



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 J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI) Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010288

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.415

Deadline for Applications: May 7, 2024

Executive Summary: The Global Leaders Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposal submissions for one cooperative agreement to design, administer, and implement the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI) Program.

The JCSVEI will strengthen engagement between young people in the Middle East and North Africa (NEA) region and in the United States as a lasting tribute to the legacy of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens. The JCSVEI will use various virtual exchange formats, technology, and online tools to facilitate exchange programs that address the themes of: Civic Engagement; Empowering Women and Girls; Climate Change and Sustainability; Language Learning and Practice; and Digital Literacy Skill Development. By using a wide range of virtual exchange formats, the program should reach approximately 10,000 participants each year. The JCSVEI will also include an Alumni Leadership Academy, and other follow-on alumni engagement activities.

Organizations applying for this federal award are required to identify up to 12 subawards to implement virtual exchange programs as part of the JCSVEI. The award recipient must demonstrate capacity to manage up to 12 subawards and will be responsible for all subaward oversight.

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](https://www.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.

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

Established in 2015, the JCSVEI was inspired by the meaningful international exchange experiences that Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens had as a young man. Ambassador Stevens was known for his uncommon goodwill towards others. Always gracious, fascinated by other cultures, and constantly asking questions, he engaged in open and respectful dialogue with everyone he met.

The JCSVEI aims to make international exchange experiences available to individuals in the Middle East and North Africa and the United States through programs that connect people virtually in sustained and meaningful ways. The program will also include a substantial Alumni Leadership Academy program that will offer a multi-month learning experience and in-person programming for alumni of the JCSVEI virtual programs.

The JCSVEI supports the following broad goals:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between people from the Middle East and North Africa region and the United States.
2. Provide opportunities for participants to collaborate, and share ideas, approaches, and strategies to develop solutions to pressing local and global challenges.
3. Equip people with the tools they need to communicate and collaborate in a digital environment.
4. Enhance leadership and professional skills for both non-U.S. and American participants to encourage positive change in their communities.

A.3. Program Specific Guidelines

The proposal should integrate the program goals into all aspects of the program design and implementation. The proposal should demonstrate any regional and thematic expertise and detail the applicant's and subrecipients' ability to implement virtual exchange in a variety of

settings. 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.

The recipient will be responsible for managing and supporting all virtual, and domestic and international, activities and serve as the primary program contact for involved U.S. embassies. Award recipients must work closely with involved U.S. embassies to seek approval of local partners, recruitment, other in-country program activities, and the selection of alumni for the Alumni Leadership Academy.

A.3a Participating Countries

Activities must be conducted in the United States and in one or more of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

ECA reserves the right to modify the list of participating countries under the FY 2024 cooperative agreement.

A.3b Participants

Participants in the JCSVEI must be young people from the United States, or from one of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

A.3c Program Themes

Applicants should propose a portfolio of virtual exchange programming that addresses a minimum of three of the outlined themes:

- Civic Engagement;
- Empowering Women and Girls;
- Climate Change and Sustainability;
- Language Learning and Practice; and,
- Digital Literacy Skill Development;

A.3d Overview of Key Program Components

All proposals should contain detailed information related to the following key program components:

Subaward Selection – The applicant must identify up to 12 partner organizations as subawards to implement virtual exchange programs under the JCSVEI. The proposal must include the process used to select the subaward organizations and the reason for their inclusion. Selection of subaward implementing partners must highlight diverse regions and participant backgrounds. The applicant’s proposal must contain letters of commitment and support from any subaward organizations with which the applicant plans to work. Prior to the issuance of the award, the applicant will be required to share detailed information about each subaward organization and a description of the subaward’s proposed exchange programs. The selected subaward organizations’ proposed exchanges must address one or more of the above outlined programmatic themes.

Subaward Management and Oversight – The applicant will be responsible for oversight of all aspects of the subawards under the JCSVEI. Proposals should demonstrate experience in managing multiple subawards and articulate a detailed program management plan. Applicants must clearly outline and describe the roles and responsibilities of all partner organizations in terms of project logistics, management, and oversight.

