



Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

Amendment to Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2024 Leaders Lead On-Demand Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010306

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.415

Deadline for Applications: May 30, 2024

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposals for the FY 2024 Leaders Lead On-Demand program (LLOD). LLOD takes ideas generated across the U.S. Department of State and develops them into uniquely tailored, multi-segmented projects. LLOD supports U.S. foreign policy goals by enabling ECA to quickly respond to emerging foreign policy priorities. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to provide a series of multi-segmented exchange projects ranging in size and scope, each involving current or potential government, business, and civil society leaders. It is anticipated that this cooperative agreement will support four to six distinct exchange projects for approximately 75 participants including approximately 55 foreign participants and 20 from the United States.

A central component of each project will include a group of foreign participants who will ideally travel to the United States for an intensive, tailored program. Activities could offer a range of program components that may include participation in workshops, meetings, events, mentorships, or working placements in U.S. organizations or businesses. Any U.S.-based program should be complemented by at least one additional segment overseas that should include U.S. participants. Both foreign and U.S. participants should have experience or expertise in the field of the exchange project and U.S. participants should engage with the foreign participants during both the U.S. and foreign program components. The award recipient will work closely with ECA, other Department of State representatives, in-country or regionally-based partner organizations, as appropriate, to recruit, screen, and select the participants and develop program activities that best address the specific project goal(s). The final list of participants should be approved by ECA. U.S. participants will be selected in close consultation with ECA. Additional project components, such as regional gatherings of participants overseas, small grants competitions, or local trainings should be developed, as appropriate, based on the scope and goals of the specific exchange.

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.

It is ECA's intent to award a cooperative agreement of one base year plus two non-competitive continuations (NCCs). Please see section B.) Federal Award Information and NCCs in section D.16. below for additional details.

This NOFO has been amended to extend the deadline for submission of applications due to an unexpected change in the May grants.gov maintenance window and unavailability of the submission system. The original deadline date was May 20, 2024. The new deadline for submission of proposals is May 30, 2024.

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

To complement existing public diplomacy efforts supporting emerging leaders/young professionals, and to allow the Department of State to respond to emerging foreign policy issues and events more nimbly around the world, ECA has developed the LLOD program. The LLOD program will allow participants from countries around the world to take part in a specially designed exchange focused on a specific urgent or emerging U.S. foreign policy priority or goal. While the subject matter of individual LLOD projects will differ, they should focus on strengthening the capacity of civil society, private sector, and government to respond to pressing challenges in any region or country.

A.3. Program Specific Guidelines

The FY 2024 LLOD program supports the following broad goals:

1. To provide tailored support for urgent or emerging foreign policy priority issues where existing public diplomacy resources are not immediately available or accessible;
2. To create lasting partnerships between emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States in specific and substantive focus areas;
3. To provide opportunities for foreign and U.S. emerging leaders to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies regarding challenges to pressing issues;
4. To enhance professional and leadership skills for both foreign and U.S. participants to create positive change in their communities and countries.

During this cooperative agreement, it is anticipated that approximately four to six projects will be approved for implementation during each of the three years on a broad range of themes. Each project will be identified by ECA in consultation with other Department of State entities and the award recipient. ECA will ultimately approve individual LLOD projects. Once officially approved by ECA, work on a new project will commence. It is highly likely that multiple projects will take place on overlapping timelines and the award recipient needs to be able to manage several projects in various phases of design and implementation at the same time.

Projects: "Projects" are defined as a set of exchanges focused on specific and often urgent or emerging foreign policy priorities. A past project example is the African Descent Social Entrepreneurship Program that brought together 60 young social entrepreneurs of African descent from around the world to share experiences, perspectives, and best practices. During the U.S. phase of the program, participants visited Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Louisiana and Georgia. They worked on capacity development through case studies of how social entrepreneurs found creative solutions for social problems. The program launched the African Descent Social Entrepreneurship Network (ADSEN), an independent organization for collaboration, which will serve as an ongoing tool for collaboration. The Exchange for Rising Think Tank Leaders from Quad Countries included participants who are think tank professionals from Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. Their program included exchanges in each of the four countries where they explored the respective policymaking landscapes in areas of mutual collaboration.

