English Access Scholarship Program Handbook

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Audience

This is a handbook for the English Access Scholarship Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. It is meant to be a resource for providers of Access programs and their administrative staff and teachers.

Goals

The goals of this handbook are:

- to give an overview of the Access Program;
- to detail the process of applying to host an Access program; and
- to serve as a guide that highlights important scholarship program policies and resources available to Access providers and teachers.

The policies and procedures of the Access Program will be updated in this handbook as needed, and providers will be notified of major changes.

Program Goals

The English Access Scholarship Program (hereafter known as "Access Program" or "Access") is a U.S. Department of State-sponsored program that is managed by the local U.S. Embassy/Consulate and implemented by in-country educational service providers (providers), supporting global English language learning needs and improving English teaching capacity.

The program exposes participants to U.S. culture, global citizenship, and democratic values through English language scholarships, professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators, and programming for alumni. Teaching focuses on critical thinking and student-centered and communicative approaches.

Bright, underserved students, primarily aged 13 to 20, receive a foundation of English language, leadership and professional skills, and exposure to U.S. culture and democratic values, through a two-year, 360-hour program.

Pillars of the Access Program

The program curriculum, both in-class and off-site activities, must integrate the four pillars of the Access Program: Global citizenship themes, U.S. culture and values, 21st-century skills, and English language instruction.

Global Citizenship Themes

Providers must work with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to identify key global citizenship themes, which should be integrated into each program curriculum. While specific themes will vary according to context, common global citizenship themes include DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility), climate action, media literacy, and civic engagement, but may also include sustainable development, human rights, conflict resolution, healthcare access, global economy and trade, environmental stewardship, and education, among others.

U.S. Culture and Values

Understanding U.S. culture and values encompasses appreciating the principles of democracy, equality, freedom of speech, diversity, and respect for cultural differences. Learning about U.S. history, institutions, and societal norms fosters cross-cultural understanding and should be integrated into the Access program curriculum.

21st-century Skills

21st-century skills emphasize critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.

- Critical thinking (analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information through project-based learning)
- Creativity (innovation and imagination)
- Collaboration (cooperation, conflict resolution, and service learning)
- Communication (conveying ideas and information, as well as digital literacy)

In order to navigate complex challenges, embrace innovation, contribute meaningfully to society and develop workforce skills, the Access program curriculum should focus on activities that support the growth of these skills to prepare students for the 21st-century economy.

English Language Instruction

English language instruction should focus on developing effective communication skills in English, in order to express ideas, engage in discussions, and comprehend written and spoken English. Through communicative, student-centered teaching techniques, students should gain skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, fostering the ability to interact confidently in various contexts.

Program Design

When designing an Access program, providers should take into consideration the time needed to recruit and train teachers and to select students for the program prior to beginning instruction. In addition, the purchase of textbooks and supplies will be an important part of program planning. The Access Program requires 360 hours of instruction over a two-year period. Instructional hours may include classroom instruction as well as off-site activities that are cohesive and clearly linked to the curriculum.

Access Teacher Community of Practice (CoP)

It is highly recommended that providers plan for and budget to pay teachers to attend at least two hours per month of teacher professional development through the free Access Teacher Community of Practice (CoP). The Access Teacher CoP is an online resource for teachers to receive professional development focused on model lesson plans as well as webinars with guest speakers on American culture. Each month, the CoP will feature two live webinars, which will scaffold the background knowledge and teaching methodology incorporated in the monthly lesson plans. These webinars will be recorded and posted on the CoP. The resources on the CoP provide support in integrating global citizenship themes and U.S. culture and values into Access instruction. One model to support teacher professional development might include regular watch parties organized by Access providers.

Professional Development

Before Access instruction begins, providers should provide and budget for training for teachers on all four pillars of the Access Program. For example, training on global citizenship themes and U.S. culture and values can be facilitated through webinars on the Access Teacher CoP, while training on TESOL methodology and 21st-century skills may be incorporated through Online Professional English Network (OPEN) courses or in-person trainings organized by the U.S. Embassy's Regional English Language Office. It is recommended that teachers engage in professional development on the CoP throughout the two-year program.

Textbook and Assessment

It is highly recommended that providers connect the lesson plans released monthly on the Access Teacher CoP with their selected textbooks. The provider should identify a textbook that will be used by students and teachers for the proposed program with guidance from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate or Regional English Language Officer (RELO). Textbooks should be designed for an age-appropriate audience and integrate 21st-century skills and global citizenship themes. Instructional materials should feature American English and encourage a communicative approach to language teaching. Online textbooks may be considered as an option.