Alumni Leadership Academy – The award recipient will be responsible for developing and implementing a robust Alumni Leadership Academy. The Alumni Leadership Academy should be a multi-month hybrid experience that includes at least one, and up to two, in-person components. The Alumni Leadership Academy should serve approximately 40 JCSVEI alumni a year. The Alumni Leadership Academy should build on themes and skills developed under the JCSVEI and offer participants opportunities for deeper learning and engagement. Clear learning and engagement goals for the Alumni Leadership Academy should be articulated in the proposal. The proposal should also include a grants component, to enable participants to implement projects upon completion of their Alumni Leadership Academy. The recipient may propose one or two Alumni Leadership Academy cohorts a year. Each cohort should have an approximately equal number of alumni from the United States, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Program Promotion and Outreach – The recipient will develop and manage a program website, create informational documents, and develop and manage official program social media accounts. The recipient will work closely with ECA and U.S. embassies abroad to disburse this information as necessary.

Alumni Engagement – Proposals should include plans to create and maintain an engaged network of alumni outside of the Alumni Leadership Academy. The network should advance the goals and interests of the JCSVEI and the Department of State’s public diplomacy objectives. Applicants should incorporate ECA alumni initiatives into their plans and communications for alumni programming, including, but not limited to, the online community on the International Exchange Alumni website (exchangealumni.gov) and other exchange alumni opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State such as small grants and professional development seminars. It is important that all alumni programs continue to strengthen a sense of identity with the U.S. government, as such, the applicants should follow ECA communications guidance for crediting the U.S. Department of State.

A.3e Projected Timeline

The cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2024. The award period will be approximately 28 months in duration. The exact dates of each exchange project will not be determined until a proposed project is officially approved. Applicant organizations should include a proposed timeline in their proposal.

A.3f Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

The proposal must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the success of the program as the activities unfold, at the end of the program, and once select participants return to their home communities. The award recipient should develop a set of outcomes that can be tied to the JCSVEI goals and address plans to administer post-program survey to JCSVEI participants. ECA requests that the proposal provides a description of the methodology linking outcomes to program objectives. These performance monitoring tools should complement ECA’s MODE activities, not duplicate them. The plan should address indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding, substantive knowledge, and the program’s significance for communities in the United States and overseas. Collected data should be included in regular reporting and provided to ECA upon request.

A.3g Participant Tracking and Database Management

The proposal must provide a clear plan for participant tracking, database management, and providing data points to ECA and Posts in participating countries. All statistical information gathered and compiled by award recipient should be transferable to the database maintained at ECA. The recipient may be asked to provide regular data submissions, via electronic upload or data transfer, to an ECA database, or to enter data directly into an ECA provided spreadsheet and/or platform. Data fields should include but are not limited to the following: first name; middle name; last name; gender; date of birth; country of citizenship; country of residence;

participant type; field of study/research topic; home/host institution or affiliation; program category; fiscal and calendar year of participation; and the location where the exchange takes place. The recipient will be expected to meet all statistical requirements including the submission of all grantee data for the Bureau's annual statistical report. The award recipient must maintain and regularly update a participant database, always ensuring the protection of personally identifiable information, and provide participant data to ECA in the form requested by ECA, which may include, but is not limited to using ECA-provided spreadsheets and ECA-designed databases.

A.4. Recipient Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Promote mutual understanding and partnerships between participants in the United States and participants in the NEA.
2. Identify and properly vet U.S. or NEA-based subaward organizations to implement virtual exchange programs as part of the JCSVEI. The partner organizations and their proposals should represent a diversity of region, participant backgrounds, themes and formats.
3. Create program guidelines and other relevant materials for subaward partners. Materials must acknowledge it as a program of ECA of the U.S. Department of State.
4. Seek approval from ECA and NEA-based U.S. embassies for the recruitment of participants or in-country partners.
5. Provide ECA with all subaward agreements and amendments, and ensure all subaward agreements are ratified before starting work on the subaward.
6. Provide ECA with subaward reports and outside evaluator reports.
7. Monitor the performance of subawards. Conduct regular assessments.
8. Create program guidelines, Terms & Conditions, and other relevant materials for participants.
9. Monitor the success and engagement of participants throughout their JCSVEI virtual exchange. Conduct regular assessments.
10. Develop and support a well-articulated plan to help ensure the safety and well-being of participants throughout the duration of the program.
11. Promptly inform and consult with ECA and involved U.S. embassies about any program or participant problems, emergencies, or other issues as well as the progress of necessary action.
12. For in-person exchanges and conferences, coordinate with ECA and/or NEA-based U.S. embassies on timing, location, topics, speakers, and travel arrangements (if applicable).
13. For in-person exchanges, work with the Program Office to issue participant DS-2019 forms. All international participants will travel on the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor program.
14. Enroll in-person participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program, issue health benefits identifications

cards, and assist with claims as necessary. More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>.

