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 American Music Mentorship Program (AMMP)
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010308
Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.415
Deadline for Applications: May 29, 2024

Executive Summary:
The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces the American Music Mentorship Program (AMMP) open competition for one cooperative agreement to support a mentorship residency for music industry professionals from around the world. AMMP is a two-to-three-week U.S.-based mentorship residency for approximately 20 mid-career music industry professionals ("mentees") from three to five countries. AMMP is ECA's Global Music Diplomacy Initiative's (GMDI) mentorship program, first announced by U.S. Secretary of State Blinken in September 2023 in response to the PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act. The program seeks to bolster music ecosystems, which play a vital role in fostering diverse and inclusive societies, championing innovation, protecting free expression, promoting economic opportunity, and contributing to the vitality of a civil society. AMMP is facilitated by a partnership between ECA and a private sector partner. With ECA input, the private sector partner will lead the recruitment and selection process and secure American professionals from its membership to serve as "mentors," who will volunteer their time. Mentors will be available four days during the in-person program and meet virtually monthly with the mentees for up to a year following the residency. Mentors will provide behind-the-scenes access, bolster the mentees' technical skills and build the foundations for lasting professional networks.

Mentees will represent careers that support creative talent and build the music industry infrastructure in their home countries and demonstrate English language proficiency. Mentees will be recruited and selected in cooperation with participating U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Areas of specialization, or "professional tracks," will be determined each year between the ECA and the private sector partner in cooperation with the award recipient and in line with needs of the participating countries. Mentees will be paired with mentors in the U.S. music industry who are in the same professional track and who bolster mentee's professional skills and build networks.

Mentees will travel to the United States for a two-to-three-week residency, which will take place in a site(s) that have a music industry presence and/or access to individual experts, from small/niche companies, independent labels, mid-sized companies, and larger industry businesses. During the residency, mentees work with expert workshop facilitators and mentors to receive state-of-the-art-training and industry access. Mentees will participate in professional workshops, small and full group forums, cross-industry collaborations, site visits, and develop post-program action plans. Program activities will provide opportunities for professional networking, career planning, and skills-building that create a holistic professional experience through a robust exchange of ideas and training by utilizing in-person and virtual approaches. Mentors and mentees will meet virtually monthly for approximately one year to develop mentee career plans and ensure sustainable effects of the program. Some of these sessions may occur prior to the in-person residency, but the majority should take place after the mentees have returned to their home countries. The recipient will coordinate and track the virtual component throughout the course of the year-long mentorship.

The recipient must manage complex logistics, meet strict timelines, manage the needs of private sector partners and mentors, and promote the program through media and social media and develop a plan to share progress, status, updates and outcomes of program components with relevant stakeholders.

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.

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
Cultural diplomacy enhances cross-cultural understanding and opens new avenues of dialogue and collaboration between individuals and nations. The Cultural Programs Division (ECA/PE/C/CU) in the Office of Citizen Exchanges conducts global cultural exchanges with

diverse artists and arts experts designed to **engage** communities at home and abroad; **educate** and share cultural and professional expertise; and **elevate** voices of emerging and established cultural leaders to build inclusive professional and social networks that position the United States as a partner for peace and prosperity. The goals of AMMP are to:

- Foster mutual understanding and deepen trust between the people of the United States and abroad to counter negative stereotypes and advance safety and security;
- Advance and complement U.S. foreign policy objectives;
- Build the capacity of creative leaders and institutions to develop new skills, partnerships, and opportunities, which promote creative industries and entrepreneurship;
- Advance America's global competitiveness and create networks and opportunities for artists and institutions that endure beyond the program duration;
- Provide unique opportunities for artistic collaboration and engagement between American artists, foreign artists, and audiences;
- Convey the diversity and high artistic merit of the arts in the United States;
- Increase awareness and understanding of U.S. art, culture, values, and society among international participants and audiences;
- Foster opportunities for educational outreach and community engagement with diverse and underserved communities, especially youth (ages 12-25), women, and persons with disabilities.
- Support and increase opportunities for diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility (DEIA).

A.3. Program Specific Guidelines
The applicant will propose a mentoring and hands-on training program that takes full advantage of the talent range, technical skills, and business expertise found throughout the U.S. music industry, from individual experts to independent labels and non-profits, to small and mid-sized companies, to larger organizations. This program will provide mentees with professional and technical support needed to develop their professional skills through specially tailored peer mentorships, expert fora, workshops, and other engagement opportunities. AMMP will provide substantial professional and technical insight for mentees and includes ongoing counsel and support by mentors and industry experts after mentees return to their home countries.

