Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request

for Grant Proposals: FY 2014 Community Solutions Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-038

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: March 31, 2014

Executive Summary:

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of
Educational and Cultural Affairs invites proposal
submissions for the Community Solutions Program in Africa,
East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and
North Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Western
Hemisphere. Public and private non-profit organizations
meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code
section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct
this professional fellowship program. Created in 2010 the
Community Solutions Program supports and encourages
initiatives organized by young civic and community leaders,
ages 25-38, working to address the economic, environmental,
political, and social challenges confronting their
respective local communities. Through four- to six-month
professional fellowships with a specific leadership
component, Community Solutions will provide opportunities

for eligible individuals to more effectively address issues of concern in their own towns, cities and regions.

I. **Funding Opportunity Description**:

I. 1. **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.

I.   2. *Purpose and Program Description*:

In an increasingly connected world, the economic, environmental, political, and social challenges that confront seemingly disparate communities around the world actually link them together. Similarly, one community's approaches and solutions to these problems may be applicable globally. Making progress on complex global challenges on a local scale requires multi-dimensional public engagement strategies to forge partnerships, mobilize broad coalitions, and galvanize public opinion across all sectors of society.

The Community Solutions Program seeks to enhance the skills of approximately 60-70 civic and community leaders to more effectively address current economic, environmental, political, and social challenges in their communities. Through a four- to six-month fellowship, complemented by leadership training and development, Community Solutions will provide opportunities for eligible individuals to experience U.S. best practices and learn effective models of public and community engagement, while developing concrete strategies to better address complex issues in their home communities.

ECA anticipates funding one project for approximately $1,500,000 to take place over the course of two years and support young professionals currently engaged in initiatives that aim to improve and enhance the economic, environmental, political, and social well-being of their communities.

As a global tool to address community-based challenges, the Community Solutions Program seeks to:

1) enhance participants' ability to address complex local economic, environmental, political, and social challenges through a U.S.-based fellowship;

2) provide new skills and resources to enable participants to assume greater leadership roles in their communities.

3) provide concrete tools for enhanced community leadership and engagement and expand opportunities for collaboration, effective communication, project implementation, and public discourse;

4) cultivate professional ties with U.S. economic,
environmental, political, and social institutions
through collaborative and follow-on projects;

5) create a global network of diverse, multi-disciplinary
civic leaders committed to problem solving and
community engagement; and,

6) expand and strengthen the relationship between the
people of the United States and other countries to
work in partnership to identify solutions to common
issues facing their local communities.

The specific themes for the professional fellowships for
this program are: 1) Environmental Issues, 2) Tolerance
and Conflict Resolution, 3) Transparency and
Accountability, and 4) Women and Gender Issues.

Eligible countries and guidance for each theme are provided
in Section I.8 below. Proposals that target professional
fellowships that are unrelated to the themes referenced in
this Request for Grant Proposals will be deemed technically
ineligible and receive no further consideration in the
review process.

I.3. Participants

For the purposes of this program, "participants" are
defined as citizens of the eligible countries selected
through a merit-based, global competition to travel to the
United States to take part in a Community Solutions
fellowship. Participants must be early to mid-level career
professionals with demonstrated leadership abilities, who
are engaged in a community-based project with the express
goal of addressing an economic, environmental, political,
and/or social challenge confronting that community (either
in or outside of their professional capacity).
Participants must possess the intercultural and English
language skills necessary to benefit fully from the
fellowship.

Fellows should be placed in community-based, non-profit or
other civil society organizations, government offices, or
legislative bodies (federal, state, county or municipal).
Hosting institutions and organizations should have
expertise relevant to the fellowship's focus and be working
on innovative community engagement projects in the non-
profit or governmental spheres, including state
legislatures, city councils or local government that

express willingness to collaborate on a specific project of
mutual interest. Preference should be given to hosts that
have identified potential collaborative projects or
initiatives of interest to Community Solutions
participants. To enhance the viability of these
collaborative initiatives, proposals should include follow-
on projects that capitalize on existing Web or social
technologies.

Through their fellowships, Community Solutions Fellows will
work with seasoned civic leaders on pre-defined issues of
mutual interest. Fellowship hosts should understand that
the Fellows, too, are experienced professionals in their
home countries who have passed through a rigorous selection
process. For them to derive full benefit from the
exchange, fellowship hosts should provide substantive
opportunities and real life models for the Fellows to
practically apply leadership lessons, explore creative
approaches to global challenges, and develop concrete
strategies to employ within their local communities.
Linking Community Solutions Fellows, program hosts and
mentors together, the Community Solutions program will work
to create a worldwide network of engaged professionals and
civic leaders.