Providers should identify methods that will be used to assess student progress throughout the program, including the frequency of assessment and method of tracking student learning. Providers are encouraged to move away from standardized assessments and focus on portfolio-based assessment, continuously evaluating progress through a collection of student work samples over time.

Introduction to Access Stakeholders

Many people collaborate to make the Access Program possible. Below is an overview of roles with the program, as well as some main responsibilities. Please note, this is not a complete list of each stakeholder's responsibilities.

In-country Educational Service Provider (Provider)

Providers are the in-country implementers of the Access Program that:

- Collaborate with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to integrate program goals and the four pillars in curriculum and program design.
- Adapt curriculum to meet local program needs.
- Partner with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to select high-quality teachers and appropriate students for the program.
- Hire, monitor, and support professional development needs for Access teachers.
- Deliver instruction and programmatic activities.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate program implementation to ensure high-quality programming.
- Inform U.S. Embassy/Consulate and RELO about significant program developments, challenges, and highlights.
- Complete and submit program reports in a timely manner.

- Maintain program and financial documentation to comply with auditing and U.S. Government regulation.

U.S. Embassy/Consulate

The U.S. Embassy/Consulate is the primary monitor and manager of local Access programs that:

- Selects providers.
- Informs providers of program goals and strategic priorities.
- Serves as the primary point of contact for providers throughout the program.
- Approves proposals, program reports, and expenses.
- Oversees program implementation and financial compliance.
- Visits program sites.

Regional English Language Officer (RELO)

The RELO is a U.S. Department of State Specialist in the field of TESOL who designs and manages regional U.S. Department of State English language programs. RELOs can provide guidance on professional development and be consulted on program design, curriculum, and methodology.

FHI 360

FHI 360 is ECA's global administrative partner organization for the Access Program that:

- Processes and signs service agreements with providers.
- Supports ECA with proposal and program report review.
- Disburses funds to providers.

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

ECA is the program funder that:

- Creates and communicates program guidelines and policies.
- Approves providers, proposals, program reports, and expenses, in consultation with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate and RELO.

Proposal Overview

Providers implement Access programs in close collaboration with the local U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Once selected, all providers must submit proposals that meet program requirements to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate for approval. Providers should read through this handbook and speak with U.S. Embassy/Consulate staff to plan an effective and efficient Access program.

Program Narrative

In the proposal, providers will need to describe specific activities that address global citizenship themes and the other pillars of the Access Program. Providers are required to consult extensively with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate as they complete their proposal and ensure that the proposal reflects all U.S. Embassy/Consulate recommendations. Some sections of the proposal will be pre-populated by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Applicant Organization/Provider

This section of the proposal captures provider contact information, banking details, nonprofit status, financial management experience, and program capacity. Providers will be asked to certify the following information:

- Expenses incurred and payments received for this proposed Access program will be tracked separately from the provider's other activities (including activities for other active Access programs).
- The provider's staff will have different financial duties to prevent one individual from controlling all aspects of financial transactions.
- Staff hours will be tracked and documented throughout the program. If the provider has multiple Access programs active at the same time, they must also describe how staff hours will be tracked and charged to the correct program.
- Providers will be required to have a bank account (or have the ability to open a bank account) that can receive funds from international wires.

- The provider must be a nonprofit organization, registered or licensed as a legal entity in the country where the proposed Access program will be implemented.

Key Information

This section of the proposal requests information about proposed program dates, partner organizations, sites, and staffing.

Program Dates

Providers have a maximum of two months to complete a proposal, and the agreement setup should take a maximum of two months. Proposed agreement and instruction start dates should be set in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate and may already be pre-populated in the proposal. Dates will be finalized based on the final approved proposal and included in the agreement signed by the provider. Providers are encouraged to submit proposals as quickly as possible to facilitate efficient program setup.

Important guidance for program setup:

- All program activity must take place between the Agreement Start Date and the Agreement End Date, including startup and closeout activities.
- Startup activities include student and teacher recruitment and training, and can take two to three months to complete.

Teacher Recruitment
Read more in the Recruiting and Selecting Access Teachers section of this handbook.

Student Recruitment
Read more in the Recruiting and Selecting Access Students section of this handbook.