In-Person Residency and Virtual Sessions: AMMP includes a two-to-three week in-person residency and monthly virtual mentoring sessions for up to a year. The residency site location will be determined by ECA and the private sector partner with input from the award recipient and may include more than one location depending on the needs of the mentees and mentors. For the purposes of this proposal, applicants should consider Los Angeles as the sole residency

location. The applicant may make suggestions for other city selection(s), but the final determination will be made by ECA and the private sector partner and will focus on locations in which the private sector partner has a robust existing presence in order to minimize mentor travel and maximize opportunities for professional site visits.

The in-person residency will be developed in consultation with ECA/PE/C/CU and the private sector partner to ensure program objectives are met, and should:

- allow for full group and small group interactions to encourage a community of cross-sector industry professionals,
- allow for a common workspace or hub where professionals can congregate each day to work or hold meetings and consultations with experts.
- offer peer mentoring and hands-on training that takes full advantage of the professional range, technical skills, and business expertise found throughout the music industry.
- include facilitators to lead workshops and discussions and create activities that provide additional networking opportunities and enhancement activities that take advantage of the educational, cultural, and professional opportunities found in the host city. Facilitators will complement the expertise of the mentors and address the needs of the mentees.
- include a reverse mentorship component in which mentees share knowledge and expertise about the music industry in their home countries with mentors and other U.S. music industry experts.
- include other virtual components designed by the applicant.

To ensure sustainable effects of the program, the in-person residency will be complemented by virtual sessions between the mentee and mentor. The proposal should include plans for facilitating the mentee-mentor relationship virtually through monthly meetings for approximately one year in the lead-up to and following the in-person exchange. Plans should include facilitating virtual meetings, logistics, tracking, and assessment as well as regular check-ins with mentors and mentees in order to ensure AMMP is on track to meet the goals of the program.

The program should begin with an orientation session for mentors and mentees that addresses, but is not limited to, program expectations, going over mentor and mentee guidelines, cultural sensitivities, rules of conduct, and safety guidelines. The applicant should consider a virtual pre-departure orientation for mentees to prepare them for the program and travel to the United States.

The program should also include a closing session with the mentees, 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 mentees should share and receive feedback on action plans that establish specific ways for continued engagement with the mentor networks during the yearlong virtual sessions. Similarly, mentees will discuss how they plan to share the skills they have acquired with emerging music industry professionals and local creative communities in their home countries and regions. The applicant should propose plans for a closing ceremony which will bring together mentors and mentees as well as other stakeholders to celebrate the success of the program. The closing ceremony may include an award presentation and/or other activities.

Participant Profile: Applicants should propose a selection and recruitment process for mentees in coordination with U.S. Embassies and Consulates. The process should be informed by a needs assessment of local and regional music industries in the countries selected by the State Department. The needs assessment should be conducted by the recipient in coordination with ECA and the private sector partner and the participating U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Mentors will be led by the private sector partner. Mentors and mentees will align with the selected areas of specialization/professional tracks, which may include, but are not limited to: audio professionals (producers, engineers, mixers); artist and repertoire (A & R); talent scouts and executives; publishers and Performing Rights Organization (PRO) representatives; management and artist development; agents and presenters (festival promoters); lawyers and intellectual property rights/licensing experts; and public relations specialists.

Mentees will be mid-career music industry professionals between approximately 21 to 45 years of age and will be required to come to AMMP with a professional goal or professional challenge. Mentees will have a proven track record of professional experience in their home countries. Mentees will outline goals at the outset of the program that will help to tailor their AMMP experience. Ideally, AMMP will invite multiple participants from a single country, with each participant bringing different but complementary professional skills. Mentees also have the option to partner as a professional team, no more than two people. Multiple mentees from one country will amplify the professional exchange experience, increase potential for a transfer of skills, and facilitate further collaboration in participants' home countries upon return from the exchange, deepening the reach of AMMP.

Selection Process for Mentees and Mentor:
The proposal should include a description of how the applicant recommends conducting the recruitment, review, and selection of mentees. The selection process should be informed by country/regional music industry needs assessment conducted by the recipient and support the professional tracks identified. Applicants should design a mentee nomination process that incorporates U.S. Embassies and Consulates' recommendations and approval. This process will require working closely with U.S. Embassies, ECA, and the private sector partner. The recipient will draft justifications recommending mentees for ECA's final determination and selection.

