

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY2018 Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad**

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SFOP0004985

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.009

**Key Date/Application Deadline:** June 7, 2018

Program Description/Executive Summary: The Office of Global Educational Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, is pleased to announce an open competition for proposals to advance the Bureau's objective of mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, through building and expanding the institutional capacity of accredited U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) to increase and/or diversify U.S. student mobility abroad through the administration of the FY2018 Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad. The FY2018 Capacity Building Program aims to achieve this goal through two main components: 1) the administration of up to two national open competitions to provide small grants to accredited U.S. HEIs to create, expand, and/or diversify their U.S. study abroad programs and 2) the implementation of workshops and other initiatives to build broader capacity within the U.S. study abroad community. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the number of competitions and the number of capacity building initiatives in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. This competition is a component of the Department's engagement in expanding and diversifying U.S. study abroad through its U.S. Study Abroad Branch (ECA/A/S/Q).

U.S. public and private non-profit organizations, or consortia of such organizations, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3), may submit proposals to cooperate with the Bureau in the administration of the Capacity Building Program, according to the guidance provided in this solicitation.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

Under this cooperative agreement, the selected recipient will provide overall program administration for the Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad, which includes administrative support services, monitoring, evaluation, and programmatic advising and support to applicant institutions, and selected sub-award recipient colleges and universities. The Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad is intended to create or expand the capacity of U.S. HEIs to administer study abroad programs for primarily undergraduate U.S. students with an emphasis on diversifying both the kinds of students taking part in study abroad and the destinations to which they travel. It is also intended to allow U.S. institutions to help expand the capacity of overseas HEIs to provide academic programs for U.S. students. Study abroad programs may include both short- and longer-term study abroad programming for academic credit, as well as internships abroad for academic credit. For the purposes of this award, diversification of study

abroad programming includes the expansion of destination countries as well as increasing the number of study abroad students from categories that are currently underrepresented in study abroad on the sub-awardee's campus, which may include first-generation students, racial/ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, and/or students from underrepresented academic disciplines, among other categories.

The recipient, in close consultation with ECA, will be expected to implement two main activities under this award:

- 1) **Administration of Small Grants to Support Capacity Building:** The award recipient will execute up to two national competitions for the provision of no fewer than 20 total sub-awards of \$35,000 or less from all competitions combined to accredited U.S. HEIs to create, expand and/or diversify primarily (though not necessarily exclusively) their undergraduate U.S. study abroad programs. (Applicants may propose a greater number of awards at lower per-award funding with additional justification.) Selection criteria for sub-awards should fully reflect the overall goals and criteria for the capacity building grants as stated in the NOFO. The award recipient will provide programmatic support, guidance, and consultation to sub-award applicants and recipients and monitor the fiscal and programmatic progress of the recipients and their projects, as well as the final impact of the awards, with regular reporting of results to ECA.
- 2) **Implementation of Other Capacity Building Initiatives:** The award recipient will also implement a number of initiatives for the wider U.S. HEI study abroad community to expand and diversify U.S. student mobility abroad. These initiatives may take the form of in-person workshops, seminars, trainings and/or other creative mechanisms such as online webinars and may also include digital engagement to bolster the capacity and knowledge sharing of U.S. higher education in support of expanding American student mobility overseas. For in-person activities, proposals should include relevant funding to enable broad and diverse participation of U.S. higher education representatives, including those requiring financial support to participate. Proposals for this element should not exceed \$350,000.

#### **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.

***Purpose:***

The Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad is designed to expand and diversify American student mobility in support of the U.S. foreign policy goals of increasing national security and promoting economic competitiveness. It is imperative that our next generation of leaders — American students of all backgrounds — engage internationally to foster mutual understanding and develop critical skills. The 2017 National Security Strategy indicates that “exchanges based in culture and education are a natural expression of the American character” and that American “values of democracy, freedom, liberty of conscience and individual dignity are the bedrock of our nation...[and] [t]here is enormous resonance in the world for the messages of freedom and dignity.” It also states we “must identify opportunities for commerce and cooperation, and facilitate the cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchange that create the networks of current and future political, civil society, and educational leaders who will extend a free and prosperous world.” To promote American resilience, it says we must “take steps to build a culture of preparedness, informing and empowering communities and individuals to obtain the skills” necessary to live in a global world. This program will expand intellectual ties among a future generation of leaders working collaboratively to achieve solutions to global challenges. This program will directly benefit U.S. communities by preparing American students with cultural competence, foreign language skills, interpersonal connections with counterparts in other countries, and academic or job knowledge, all of which prepares them for career success, thereby supporting America’s economic prosperity. It will also support more American students traveling to countries that do not have strong traditions of Americans studying abroad and receive relatively few American students.

The Capacity Building Program aims to assist a diverse range of higher education institutions across the United States to expand their capacity to support increased numbers of American students to study or intern abroad, as well as to diversify American student mobility in terms of both the Americans who study abroad and the destinations to which they travel. The Capacity Building Program also seeks to expand the capacity of overseas higher education institutions, through partnership with U.S. HEIs, to better support American students abroad.

