



Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2024 Global Media Makers

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010291

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.415

Deadline for Applications: May 6, 2024

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the FY2024 Global Media Makers (GMM) program. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct a professional development program for film and television content creators from participating countries to enhance their skills and to support local creative economies. This program, like other ECA film program models, seeks to elevate influential voices that are building resilient civil societies by using film and television content to address critical local issues including, but not limited to, the climate crisis, democratic governance, freedom of expression, pluralism, tolerance, women's and youth empowerment.

The FY 2024 GMM program will connect up to 50 mid-career film and television professionals ("Fellows") with professionals ("Mentors") from the U.S. entertainment industry who will facilitate behind-the-scenes access, bolster Fellows' technical skills and creative content development, and build the foundations for lasting professional networks. Fellows will travel to the United States for a four-to-six-week residency, which will take place primarily in Los Angeles (L.A.), to work on projects with a team of mentors to receive state-of-the-art-training and industry access to support conceptual development of independent, authentic, and compelling content for distribution in the Fellows' home countries.

Following the residency, 15-20 mentors will travel for seven-to-10 days to a select number of the Fellows' home countries, when possible, for continued creative consultation and engagement. Both Mentors and Fellows will mutually benefit from the extended creative and professional development, which will promote critical thinking and dialogue, leading to greater creative and entrepreneurial connections.

Additionally, GMM will support current Fellows and other GMM alumni through professional development opportunities such as microgrants, mentor meetings, industry screenings, and workshops, expanding the GMM network through cross-regional alumni summits.

Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

GMM will also engage with film festivals and industry platforms both overseas and in the United States to further the goals of the program.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Authority

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

A.2. Purpose

The U.S. Department of State's Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA proposes a professional mentoring program with leading U.S. entertainment film and television professionals ("Mentors") to enhance the capacity and creative reach of film and television professionals ("Fellows") from select countries. The program also seeks to support local creative economies and wider creative professional networks.

The GMM program seeks to elevate creative voices, crucial to building strong civil societies, by utilizing film and television to amplify issues such as, but not limited to, freedom of expression, pluralism, tolerance, women's and youth empowerment. With an L.A.-based residency and additional follow-on engagement activities, GMM seeks to create a holistic creative and professional experience through a robust exchange of ideas and training by utilizing, when relevant and required, both in-person and virtual approaches. This program will provide Fellows with creative and technical support needed to develop story concepts and works-in-progress through specially tailored mentorships, masterclasses, workshops, and other enhancement opportunities. GMM will provide substantial creative, technical, and business insight for Fellows and includes ongoing counsel and support by Mentors after Fellows return to

their home countries. Additionally, GMM will provide opportunities for alumni support and engagement.

For proposal planning purposes and GMM continuity, the program can include new participants and program alumni from countries worldwide. The Bureau reserves the right to modify the target regions and/or countries from the program based on Department priorities and other considerations.

The goals and outcomes of GMM are to: (1) enable participants to more effectively harness the power of visual storytelling to explore the critical issues confronting their communities; (2) connect participants with a range of U.S. creative, business, and technical leaders through mentorships and other engagement opportunities; (3) help visual storytellers acquire the necessary skills, enabling them to create compelling content for multi-media platforms; (4) establish professional networks by linking participants with each other and with professional leaders in the U.S. entertainment industry; (5) develop business skills and connections necessary to secure film financing and increase market distribution; (6) expose filmmakers to community-based organizations that either provide media-focused training for youth and underserved populations or use film as a tool to promote critical thinking and mutual understanding; (7) showcase films and episodic content and to organize industry panel discussions to promote the exchange of ideas and to create a professional dialogue; (8) continue to support GMM alumni and professional network building; (9) and help support the development of the local creative economy.

A.3. Program Specific Guidelines

Residency Program: The GMM residency will be the core programmatic activity. It will primarily take place in L.A. with possible activities taking place in other areas of the United States with a significant film and television industry presence. The applicant will design a mentoring and hands-on training program that takes full advantage of the talent range, technical skills, and business expertise found throughout the entertainment industry in L.A., from individual experts, and from small, niche companies to independent studios, mid-sized production companies, and larger entertainment studios and streaming platforms.

The applicant will need extensive expertise regarding the on-ground realities of international production and distribution in select countries to match Fellows with Mentors and to design training that can be transferable and relatable.

