

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY 2017 Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAS-17-006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.009

Key Date/Application Deadline: April 3, 2017

Program Description/Executive Summary:

The Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the FY 2017 Tunisia Community College Scholarship (TCCSP) Program. TCCSP provides international participants from underserved and underrepresented communities with an intensive academic-year-long program at accredited U.S. community colleges, focused on building technical and professional skills while deepening participants' understanding of the United States.

TCCSP is one of two components of the broader Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP). The second component of TJSP is the Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program (Tunisia UGRAD), which is also being openly competed in FY 2017 (**Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAE-17-011**) and can be accessed on Grant.gov and ECA's website. Applicant organizations are encouraged, but not required, to apply to administer both programs in order to promote efficiencies and maintain a unified program identity, particularly in the administration of recruitment and alumni activities. If one organization is awarded TCCSP and a different organization is awarded Tunisia UGRAD, both organizations will be expected to cooperate closely to promote the programs under the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program.

In order to maximize the number of participants under this program, it is the Bureau's expectation that institutional and private sector funding and cost sharing will be made available by applicant organizations.

It is the Bureau's intent to award one cooperative agreement for activity that will be carried out over the course of four years for \$2,672,500, pending the availability of funds. Please see section B.) Award Information, below for additional details.

A. Program Description:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the

Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

ECA reserves the right to modify the composition of final awards and their funding levels based upon the quality of proposals submitted, the availability of funds, and other factors impacting long-term foreign policy objectives.

Purpose: TCCSP provides access to educational opportunities to a broad spectrum of international students from underserved and underrepresented communities. By providing quality technical and professional education, community colleges can prepare students from developing countries with skills and experiences that will help them to participate constructively in their country's development. ECA is engaged with the U.S. community college sector to increase the number of international students enrolled at U.S. community colleges and to reinforce efforts to build international ties. International students bring opportunities for global engagement and learning to U.S. classrooms and campuses, encouraging U.S. community college students to study abroad and fostering global awareness and skills development for those U.S. students who may not have the opportunity to study or travel abroad.

Tunisian students selected for academic-year-long study at accredited U.S. community colleges under this program will receive educational opportunities, professional and leadership development, and exposure to U.S. society that will enable them to return home with new skills and experience with which to contribute to the growth and development of their home country and to enhancing mutual understanding between citizens of Tunisia and the United States.

The program goals are to:

- 1) Support the U.S. foreign policy goal of youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, and development by equipping exchange participants with improved technical and professional skills and a more global perspective that will help them return to their communities as workforce leaders able to meet important needs in their home country;
- 2) Build mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect through sharing cultures and values;
- 3) Empower participants from underrepresented and underserved groups to engage in addressing issues of concern in their local communities upon their return home;

- 4) Foster relationships among underserved youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups, including U.S. counterparts; and
- 5) Promote internationalization efforts on U.S. community college campuses.

The objectives of the program are for participants to:

- 1) Demonstrate increased knowledge and professional skills in their chosen field of study;
- 2) Demonstrate increased confidence and ability in their personal, professional, and leadership skills;
- 3) Demonstrate a better understanding of community engagement as practiced within their multinational campus cohorts and in their host communities in the United States;
- 4) Demonstrate a better understanding of the society, institutions, and culture of the United States; and
- 5) Demonstrate improvement in their level of proficiency in English.

The objectives of the program are for community colleges to:

- 1) Increase institutional capacity to host international students, especially those from underrepresented communities;
- 2) Increase institutional capacity to facilitate engagement among visiting international students and U.S. students, staff, and faculty to build mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect through sharing cultures and values; and
- 3) Promote on-campus opportunities for U.S. students to gain international awareness, global competencies and ultimately to increase the global mobility of U.S. community college students.

Applicants are requested to submit a narrative of no more than 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages outlining a comprehensive strategy for the administration and implementation of the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program over two consecutive academic years beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year. During this period, the Program will provide approximately 60 scholarships (about 30 each year) at U.S. community colleges to outstanding students and youth from non-elite sectors and underrepresented parts of Tunisia. The proposal should describe a process to identify and place students at U.S. community colleges in small clusters of no more than four students per school. Colleges with limited international experience should host smaller clusters.

