

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request  
for Grant Proposals: FY 2014 Professional Fellows  
Congresses**

**Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement**

**Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-040**

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415**

**Application Deadline: April 8, 2014**

**Executive Summary:**

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs invites proposal submissions to conduct the 2015 spring and fall "Professional Fellows Congresses" the concluding element of the Professional Fellows 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 conduct two three-day Professional Fellows Congresses in spring and fall 2015. The Professional Fellows Program (PFP) is a two-way exchange program which brings young leaders from civil society and government from around the world to the United States for month-long working placements with U.S. organizations throughout the country; all PFP participants travel to Washington upon

completion of their fellowships for the concluding program Congress. These professional exchange programs provide foreign participants knowledge and experience of U.S. practices and techniques in their field of expertise and deepen their understanding of U.S. society, culture, and people. Similarly, through their involvement in the program, U.S. participants gain a deeper understanding of the societies, cultures, and professional arena of their foreign colleagues. The Congresses bring all foreign participants together at the end of their exchange and provide a larger context for their shared experiences, promote post-exchange collaboration, introduce them to resources available to program alumni, and strengthen the identity of the PFP as a vital element of U.S. public diplomacy.

It is the Bureau's intent to award a cooperative agreement for one base year plus two option years for an estimated total amount of \$1,800,000. Please see section II.) Award Information, below for additional details.

**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:***

ECA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement of approximately \$600,000 for the development, management, and implementation of two (2) Professional Fellows Congresses that will occur at the end of both the 2015 spring and fall fellowship components of the Professional Fellows Program.

The Professional Fellows Program is a two-way exchange which brings emerging leaders from around the world to the United States for intensive month-long fellowships designed to broaden their professional expertise. Participants are placed in non-profit organizations, private sector businesses, and government offices across the country to learn first-hand how issues in their field are addressed in the United States. The Fellows build a broad network with both their American colleagues and other program participants as they develop a deeper understanding of American society.

The three-day Professional Fellows Congresses should promote active engagement between participants from different countries; highlight key learning objectives; outline plans for follow-on projects; and provide opportunities for the program participants to reflect on how their U.S. experiences can be drawn upon in what they are trying to achieve in their home communities and workplaces. Special attention should be paid to concepts such as leadership, community action, citizen empowerment and volunteerism into the Congress design and program.

As the capstone events of the 2015 spring and fall Professional Fellows Program, each Professional Fellows Congress will provide the fellows:

- the opportunity to network with colleagues from around the world, share their U.S. experiences, and learn from the experiences of other Professional Fellows;
- a contextual framework for the broader fellowship experience and exchange program;
- an opportunity to examine ways an individual, organization, or interest group can generate change for the common good; and
- a greater understanding of public diplomacy in the global community.

Additional information about the **FY 2014** Open Competition for the Professional Fellows Program can be found in a separate RFGP published on Grants.gov, as well as on the ECA website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding>. Potential applicants may wish to review the FY 2014 **FY 2014** Open Competition for the Professional Fellows Program before developing a proposal for the FY 2014 Professional Fellows Congresses.

**Please note:**

In a cooperative agreement, the ECA Program Office is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The ECA Program Office's activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

1. Participation in the design and direction of conference-related activities including the development of the conference agenda, speaker selection, and networking activities;
2. Participation in collaborative teleconference or other communications means utilized in coordinating information sharing and dissemination of information amongst all grantee recipients;
3. Approval of key personnel;
4. Input and approval on program timelines and agenda;
5. Providing guidance in execution of all program components;
6. Review and approval of all program publicity and other materials;
7. Approval of conference facilities and location for reception and other social events;
8. Assistance with participant emergencies;
9. Liaison with relevant U.S. Embassies and country desk

officers at the State Department particularly in terms of ECA speaker and staff participation; and,

10. Working with the award recipient to publicize the program through various media outlets.
11. Performing an annual performance evaluation/review. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition 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 two additional option years, 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 two option years are exercised.

### ***I.3. Participants***

For the purposes of the Professional Fellows Congresses, "participants" are defined as citizens of the countries included in the exchange, selected through a merit-based

competition that travel to the United States to take part in the exchange. Participants will be experienced civil society, government, and economic development leaders, approximately 25-40 years of age whose current employment is related to one of the themes of the exchange. Because of the nature of this program, all selected participants will have a demonstrated proficiency in both written and oral English, be self-directed, be able to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting, and will have demonstrated leadership abilities.

The proposal should also describe a proposed plan for identifying a small number of foreign and American program alumni to be fully incorporate into each of the Professional Fellows Congresses. These individuals should have a specially defined role as participants with extra responsibilities, including speaking, moderating, or other roles throughout the Congress.

The grantee staff from the 12-16 grantee organizations should also have a specially defined role in the Professional Fellows Congress that is described in the proposal, including, but not limited to, assistance with moderating sessions, evaluating sessions, etc.

***I.4. Project Activities***

Proposals should include the planning and implementation of two three-day long Professional Fellows Congresses in spring and fall 2015. Each Professional Fellows Congress will include approximately 200-250 total participants, including grantee staff from approximately 12-16 participating organizations and program alumni. Each Congress should strengthen the fellowship experience with leadership development activities that relate to civic engagement. This could include the coordination of community-based activities before the official start of the Professional Fellows Congress. Proposals should clearly outline the goals and objectives of the Professional Fellows Congress, describe possible symposium themes and topics, suggest speakers, and include innovative networking or related activities that allow ample time for interaction among the program participants. Proposals should also include a detailed draft agenda. Projects should provide opportunities for the exchange participants to begin the transition from program participant to alumni and discuss how they can draw upon their U.S. experiences as they return home to their home communities and workplaces.