- Instruction may begin once startup activities are completed, and should begin at the start of the local academic year.
- Providers may organize modest opening and closing ceremonies for the Access Program. Students may be given a certificate signed by a U.S. Embassy/Consulate official at the opening and closing ceremonies. It is the responsibility of the provider to request certificates from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate 30 days before the opening/closing ceremony is scheduled. Ceremonies must occur between the start and end dates of a signed agreement.
- The proposed agreement end date should allow time for closeout activities and final reports.

Partner Organizations

In rare cases, providers will have partner organizations who provide instruction at one or more Access sites. If the Applicant Organization will not be present at the program site but will entrust the implementation of the program to another organization, that organization is considered a partner organization. Partner organizations must be nonprofits, and they should be listed on the proposal. Partner organizations will be held to the same standards and practices as the primary provider and should have written contracts detailing services.

Sites

The provider should follow the guidance from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in the proposal to complete this table with information about the locations, number of participants, and groups/classes.

Staffing

- **Instructors:** The provider should complete this table with proposed instructional staff for the program based on guidance in the proposal request form. It is recommended that each group/class larger than 18 students have one paid assistant teacher in addition to the paid classroom teacher.
- **Administrators:** Access Administrator(s) or Coordinator(s) should have sufficient English proficiency to complete Access reporting documents and have effective program and financial

management skills. Administrative staff must include a Program Coordinator and might also include an Accountant, Administrative Assistant, Finance Manager, Program Director, and/or Office Manager.

Program Implementation

This section of the proposal, about anticipated breakdown of hours, calendar, and/or weekly schedule as well as plans for teacher and student recruitment, should be completed based on guidance provided by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Weekly Access Schedule

- Classes should take place at least two days a week for no more than three hours per session.
- Additional justification in the proposal is needed if the proposed classes exceed three hours per session.
- Providers must submit a detailed schedule of classes so the U.S. Embassy/Consulate can conduct announced and unannounced site visits and have direct contact with families.
- With RELO approval, online instruction can be considered for adult audiences as long as instruction is synchronous and access to appropriate laptops, tablets, and internet data are provided through the program (consult the U.S. Embassy/Consulate point of contact (POC) or RELO for guidance on the maximum number of online hours for the program). Programs for minors are intended to be in person.

Instructional Staff

For support with this section of the proposal, please refer to the teacher recruitment information in the Recruiting and Selecting Access Teachers section of this handbook.

Students and Families

For support with this section of the proposal, please refer to the student recruitment information in the Recruiting and Selecting Access Students section of this handbook.

Program Curriculum

Global Citizenship Themes

Providers should incorporate the global citizenship themes previously identified by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate into the Program Curriculum section of their proposal. Using the themes identified, proposals should include a list of activities that providers will complete to address each topic. For example, if the U.S. Embassy/Consulate has identified climate action as a global citizenship theme, a provider might outline activities related to studying an environmental issue, visiting a local conservation organization, learning more about climate action campaigns in their country, creating projects focused on sustainability or renewable energy, researching youth climate action leaders, or engaging in climate advocacy or action projects.

U.S. Culture and Values

In the proposal, the provider should also outline the aspects of U.S. culture and values that the U.S. Embassy/Consulate previously identified, and list supporting activities that will be incorporated into the program training, curriculum, or activities. For example, a provider might list activities that could include learning about contemporary U.S. culture and how it reflects changes in American society, or researching young people in the U.S. who are making an impact on their communities.

Instruction and Materials

Providers should incorporate additional activities that were identified by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate into their program curriculum. Proposals should also indicate how instruction will reflect 21st-century skills and TESOL methodology. An example project that includes 21st-century skills might be a service learning project that examines a need identified by students in the community and undertakes a project to address that issue. Service learning projects should also reflect the global citizenship themes identified by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Providers should identify methods that will be used to assess student progress throughout the program. The proposal should identify the textbook that will be used by students and teachers and indicate how learning materials that are recommended by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate will be integrated into the program.

Textbook and Assessment

See the Textbook and Assessment information in the Program Design section of this handbook for additional guidance.

Off-site Activities

Off-site activities can occur when integrated into the curriculum. The Program Curriculum section of the proposal should include an explanation of how proposed off-site activities will incorporate the four pillars of the Access Program.