TCCSP Program-wide Administration and Implementation:

TCCSP Administration:

Recruitment and Review

The proposal should describe the participant application and selection processes including recruitment, application, evaluation, selection, and placement in consultation with the ECA program office and the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia. The proposal should describe in detail a system for openly and widely publicizing and recruiting in all 24 governorates in Tunisia, as well as screening candidates from Tunisia for recommendation and selection. The proposal may include strategies for working with higher institutes of technological studies throughout Tunisia, or other strategies, to achieve a diverse applicant pool representing a broad spectrum of Tunisian students from underserved and underrepresented communities, particularly women. The proposal should also describe a review process that will lead to the identification of principal and alternate candidates. Staff of the selected organization may not participate in selection panels. The screening process should be described in detail, including the timeline, the identification and convening of a review committee, and procedures to ensure that its deliberations are merit-based, transparent and consistent with the purpose of the program. Final selection of candidates will be made by ECA based on the recommendations made by the review committee and implementing organization. No offers of scholarships to participate may be issued without Department of State/ECA clearance.

Placement

The selection of accredited U.S. host community colleges is essential to the success of the FY 2017 TCCSP. Each host college should be selected on the basis of excellence in the field(s) of study in which the college is hosting participants. Other factors which may be addressed include geographic diversity, ability to leverage institutional and private sector funding, resources to support international students, proven success hosting international students, and availability of appropriate, safe, and cost-effective housing. The proposal should describe host campus selection and placement strategies for participant clusters across multiple community colleges; no single college should host all participants. The proposal should explain a process for placing selected candidates at U.S. host institutions, no more than four participants per campus, including the rationale for the distribution of candidates across host campuses and plans to facilitate their integration into campus communities. The proposal should include how individual candidates will apply to participate in specific, targeted, field of study-driven, academic year programs.

Pre-arrival Information and Pre-Departure Orientation

Applicants should describe how program leaders will engage with participants prior to arrival at host campuses. The proposal should also describe plans for a pre-departure orientation in Tunisia. Applicants should provide a sample pre-

arrival information packet with the proposal. Information should be complete and detailed. Key points to be covered in pre-arrival information and the pre-departure orientation include:

- how to prepare for travel and participation,
- academic requirements,
- academic departments and available courses,
- social and cultural issues, including gender issues,
- housing,
- personal budgeting considerations, and
- other critical issues.

Materials should be designed to serve as a useful post-arrival reference as well. Creative uses of technology to advise participants about pre-arrival preparation and engage with them to set expectations prior to departure and during the program are encouraged.

Mid-Program Workshops

Proposals should describe plans to implement a mid-program workshop of no less than two days in duration that facilitates participant personal and professional development and helps participants to maximize their TCCSP experiences. The preference is for programming in or near Washington, D.C. However, other locations can be proposed with clear rationale. Proposals should also describe plans for training and professional development for host advisors to further develop their knowledge of the program and strategies to enhance college capacity to host international students and internationalize their campuses.

Proposals should include a description of the overall concept of the program, a rationale for the duration and timing of the event, and plans for coordinating logistics and implementing the program. The proposal should demonstrate a commitment to work closely with ECA to determine the theme for the event and to coordinate opportunities for ECA's participation and engagement with TCCSP participants and host advisors during this program.

Reentry Programming

The proposal should include administration of reentry programming for all participants. The workshop dates and content should be planned in consultation with the ECA program office. The re-entry workshop should address issues of "reverse cultural shock," academic and job search skills and other re-entry considerations as appropriate, as well as further opportunities for alumni activities and engaging with PAS Tunis.