Applicants should maximize the number of participants and the length of the U.S.-based program at the given funding level. Therefore, applicants who engage public and private partners for programming support, and employ other creative techniques to increase or stretch funding dollars will be deemed more competitive than those that do not, under the Cost Effectiveness and Cost-Sharing review criterion.

I.4. Partner Organizations

Applicants must identify the U.S.-based and any foreign-based organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate to implement Community Solutions, and describe any previous cooperative activities. While having a presence in each eligible country is not required, applicants that demonstrate institutional capacity overseas (whether through their own resources or through partnerships with other organizations or institutions) will be given strong consideration under the Institutional Capacity and Track Record criterion. In addition, proposals must demonstrate capacity in the United States to secure effective and appropriate host placements for the participants. Proposals that include letters of commitment from possible U.S-based host organizations will be deemed

more competitive under the Institutional Planning and Track
Record criterion.

I.5. Project Activities

Projects should include placement of participants in
carefully identified four- to six-month fellowships in non-
profit organizations and other public and civil society
organizations where they will work with seasoned community
leaders on complex global challenges related to the
participants' community activities. Strong project designs
will ground and augment the fellowship experience with
leadership development activities that relate to civic
engagement.

I.6. Program Guidelines

In a cooperative agreement, ECA's Office of Citizen
Exchanges, Professional Fellows Division, is substantially
involved in program activities above and beyond routine
monitoring. ECA anticipates working closely with the
recipient organization to ensure that all aspects of the
program model support the Community Solutions program
goals. ECA activities and responsibilities for this
program include participation in the design and direction
of program implementation including recruitment and

selection strategies, development of publicity and program materials, creation of online components, and execution of U.S.-based and follow-on programming.

Additional guidelines and programming responsibilities of the recipient organization and ECA are in the POGI.

I.7 Projected Timeline. ECA envisions the approximate dates of the Community Solutions program to be as follows:

- August 2014 – December 2014: Recruitment and selection of foreign participants. Recruitment campaign for U.S. hosting institutions.

- January 2015 – May 2015: Securing U.S.-based hosts and host sites.

- July/August 2015: Travel to the United States by all the foreign participants for orientation and placement at hosting sites for a four- to six-month fellowship program.

- July/August 2015 – December 2015: Community Solutions Fellowships

- December 2015: Travel to Washington, DC, for an end of program workshop.

- January 2016 – July 2016: Conduct follow-on collaborative projects.

I.8 Professional Fellowship Themes.

Themes and Eligible Partner Countries: Proposals should embrace a global program design that incorporates all of the proposed themes under Community Solutions. Program participants should be from all of the regions listed below. Proposals that target countries or themes not listed in this solicitation will be deemed technically ineligible. No guarantee is made or implied that every country will have participants.

Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries include:

<u>**Africa**</u>:

Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

<u>**East Asia and the Pacific**</u>:

Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam

Europe:

Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey

Middle East and North Africa:

Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and West Bank/Palestinian Territories

South and Central Asia:

Bangladesh, Burma, Maldives, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

Western Hemisphere:

Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago

Thematic Areas:

Environmental Issues:

Fellowships for the "Environmental Issues" theme should focus on issues related to climate change, food security, community farming, supporting food supplies (at local, regional or national levels), social entrepreneurship (leveraging science and technology to address ecological and environmental issues), water and resource management,

low-carbon and renewable technologies, sustainable

energies, pollution, and the use of natural resources.

Tolerance and Conflict Resolution:

Fellowships in the area of "Tolerance and Conflict

Resolution" should expose participants to issues and

strategies that address tolerance, inclusion, multi-

culturalism, discrimination, and conflict resolution.

Negotiation skills, the art of compromise, fair treatment

and inclusion of minority and marginalized populations, and

civil rights and responsibilities can also be addressed.

Based on participants' specific interests, fellowships may

need to be identified that deal with community building,

conflict resolution, and crisis response tools for use in

failing and post-conflict states and complex

emergencies/disasters. Fellowships may also explore the

way technology and social media can be utilized as tools

for ensuring peace, promoting tolerance, and resolving

conflicts.

Transparency and Accountability:

Fellowships in the area of "Transparency and

Accountability" should provide participants exposure to

institutions and concepts related to civil society, citizen

and youth engagement, grass-roots democracy, good governance, anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, and/or free and fair elections. Fellowships may also explore the role technology and social media play in supporting civil society and transparency. Under this theme, the important role of volunteerism and the culture of volunteerism can also be addressed, as appropriate.

Women and Gender Issues:

Fellowships for the "Women and Gender" Issues" theme should focus on issues related to women's empowerment, women's education, women's health, women entrepreneurs, gender equality and discrimination, and the prevention of all forms of exploitation, including domestic violence. Special emphasis should be placed on identifying fellowships that will provide exposure to best practices for grassroots organizations working to advance the political, economic, and social well-being and empowerment of women.

