

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals: FY-2014 Youth Leadership and Teacher Professional Development Program with Bosnia and Herzegovina

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-045

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: April 21, 2014

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the FY-2014 Youth Leadership and Teacher Professional Development Program with Bosnia and Herzegovina. 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 U.S.-based exchange activities on civic education, leadership, and community service for high school students and teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bureau will be supporting a three- to four-week exchange for approximately 21 participants in April/May 2015. The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) of the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo will recruit, screen, and select the participating secondary school students and teachers. OPA and the award recipient will jointly support follow-on activities for the alumni. 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 \$330,000. Please see section II.) Award Information, below for additional details.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

Authority: Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Overview: The Youth Leadership and Teacher Professional Development Program with Bosnia and Herzegovina has been implemented annually since 1999 through a partnership of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) in the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo, and a U.S. organization or institution that has received an ECA award.

The goals of the program are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- 2) Prepare young leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities and to develop their leadership skills;

- 3) Nurture a cadre of students and teachers to be actively engaged in addressing issues of concern in their schools and communities upon their return home and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to become citizen activists.

The objectives of the program are for participants to be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate a better understanding of the elements of a participatory democracy as practiced in the United States;
- 2) Demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills; and
- 3) Demonstrate skill at developing project ideas, planning a course of action, and bringing the projects to fruition.

Participants will be engaged in a variety of activities during the U.S. exchange such as workshops, community and/or school-based programs, seminars, civic education programming in Washington, D.C., and other activities that are designed to achieve the program's stated goals. Opportunities for the youth and adult participants to interact with their American peers in a sustained, substantive, and in-depth manner must be prominently integrated into the exchange program.

The applicant should present a program plan that allows the participants to thoroughly explore civic participation in the United States in a creative, memorable, and practical way. Exchange activities should be designed to be replicable and provide practical knowledge and skills that the participants can apply to school and civic activities at home.

The U.S.-based exchange will take place in spring 2015 during the months of April and May. Applicants should propose dates for the exchange, but the exact timing of the project may be altered through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the award recipient. The program should be no less than three weeks and up to four weeks in duration. Program development should begin in the late summer of 2014.

The participants will be high school students between the ages of 15 and 18 who have demonstrated leadership abilities in their schools and/or communities, and high school teachers who have demonstrated an interest in youth leadership and are expected to remain in positions where they can continue to work with youth. Participants will be proficient in the English language. The delegation will be 18 students and three teachers.

Applicants should outline their team's capacity for doing projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of leadership and civic education programming, (2) age-appropriate programming for youth, and (3) working with individuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina or other areas of Southeast Europe. Applicants need not have a partner in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo will recruit and select the participants from selected cities in the Federation and in Republika Srpska and will organize a pre-departure orientation and follow-on activities in coordination with the award recipient.

In pursuit of the goals outlined above, the exchange program provided by the U.S. award recipient organization will include the following:

- A pre-departure orientation in Sarajevo, to be prepared and delivered by OPA and award recipient staff.
- A welcome orientation.
- The planning of a creative and substantive three- to four-week exchange program in two or three communities in the United States, one of which will be a program segment in Washington, DC. The exchange activities should develop both the youth and the adult participants' knowledge and skill base in civic education, community service, and youth leadership. The academic and extracurricular components will focus primarily on interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities that explore the program themes. Some activities should be school and/or community-based, and community service must also be included. Cultural, social, and recreational activities will balance the schedule.
- Organized activities that provide substantive and sustained interaction with American teenagers.
- Opportunities for the educators to work with American professionals and volunteers to develop ideas for fostering youth leadership, civic education, and community service programs at home.
- The arrangement of homestays for the participants in the United States with properly screened and briefed American families for the majority of the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years of age or older.
- Logistical arrangements, including lodging and meals not taken at homestays, disbursement of stipends, local travel, and travel between sites.
- The development and implementation of a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange, and to create opportunities for participants to share potential issues and resolve them promptly. The award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the teenagers have safe and pedagogically rich programs. Staff, along with the adult participants, will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed.
- A closing session to summarize the project's activities and prepare participants for their return home.
- Support of the participants' follow-on activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly by facilitating continued engagement among the participants, advising and supporting them in the implementation of community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the exchange. Exchange participants should return home from the exchange prepared to conduct projects that serve a need in their schools or communities, which will be supported by project staff through a follow-on visit.
- The design and implementation of an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the project.

Please note:

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

- 1) Serving as the in-country partner and managing the recruitment and selection of the participants, arranging and paying for the international travel, and overseeing follow-on activities.
- 2) Providing advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 3) Facilitating interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas post.
- 4) Arranging meetings with Department of State/Embassy officials.
- 5) Issuing DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the participants. All participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 6) Approving host family applications, publicity materials, and the calendar of exchange activities.
- 7) Monitoring and evaluating the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.
- 8) 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.

Additional Information:

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

Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the stated objectives will be met. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major project activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. 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. Projects must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor and Government Visitor category. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package – this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) – for further information.

II. Award Information:

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

Fiscal Year Funds: FY-2014 – \$110,000, base year; FY-2015 – \$110,000, option year-one; FY-2016 – \$110,000, option year- two, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$330,000. This figure represents base year plus two option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$110,000

Anticipated Award Date: August 15, 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 will be awarded for a period of 16 months (base year) with options for two additional 12 month periods (option years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of its 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.

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 Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 632-6421, fax (202) 632-9355, e-mail LantzCS@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 Branch Chief Carolyn Lantz 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 Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/>. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

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 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. Budget requests should be for approximately \$110,000. 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.

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.

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, April 21, 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 the program idea:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives. The proposed program should be creative and well developed, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail.
- 2. Program planning:** A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how objectives would be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail. Proposals should also provide a plan for a Bureau-supported follow-on visit by project staff to Bosnia and Herzegovina, plus a plan for continued follow-on activity, not necessarily with Bureau support, that ensures that the exchange is not an isolated event.
- 3. Support of diversity:** Support of diversity is an important feature of Bureau programs. The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.
- 4. Institutional capacity and track record:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The three areas of competency

will be considered. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance.

5. Program evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Please see Section IV.3d.3. of this announcement for more information.

6. Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

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 copy of the following required reports:

- 1) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a Grant Note under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.
- 2) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

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: Carolyn Lantz, U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, Telephone (202) 632-6421, E-mail: LantzCS@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.

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

February 26, 2014