Participants: "Participants" are defined as those who travel under federal award funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country of a project. Ideally, foreign

participants should, as appropriate, be selected through a merit-based, competitive process. Unless requested otherwise, participants should be mid-career emerging leaders/young professionals in government, business, or civil society with experience and current employment directly relevant to the exchange project. It is preferable that all selected participants be proficient in written and oral English, have demonstrated leadership ability, and a professional commitment to the project goal(s). It should be possible to include participants without strong English skills and specific provisions for non-English speaking participants should be included in the proposal and budget, if applicable.

U.S. participants should include professionals with relevant expertise in the project's subject matter or policy issue area. U.S. participants should be individuals who have had or will have significant engagement with the foreign participants during their U.S. exchange program.

Organizational Capacity: Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international professional exchanges; supporting a range of different kinds of exchange activities, subject areas, and geographic regions; implementing exchange programs that address specific policy challenges and providing substantive programming and leadership training for up-and-coming professionals.

Proposals should illustrate the organization's breadth of experience working in difficult environments, establishing individually tailored working placements in a range of fields, and demonstrating flexibility, adaptability, and creativity in programming under challenging conditions. Proposals should include concrete examples in which the organization has responded quickly to rapidly evolving circumstances, and ideally including examples that demonstrate an ability to program in countries in which they have not previously worked. Proposals should clearly articulate a staffing plan that allows the organization to conduct multiple On-Demand projects concurrently.

Partner Organizations: Applicant organizations should provide examples of programs, businesses, institutions, organizations, and individuals with whom they would collaborate to implement projects and should describe any previous collaborative activities. A proposal could identify a hypothetical project theme and goal and include a proposed approach to developing a project with examples of organizations or individuals who might assist with program design. Proposals must demonstrate capacity for developing professionally relevant, substantive programming in the United States. As it is likely that program activity will take place in countries where an organization does not have a presence, the proposal should demonstrate the ability to identify and work with in-country or regional partners on a short timeframe, as needed. Applicant organizations should include a participant recruitment plan, which may include a list of foreign partner organizations who have assisted the organization with participant recruitment in other programs.

Broader U.S. Department of State Involvement: It is anticipated that State Department entities will generate initial project ideas and be actively engaged in each project. State Department entities, including U.S. embassies and consulates, may work closely with the award recipient on program activities including, but not limited to, recruitment and selection of the participants; pre-departure briefings; U.S. visas; and follow-on projects. The proposal should discuss how the award recipient plans to consult regularly with relevant State Department entities to implement the exchange projects. While State Department entities may be actively engaged in any project, it is the award recipient's responsibility to manage the overall program activities.

Projected Timeline: The exact dates of each exchange project will not be determined until a proposed project is officially approved. Applicant organizations should propose at least one sample timeline and outline for a hypothetical project.

A.4. Recipient Responsibilities

The award recipient will be responsible for the following:

Development of Project Model: Once projects have been officially approved by ECA, the award recipient will begin designing project activities and will submit a detailed outline to the Global Leaders Division in the Office of Citizen Exchanges. Each project will be unique and will likely need a different program model or design. The size, scope, and timing of each project should be designed with a flexible and collaborative approach to maximize project effectiveness and demonstrate significance. All projects should be multi-segmented with at least one component based in the United States and at least one component hosted in a foreign country, if appropriate.

Recruitment and Selection: The award recipient will work closely with the relevant State Department entities and, if appropriate, an in-country regional partner to recruit and select qualified participants for an approved project. The recruitment strategy should include:

1. A recruitment campaign that targets individuals meeting the eligibility criteria for each project, supports a merit-based competition, and adheres to the project's goals;
2. A web-based application tool that securely collects applicants' data across projects;
3. A transparent review process to evaluate candidates. The award recipient will work closely with ECA on the development and implementation of review criteria, involving the appropriate State Department entities in the selection process, and proposing a participant list to ECA for final approval; and
4. Interviews conducted in English (virtual or in-person), if appropriate, for semi-finalists as part of the selection process.