***I.5 Projected Timeline.*** ECA envisions the approximate dates associated with the implementation of the Professional Exchanges Congresses to be as follows:

September 2014 - January 2015:

- Develop and implement communication plan and process with ECA and Professional Fellows Program partner organizations.
- Identify and negotiate contract with appropriate hotel or meeting site for both spring and fall Congresses. Contracts should include provisions for meals and lodging for participating fellows and staff from grantee organizations, as well as space for plenary meetings, informal networking activities, break-out sessions, etc.

February 2015 - May 2015:

In coordination with ECA/PE/C/PF staff and participating grantee organizations,

- develop spring Congress agenda and all corresponding materials.
- arrange all hotel, meals, and travel logistics.
- disseminate arrival and hotel information to participating fellows along with the agenda for the Congress and materials.

- develop and implement a public media outreach campaign to interested stakeholders and the wider community.

June 2-4, 2015 (tentatively scheduled):

Conduct three-day Spring Professional Fellows Congress.

June-July 2015:

Prepare Final Professional Fellows Congress Report. Meet with ECA/PE/C/PF staff for an official programmatic debrief.

July 2015 - October 2015:

In coordination with ECA/PE/C/PF staff and participating grantee organizations,

- develop fall Congress agenda and all corresponding materials.
- arrange all hotel, meals, and travel logistics.
- disseminate arrival and hotel information to participating fellows along with the agenda for the Congress and materials.
- develop and implement a public media outreach campaign to interested stakeholders and the wider community.

November 3-5, 2015 (tentatively scheduled):

Conduct three-day Fall Professional Fellows Congress.

December 2015:

Prepare Final Professional Fellows Congress Report. Meet with ECA/PE/C/PF staff for an official programmatic debrief.

***I.6 Professional Fellows Programs.***

**Programs and Eligible Partner Countries:** Congress proposals should reflect a global program design that builds on the FY 2014 Open Competition for the Professional Fellows Program outlined in the RFGP on Grants.gov, as well as on the ECA website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding>. Participants in the Professional Fellows Program will come from at a minimum 30 countries worldwide. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate a capacity to engage a diverse group of program participants in a manner that accounts for cross-cultural sensitivity and awareness. For a full list of the eligible countries under each specific theme, please refer to the FY 2014 Open Competition for the Professional Fellows Program RFGP on Grants.gov, as well as on the ECA website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding>.

Additional guidelines are located in the Program Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document.

**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; 2015-option year one; 2016-option year two, pending successful performance and availability of funds.*

**Approximate Total Funding:** *\$1,800,000. This figure represents base year plus two option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds.*

**Approximate Number of Awards:** *1*

**Approximate Average Award:** *\$600,000*

**Anticipated Award Date:** *September 1, 2014*

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** *December 31, 2017.*

*This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award, one base year plus two option years.*

**Additional Information:**

A Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 15 months (base year) with options for two additional 15 month periods (option years one and two). 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.) Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$130,000. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount up to \$600,000 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 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.

**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 the David Gustafson in the Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PF, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 632-6083, [GustafsonDP@state.gov](mailto:GustafsonDP@state.gov) to request a Solicitation Package.

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

It also contains the POGI document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Adam Meier 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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://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):

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. 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 two additional option years, 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 two option years).

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

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

5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

**The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:**

1.) closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional 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;

- All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional option years.

- 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.

- 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:

Eligible costs include:

- 1) Symposium programming for a total of approximately 500 Professional Fellows, participating grantee organizations, and ECA staff (approximately half in the spring, half in the fall)
- 2) Honoraria for speakers
- 3) Lodging and hotel expenses including conference space and audio-visual support
- 4) Food including working meals (reception and final banquet)
- 5) Enhancement and cultural programming
- 6) Ground transportation in the Washington, D.C., area for participants, staff, and speakers
- 7) Educational Materials
- 8) Materials including printing and duplication

of promotional pieces, Congress binders, participant bios, name tags, table tents, and other supporting Congress related items such as printing of participant photo submissions or production of materials for a participant poster show

9) Travel to and from Washington, DC, per diem and lodging for a small number of foreign and American alumni of the Professional Fellows Program to fully take part in each of the Professional Fellows Congresses

10) Staffing

11) General administrative expenses

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2014

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically

through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/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](mailto: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 the program idea:* Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. *Program planning and ability to achieve objectives:* Detailed agenda, sample materials, and relevant work plan should demonstrate an institution's or organization's substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the stated Professional Fellows Programs overview and Congress guidelines described above. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution or organization will meet the Congress goals and objectives.

3. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate the institution's or organization's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in all aspects of the Congress planning, development and implementation.

4. *Institutional Capacity and Track Record:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to designing, developing, implementing, and managing a spring and fall capstone event for the Professional Fellows Programs. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful execution of large scale conference, workshop, or symposium type programming and related activities, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards.

5. *Multiplier effect/impact:* The proposed program should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

6. *Project Evaluation:* Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

7. *Cost-effectiveness:* 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.

## **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.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 version and one hard copy of the following reports:

## Mandatory:

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

[http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](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](mailto: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

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet with all program reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration 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](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USAspending.gov](http://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 cooperative agreement 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.

#### **VII. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Adam Meier, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Professional Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, ECA/PE/C-14-XX, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-6067, meieraw2@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.

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Evan Ryan

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Date

Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State