The applicant should provide facilities that are accessible, well-maintained, safe, and conducive to the creative needs of the Fellows.

Fellows will be in L.A. together at the same time, creating an opportunity to build a community of socially engaged filmmakers and content creators who will maintain connections once they

return home. To this end, the program design should allow for a common workspace or hub where filmmakers can congregate each day to work on their projects or hold meetings and consultations with experts.

The residency should begin with an orientation session, either in-person or virtually, to outline various points, including, but not limited to, residency expectations, cultural sensitivities to be aware of, rules of decorum, and safety guidelines and practices.

Approximately 12 to 18 mid-career Fellows from six to eight countries will participate in a residency program that will refine storytelling techniques, to include new technologies, establish professional networks, and expand business skills by offering training in development, financing, distribution, and promotion.

Qualified Fellows will be mid-career filmmakers between approximately 21 to 45 years of age and will be required to come to GMM with a project in development, preferably, but not required, one that is already supported by film, television, and other media partners. Fellows will have a proven track record of having written, directed, or produced content in their home countries. The projects in development should explore civil society themes in an organic, compelling way. Projects could include documentary films, narrative features, and episodic content in any genre. Fellows will outline goals at the outset of the program, including production and distribution plans for their projects, upon completion of the residency.

Ideally, the program will invite multiple participants from a single country, with each participant bringing different but complementary creative skills. Fellows also have the option to partner as a creative team, no more than two people, working on a project together. Multiple Fellows from one country will ideally amplify the creative exchange experience and increase potential for a transfer of skills.

The Mentor and Fellow matching process will be critical, and each participant and/or team may have different needs. Once Fellows are identified, the applicant will ensure that Mentors possess the relevant skills and experience to meet each Fellow's needs and interests. Additionally, Mentors and Fellows will work together to develop a project plan during the residency, as well as an action plan for the Fellow to implement once they return home.

Program design will allow Fellows to take full advantage of the range of professional expertise in the U.S. Fellows will be paired with a team of creative, business, and technical Mentors in the film and television entertainment industry. Mentors will represent a spectrum of expertise from the creative, financial, and technical sides of storytelling. Mentors will be carefully matched to offer Fellows a broad range of individualized and close-up professional experiences such as, but not limited to, access to pitch sessions, writers' rooms, production lots, editing bays, sound mixing studios, production budget meetings, costume and set design, and

marketing and distribution planning. Through diverse access and relationship-building with multiple Mentors, Fellows will experience the many different stages of creative development, production, and distribution. This range of expertise will allow Fellows to refine skill sets and learn new ways to connect with audiences, especially younger audiences who access stories on a range of platforms. Mentors should represent a wide range of expertise from independent film and digital media to larger film and television productions, including, but not limited to, writing, directing, producing, editing, cinematography, audience engagement, physical production, film financing, and distribution. Fellows can connect with Mentors in-person and through virtual sessions.

The applicant will be expected to identify, and recruit established U.S. film and television professionals to serve as Mentors, as well as technical experts to create unique, tailored activities and present workshops for Fellows. The applicant will match Mentors with Fellow's and/or creative team's needs, according to their needs. Some Mentor engagements may be longer and more substantial than others. Proposals should also include letters of intent and/or commitment from established individual film and television professionals and/or U.S.-entertainment and media companies that would be willing to mentor participants.

Applicants must identify U.S. and foreign partners with whom they are proposing to collaborate. Proposals should contain letters of commitment or support from any prospective partners. Applicants should clearly outline and describe the roles and responsibilities of all partners in terms of project logistics, management, and oversight.

Residency activities will also include additional networking opportunities and enhancement activities to take advantage of the educational, cultural, and professional opportunities in L.A. For example, each week Fellows could attend seminars on funding, marketing and distribution, film festivals or television markets, pitch sessions, and/or discussions with established filmmakers, television writers, and other professionals.

As an important part of the cultural exchange aspect of GMM, Fellows should also have the opportunity to observe and engage with U.S. non-profit community-based groups who use film, television, and online content to enhance understanding and raise awareness of social issues. Participants should receive an understanding of these advocacy techniques to civil society groups upon return to their home countries.

Upon program completion, Fellows should have exposure to leading practices for creating and developing engaging film, television, and/or episodic content. GMM seeks to enable Fellows to develop, shape, and amplify their compelling creative content for their local markets and beyond. All Fellows will maintain full editorial and creative control of their projects.