***Expected Program Outcomes:***

The following program outcomes are expected:

- 1) Accredited U.S. HEIs will:
  - a. Create or expand their capacity to administer study abroad programs for primarily (though not necessarily exclusively) U.S. undergraduate students, which may also include expanding the capacity of foreign HEI’s to receive and host U.S. undergraduate students, all with an emphasis on diversifying both the students taking part in study abroad and the destinations to which they travel;
  - b. Increase the number of U.S. undergraduate students studying or interning abroad for credit, including at community colleges that have historically had lower levels of study abroad participation; and

- 2) Through workshops and other initiatives, develop and gain access to best practices to share with U.S. HEIs, to both expand and diversify study abroad opportunities for U.S. students.

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

***Funding Goal:***

The recipient of this cooperative agreement will provide administrative support services for ECA's FY2018 Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad, which seeks to create or expand the capacity of U.S. HEIs to administer study abroad programs, including broadening the student population who studies abroad and/or the destinations in which they study. It is also intended to allow U.S. HEIs to collaborate with and help expand the capacity of overseas HEIs to provide study abroad programs for primarily (though not necessarily exclusively) U.S. undergraduate students.

U.S. public and private non-profit organizations, or consortia of such organizations, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3), may submit proposals to cooperate with the Bureau in the administration of the Capacity Building Program, according to the guidance provided in this solicitation.

Interested organizations should read the NOFO for all information prior to preparing proposals. Please refer to the solicitation package including this NOFO and the Proposed Submission Instructions (PSI) for further instructions.

**B. Federal Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement; ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** 2018 – \$1,669,400

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$1,669,400

**Approximate Number of Awards:** 1

**Approximate Average Award:** \$1,669,400

**Floor of Award Range:** None

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$1,669,400

**Anticipated Award Date:** August 15, 2018

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** August 15, 2020

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

**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 Guidance 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 award in the amount of \$1,669,400 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process:

- Eligible applicants must agree to full collaboration with ECA in the implementation of the program and include suggested approval procedures for major components of the program in their narrative and overall program timeline.
- Due to the various responsibilities involved in the design and implementation of this program, prospective primary recipients can include a sub-recipient—who are responsible for carrying out specific activities or components of this program—as part of their application. Applications involving sub-recipients should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of each sub-recipient. Letters of commitment from any sub-

recipient should be included in the application.

- Proposals requesting funding for infrastructure development activities, sometimes referred to as “bricks and mortar” support are NOT eligible for consideration under this competition, will be declared technically ineligible and will received no further consideration in the review process.

c.) 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 the Office of Global Educational Programs U.S. Study Abroad Branch (ECA/A/S/Q), Tara Barancik, Program Officer, SA-5, Room 4-AA14, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, Phone (202) 632-9483, Fax (202) 632-9451, [BarancikT@state.gov](mailto:BarancikT@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 Program Officer Tara Barancik and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other 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 <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

**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. Unique Entity Identifier Number:** 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 (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

**D.3b. Required Proposal Elements:** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

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

**D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM):** 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](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

**D.3d. Non-Profit Status:** You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** 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. FFATA Report:** 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. Verifying Non-Profit Status:** 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. SAMS Domestic:** All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). SAMS Domestic will utilize three ILMS modules to support the Federal Financial Assistance Award process including the SAMS Domestic portal a.k.a. Service Now; Ariba; and Status Tracking a.k.a. the Federal Award File. To register as a SAMS Domestic user, please click the "create an account" link at <https://mygrants.service-now.com>. Organizations that have previously used SAMS Domestic do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

In the event you are having difficulty registering, please email [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

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

**FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY:**

**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. 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-4E (Bldg. 3)  
2430 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

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.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (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**, such as 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. **Budget requests may not exceed \$1,669,400.** 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.

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

- 1) **Travel.** International and domestic airfare; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs, except where these project activities will be paid directly by ECA. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. Limited funding should be requested for outreach at higher education conferences and related activities.
- 2) **Per Diem.** For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>

Administrative costs can include:

- Staff salaries and benefits (each staff member and his/her position must be listed separately). Please also note the percentage of his/her total time spent on this program.
- Staff travel/per diem;

- Communication costs (e.g. fax, telephone, postage, communication equipment, etc.);
- Office supplies;
- Printing and duplication costs;
- OMB Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 Subpart F Audits
- Other direct costs; and
- Indirect costs.

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

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

Application Deadline Date: Thursday, June 7, 2018

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

**D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures**

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

**How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov**

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

**How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov**

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

**Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues**

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

Grants.gov Customer Support  
Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

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

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

**Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission**

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.

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

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

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 "Applicant FAQs" 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. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**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.

**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:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.
- 2. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:** A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 3. 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.

**4. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

**5. Multiplier Effect/Impact and Follow-on Activities:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages, providing reporting on measuring increases in student mobility over time as a result of capacity building sub-awards. Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

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

**7. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:** 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. Proposals 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 Guidance 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 Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov) website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>  
<https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

**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). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#). SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system, which is replacing GrantSolutions.gov, and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). For assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Help Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for US callers) or through the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home>. 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 [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

- 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](mailto:FFATAECA@state.gov). This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's [USA Spending.gov](http://USA Spending.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 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: **Tara Barancik**, Program Officer, U.S. Department of State, **Office of Global Educational Programs U.S. Study Abroad Branch, ECA/A/S/Q, SA-5, 4-AA14**, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, **Phone (202) 632-9483, Fax (202) 632-6489, Email: [BarancikT@state.gov](mailto:BarancikT@state.gov).**

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 above.

Marie Royce  
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

April 25, 2018