Requirements for Off-site Activities

- The provider must undertake efforts to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all participants in the Access program and address any issues immediately. Anticipated related costs must be included in the proposal.
- Providers must obtain consent forms from students' parents/guardians before students attend any off-site activities.
- Providers must have an emergency action plan for travel and medical emergencies.
- Providers must verify some form of medical/travel insurance for students and teachers for all program activities that occur outside of the city/area of the Access program.
- For every off-site activity, there must be one paid adult chaperone for every 10 Access students.
- Providers should plan for appropriate food, transportation, and accommodation costs for all off-site class activities.

Budget

As part of the proposal, providers will need to submit a budget for the program. A budget narrative is also required for all costs to clearly explain and justify each budget item. Please note that students and their families must not be expected to make any financial contributions to the provider related to their participation in Access, purchase any materials for use during Access, or fund their own transportation to/from classes.

When planning the budget, the provider should ensure that:

- The budget only includes costs exclusively for the Access program.
- Costs are reasonable and allowable (*see list below for unallowable costs*).
- The budget includes costs for program startup (i.e. teacher and student recruitment) and closeout.

The budget has three sections - **Regular Program Activities Costs**, **Other Program Activities Costs**, and **Administration Costs** - with the cost categories below.

Please note, this section is not comprehensive, but highlights some of the most important aspects of the Access proposal budget. There is more detailed information and guidance in the proposal system.

Cost Categories

Salaries and Wages

- Hourly rates paid to administrative staff should be adequate, competitive and reflect the local labor market rate for the position and experience required. The hourly pay rate should also follow the existing salary and wage structure of the provider for a similar position.
- Access teachers should be compensated at a rate that is higher than that of both local private and public language schools.
- Budgeted instructional staff hours should be sufficient to cover all proposed hours for the program and include ongoing professional development on the Access Teacher CoP and pre-program training hours as outlined in the Program Design section of this handbook.

Professional Development
Read more about budgeting for professional development in the Program Design section.

- Compensation for professional development on the Access Teacher CoP and pre-program training hours should be paid at the instructional rate.

Benefits

- The provider may include benefits for instructional and administrative staff if they are reasonable, required by law or based on the provider's established policy. Examples of benefits include pension, leave, insurance, employer paid-taxes, etc.

Books and Instructional Materials

- When calculating the number of textbooks or other books needed, note that all students must receive a new book (not a photocopied version) that remains the student's property throughout the program and after the program. Online textbooks may be considered as an option.
- Additional materials such as textbooks can be purchased at the start of the program for replacement students at 10% of the class size.

Travel

- Transportation costs may be for regular class time and off-site activities.
- Accommodation costs may be included for off-site activities.
- Travel costs may be included for students, teachers, administrative staff, and chaperones.

Food and Beverage

- If necessary, food and beverage items can be included for regular class time and off-site activities.
- For off-site activities, food and beverage may be included for students, teachers, administrative staff, and chaperones.

Other Costs

- *Instructional Technology* should be included in this section and may include costs to purchase or lease instructional laptops, overhead projectors, screens, printers, etc. Justification for the purchase of any instructional technology is required and will be reviewed before the cost is approved.
    - The Provider should budget for student and teacher devices and internet access if planning to purchase online textbooks for the program. These devices should remain the student's property throughout the program and after the program.

- *Miscellaneous Costs* are any remaining costs for the program and administration that do not belong in the other categories. These may include: classroom supplies, shipping costs for books and materials, classroom rental, administrative communications, banking fees, and services such as accounting, etc. The provider should also include travel/medical insurance, which is required for all activities that occur outside of the city/area of the Access program if there is no national insurance coverage.

Currency and Rate

In the proposal, providers will enter the local currency and exchange rate that will be used in the budget. Please note, the exchange rate included in the proposal is for budgeting purposes only. During the program, the exchange rate can be recalculated to account for fluctuation during each reporting period. Providers will be required to use and document a consistent method for calculating a current exchange rate for the duration of the program.

Unallowable Costs

These items should **not** be included in an Access proposal and may **not** be purchased with Access funds:

- Cash gifts and prizes
- Paid performers for non-instructional purposes
- Alcohol
- Any expenses related to the press (i.e. Access funds cannot be used to pay for the travel expenses for a newspaper reporter to attend an activity)
- Business development/fundraising activities (i.e. Access funds cannot be used to generate income for the provider)

Please note, this is not a comprehensive list of all unallowable costs for the program. Providers should contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate with questions about costs while working on the proposal.