Project Promotional Materials: The award recipient will be responsible for creating promotional materials both for the LLOD program and for individual projects, as needed. ECA will provide final approval for all created materials.

Pre-Departure Orientation and/or Arrival Orientation: For both foreign and U.S. participants, the award recipient will be responsible for conducting an in-person or virtual pre-departure orientation (PDO) before exchange components and/or an in-person arrival orientation at the beginning of an exchange component. The recipient should provide pre-departure materials and program information to prepare participants for the exchange. The PDO and arrival orientation should cover, at a minimum:

- travel logistics, including arrival and lodging information and J-1 visa regulations;
- project goals and expectations;
- a detailed program schedule and host community information; and
- a cross-cultural orientation.

Issue DS-2019 forms and facilitate the Visa Process: All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program. The award recipient will be responsible for preparing and issuing DS-2019 forms required for J-1 visas. The award recipient will work with the U.S. embassy or consulate to assist foreign participants with the J-1 visa application process and with foreign embassies to arrange visas for U.S. travelers, as needed.

Logistics: The award recipient will manage all logistical arrangements, including international and domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, and meals. The award recipient will comply with all federal regulations regarding the use of U.S. government funds, including the Fly America Act.

Health Benefits: The award recipient will enroll all U.S. and foreign participants in ECA's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program and issue health benefits identification cards. More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>.

Participant Monitoring: The award recipient will develop and implement a plan to monitor participants' safety and well-being while on program. Proposals should articulate how the program will ensure effective communication, so potential problems are resolved promptly. Proposals should demonstrate staffing structures that support program activity and ensure safe and rewarding programs.

Program Closing: The award recipient should conduct an appropriate program closing session at the end of each project.

Collection and Maintenance of Program and Participant Data & Reporting: In addition to the reporting requirements outlined in section F.4. Reporting Requirements, the award recipient should create and maintain a means of tracking all On-Demand projects initiated, ongoing, and completed projects, for the period of performance. Tracking information should include budget information, total participant numbers and numbers by country, and other key data to be determined in consultation with ECA. Tracking data should be included in regular reporting and provided to ECA upon request. The award recipient must ensure the protection of personally identifiable information.

A.5. Substantial Involvement:

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA's activities and responsibilities for the LLOD Program are as follows:

1. Approve each LLOD project;
2. Approve partner organizations, including in-country partner organizations and sub-award recipients;

A.6. Non-Competitive Continuations (NCCs)

Proposal narratives should include a commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional NCCs, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration, and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two NCCs are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a NCC will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all NCCs.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION for NCCs

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

Fiscal Year Funds: FY2024 – base year funding amount \$1,000,000, pending the availability of funds; FY2025 – NCC year one funding amount \$1,000,000; FY2026 – NCC year-two funding amount, \$1,000,000, will be pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$3,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Minimum “Floor” of Award: \$1,000,000, pending the availability of funds.

Maximum “Ceiling” of Award: \$1,000,000, pending the availability of funds

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

Anticipated Award Completion Date: December 31, 2028. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two NCC years.

Additional Information: A Cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of 18 months (base year) with NCCs for two additional 12 month periods (NCC years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of its intention to exercise or not to exercise a NCC at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient’s performance. The decision to exercise a NCC will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets, participant numbers, and the number of projects 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 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 \$1,000,000. Therefore, organizations that do not demonstrate four years of experience in conducting international exchanges in their proposal are ineligible to apply under this competition.

2. All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, and the PSI; non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
3. In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 & D.5. for more information.
4. Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the PSI document.

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

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing required for this competition. However, ECA encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution may be reduced in like proportion.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

D.1. Solicitation Package Location

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

D.2. Content and Form of Submission

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the PSI document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.17. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3. Unique Entity Identifier Number

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

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

D.4. Required Proposal Elements

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

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

All organizations must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov. ***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.*** Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

All federal award recipients must maintain a current registration in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting is completed on any issued award. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

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

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

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

D.7. Required Registration with 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://afsism.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.

The award recipient 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.