The L.A. residency will conclude with a closing session with the Fellows, Mentors, and other participating industry leaders discussing and summarizing core successes of the residency and areas where collaboration and skill sharing need to continue. The Fellows will share and receive feedback on action plans for developing their projects once they return home and establish specific ways for continued engagement with the Mentor networks. Similarly, Fellows will discuss how they plan to share the skills they have acquired with emerging filmmakers and local creative communities in their home countries.

After the L.A. residency, the applicant will propose ways Fellows and Mentors will maintain contact and how GMM will support alumni.

GMM Fellows and Overseas Participants: Individuals accepted to be part of the L.A. residency will be known as “Fellows”. Fellows will be mid-career film, television, and online content creators, specifically who are writers, directors, and producers. “Filmmaking” should be interpreted broadly to include – but not be limited to – storytelling across traditional and digital media platforms and to include the fields of writing, producing, and directing film, television, and streamed content.

Prior to being accepted into the L.A. residency, individuals will be known as “candidates.” Candidates applying for the L.A. residency must have an established track record within their respective media markets, submit work for review, submit professional letters of support, and come with works in progress that incorporate a creative narrative that explores issues and themes of local importance.

Candidates should outline their production and distribution plans for proposed works in progress and how their content will facilitate and contribute to dialogue within their home communities. Candidates should state their intended goals for participation and outline areas of support and training needed. Candidates should identify general challenges filmmakers face in local markets, and how participation in the GMM residency can address these challenges.

Multiple Fellows can come from one country, with each Fellow potentially bringing a different but complementary creative skillset from writing, directing, and producing. Candidates can submit applications independently or as creative teams of no more than two individuals.

All Candidates applying for the L.A. residency must be proficient in written and spoken English. Additionally, all participants should be approximately between the ages of 21 to 45.

Apart from the L.A. residency, other follow-on programs will take place. Individuals participating in these follow-on programs will be known as “overseas participants”. Application requirements for overseas participants in follow-on programs are more flexible, in comparison to those for the L.A. residency program, in areas such as level of filmmaking experience, age,

and English proficiency. Application flexibilities can be determined by the award recipient for each overseas program.

Applicant proposals should include a description of the recruitment and merit-based application and selection processes for both Fellows and overseas participants. Participant recruitment for GMM programs should primarily be a nomination-based process, with participation from relevant U.S. Embassies, Consulates, GMM alumni, and other industry partners. Selection of all Fellows and overseas participants will be done in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates.

Additional Activities: Following the L.A. residency, U.S. Mentors can reconnect with Fellows either through in-person activities in their home countries or virtually. For each visit Mentors will work with Fellows on their projects and lead discussions, workshops, masterclasses, and other activities for local audiences and emerging filmmakers.

In their proposals, the applicant should include additional follow-on activity ideas to further connections between Mentors, Fellows, and alumni. For example, the applicant could propose a microgrant program for the Fellows to enable continued support of their work and professional development.

GMM can also support participants in addition to the L.A. residency. In their proposal, applicants should outline ideas for additional activities, which can include, but are not limited to, attending film festivals, industry platforms, creative labs, both in-person and virtual screenings, and activities that support local creative economies. Selection of these participants will also be done in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates. These activities can be in-person and/or virtual.

In consultation with ECA, GMM can support in-person and/or virtual film screenings and discussions, in association with posts, that further professional development and showcase stories that elevate creative voices, crucial to building strong civil societies. Films can be directed/produced by both U.S. and international filmmakers.

Communications and Program Materials: The production and publication of print and online program materials should be designed and arranged in collaboration with ECA and the relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Relevant materials should include those to advertise and promote the program (both in the U.S. and overseas), orientation materials, mentoring guidelines, and materials for activities conducted in the participants' home countries. Materials and website designs must be approved by ECA prior to publication and/or distribution (allowing ECA a minimum of three weeks for this review process).

The applicant must coordinate all public announcements regarding GMM (including press releases, website updates, media notes, blog entries, etc.) with ECA's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications (PASC). Printed materials and websites must prominently display the U.S. flag, the U.S. Department of State seal, and the GMM logo. All official documents and materials developed for promotional purposes must use the GMM logo and acknowledge the U.S. Department of State's role as the program's sponsor. All materials and website resources paid for by funding through the cooperative agreement will become the property of the U.S. Department of State. Please refer to **D.12.Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients** in the **D. Application and Submission Information** below for further information.