15. Conduct group pre-departure orientations prior to any international travel.
16. Provide pre-departure orientation materials to the applicable U.S. embassies to conduct orientations for participants before departing their home countries and/or supplement the orientations conducted by the award recipient.
17. Arrange all appropriate program-related travel to/from and within the United States for in-person participants.
18. Organize and implement, in consultation with ECA, a media and marketing strategy that will amplify the program in the United States and overseas. Plans can include, but are not limited to, program branding, press strategy, press/media packets, program website and social media plans. The Recipient will work closely with U.S. embassy Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) staff members to ensure that foreign audiences are aware of JCSVEI recruitment opportunities and successes.
19. Craft a comprehensive outreach strategy that fully utilizes online and social media platforms to highlight participant and alumnae achievements, collaborative projects, and new initiatives. This includes collecting, updating, and making available for consumption by the public and Department representatives the narrative stories, anecdotes, and any quantifiable data that illustrate the significance and multiplier effect of JCSVEI both overseas and in the United States.
20. Develop and implement an Alumni Leadership Academy that builds on themes and skills developed under the JCSVEI and offers participants opportunities for deeper learning and engagement.
21. Develop and implement a grants program designed to assist JCSVEI alumni in the implementation of their action plans/follow-on projects.
22. Engage broader JCSVEI alumni. Increase the number of alumni and alumni activities.
23. Conduct performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that incorporates the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework.
24. Provide ECA with formal written agreements for all outside funding sources.
25. Participate in regular program reviews with ECA (in person or by telephone) to assess program implementation and identify matters of concern. The award recipient should report programmatic, financial, and statistical information to ECA including brief monthly email updates outlining general programmatic activities conducted during the past month and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted the following month.
26. Provide a detailed staffing plan including the names, titles, and portfolio breakdown of all staff who will work on JCSVEI. Any changes to staffing plans and/or key personnel must be submitted to ECA for approval.
27. Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from ECA.
28. Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement with ECA, including, but not limited to, submitting timely financial and program reports and proper budget oversight.

A.5. Substantial Involvement:

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

1. Collaborate on selection of partner organizations, including in-country subaward recipients, and any changes in partners made.
2. Collaborate on amendments and renewals for subawards of the JCSVEI.
3. Review and approve, in advance, all travel paid for using ECA funds.
4. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout the duration of the program and assist as needed with participant emergencies.
5. Approve all outside funding sources supporting the JCSVEI.

A.6. What to Include in Your Proposal

Proposals should consist of five main electronic files in addition to the required SF-424 forms:

1. an executive summary
2. a proposal narrative
3. a budget
4. a budget narrative
5. attachments

Note: All of the documents described below that can be submitted as attachments should be submitted in one document labelled "Attachments" as opposed to submitting multiple individual attachment documents.

1. *Executive Summary* – The Executive Summary should be one page in length and include: the program name (the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative), the themes under which the proposal is being submitted, the countries proposed to be involved in the program, the goals of the program, the names of all subaward recipient organizations responsible for program implementation, the numbers of participants (both non-U.S. and American), and the number and approximate dates of proposed exchanges.
2. *Proposal Narrative* – In 20, double-spaced pages, the proposal narrative should address all items specifically referenced in this NOFO, in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), and those items noted below:
 - a. Program Goals, Objectives, Anticipated Outcomes: Proposals should include a clear, succinct statement of program goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes that expand upon the JCSVEI goals. Objectives should be described in specific, measurable, and realistic terms that are achievable within the scope of the program, both in terms of time and funding.