Agreement Setup

Once the proposal has been reviewed and approved, the provider will be contacted by FHI 360 to begin the agreement setup process. This process requires the review and/or completion of several setup documents.

Programs are not authorized to begin activities or incur costs until the start date of the final signed service agreement has arrived, and the provider has submitted all requested information.

The service agreement for the Access Program contains the following information:

- Legal name of the Access provider
- The period of performance (start and end dates of the agreement)
- Scope of work
- An approved program budget
- A reporting and payment schedule
- Required Terms and Conditions (2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, State Department and FHI 360 Terms and Conditions)

A signed agreement allows FHI 360 to send program funds to a provider’s bank account.

The provider will complete a template with estimated expenses for the first period of the program, which will determine the first disbursement amount. Funds are sent as advance payments to cover the costs of the program activities planned for the upcoming period.

Agreement Modifications

Ideally, Access programs are implemented according to the timeline, budget, and plan of the approved proposal. However, circumstances may change, and providers might need to modify their agreement through an amendment or budget revision.

An amendment is required if the provider anticipates any of the following items to change during the period of performance:

- The end date of the agreement
- The total award amount
- The scope of work
- The provider name (if the organization's legal name has changed)

Amendment requests must be submitted to and approved first by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate and/or RELO, and ECA, at least 30 to 60 days before the agreement end date. Once signed by both the provider and U.S. Embassy/Consulate, the amendment is in effect.

A budget revision must be processed if a provider needs to transfer funds between budget line items by a cumulative amount that is 10% or more of the total agreement award amount.

Program Termination

In rare situations, the U.S. Embassy/Consulate or provider can decide that an Access program should not continue and the program agreement will be terminated.

There are two types of terminations:

- **Termination for Cause:** The provider is failing to meet the terms and conditions of the signed agreement. Possible "cause" may include falsification of records, poor accounting practices, failure to account for funds accurately, misuse of funds, etc.
- **Termination by Mutual Consent:** The provider may ask for the agreement to be terminated for a variety of reasons, including a change in staffing or inability to implement the program for political or other logistical reasons. ECA and/or the U.S. Embassy/Consulate may ask for the agreement to be terminated for logistical reasons that were unforeseen at the time the agreement was signed.

This process must occur before the agreement end date.

Closeout

For smooth program closeout, the provider should submit their final financial and program reports based on the reporting schedule in their signed agreement. After the final reports have been reviewed and approved, the provider may be required to return unused funds or receive a final reimbursement. Once finalized, the provider will receive a closeout letter that will end all agreement obligations.

Failure to return unused funds will result in the provider organization being declared delinquent and ineligible to receive future U.S. Government funding.

Maintaining Documentation

To comply with auditing and U.S. Government regulations, the provider must keep the following documents for at least three years after the end of the program. These documents include but are not limited to:

- Signed agreement
- Signed agreement amendment(s) or letter(s) of approved budget change
- Closeout letter and disbursement report
- All program and financial reports
- Original receipts and other supporting financial documentation

- Bank statements
- Recruitment materials
- Photo consent forms
- Student applications
- Student interview rubrics
- Parent consent forms
- Program staff employment agreements

Branding

This program is a U.S. Department of State program funded by the U.S. Government. The official name of the program is the "English Access Scholarship Program." The shortened forms "Access Program" or "Access" are acceptable.

All materials and communications created for this program must be branded as the "English Access Scholarship Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State" and use the Access logo, U.S. Embassy/Consulate seal, and the U.S. flag.

Social Media Guidelines

Each Access student must have a parent/guardian sign a consent form at the beginning of the program. By signing this form, the student and parent/guardian agree to allow any images taken of the student to be published on public platforms, including the Access CoP, and other social media and promotional materials.

The U.S. Embassy or Consulate POC and/or RELO must approve all social media accounts (Facebook, X/Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, etc.) that providers create for Access programs. The accounts must have the official Access logo and should follow the U.S. Department of State's Social Media Terms of Use. In addition, any social media page created by the provider for the Access program should include the following disclaimer: "This website is not an official U.S. Department of State website. The views and information presented are the author's own and do not represent the English Access Scholarship Program or the U.S. Department of State. The English Access Scholarship Program is funded by the U.S. Department of State."