While the private sector partner will take the lead in recruiting and selecting American mentors, the recipient should help ensure that mentors represent the full geographic, social, and cultural diversity within the United States. The mentors will represent a spectrum of expertise from the music industry and participate four days onsite at the residency location(s) and participate in a year of monthly virtual sessions in the lead up to and following the in-person exchange. Proposals should describe how the recipient will coordinate with the private sector partner to share mentee profiles and other details to assist the private sector partner in recruiting appropriate mentors for the mentees. The matches will be based on the interests, skills, and experience of the mentees and mentors. Mentees and mentors should be matched at least two months prior to the program opening and mentor commitments confirmed at least three months in advance. Mentors will extend their involvement through monthly virtual mentorship sessions with mentees for one year, which may commence before the in-person exchange. Proposals should also describe how the recipient will make logistical arrangements for mentors, such as potential travel, scheduling, and virtual engagements pre- and post- AMMP.

The mentor and mentee matching process will be critical, and the applicant should demonstrate an aptitude and strategy for conducting it in coordination with the private sector partner that prepares all participants for success.

Staffing and Facilitating the Program
The applicant should propose a sample schedule and staffing plan. Proposals should include suggestions for U.S.-based individuals or organizations to staff the program. Proposed staff should demonstrate the applicant's network of professional contacts and describe the roles and responsibilities of all staff, facilitators, or collaborators in terms of project logistics, management, and oversight. Applicants will recommend and recruit staff to coordinate and lead the program as well as music industry technical experts to facilitate workshops. Like the mentees, staff and facilitators should be mid-career professionals, creating a peer-to-peer relationship with mentees. The applicant should outline in the proposal how staff and facilitators will be recruited.

Communications and Program Materials: The production and publication of print and online program materials should be designed and developed in collaboration with ECA, the relevant U.S. Embassies and Consulates, and, as needed, the private sector partner. Relevant materials (digital and print) may include promotional (for use in the United States and abroad) and programmatic materials (such as program books, orientation or mentoring guidelines). Materials and website designs must be approved by ECA, and where relevant the private sector partner, 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 AMMP (including press releases, website updates, etc.) with ECA's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic

Communications (PASC). Printed materials and websites must adhere to the guidelines referred to in **D.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients** in the **D. Application and Submission Information**.

A.4. Recipient Responsibilities
The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:
1. In consultation with ECA, the recipient is expected to design, plan, implement, a two to three-week U.S.-based mentorship program; facilitate and coordinate yearlong virtual mentoring sessions between the mentee and mentor, and provide timely reporting of progress to ECA, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.

2. Designate a **project manager(s)** to oversee exchange activities and all the corresponding projects, coordinate logistical and administrative arrangements, ensure all of the interests of the various stakeholders are represented, serve as a primary point of contact for ECA, and initiate, facilitate, manage, and monitor communications between all the parties involved in the program. The project manager(s) should coordinate and host meetings with ECA and the private sector partner to review progress, finalize decisions, and establish next steps. The project manager(s) should maintain regular communication with the ECA program officer via meetings and emails to update on program details and obtain input and approvals.

3. Work with the U.S. Department of State and the private sector partner to design, implement and manage AMMP program activities. Design a responsive program for mentees to include individual or small group mentoring, workshops/labs/masterclasses, and follow-on activities to meet individual and group needs. Provide opportunities and/or cultural excursions during U.S.-based program activities for mentees to engage with local community groups or schools that work with music.

4. Implement mentorship exchange activities: Coordinate logistical and administrative arrangements and day-to-day monitoring of 20 international participants, including international and domestic travel, ground transportation, lodging, medical treatment (if needed), the disbursement of per-diem funds, and any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may arise.

5. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend/honorarium disbursements to the participants and sub-award relationships with any sub-recipients.

6. Develop and manage an orientation and closing session for mentees and mentors as described above that may include representatives from the U.S. Department of State and the private sector partner.

7. Coordinate communications with mentees, mentors, U.S. State Department, the private sector partner, and any other relevant stakeholders.

8. Develop a detailed timeline for the program.

9. Identify facilities that are accessible, well-maintained, safe, and conducive to the professional needs of the participants for in-person activities.

10. Design an inclusive and comprehensive selection process for 20 mentees from selected countries for the AMMP residency in close collaboration with the State Department. Obtain ECA approval of the selection process. Provide the private sector partner with mentee profiles or other relevant information to assist the private sector partner with recruitment and selection of mentors from their membership. The recipient will ensure that mentors possess the relevant skills and experience to meet individual mentees' needs and interests. U.S. participants should represent the full range of diversity in terms of 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.