Alumni Tracking and Follow-On Activities

Alumni activities are an important part of the Bureau's academic exchange programs. Alumni programming in the form of newsletters, listservs and use of

social media provides critical program follow-on and maximizes and extends the benefit of the participants' program in the United States. Proposed follow-on activities for alumni must be developed in close consultation with ECA and PAS Tunis, must reflect the goals and objectives of the FY 2017 TCCSP, and must contribute to ECA's goals to foster mutual understanding between the people of Tunisia and the people of United States. The proposal should describe how long-term links with FY 2017 TCCSP alumni will be fostered and maintained.

Proposals should outline ways to creatively organize and support engagement with alumni without additional ECA funding, including a timeline. Proposals should explain how alumni activities will be integrated with initiatives for alumni of other ECA programs, rather than being isolated events.

Alumni tracking is critical for the evaluation of the Program and for the implementation of worthwhile follow-on programs. The proposal should detail how database systems will be maintained and updated beyond the duration of the Cooperative Agreement and how often updated database information will be provided to the ECA. Applicants should explain how these efforts will be coordinated with ECA and the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis.

All statistical information gathered and compiled by the award recipient on the program participants and alumni should be transferable to the database maintained at the ECA. The proposal should describe how the applicant organization intends to store data on participants for transfer to the ECA's system.

Because TCCSP is one component of the TJSP, which also includes the Tunisia UGRAD, the applicant must be willing to cooperate closely with the organization that is awarded the cooperative agreement for Tunisia UGRAD to implement alumni activities that will be available to all TJSP alumni. These alumni activities should be promoted as TJSP alumni activities under unified branding.

Alumni Workshop

The proposal should include a detailed plan for the administration of a workshop in Tunisia that would include alumni from all cohorts of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, including TCCSP and Tunisia UGRAD totaling approximately 600 alumni. The alumni workshop should offer alumni ample opportunity to network amongst themselves and with Tunisian representatives from various sectors; to present the work they have been doing since their exchange programs in the United States; and to reflect on the impact their exchange programs have had on their lives and communities. The workshop should take place in Tunisia after the return of the final program cohort and no later than March 2021.

The cooperating organization will develop the workshop agenda in close consultation with the ECA and PAS Tunis, and must be willing to work with

cooperating organizations previously responsible for implementing TCCSP and Tunisia UGRAD to include all program alumni equally. Proposals should explain how the applicant organization would plan this workshop if there are multiple organizations administering the two components of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program: TCCSP and Tunisia UGRAD. For the purposes of this proposal, the applicant should budget for the participation of approximately 280 TCCSP alumni.

TCCSP Program Implementation:

The proposal should explain processes for registering and monitoring participants in SEVIS under the Bureau's sponsorship with a program number to be provided by the Bureau.

Academic Programs

The proposal should indicate the ability to design and offer comprehensive academic-year programs in the selected fields of study. Applicants should describe an academic program in the selected fields of study with both theoretical and practical elements. Proposed professional and cultural enrichment programming should foster leadership development and mutual understanding through community engagement and learning about U.S. society and culture. A methodology to evaluate the achievement of program goals and objectives should be described in the proposal.

Participants may apply for, and be placed in, the following fields:

- Applied Engineering
- Business Management and Administration
- Information Technology
- Tourism and Hospitality Management

ECA reserves the right to add or remove eligible fields of study prior to each recruitment cycle.

The proposal should outline procedures for advising, monitoring and supporting participants in their professional and personal development throughout the year and for evaluating their progress toward program goals.

Cultural Programs

To support the mutual understanding goal of the exchange, the Bureau is interested in opportunities for academic and enrichment experiences related to U.S. institutions, society, and culture, including opportunities for students to better understand and appreciate diversity in the United States. Activities should include participant presentations (for example, to college classes, local schools and community groups) and matching students with a local friendship family. The Bureau welcomes creative ideas for introducing participants to American

institutions; opportunities may include discussion groups on U.S. social, political, educational, or cultural issues, visits to political campaign offices and polling places, attendance at school board or city council meetings, visits to American religious institutions, and civic-related volunteer work. Participant attendance at museums, concerts, plays, sporting events, and other cultural events featuring American content should be encouraged and facilitated whenever possible. The organization cooperating with the Bureau on this program will be expected to keep the Bureau informed of the progress of these academic and enrichment experiences as well as other aspects of the program throughout the year.