The below section will be customized for every solicitation and provided by ECA/P/MELI as a part of the drafting process. All objectives, sub-objectives, and indicators here are samples, illustrating what this language will look like. Your solicitation will include only the aspects that apply.

- 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)
 - E1.1.11: Percent of American participants indicating a change in their understanding of their host country's culture and values
 - E1.1.12: Percent of foreign participants indicating a change in understanding of third-party countries' cultures and values
 - E1.1.17: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the American people (core indicator)
 - E1.1.18: Percent of foreign participants indicating an increase in understanding of United States culture and values (core indicator)
 - 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.
 - o 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)
 - o Sub-Objective 3.1: Alumni subscribe to platforms for resources and information-sharing
 - E3.1.02: Percent of participants who learned about new resources
- 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

- E4.0.09: Percent of participants reporting an increase in language 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)
 - E4.1.04: Number of professional placements
- Objective 6: Increase Capacity of ECA partner institutions to achieve program strategic goals
 - o Sub-Objective 6.1: Increase capacity of implementing partners and educational institutions for the internationalization of programs
 - E6.1.02: Number of exchange participants from or hosted by Minority-Serving Institutions participating in ECA (both funded and private sector) exchanges (core indicator)
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
 - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core indicator)

Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs)

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

- **Objectives:** Programmatic objectives are statements of the condition(s) that state what the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART; see the ECA Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Innovation (MELI) Unit's pages on the ECA website for more information: <https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-evaluation-division/capacity-building>). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the MODE Framework, the Functional Bureau Strategy

(<https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau>), or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives.

- **Indicators:** Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives and sub-objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations (meaning, breakdowns of the data by subgroups, such as gender or country; the PMP lists the demographic questions required to obtain the information necessary to report the disaggregations). Each indicator should also include a target number to be achieved. A target is a planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe.
 - If you do not use the PMP format provided, note that any performance monitoring reference document the applicant submits should include the information in the column headers (Indicator Name, Definition, Target, Survey Question, etc.) in the PMP attachment at a minimum.
 - In addition to those indicators outlined in above, the applicant may propose additional custom, program-specific indicators in the PMP (ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each custom programmatic objective).
 - During the period of performance of the award, the ECA program office may further revise, add, or remove indicators. Therefore, the applicant's PMP and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established.

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

Award recipients will be required to submit an upload of the raw data (in CSV format) along with the 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

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

In addition to planning for virtual exchange activities if in-person programming is prohibited, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage virtual programming technologies during or in addition to in-person programming. ECA encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s) is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation.

ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project-by-project basis.

D.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients

All ECA Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D. 13. Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial

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

D.14. Budget Format

Applicants must submit SF-424A (Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs) along with a detailed, line-item budget for the entire program and a budget narrative. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both overhead and staffing and participant support costs. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.14.a. Allowable costs for the program include, but are not limited to, the following:

Travel: International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must comply with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in Bureau-sponsored projects.

Per Diem: For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use up to the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities.

Book and Cultural Allowances: Participants, as appropriate, are entitled to a cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50.

Consultants: Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day per session. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that figure.

Sub-Award Costs: Should a proposal include sub-award organizations a draft written agreement between the prospective awardee and sub-awardee should be included in the proposal. Such subawards should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.

Room Rental: The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.

Materials: Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for participants, as needed.

Supplies: Applicants may propose to use award funds to purchase supplies and should be justified in the budget narrative.

Working Meal: One working meal may be provided during U.S.-based and foreign-based components. Per capita costs for working meals may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental and other overhead charges. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one.

Return Travel Allowance: A return travel allowance of \$70 for participants may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

Health Benefits and Travel Insurance: The award recipient will be responsible for working with ECA to ensure that both foreign and U.S. participants are enrolled in the ECA-sponsored ASPE. The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the proposal budget. Applicants may include costs for travel insurance for both foreign and U.S. participants in the budget.

Wire Transfer Fees: When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to foreign-based partner organizations. Award recipients are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes: Visas for foreign fellows are provided by the U.S. Department of State and should not be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including travel for interviews, delivering, or picking up passports, etc.

Staff Salaries and Benefits: Costs necessary for the effective administration of the program may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI.