Recruiting and Selecting Access Teachers

Providers must consult with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate when developing teacher recruitment plans and selecting teachers. This process can be lengthy - taking up to three months. Access teacher position(s) should be advertised outside of the institution, and all qualified teachers should be encouraged to apply. U.S. Embassy/Consulate staff should actively participate in the teacher interview, and teacher selections must be approved by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Access teachers should be qualified English teachers with at least three years of experience teaching the target age group. Teachers are required to use a student-centered and communicative approach to teaching global citizenship-themed topics that integrate U.S. culture and values, English language skills, and 21st-century skills. Access teachers are also expected to participate in professional development activities, both online through the Access Teacher Community of Practice (CoP) and in person, outside of regular teaching hours, so it is important that potential candidates understand this requirement and have the flexibility in their schedules to participate.

Access teachers should be compensated at a rate that is higher than that of both local private and public language schools. Teachers may also be compensated for participation in approved professional development activities.

Teacher Interviews

When evaluating potential candidates, consider using multiple methods, such as teaching demonstrations, lesson plans, or portfolios, in addition to interviews.

Teacher Professional Development Opportunities

An important goal of the English Access Scholarship Program is to empower and develop the capacity of teacher leaders in the region.

Through the Access Program, teachers will learn about American culture and have opportunities to engage with innovative teaching approaches and impactful community projects. The program provides ongoing professional development opportunities through its CoP and in-person training. It is recommended that teachers participate in the Access Teacher CoP and attend the two monthly webinars on American culture content and the TESOL methodology explored in the monthly lesson plans.

Professional Development

Teachers should be paid for ongoing professional development on the Access Teacher CoP and pre-program training hours as outlined in the Program Design section of this handbook.

Providers should budget for these costs when developing their program budgets.

Additionally, teachers may be selected for professional leadership opportunities, such as participation in regional and international conferences or mentorship and coaching roles on the CoP.

Recruiting and Selecting Access Students

Providers must consult with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to determine the appropriate population to recruit for their Access program. Please note that students with the financial means to enroll in private schools and/or classes, or who are alumni of U.S. Embassy/Consulate exchange programs, should not be recruited for the Access program. The U.S. Embassy/Consulate will determine the specific audience of the local program based on U.S. Embassy/Consulate priorities.

Advertising for the Access program and recruitment for the program's students should be well thought out, targeted in scope, and involve the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Advertising and recruitment should be open and transparent, clearly indicating that the program is:

- Free of charge
- Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State/U.S. Embassy/U.S. Consulate
- For the audience identified by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate

Student Applications

Any students applying for the program must complete an Access application form offered by the program provider that must be in the students' first language. The application will include information about the student applicant, their school, and their parents/guardians and/or family. The application includes short-answer questions about the student's motivation for and commitment to the program.

Student Interviews

After the recruitment and application period has ended, program providers will interview all potential Access students and invite a representative of the U.S. Embassy/Consulate to participate in interviews and to be a member of the final selection panel.

The provider must not accept students into the program until they are approved by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Prior to the start of instruction, the provider must submit to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate a student roster with student and parent contact information to allow for direct contact with families. Initial student applications should be made available to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate and retained for monitoring purposes.

Providers may identify two alternate students per class in case students withdraw from the program during the first three months. To maintain the program's integrity, providers can only replace students who leave during the first three months of instruction. Additional materials such as textbooks can be purchased at the start of the program for replacement students at 10% of the class size. Auditing students are not allowed.

Working with Families and Students

Family support is essential to Access student success. If students are younger than 18 years old, parents/guardians must approve their child's participation in the program. Providers must share information in the local language to both students and guardians with the Access program rules regarding attendance, behavior, and participation. A letter of commitment must be signed by students and their parents/guardians.

Students and their parents/guardians need to grant permission at the beginning of the program via a signed consent form before the provider may take and potentially share their photos. Providers must keep signed copies on file throughout the duration of the program and may only take and share a photo publicly if they have a permission form for all people in the photo.

It is important that families and students understand the attendance policies of the Access program. Attendance at all classes and events is mandatory, and any student absence should be justified. Students who miss classes without an excuse can be withdrawn from the Access program, in consultation with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Organizing Access Classes/Groups

Providers are responsible for grouping their program participants in a way that serves the Access program's goals and its anticipated outcomes. Each class should reflect the audience identified by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Language proficiency should not be used as a criteria for student selection; however, it should be assessed for student grouping purposes. When possible, students in a group should be at approximately the same language proficiency level. If students are not grouped at the same proficiency level, teachers should be trained on how to work with a multi-level classroom.