Program Tracking: The applicant should create and provide ECA with a living document, such as a Google or Airtable document, to communicate and track all L.A. residency components, follow-on programs, and other related GMM activities. This document should provide program details, such as, but not limited to, dates, progress, status, and outcomes.

A.4. Recipient Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Design a responsive program for participants to include individual mentoring, workshops/labs/masterclasses, and follow-on activities to meet individual and group needs. The program will take place primarily in L.A., when possible, include program activities in other parts of the U.S.
2. Design additional program activities that will contribute and support local creative economies. Activities could include, but are not limited to, equipment grants, masterclasses, mentoring, networking, other micro-grants, workshops, and virtual engagements.
3. Develop a timeline and design an inclusive selection process for participants. Obtain ECA approval of the selection process.
4. Identify qualified and established partner organizations overseas to identify and nominate applicants to GMM, in consultation with ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates.
5. Conduct a comprehensive selection process of up to 50 foreign participants from eligible countries for the L.A. residency and other GMM engagements and programs. Fellows will be mid-career writers, directors, and producers between the ages of approximately 21-45, and will come to GMM with a project in development. These projects should explore policy priorities and issues of local importance such as the climate crisis, DEIA issues, freedom of expression, human rights, pluralism, rule of law, strengthening civil society, women's empowerment, and youth empowerment. Projects could include documentary films, narrative features, and/or episodic content in all genres.

6. Conduct a comprehensive selection process for GMM Mentors for the L.A. residency who will represent a spectrum of expertise from the creative, business, and technical sides of storytelling. Once Fellows are identified, the applicant will ensure that Mentors possess the relevant skills and experience to meet individual Fellow's needs and interests. U.S. participants should represent the full range of diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, culture, race, and disability.
7. Support robust engagement with the wider private sector to expand networking opportunities and possible partnerships.
8. Conduct a pre-residency orientation to discuss issues such as, but not limited to, program expectations, housing and travel logistics, safety and security, local cultural awareness, professional standards, and codes of conduct.
9. Provide cultural outreach activities during the residency to take full advantage of the educational, cultural, and professional opportunities in U.S.
10. Provide opportunities during U.S.-based program activities for Fellows to engage with local community groups or schools that work with film.
11. Maintain liaison with ECA and program participants to ensure the program schedule is compatible with needs and objectives.
12. Identify approximately 15-20 Mentors who will travel for overseas GMM engagements and programs.
13. Arrange for all Fellows and Mentor travel, immunizations, and other pre-travel preparations. Purchase round-trip international travel (complying with the Fly America Act) for the participants. The applicant is responsible for making travel and housing arrangements for all of the participants in the United States and overseas.
14. Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program, issue health benefits identifications cards, and provide instructions on host claim forms. More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>.
15. Provide Mentors with background and assessment briefs that outline the entertainment and media landscapes for participating countries and the on-ground realities and challenges participants face in different media environments.
16. Organize and hold a one-to-two-day closing-session after the conclusion of the residency for all the GMM Fellows and Mentors to discuss the program and summarize core successes and areas where collaboration and skills sharing needs to continue. Fellows will develop plans for how they will share information and lead educational and capacity building activities with emerging filmmakers in their home countries.
17. Provide ECA with regular program highlights and summaries during and after the residency and other GMM programs.
18. Provide ECA with an ongoing document to track program plans, status, and updates.

19. Ensure that foreign participants are nominated and vetted by overseas U.S. Embassies and Consulates. All foreign participants should be at least 21 years of age and must travel to the United States on J-1 visas. (Please see separate section for J-1 visa requirements.) Like U.S. participants, foreign participants should represent the full range of diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, culture, race, and disability.
20. Work closely with ECA and U.S. Embassies and Consulates to develop programs that provide follow-on engagement and further professional development of international participants. Determine the program length in consultation with ECA and U.S. Embassies and Consulates.
21. Propose film titles for GMM in-person and/or virtual screenings. All film titles should be approved by ECA and relevant U.S. Embassies.
22. Continue to support GMM alumni through means such as, but not limited to, micro-grants, professional engagement opportunities, alumni film screenings in the U.S. and/or other regions.
23. Develop a robust program evaluation to measure the short-term and long-term effects of the program, including, but not limited to, trip reports, program highlights, blog posts, social media, local press, photographs, and by any other means or metrics.
24. Develop a comprehensive media and public relations strategy that includes outreach to international and U.S. media. The applicant will incorporate social media and other online platforms into the outreach strategy. All final public relations strategies will be developed in consultation with and approved by ECA.
25. Ensure that both the credit language, the U.S. flag, and the Department of State Seal are used on all print and web materials related to the cooperative agreement. Please see Communications guidance in this solicitation for more information.