- b. Background information on the applicant organization including the mission, the date of establishment, relevant expertise, past programmatic work, and ongoing programmatic work should be described. Previous awards from ECA since 2014 should be listed by office (Citizen Exchanges, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges, etc.), project name, countries involved, year of the federal award, and dollar amount of the award. Proposals should describe previous collaboration with proposed subaward organizations, as well as clearly delineate a division of responsibilities between all organizations that will be involved in the project.
3. *Budget* – For more budget information, please see further below at the section entitled, “Allowable Costs”, as well as the PSI.
4. *Budget Narrative* – Proposals must include a detailed budget narrative.
5. *Attachments* – The items below and any other program materials should be included in a document labelled “Attachments”:
 - a. Letters of commitment and/or letters of support from proposed subaward organizations;
 - b. Resumes of proposed key staff at the applicant organization and all partner organizations that will be involved in the implementation of the program;
 - c. Suggested programmatic timeline; and,
 - d. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)-related documents as outlined in Section D.10.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

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

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2024

Approximate Total Funding: \$6,000,000 pending the availability of funds

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Approximate Average Award: \$6,000,000, pending the availability of funds

Minimum “Floor” of Award: \$6,000,000, pending the availability of funds

Maximum “Ceiling” of Award: \$6,000,000, pending the availability of funds

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2024, pending the availability of funds

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 30, 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, participant numbers, themes, format, and/or countries based on program needs and the availability of funding.

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 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 demonstrate at least four years of experience in conducting international exchanges to be eligible for awards exceeding \$130,000 in ECA funding. As noted in section B above, ECA anticipates issuing one grant/cooperative agreement, for approximately \$6,000,000. Therefore, organizations that do not demonstrate four years of experience in conducting international exchanges in your proposal are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- 2.) All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO 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 Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov> or from ECA website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding>.

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
 - E1.1.16: Percent of virtual exchange (VE) participants who report VE as their only likely way to interact with citizens from other countries in the future
 - 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)
 - E1.1.19: Percent of participants agreeing with statements in support of democratic 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)
 - E3.0.07: 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
 - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of their program participation
 - E4.0.14: Percent of participants reporting new digital skills/competencies gained from virtual exchange (VE) programming
 - 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)
- E4.1.15: Number of participants in virtual exchange (VE) programs
- 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.

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.

In all communication materials the program must be referred to as the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative, or the JCSVEI.

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 detailed, line item budget for the entire program and a budget narrative.

For additional budget guidelines and formatting instructions, please refer to the PSI.

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

- Staff salaries and benefits. Each staff person must be listed separately. Provide the percentage of time spent on the program.
- Other direct expenses
- Indirect costs
- Subawards
- Curriculum Development
- In-person Alumni Leadership Academy event costs including, but not limited to, honoraria for speakers, educational materials, lodging, room rental(s), welcome and farewell events, and participant admissions
- Participant travel costs including, but not limited to, round trip international airfare, visa travel, ground transportation, domestic travel, and other transit costs
- Per participant allowances for travel including baggage allowance, travel allowance, and meals and incidentals
- Alumni Programming/follow-on activities, including grants, etc.
- Tax withholding
- Wire transfer fees
- Consultant fees
- Web hosting
- Communications (i.e., participant cell phones or sim cards, internet access fees)
- Recruitment, outreach, and program materials
- Medical expenses
- Medical costs related to pandemics/ public health emergencies, including but not limited to, testing and medically required quarantine (outside of medical facilities covered under ASPE)
- Covid protection

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Reasonable accommodations
- Other cost categories as necessary

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete 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: Tuesday, May 7, 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 PDSs 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, guidelines, and assessed for risk. Final funding decisions are made by the ECA's Assistant Secretary. 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. **Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, direct linkage to the goals of the JCSVEI program, and relevance to the Bureau'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 a realistic and achievable scope that fits within the budgetary and time parameters set forth in this NOFO. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how program objectives and key program elements will be achieved through programmatic activities.

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 Track Record:** Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results. Proposals should include (1) the institution's mission and date of establishment; (2) detailed information about proposed subawards including a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities; (3) an outline of prior awards, or U.S. government and/or private support received, for similar programs; and (4) descriptions and resumes of key staff who will implement the program. The proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
4. **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.
5. **Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:** The overhead 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 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.3.a. 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 Melissa Kirschner, U.S. Department of State, Global Leaders Division, (ECA/PE/C/GL/EV), at kirschnerm@state.gov or Dawnjalice Brown, U.S. Department of State, Global Leaders Division, (ECA/PE/C/GL/EV) at brownd4@state.gov.

F.3.b. 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 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 monitoring and 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: Melissa Kirschner, U.S. Department of State, Global Leaders Division, (ECA/PE/C/GL/EV), at kirschnerm@state.gov or Dawnjalice Brown, U.S. Department of State, Global Leaders Division, (ECA/PE/C/GL/EV) at brownd4@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