Additional grouping considerations are age and gender balance. There should be no more than a two-year age range (for example, 14 to 16 years old) in the students within each class/group. Gender balance should be factored into student recruitment and class grouping.

Reporting and Monitoring Overview

Program reporting and monitoring are critical for ensuring that the Access program achieves its goals, for identifying program and administrative strengths and challenges, and for ensuring that the program is implemented in accordance with the signed service agreement.

The U.S. Embassy/Consulate, RELO, or ECA can request additional external monitoring or a financial audit of any Access program.

Reporting Requirements

Providers are required to submit program and financial reports to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate according to the schedule in their signed agreement. The purpose of these reports is to summarize completed program activities, report expenses, and request an advance of funds for the next reporting period. The reports will be reviewed and approved by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

The financial report will include information about the provider's expenses, planned expenses, remaining funds, and current cash balance. Providers will be required to use and document a consistent method for calculating the current exchange rate(s) used for reporting for the duration of the program. This rate should be the actual exchange rate for the reporting period, not the exchange rate used for the proposal budget.

The program report will include information about the program hours completed for each class/group of students, the number of active teachers, student attendance, and descriptions of completed activities during the reporting period.

Program funds will be sent for the next period once accurate reports are received and approved. Payments will be sent only when all questions related to the report have been clarified.

Late, incomplete, and/or inaccurate reports can result in delayed payments. Consistent late submission of reports could mean the U.S. Embassy/Consulate may not select the provider for future programming. Failure to submit all reports will result in the provider organization being declared delinquent and ineligible to receive future U.S. Government funding. If something beyond the provider's control is causing delays in reporting, please contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Program Monitoring

Provider Responsibilities

The provider is responsible for regularly monitoring and evaluating the program to ensure high-quality programming, to highlight student and teacher achievements and best practices, and to address challenges quickly.

As part of monitoring, it is recommended that provider administrators observe classes and give feedback to teachers a minimum of twice per year for each class/group.

In addition to submitting reports, providers are responsible for regularly contacting the U.S. Embassy/Consulate with updates on program progress. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing:

- Highlights and program successes
- Upcoming opportunities for U.S. Embassy/Consulate staff to visit
- Changes to provider staff (including director, coordinators, and teachers)
- Updated students lists
- Approved class schedules and any changes to class schedules
- Any anticipated challenges or concerns (low student attendance or performance, increasing costs, etc.)
- Any changes to student and teacher safety/well-being (critical health circumstances, political unrest, etc.)
- Any anticipated need for a possible budget revision or amendment
- Any anticipated technology costs not included in proposal/approved estimates for approval

- Any questions about whether an upcoming cost is allowable

Visits from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate

As part of the monitoring process during program implementation, representatives of the U.S. Embassy/Consulate will visit Access program sites and engage with students and teachers during classes and other program activities. Site visits may be announced or unannounced, and each class/group will be visited at least four times throughout the program as a program requirement.

Site visits will include meeting with provider administrators, staff and teachers. The U.S. Embassy/Consulate will also ask to meet with finance staff to review supporting financial documentation. Visits may be focused on observing classes, attending program activities, or being guest speakers during lessons. Site visits will evaluate whether the four pillars of the Access program are being integrated into curriculum, class activities, and teacher professional development.

Required Financial Documentation

All expenses paid with Access Program funds should have supporting documentation. The U.S. Embassy/Consulate can request to review this financial documentation at any point throughout the program, including while reviewing reports or conducting site visits. If applicable, providers should follow their own organizational documentation standards and policies.

Some examples of supporting documentation include:

- Original invoices
- Receipts (must include vendor information, name and quantity of items purchased, and date of purchase)
- Vendor agreement or contract
- Proof of payment (i.e. copy of a signed check, deposit slip, wire or money transfer order, memo signed by recipient, etc.)
- Staff timesheets
- Staff payment document (includes hours worked, hourly pay rate, and total amount paid, date of payment, method of payment, currency of payment)
- Staff travel expense report (includes dates of travel, purpose of travel)

Please be aware that if a financial report includes expenses that lack proper supporting documentation or that are not in line with the approved budget for the program, the U.S. Embassy/Consulate may request for the provider to remove them from their financial report, resulting in the provider having to pay for these costs with their own non-Access funds.