A.5. Substantial Involvement:

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring, as follows:

ECA Responsibilities

- a. Identify and approve all participating countries.
- b. Share GMM opportunities with U.S. Missions.
- c. Advise on the outreach and selection of Fellows and Mentors.
- d. Approve the final selection of Fellows and Mentors,
- e. Approve additional GMM participants for other activities.
- f. Approve all micro grants.
- g. Approve film selection for GMM screenings.

U.S. Mission Responsibilities

- a. Identify local partner organizations to nominate candidates, according to the nomination procedure guidelines provided by the applicant,
- b. Nominate candidates to participate in a U.S. based four-to-six-week mentoring program and follow-on activities.
- c. Identify local partners and sites for workshops, master classes, screenings, discussions, and other in-country activities.
- d. Advise on in-country travel and logistics, as well as on safety and security protocols.
- e. Participate in the final participant selection process.
- f. Arrange pre-departure orientation and post program debrief with Fellows.
- g. Arrange any relevant in-country media and press engagements for the Fellows and Mentors.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A.5. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2024

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,550,000, pending the availability of funds

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$1,550,000, pending the availability of funds

Minimum "Floor" of Award: \$1,550,000, pending the availability of funds

Maximum "Ceiling" of Award: \$1,550,000, pending the availability of funds

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2024

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 21, 2026

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

The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

U.S. public and private academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons, and other not-for-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements

The following additional eligibility requirements apply to this NOFO announcement:

- 1.) ECA's grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in ECA funding. ECA anticipates making cooperative agreement, in an amount of \$1,550,000 to support all 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.
- 2.) All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), and the PSI; non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- 3.) In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3. & D.5. for more information.
- 4.) Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

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 PSI document.

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing required for this competition. However, ECA 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 may be reduced in like proportion.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

D.1. Solicitation Package Location

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the ECA's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

D.2. Content and Form of Submission

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the PSI document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.16. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3. Unique Entity Identifier Number

All organizations are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. ***Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications. A UEI is issued as part of the required SAM.gov registration below in section D.5.***

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

D.4. Required Proposal Elements

All proposals must contain a SF-424, executive summary, proposal narrative, budget (SF 424A), detailed budget, and budget narrative.

D.5. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM)

All organizations 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. ***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.*** Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

All federal award recipients must maintain a current registration 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 is completed on any issued award. 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.

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>

Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

D.6. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly, FAPIIS)

- 1.) The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);
- 2.) An applicant, at its option, may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. Currently, federal agencies create integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov;
- 3.) The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

D.7. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic

All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S.

Department of State award recipient 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 Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories 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://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

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

D.8. Adherence To All Regulations Governing the J Visa

ECA places critically important emphasis 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.

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

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

Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation
U.S. Department of State
SA-5, Floor C2, Room C2L13
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20522

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.9. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to ECA's authorizing legislation, "diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, age,

disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, geographic location, education, income, socio-economic status, and other diversity dimensions, that may hinder inclusion. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. 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. Please refer to the "Support of DEIA" review criterion of this document for more information on how this will be reviewed as a part of any application. Please also refer to the "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility" section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating DEIA into the 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," ECA "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.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Distinct from grants or cooperative agreement monitoring and participant monitoring, performance monitoring is designed to assess progress against a program's goals and objectives. A performance monitoring framework is vital to tracking the direction, pace, and magnitude of change that result from ECA programs.

ECA created the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework to measure the performance of ECA programs. **The MODE Framework provides standard indicators and corresponding survey questions to ensure consistent measures across all ECA programs.** More resources and guidance documents on the MODE Framework are available online at:

<https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and>.

For this proposal, ECA requires the applicant include the MODE Framework objectives and indicators listed below (note that, because not all MODE objectives and indicators are relevant for a program, the numbering below will not be sequential). In addition to the ECA-required objectives and indicators, applicants may also select additional MODE Framework indicators (see the Indicator Book on the MODE Framework website), or design custom objectives and indicators that are specific to the proposed program and this proposal.