11. Design and conduct a mentor/mentee matching process. Strategically match mentees with American mentors at least two months in advance of program implementation while facilitating and supporting the relationship through, but not limited to, the following: a. Interviews and selection; b. Virtual introductions and orientations for international participants; c. Provision of program materials for pre, mid, and post activities; d. A mentor orientation; e. Briefing and clarification of expectations for mentees and mentors.

12. Conduct a pre-residency orientation with the mentees to discuss issues such as, but not limited to, program expectations, housing and travel logistics, safety and security, cultural sensitivity, local cultural awareness, and professional standards and codes of conduct.

13. Work with mentors, mentees, staff, and facilitators on program expectations and matches.

14. Coordinate with mentors, mentees, staff, and facilitators on logistical/technical needs during the mentoring assignments.

15. Provide mentors with background and assessment briefs that outline the music industry landscapes for participating countries and the on-ground realities and challenges participants face in different environments.

16. Manage and arrange all travel, immunizations, and other pre-travel preparations associated with the program for mentees, program leaders, and workshop facilitators. Every effort should be made to minimize the need for mentor travel to maximize opportunities for professional site visits. Mentor travel will be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

17. Provide U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy staff with program materials and logistical information in advance of pre-departure orientation.

18. Assist with enrolling participants in ECA's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). More information on ASPE is available at https://www.sevencorners.com/gov/usdos

19. Provide day-to-day monitoring of the program to prevent and/or manage any issues or complications that may arise.

20. Conduct a post-program survey of the mentors and the mentees after the end of the in –person and virtual program components in line with ECA's program performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guidelines (see Section D.10.).

21. Provide ECA with regular program highlights and summaries during and after the residency and virtual programs.

22. Ensure that foreign mentees are nominated and vetted by overseas U.S. Embassies and Consulates. All foreign mentees should be between 21 –45 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. Refer to section D.9 for DEIA statement.

23. Develop a comprehensive media and public relations strategy that includes outreach to international and U.S. media, incorporating social media and other online platforms. 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.

24. 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.

25. Produce and manage content for social media and website platforms, ensuring that all content is accurate and current. Follow ECA guidance for digital content.

A.5. Substantial Involvement:
In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring, as follows:
1. Identify countries from which the international participants will be selected and provide contact information at posts and facilitate communications.
2. Collaborate with the award recipient to develop appropriate workflow processes to ensure effective communication between the Department of State and the private sector partner.
3. Participate in the selection process and approve the final mentees.
4. Collaborate with the recipient on the outreach and selection of mentors and host organizations and facilitation of relationship with the private sector partner
5. Approve residency site.
6. Assist in arrangements for the orientation and opening activities as well as closing sessions and debriefing sessions.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A.5. Substantial Involvement.
Fiscal Year Funds: 2024
Approximate Total Funding: $702,000, pending the availability of funds
Approximate Number of Awards: 1
Approximate Average Award: $702,000, pending the availability of funds
Minimum "Floor" of Award: $702,000, pending the availability of funds
Maximum "Ceiling" of Award: $702,000, pending the availability of funds
Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2024, pending the availability of funds.
Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 31, 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 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 cooperative agreement, for approximately $702,000. 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 Proposal Submission Instructions (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 Proposal Submission Instructions (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 Proposal Submission Instruction (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. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.*** 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 MyGrants
All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's MyGrants by accessing https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com and clicking the "create an account" link. MyGrants 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 MyGrants 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/.

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
    - o 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
- E1.1.16: 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)
    - E3.0.04: 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)
  - Sub-Objective 3.1: Alumni subscribe to platforms for resources and information-sharing
    - E3.1.02: Percent of participants who learned about new resources
    - E3.1.05: Percent of participants who are connected to ECA through a U.S. Department of State-managed platform

- 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
- E4.0.05: 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.

- o 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.
- o 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).
- o 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 MyGrants 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.

