participants in the event of an emergency. At the same time, the requirements of the cooperative agreement are that the award recipient must be able to manage the program in the host country

in its entirety, with little reliance on the embassy staff for support.

Guidelines:

The cooperative agreement will begin on or about August 1, 2014. The base year award period will be approximately 14 to 18 months in duration, according to the applicant's program plan, and will cover all aspects of the programming in the United States and the partner country - the recruitment, selection, and orientation of the participants, the three to four weeks of exchange activities, and support of follow-on activities. Planning and preparation will start in summer 2014, and the exchange activity will likely take place in 2015. Applicants must consult with their overseas partners and propose mutually agreeable times for the exchange(s) in their proposals. For instance, while the summer months may be a good time for Americans to travel, it may not be a suitable time for hosting activities in the partner country. The exact timing of the project may be altered through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the award recipient.

The award recipient will be responsible for the following:

Recruitment and Selection: Manage the recruitment and merit-based selection of a diverse group of participants from the United States. Diversity addresses, but is not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Award recipient organizations must make every effort to actively recruit and include individuals with sensory impairments, intellectual and physical disabilities, or cross-disabilities in the program. The Bureau will have final approval of the recruitment plan, selection process, and final delegation.

Orientations: Provide pre-departure and arrival orientations for exchange participants and orientations for those participating from the host countries, including host families.

Logistics: Manage all logistical arrangements, including passport and visa applications, international and domestic travel, local transportation, accommodations, group meals, and disbursement of stipends. This includes provision of effective interpretation and translation, as needed, as well as support for participants with special needs and provision of reasonable accommodation, as needed.

Exchange Activities: Design and plan three to four weeks of exchange activities in the partner country(ies) that provide a creative and substantive program on the specified themes and offer a thorough introduction to the host country's culture and the civic, cultural, and educational institutions. In addition to visiting the capital city or a major city of the host country, the delegations should spend their time in no more than one or two locations so that the participants have time to familiarize themselves with a community. The program should focus primarily on interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities that reveal various aspects of the host country, such as group dialogues with peers, volunteer service projects, or visits with community and government leaders. Participants will explore leadership through activities such as project planning, team building, and public speaking. Visits to different types of educational institutions should be a component of each exchange. All programming must involve sustained and meaningful interaction with peers of the host country and include a clear plan of how local youth will be identified to participate in the exchange activities and the extent of their participation. Cultural, social, and recreational activities will balance the schedule. Please see the POGI for more details.

Accommodations: Arrange homestays for the participants with properly screened and briefed families for a significant period of the exchange. Host families may receive a modest stipend to offset the cost of hosting, but not to serve as a financial incentive. Alternate housing arrangements will be considered based on the local environment; applicants must provide a strong justification if home stays are not proposed. Once a cooperative agreement is awarded, organizations must seek and obtain approval about host family locations from the U.S. Embassy in the partner country.

Monitoring: Develop and implement a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange and to resolve any issues promptly. The award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the teenagers have safe and pedagogically robust programs. Staff will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. For the safety and security of the American participants abroad, applicants must provide similar protections and oversight traditionally afforded to foreign students in the United States under the J-1 visa regulations.

Follow-on Activities: Plan and implement activities in the United States, particularly in facilitating continued engagement among the participants, advising and supporting them in the implementation of community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the exchange. Applicants should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers, as a means to amplify the program impact. Applicants are encouraged to engage the host country peers in the follow-on activities.

Evaluation: Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program.

Please note:

The ECA awards for the American Youth Leadership Program will take the form of cooperative agreements with the award recipient. In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. The Department's activities and responsibilities for the American Youth Leadership Program are as follows:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.

- 2) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- 3) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and/or the partner countries.
- 4) Approve the selection of final candidates and alternates.
- 5) Approve outreach/recruitment plans, publicity materials, web content, application forms, and final calendar of exchange activities.
- 6) Approve housing arrangements, including the host families.
- 7) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.
- 8) Host a one-day meeting for award recipients in Washington, D.C. in Fall 2014. The date and agenda will be set in consultation with the recipients.
- 9) Perform an annual performance evaluation/review.
Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds are conditions of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus one additional option year, pending successful performance and 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 option year is exercised.

Additional Information:

Award recipients will retain the name "American Youth Leadership Program" to identify their project. All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

The award recipient must inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and will be required to obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation.

Proposals must demonstrate how the stated objectives will be met. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major project activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package - this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) - for further information.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under number I above.

Fiscal Year Funds: 2014 - base year, \$1,350,000; 2015 - option year-one, \$1,350,000; pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$2,700,000. This figure represents base year plus one option year, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: Six to eight

Floor of Award Range: \$150,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$250,000

Approximate Average Award: \$200,000

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2014

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 31, 2015. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award - one base year plus one option year.

Additional Information: Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 14-18 months (base year) with the option for one additional 12 month period (option year one). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise an option 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.

III. Eligibility Information:

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

III.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 OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. 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.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

- a) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making multiple awards in amounts exceeding \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.
- b) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements listed below or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- c) Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition.
- d) 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.

IV. Application and Submission Information: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1. Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact the Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, tel. 202-632-9352, PhillipsJA@state.gov, to request a Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

IV.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.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f.

“Application Deadline and Methods of Submission” section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) 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 DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF-424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.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.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (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.

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.

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.

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.

IV.3d. 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:

FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

IV.3d.1. Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

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.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://jlvisa.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

IV.3d.2. **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.

IV.3d.3. 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 RFGP.

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 RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

- **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
- **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
- **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.
- **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.

IV.3d.4. 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.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

For competitions that will be renewed through the option year, applicants must submit:

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;

- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus one additional option year, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus one option year).

To exercise the option year mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

- timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
- a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year.
- a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
- a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested option year; and
- 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 option years. (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 option years.
 - 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 option years.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- Staff travel
- Participant travel (international, domestic, ground transportation, passport and visa fees)
- Orientations

- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Lodging, when not in home stay
- Living allowance for host families
- Food (primarily group meals)
- Interpreters, if necessary
- Reasonable accommodations for participants with disabilities
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities
- Travel and per diem at USG rates for one staff member to attend the American Youth Leadership Awardee meeting in Washington, D.C.

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

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: **Friday, April 4, 2014**

Methods 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/GetStarted>).

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 RFGP 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.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information:

V.1. REVIEW PROCESS:

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. 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 cooperative agreements resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA: Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the program idea: The proposed program should be well developed, respond to design outlined in the solicitation,

and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. Program planning: A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above and in the POGI. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the organization will meet the program's objectives and plan.

3. Support of diversity: The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.

4. Institutional capacity and track record: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Office of Contracts.

The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

5. Program evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

6. Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. 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. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

VI. Award Administration Information:

VI.1. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA

and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and 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.

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 Jennifer Phillips at PhillipsJA@state.gov for additional information.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

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](http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68)

[id=68](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/>. 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.
5. Because this competition allows for the exercise of 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. Quarterly program and financial report guidelines will be sent once an award is made

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) 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.

VII. Agency Contacts:

For questions about this announcement, contact: Jennifer Phillips, U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, tel. 202-632-9352, PhillipsJA@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above 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 RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP 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 RFGP 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 VI.3 above.

Kelly Keiderling

February 5, 2014

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State