- Demographic Questions as outlined in the Indicator Book on page vi, and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) (<https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and>)
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
 - Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
 - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their program experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
 - E1.1.04: Percent of participants with more favorable opinions of the United States Government (core indicator)
 - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program (core indicator)
 - E1.1.10: Percent of foreign participants who traveled to the United States for the first time during their program (core indicator)
 - E1.1.12: Percent of foreign participants indicating a change in understanding of third-party countries' cultures and values
 - E1.1.17: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the American people (core indicator)
 - E1.1.18: Percent of foreign participants indicating an increase in understanding of United States culture and values (core indicator)
- Objective 2: Increase the impact that participants and alumni have on their communities/countries
 - Sub-Objective 2.2: Foster participants' belief that civic engagement benefits communities/countries
 - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country (core indicator)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
 - E3.0.02: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of Americans (core indicator)
 - E3.0.04: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of third country nationals
 - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant (core indicator)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries

- E4.0.01: Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation
 - E4.0.05: Percent of participants who report an increase in technical skills as a result of their program participation
 - o Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
 - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core indicator)
 - E4.1.02: Total number of program cohorts (core indicator)
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
 - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core indicator)

Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs)

ECA recommends the use of a PMP to serve as the primary reference document for performance monitoring for this award. If used, the PMP is an important part of any proposal, as it outlines how the applicant plans to track progress towards the proposed program's goals and objectives through indicators and corresponding data collection questions. A PMP document that includes all MODE Framework indicators is a part of this solicitation's attachments. Specific instructions on how to modify the PMP to be responsive to this solicitation are included in that document. While ECA recommends the applicant use the PMP format provided, this is not a requirement. If a PMP is not included in the proposal, applicants should provide similar information to that found in the suggested PMP format, in a presentation of your choice. A training on how to complete a PMP is available here: <https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and>. Successful PMPs (or similar documentation) should include the following:

- Objectives. Programmatic objectives are statements of the condition(s) that state what the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART; see the ECA Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Innovation (MELI) Unit's pages on the ECA website for more information: <https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-evaluation-division/capacity-building>). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the MODE Framework, the Functional Bureau Strategy (<https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau>), or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives.
- Indicators. Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives and sub-objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations (meaning, breakdowns of the data by subgroups, such as gender or country; the PMP lists the

demographic questions required to obtain the information necessary to report the disaggregations). Each indicator should also include a target number to be achieved. A target is a planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe.

- If you do not use the PMP format provided, note that any performance monitoring reference document the applicant submits should include the information in the column headers (Indicator Name, Definition, Target, Survey Question, etc.) in the PMP attachment at a minimum.
- In addition to those indicators outlined in above, the applicant may propose additional custom, program-specific indicators in the PMP (ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each custom programmatic objective).
- During the period of performance of the award, the ECA program office may further revise, add, or remove indicators. Therefore, the applicant's PMP and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established.

Award recipients are responsible for collecting indicator data only on participant outcomes during the period of performance of the award itself (see the PMP for guidelines as to when these data collection efforts should occur). ECA will measure outcomes of ECA participants at one, three, five, and 10 years after the exchange has ended to capture the long-term impact of ECA programming unless otherwise specified in the NOFO and/or POGI. In this instance, the recipient will be responsible for coordinating with ECA on any alumni surveys to de-duplicate questions and minimize potential survey fatigue.

Award recipients will be required to submit an upload of the raw data (in CSV format) along with the State Assistance Management System Domestic (SAMS-D RPM) reporting (see below). Regardless of the survey platform used, **all** MODE Framework survey questions outlined above are **required** (i.e., should be forced response); please see the Consent Language in the MODE Framework Indicator Book for more information on how to convey this to participants/survey respondents.

Program Performance M&E Narrative

The applicant should include information within the program narrative section(s) of the proposal that outlines how the applicant intends to measure the indicators listed above. This will be separate from the PMP and should include but not be limited to:

- An overview of resources available to the applicant that outline the team structure and responsibilities surrounding performance monitoring.
- The mechanism(s) through which surveys and other data collection tools (if applicable) will be administered, including which platform will be used, and when and how surveys will be advertised to participants – detailing strategies to ensure adequate survey

response rates

(https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/eca_eval_division_survey_response_rates.pdf), and to reduce selection and non-response bias.