MyGrants RPM Reporting Requirements
MyGrants 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 MyGrants 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 MyGrants RPM. The data stored in the MyGrants 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
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 outcomes 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 detailed, line-item budget for the entire program and a budget narrative. Budget requests may not exceed $702,000, pending the availability of funds. Applicants should 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. ECA reminds the applicant that all proposed costs must be reasonable, applicable, and allocable. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the budget and participant numbers based on the needs of the program and the availability of U.S. Government funding.
2. Cover the cost of and arrange for all international and domestic travel (complying with the Fly America Act) and lodging for U.S. and foreign participants, including travel for visa interviews when necessary, transit costs, ground transportation costs, airline baggage, and seat fees. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in ECA-sponsored programs.
3. 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
4. Accident and Sickness Coverage. Enroll participants in a health insurance plan for the period of the exchange. Participants can be enrolled in ECA's ASPE with no charge to the cooperative agreement. Alternatively, you may use your own plan if it offers the same or better coverage- and costs no more than $50 per person per month; premiums may be included in the agreement request. Please see section E. Healthcare Coverage of the Proposal Submission Instructions (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.
5. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend/honorarium disbursements to the participants and management of sub-award relationships with partner organizations. There must be a summary budget, as well as breakdowns reflecting both non-participant and participant support budgets. The applicant may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Project manager(s) should go through budgets to actuals spending with the ECA program officer on a quarterly basis or as needed upon ECA's request.
6. All budget guidelines must be followed. The budget should indicate any cost sharing in the form of in-kind or cash contributions to the program from sources other than the Department of State. See the PSI in the Solicitation Package for information on cost sharing and the cost of audits.

7. Please be sure to include a Summary and Detailed Budget on a separate page before the line-item budget. Following the line-item budget, please include a Budget Narrative that concisely explains how costs were calculated and the rationale for including them in the budget.
8. Housing in the United States. The award recipient will be responsible for providing clean, safe, and reasonably located housing for the mentees, and as needed for the program leaders, workshop facilitators, mentors, and recipient organization staff, during their stay in the host city/cities. Hotel stays should not exceed government per diem rates for lodging.
9. Transportation. The award recipient will be responsible for providing methods of transportation for all non-local participants during their stay in the host city/cities.
10. Orientation Costs. The award recipient will provide mentees informational materials about AMMP and the logistics involved in traveling to the United States. This information will be included in virtual pre-departure orientations for the AMMP participants led by the applicant in coordination with the Department of State. The award recipient will also conduct a comprehensive orientation for all of the AMMP participants upon their arrival in the United States.
11. Closing Session Costs. The award recipient will be responsible for organizing and paying for a closing session at the end of the residency for mentees and mentors.
12. Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria amount for consultants 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. NOTE: The mentors are selected by the private sector partner and are providing their services pro-bono with the expectation of only four days onsite during the residency and virtual mentoring session.
13. 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.
14. Venue/Conference Room Rental. Venue and room rental rates will need to be reviewed and approved by ECA.
15. Sound Equipment, Videography, and Photography. Rates will need to be reviewed and approved by ECA.
16. Materials Development. Proposals should contain costs to purchase, develop, and print brochures, and other promotional materials.
17. The proposed budget should include but not be limited to the following program expenses:
    a. Maximum limits on cooperative agreement funding for specific expenses are as follows (if costs for these expenses exceed these limits, organizations are encouraged to cost share any rates that exceed the amounts listed below:
       - books and educational materials allowance-$100 per Mentee
       - consultant/interpreters/program leaders/workshop

facilitators/escorts/performers fees and honoraria-$300/day
- o cultural allowance -$150/participant
- o stipend for mentees should be between $500-$1500, unless applicant is able to cost-share this expense to exceed $1500. The stipend is inclusive of all virtual components of the program.
- o per diem-standard government rates for mentees. Mentors are volunteering their time, but if any mentors are required to travel for AMMP to the residency sites or opening/closing sessions, they should receive government per diem rates and lodging. Refer to the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities, which can be found at http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates.
- o Performance monitoring and evaluation costs up to 3% of the cooperative agreement beyond what is described in Section D.10 Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

b. Domestic and international travel for mentees, domestic travel for staff, and (if needed) domestic travel for workshop facilitators and mentors. Mentor travel should be minimized. Travel expenses should include transit costs if applicable, (American carriers or code-share airlines must be used for overseas travel whenever possible and adhere to the Fly America Act).

c. Airport taxes and country exit fees.

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: Wednesday, May 29, 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. <u>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.</u>

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

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 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.) **Quality of the program idea/ Program planning/ 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/ 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.) **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:** Proposals should keep the overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate.

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. 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 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 MyGrants.

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 MyGrants, 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.

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

F.4. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with 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: Nora Gordon, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Cultural Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/CU, 202-826-4344, GordonNP@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.

Lee Satterfield   March 15, 2024
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State