Service Learning

Applicants should describe how the program will provide program participants with opportunities to volunteer on a project or program within a framework of service learning to introduce participants to volunteerism as an American cultural value and to foster the engagement of participants with their local communities.

Practical Education/Professional Internship

Applicants should describe how program participants will be supported in substantive practical education placements (i.e., internship, cooperative education) directly related to their fields of study and/or career plans. This component is intended to provide participants with practical experience in their field of study and help them develop professional skills for eventual entry into the Tunisian workforce. Descriptions should include how these practical educational placements are supported as part of (or independent from) existing campus services for all students. Host colleges should guide the participants in their search, approve placements, monitor participants, assess learning, guide reflection on the relevance of learning to participants' home country context, and evaluate this component of the program. Participating colleges may offer this opportunity for academic credit.

Institutional Capacity:

All proposals should demonstrate depth of experience in conducting and administering complex and multi-faceted international education programs. An applicant organization should demonstrate the organization's interest in and capacity to administer and implement a program for Tunisian youth.

Program and administrative costs for this program are described in detail in the POGI. All budgets should provide funding for program costs, which includes round-trip international travel for all participants, tuition, books, and living costs. The proposal should also include administrative costs and explain processes for providing maintenance, book, local transportation, and other allowances to participating students and for paying tuition fees directly to host colleges.

Programs and projects must conform with the requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package, which includes the Notice of Funding

Opportunity (NOFO), the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI).

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

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2017

Approximate Total Funding: \$2,672,500, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One.

Approximate Average Award: \$2,672,500.

Floor of Award Range: \$2,672,500.

Ceiling of Award Range: \$2,672,500.

Anticipated Award Date: Pending the availability of funds, May 31, 2017.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: May 31, 2021.

Additional Information:

A.) Cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of 48 months. At this time, ECA cannot predict whether additional Economic Support Funds (ESF) or other funding will be made available to support additional programs in FY 2018 and FY 2019. However, pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, ECA reserves the right to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

C.) Eligibility Information:

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

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one in an amount up to \$2,672,500 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.

b.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the following requirements or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- Proposals requesting funding for infrastructure development activities, sometimes referred to as “bricks and mortar support,” are NOT eligible for consideration under this competition and will be declared technically ineligible and will receive 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.

D.) Application and Submission Information:

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

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact Maureen James, JamesMC@state.gov, 202-632-9462 or and Joan Zaffarano, ZaffaranoJG@state.gov, 202-632-6330, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/U, SA-5, 4th floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, fax 202-632-6489, 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. The Solicitation Package 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 Maureen James or Joan Zaffarano and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all inquiries and correspondence.

D.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.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. “Application Deadline and Method of Submission” section below.

D.3a. You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

D.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

D.3d. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its

USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

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

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

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

D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of 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 award recipient(s) will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

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

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-44, Suite 668
301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be

able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

1. We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes or impacts, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance): **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. **Virtual Exchange Component**

ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our [International Exchange Alumni](#) space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l. **Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients**

All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3n. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. 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.

Allowable costs for the program and additional budget guidance are outlined in detail in the POGI document.

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

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) Program costs including, but not limited to, outreach and recruitment materials, orientations, and enrichment events;
- 2) Participant costs including, but not limited to, costs associated with travel, stipends, cultural allowances, and tuition and fees;
- 3) Administrative costs.

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

Application Deadline Date: Monday, April 3, 2017

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Find” portion of the system.

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

Please follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition,

validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

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

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. 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.

E.1. 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 and program planning:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission as well as the objectives of the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of issues faced by Tunisia as related to the program goals. A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity for participants placed in small clusters at a variety of U.S. community colleges. Proposals should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. The program agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- 2. Ability to achieve program objectives:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program's objectives and the proposal should address each program component.
- 3. Multiplier effect/impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information

and establishment of individual linkages. The proposed strategy should maximize the program's potential to maintain links between program alumni and U.S. community colleges .