- A brief explanation of data analysis and reporting procedures.
- An overview of a proposed learning plan and feedback loops to ensure that the Grant Officer (GO)/Grant Officer Representative (GOR) are informed on performance monitoring issues at regular intervals.

SAMS-D RPM Reporting Requirements

The SAMS-D is a database solution that serves as the official system of record for all U.S. Department of State and ECA awards. The Results Performance Monitoring (RPM) module within SAMS-D is an extension module that enables users to report performance monitoring data in the same system where they currently manage federal assistance actions. As part of ECA's efforts to streamline data collection and management, the recipient(s) of this award will be required to input performance reporting data outlined in this solicitation into the SAMS-D RPM. The data stored in the SAMS-D RPM will provide ECA with a bureau-wide, uniform M&E reporting tool that is already linked with other elements of the awards familiar to existing awardees.

D.11. Virtual Exchange Component

When changing political, health, environmental, or other similar circumstances require a suspension or halt of in-person activities and where ECA determines that a virtual alternative is appropriate and viable, award recipients should demonstrate the ability and capacity to transition from in-person to virtual exchanges. Proposals should demonstrate the organization's capacity to provide innovative options for virtual activities to substitute for in-person engagement for program participants. Organizations should consider how they will implement virtual exchange activities, given the potential limits to internet access from participants in some locations and while continuing to advance foreign policy objectives and achieve lasting benefits for U.S. citizens and international participants.

In addition to planning for virtual exchange activities if in-person programming is prohibited, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage virtual programming technologies during or in addition to in-person programming. ECA 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) 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. 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.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients

All ECA 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. 13. Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial

ECA is excited to play a key role in making the Semiquincentennial – commonly known as “America250” – a truly global celebration. As the period of performance for this award is scheduled to cover part or all of calendar year (CY) 2026, the applicant may wish to consider ways the program can celebrate America250. Any America250 focused activities or plans will be subject to ECA approval and direction, and changes may be requested by ECA. Use of any ECA-provided America250 brand elements will be subject to advance ECA approval and require adherence to Department of State and ECA guidelines for such branding.

D.14. Budget Format

Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed \$1,550,00. There must be a summary budget, a detailed budget, and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.14.a. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) International and domestic airfares, visas, transit costs, ground transportation costs and airline baggage, and seat fees. Please note that all air travel must comply with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in ECA-sponsored programs.
- 2) Per Diem. For U.S.-based programming, organizations should refer to the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.
- 3) ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates for overseas activities can be accessed at https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.
- 4) Housing in the United States. The applicant will be responsible for providing clean, safe, and reasonably located housing for the Fellows during their stay in the United States.
- 5) Transportation. The applicant will be responsible for providing methods of transportation for Fellows during their stay in the United States.
- 6) Pre-planning trips to participating countries to assess media landscape and/or outreach for approximately five to 10 days. The applicant will be responsible for travel and in-country costs such as hotel and per diem. Costs for interpreters/translators may also be included in the budget.

- 7) Orientation Costs. The applicant will provide informational materials about GMM and the logistics involved in traveling to the United States. This information will be used by U.S. Embassies and Consulates to conduct pre-departure orientations for the GMM participants in each country. The applicant will conduct a comprehensive orientation for all of the GMM participants upon their arrival in the United States.
- 8) Closing Session Costs. The applicant will be responsible for organizing and paying for a closing session at the end of the residency for Fellows and Mentors.
- 9) Accident and Sickness Coverage. The GMM participants will be covered under the terms of a U.S. Department of State-sponsored healthcare coverage. Please see section E. Healthcare Coverage of the PSI document for more information. The Bureau's coverage may cover medical costs, such as, but not limited to, vaccinations and medications as necessary when traveling overseas.
- 10) Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria amount for consultants and Mentors can be up to \$300. These honoraria amount limit can be higher to accommodate special circumstances. However, ECA review and approval will be needed in those special circumstances.
- 11) Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective applicant and the subcontractor should be included in the proposal. Subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.
- 12) Room Rental. Room rental rates will need to be reviewed and approved by ECA.
- 13) Materials Development. Proposals should contain costs to purchase, develop, and print brochures, and other promotional materials.
- 14) Engagement and Follow-On Activities. Proposals should contain costs for engagement and follow-on activities such as, but not limited to, alumni summits and retreats, film screenings, micro grants, networking dinners, tickets to cultural activities, including film festivals, and other relevant events.
- 15) Wire Transfer Fees. When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to partner organizations overseas. Applicants are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.
- 16) In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with visa interviews or DS-2019 pick-up.
- 17) Costs involved in GMM overseas follow-on programming (approximately five-to-10-day trips) in GMM participating countries, including accommodations, visas, and other travel costs.