Reasonable Accommodations: Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of participating individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5-7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose.

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. NCCs

Pending successful performance and the availability of funds this award will utilize NCCs as discussed in section A.6 above.

D.16.a. For competitions that will exercise a NCC applicants must submit:

- 1.) The SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program.
- 2.) A detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the PSI for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional NCC years, pending successful program performance and the availability of funds.
- 3.) An abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two NCC years).

D.16.b. To exercise the NCC mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

- 1.) Performance and financial reports on time.
- 2.) A request in writing to ECA at least 30 days in receipt of the NCC invitation.
- 3.) A summary budget that projects expenses through the end of the current year.
- 4.) A detailed budget outlining expenses for the requested NCC year.
- 5.) A brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

D.16.c. For awards using NCCs, in addition to the Substantial Involvement for the Cooperative Agreement, the ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

1. Closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of

communication and dialogue before exercising additional NCCs. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

2. Review and evaluate all quarterly or semi-annual program and financial reports.
 - a. All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up to date before ECA will exercise additional NCCs.
 - b. Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
 - c. The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent NCCs.
3. Prior Grants Officer approval is required to utilize the remainder from an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some, or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to utilize the remainder from the unobligated balance. The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to utilize the remainder of funds. A final determination and approval to utilize the remainder of any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

The request to utilize the remainder from an unobligated balance must include:

- 1.) A brief narrative as to why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program.
- 2.) A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

D.17. Application Deadline and Method of Submission

Application Deadline Date: **Thursday, May 30, 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.18. 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. 18.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.18.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.18.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.18.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system and will be found technically ineligible.

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

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

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant

with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

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

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.19. 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:** Proposals should be original, well-defined, and relevant to ECA's mission.
2. **Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives:** 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.
3. **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.
4. **Institutional Capacity and institution's record/ability:** Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs and responsible fiscal management. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients, including the timely submission of reports, and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
5. **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Proposals should have a fully developed M&E plan that includes goals, objectives, and indicators. The plan should be feasible and aligned with the M&E section of this solicitation. Proposals should include a realistic learning plan that outlines how your organization plans to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices. All submitted M&E plans will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided at least the required

information outlined in the M&E section of this solicitation and demonstrated the applicant's capacity to carry out the M&E plan.

6. **Cost-effectiveness and cost share:** Proposals should keep the overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost share through other private sector support and institutional direct funding contributions.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Award Notices

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal ECA procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the ECA's Grants Division. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer as identified in the application.

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

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

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

Terms and Conditions applicable to all ECA agreements include:

- Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.
- U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

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

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

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

F.3. Region and Topic Specific requirements

The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3.a. Prohibition on the use of Federal Funds to Promote, Support, or advocate for the legalization or practice of Prostitution

The U.S. Government is opposed to prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. None of the funds made available under this agreement may be used to promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed to preclude assistance designed to ameliorate the suffering of, or health risks to, victims while they are being trafficked or after they are out of the situation that resulted from such victims being trafficked.

The recipient shall insert the foregoing provision in all sub-agreements under this award.

This provision includes express terms and conditions of the agreement and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Department of State prior to the end of its term.

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

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

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Program Specialist Anne Shue, shuea@state.gov 1-771-205-6598 for additional information.

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

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

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants

Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this

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

F.4. Reporting Requirements

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

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the period of performance of the award ends; 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.) Required MODE data (see Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation section) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. Frequency of these reports will be determined by MELI and the Program Officer. Aggregate data and the raw data file must be uploaded by the Recipient as an *RPM Performance Report* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's MyGrants.
 - 3.) 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.

- 4.) Because the competition will allow for the exercise of NCCs, applicants must submit program and financial reports on time. The due dates for these reports will be included in the cooperative agreement. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.
- 5.) Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to ECA in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.10. M&E information.)

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

F.5. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with ECA as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

1. Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
2. Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three workdays prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about this announcement, contact: Anne Shue, U.S. Department of State, Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Global Leaders Division, ECA-PE-C-GL, 1-771-205-6598 shuea@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
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

March 15, 2024