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

5. Institutional Capacity and Track Record: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should describe the applicant's knowledge of, or prior experience with, international students and visitors, and the applicant's experience in educating students in the targeted subject fields, including information about certificate programs in subject fields. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs in the Middle East and North Africa or similar environments, including participant recruitment and selection, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants or cooperative agreements. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

6. Follow-on Activities: Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events. Activities should include tracking and maintaining updated lists of all alumni and facilitating follow-up activities with alumni, including electronic listservs.

7. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success in meeting program objectives, 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.

8. 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 applicant should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

F.) Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted 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.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

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

Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB circular cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

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

<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

F.3. Reporting Requirements:

You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly

or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here:

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

The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov.

The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [GrantSolutions.gov](http://Grantsolutions.gov), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 4.) Quarterly reports would address significant activities of the period and planning actions completed for activities anticipated in the next period.

The following describes quarterly-specific topics to be covered in each quarterly report. At the time of the publication of this announcement, we anticipate the following timeline for the submission of reports. Noting, this is subject to the volume and quality of proposals received and completion of the final approvals stated later in this document.

An interim program report submitted by **July 31** should contain the following information:

- a) A summary description of the recruitment, application review, and placement process of nominated candidates;
- b) A summary report on the distribution of pre-departure

- orientation materials to candidates and a copy of all materials distributed;
- c) A summary of pre-arrival data collection efforts and a copy of all distributed surveys;
 - d) A summary report on English-language proficiency of participants upon arrival and placement tests given to CCI participants; and
 - e) A description of the housing arrangement at each host campus.

An interim program report submitted by **October 31** should contain the following information:

- 1.) A list of all participants, including full name, ID code, college of placement, city and state of placement, congressional district of placement, country of origin, field of study, and gender;
- 2.) An overview of the arrival orientation, including the final program schedule and copies of key materials distributed;
- 3.) A summary of host campus placement information, including host institution contact information, emergency contact information, program start and end dates, and physical addresses for all participants;
- 4.) A description by college of the academic program in each field of study and the certificate programs that TCCSP participants are eligible to pursue; and
- 5.) A detailed report on English language training programs, including list of participants and providers and a summary of participants' evaluations; and
A description of the proposed host family program at each host campus, as applicable.

An interim program report submitted by **January 31** should contain the following information:

- 1.) A summary report on participants' overall adjustment to the U.S. during the first semester with specific highlights of case study examples, as applicable, and a description of overall programmatic support that facilitates adjustment and responds to challenges;
- 2.) A detailed report on TCCSP programming designed to share U.S. culture and society with program participants and encourage participants to share information about their home country with U.S. citizens;
- 3.) A description of the students' community service projects;
- 4.) A summary report on students' overall academic progress

and progress toward earning a certificate in their field of study; and

- 5.) A detailed plan for the full-cohort program including agenda and planned evaluation methods.

An interim program report submitted by **April 30** should contain the following information:

- 1.) A detailed report on the full-cohort program, including the final program schedule, key materials, and a summary of the participants' evaluations;
- 2.) A report on students' internships;
- 3.) A summary report on students' overall academic progress and progress toward earning a certificate in their field of study; and
- 4.) Summary information about student adjustment during the second semester.

A final report containing:

- 1.) A year-end summary of key developments, achievements, and outcomes;
- 2.) A summary report on English-language proficiency changes as a result of participating in this program. Include a description, by college, of the pre-program and post-program English language assessment tools and how program assesses changes in English-language proficiency;
- 3.) An update on all alumni activities undertaken through this cooperative agreement; and
- 4.) Programmatic 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 D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.4. **Program Data Requirements:**

Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

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

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Maureen James, JamesMC@state.gov, 202-632-9462 or Joan Zaffarano, ZaffaranoJG@state.gov, 202-632-6330, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/U, SA-5, 4th floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

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

H. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements.

Mark Taplin
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

January 30, 2017