Please refer to the PSI for additional budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.15. Key Personnel

ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not

provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>).

D.16. Application Deadline and Method of Submission

Application Deadline Date: Monday, May 6, 2024

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.17. 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>).

D.17.a. 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>

D.17.b. 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>

D.17.c. 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

D.17.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 11:59 p.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 the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system and will be found 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, 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. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet 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. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if

your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

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.18. Intergovernmental Review of Applications

Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Review Process

ECA will check that all proposals meet the technical requirements in this solicitation. Proposals that do not meet the guidelines, including those under the eligibility section above or in the PSI, will be ineligible for further review.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office before being reviewed by an ECA grant panel and may be reviewed by Public Diplomacy sections overseas, State Department regional bureaus, or other State Department offices, as appropriate. All reviewers, including the ECA grant panels will review any eligible proposals based on the criteria below.

Recommended proposals will be reviewed for compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and assessed for risk. Final funding decisions are made by the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Only an ECA Grant Officer has the final authority to issue assistance awards.

E.2. Review Criteria

An ECA grants panel will competitively evaluate all technically eligible applications 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, Program planning, and Ability to Achieve Program**

Objectives: Proposals should be original, well-defined, and relevant to ECA's mission. Proposals should have a detailed agenda and work plan that demonstrates your institution's ability to carry out the program. The plan should follow the program guidelines described in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate how your institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible.

2.) **Support of DEIA:** Proposals should show how the program and your institution supports ECA's policy on diversity. Proposals should have a clear DEIA plan that is integrated into

all aspects of program administration, design, content, and implementation. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will enhance the program's goals, objectives, and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEIA plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEIA.

- 3.) **Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs and responsible fiscal management. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients, including the timely submission of reports, and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- 4.) **Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity after the ECA supported program ends, ensuring that programs are not isolated events.
- 5.) **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Proposals should have a fully developed M&E plan that includes goals, objectives, and indicators. The plan should be feasible and aligned with the M&E section of this solicitation. Proposals should include a realistic learning plan that outlines how your organization plans to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices. All submitted M&E plans will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided at least the required information outlined in the M&E section of this solicitation and demonstrated the applicant's capacity to carry out the M&E plan.
- 6.) **Cost-effectiveness and Cost Share:** Proposals should keep the overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost share through other private sector support and 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 ECA procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the ECA's Grants Division. 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 as identified in the application.

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

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

Terms and Conditions applicable to all ECA agreements include:

- 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.
- U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

For a copy of the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, or to review other Department of State assistance information, please download from:

<https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>

F.3. Region and Topic Specific requirements

The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3a. Iran Programming

A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact the Cultural Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges – Catherine Collins at (202) 632-9301 or collinacs@state.gov for additional information.

F.3.b. Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza Programming

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact the Cultural Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges – Catherine Collins at (202) 632-9301 or collinscs@state.gov for additional information.

F.3.c. Special Provision For Performance In A Designated Combat Area And Future Contingency Operations (Currently Iraq And Afghanistan)

Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over \$150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment. The DOS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number." The following information shall be provided:

Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:

- 1.) Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
- 2.) Total Number Host Country Personnel:
- 3.) Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, Recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

F.4. Reporting Requirements

Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. All reports must be submitted in a timely manner. For planning purposes, applicants can expect to provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the cooperative agreement/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](#).

- 2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 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.

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 120 days after the expiration or termination of the award.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to ECA in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information.)

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

F.5. 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 ECA 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 workdays prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about this announcement, contact: Catherine Collins, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/CU, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-9301 (tel); (202) 632-9355 (fax); collinscs@state.gov

All correspondence with ECA 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, ECA 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 ECA representative. Explanatory information provided by ECA that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards will be subject to periodic programmatic and financial reporting and evaluation requirements as outlined in the NOFO.

Scott Weinhold
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

March 5, 2024