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*

Approximate Total Funding: *$1,500,000*

Approximate Number of Awards: *1*

Approximate Average Award: *$1,500,000*

Anticipated Award Date: *May 30, 2014*

Anticipated Project Completion Date: *July 30, 2016*

Additional Information:

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this grant or cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

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 one award, in an amount up
to $1,500,000 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 following: (list requirements) or they will result in

your proposal being declared technically ineligible and

given no further consideration in the review process.

- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one
  proposal in this competition.
- If more than one proposal is received from the same
  applicant, all submissions will be declared
  technically ineligible and will receive no further
  consideration in the review process. **Please note:**
  Applicant organizations are defined by their legal
  name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-
  424 and additional supporting documentation outlined
  in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)
  document.
- Proposals that target professional fellowships that
  are unrelated to the themes referenced in this Request

for Grant Proposals will be deemed technically

ineligible and receive no further consideration in the

review process.

IV.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: 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 David Gustafson in the Office of Citizen

Exchanges, ECA/PE/C, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 3rd

Floor, 2200 C St, NW, Washington, DC 20522-0503, ph: (202)

632-6083, GustafsonDP@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.

Please specify Linnéa E. Allison and refer to the Funding
Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement
on all other inquiries and correspondence.

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 ExemptFrom 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:

IV.3d.1   **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 RFGP, 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 grant or cooperative agreement)
under this RFGP 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

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 <u>outputs</u> and <u>outcomes</u>. <u>Outputs</u> 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. <u>Outcomes</u>, 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):

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.

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. Budget
requests may not exceed $1,500,000. 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.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program are outlined in
the POGI. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for
complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:
Application Deadline Date: Monday, March 31, 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 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 Program Idea and Ability to Achieve Objectives:** Your proposal should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Program objectives should be stated clearly and should reflect expertise in the subject area and region. Objectives should also respond to the topics in this announcement and should relate to the current conditions in the target country/countries. Timelines should be comprehensive in nature and include deadlines for completion of major tasks. The substance of workshops, fellowships, seminars and/or consulting should be described in detail.

2. **Cost Effectiveness and Cost Sharing:** Overhead and administrative costs in the proposal budget, including salaries, honoraria and subcontracts for services, should be kept to a minimum. Your proposal will be considered more competitive, under this criterion, if the administrative costs do not exceed 30% of the total requested ECA grant funds. Cost-sharing and in-kind contributions, including contributions from the award receipt, proposed in-country partner(s), and other sources should be included in the budget request. Applicants who engage public and private partners for programming support,

and employ other creative techniques to increase or stretch
funding dollars will be deemed more competitive than those
that do not, under this criterion.

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

4. **Institutional Capacity and Track Record**: Proposed
personnel and institutional resources should be adequate
and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.
Responsibilities of proposed in-country partners should be
clearly described in the proposal. Proposals should
demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange
programs, including responsible fiscal management and full
compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau
awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by
Bureau Grants Staff. Proposals that include letters of

commitment from possible U.S-based host organizations will be deemed more competitive under this criterion. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. While having a presence in each eligible country is not required, applicants that demonstrate institutional capacity overseas (whether through their own resources or through partnerships with other organizations or institutions) will be given strong consideration under this criterion.

5. **Multiplier Effect and Follow-on Activities**: Your proposal should clearly articulate how the proposed program model will strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

6. **Project Evaluation**: Your proposal should include a detailed plan to evaluate the program, both as activities unfold and at the end of the program. Program objectives should target clearly defined results in quantitative terms. Competitive evaluation plans need to describe how you measure these results, including the evaluative methodology and tools to be utilized and proposals. Your

proposal may include draft data collection instruments (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) in and if relevant, samples data sets from previous educational exchanges.

7. Stewardship: Your proposal should address how you will utilize innovative tools, low-carbon technologies, and socially responsible approaches to program implementation, including Web-based and other technologies, to reduce the program's carbon footprint and be a faithful steward of federal resources.

VI.) Award Administration Information

VI.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 an Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

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

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

*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 (Linnéa Allison, ECA/PE/C, (202) 632-6060 (tel.)
and allisonle@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:

   Mandatory:

   1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://www.whitehouse/gov/omb/grants_forms. 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.) Quarterly program and financial reports highlighting

all major activities undertaken during the grant

period including program analysis and lessons

learned.

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.

VI.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 one week prior to the official opening of the
activity.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Linnea E.
Allison, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen
Exchanges, ECA/PE/C, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-6060 (tel.), (202) 632-6492
(fax), or allisonle@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP
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 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