



Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

FY 2026 International Visitor Leadership Program Collaborative Services

Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017389
Application Deadline: September 8, 2025

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A. Basic Information

1. Overview.

Funding Opportunity Title	FY 2026 International Visitor Leadership Program Collaborative Services
Funding Opportunity Number	DFOP0017389
Announcement Type	New Cooperative Agreement
Deadline for Applications	September 8, 2025 11:59pm Eastern (Washington DC time)
Assistance Listing Number	19.402
Length of Performance Period	36 months
Number of Awards Anticipated	1 award
Award Amount	Approximately \$399,000 in the base year, Approximately \$399,000 in NCC one,

	Approximately \$399,000 in NCC two
Total Available Funding	\$1,197,000, pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE) Funds – base year FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE) Funds – NCC one FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE) Funds – NCC two
Funding Instrument Type	Cooperative Agreement
Anticipated Award Date	January 1, 2026

This notice is subject to availability of funding. 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.

Non-Competitive Continuations (NCCs): ECA anticipates issuing a cooperative agreement for a period of 12 months (base year), with two additional 12 month periods (NCC years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient at least 90 days before the end of the current year if an NCC will be exercised or not. The decision to exercise a NCC will be subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

2. Executive Summary.

The United States Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ Office of International Visitors (ECA/PE/V) announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to support the staff expenses and overhead costs of the FY 2026 International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) Collaborative Services. Launched in 1940, the IVLP is the Department of State’s foundational professional exchange program. The IVLP advances U.S. national security priorities and builds long-term relationships between Americans and international leaders in government, business, academia, and other fields through customized short-term visits to the United States. IVLP participants are current and emerging leaders from around the world. These visits support U.S. foreign policy goals and reflect the participants’ professional interests. Eligible recipients will have expertise in foreign policy and experience supporting professional exchange programming.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants.

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- U.S. Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations

- U.S. Not-for-profit public and private educational institutions

Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

2. Cost Sharing.

There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing required for this program.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements.

- a. All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see *Section E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines* for more information.
- b. 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 A. Basic Information*, ECA anticipates issuing one award, for approximately \$399,000. Therefore, organizations must demonstrate four years of experience in conducting international exchanges in your proposal to be eligible to apply under this competition.
- c. All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO and the PSI; not doing so may result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- d. All proposals must contain a SF-424, executive summary, proposal narrative, budget (SF 424A), detailed line-item budget, and budget narrative.
- e. 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.

- f. All award recipients must have a Washington, DC area presence with a physical office and staff members located within the Washington DC area. Applicants who do not currently have a Washington, DC metropolitan area presence must include a detailed plan in their proposal for establishing such a presence by January 1, 2026. The costs related to establishing such a presence must be borne by the award recipient and no such costs may be included in the budget submission in this proposal.

C. Program Description

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.

2. Purpose.

As the U.S. Department of State's foundational professional exchange program, the IVLP advances U.S. foreign policy goals through professional exchanges that highlight American excellence and make America safer, stronger and more prosperous. Through carefully designed projects, the IVLP provides current and emerging foreign leaders with firsthand knowledge of U.S. society, history, and culture. In turn, the IVLP strengthens American communities by providing valuable opportunities to engage directly with foreign leaders and to foster lasting relationships. IVLP participants are leaders in government, politics, media, education, science, non-government organizations, the arts, and other disciplines. They are nominated by officers at U.S. embassies overseas, approved by ECA/PE/V staff in Washington, DC, and generally have little or no prior exposure to the United States. Since the IVLP's inception in 1940, more than 230,000 foreign leaders have participated in the program.

3. Program Specific Guidelines.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' ECA/PE/V invites proposal submissions for the design and implementation of collaborative services to maximize the flexibility, efficiency, and impact of the IVLP through support of projects, participants, and infrastructure.

IVLP projects can be as small as one person on an individual project but can also include a number of large group projects that typically include 20-30 participants from around the world. Projects are typically two to 21-days in length. Each project itinerary highlights the geography and people of the United States. The majority of projects will commence in Washington, DC. Not-for-profit IVLP implementing partners based in the Washington, DC area, called National Program Agencies (NPAs), plan and implement the Washington, DC metropolitan-area portion of most projects. These organizations also develop project plans and itineraries which usually include visits to three to five additional communities. Local programming in cities throughout the United States is developed by Global Ties U.S. affiliates, in communities where they exist.

While most projects are planned and implemented in coordination with NPAs, some IVLP projects are designed "in house" by ECA/PE/V's *IVLP On Demand Division*. These projects are managed directly by ECA/PE/V staff, without reliance on the availability of an NPA. The recipient will provide support for IVLP projects, which will include arranging certain activities for IVLP participants as needed.

IVLP projects across all NPAs rely on a comprehensive hotel pricing program for Washington, DC. The recipient will operate such a program that meets all federal procurement requirements, for the benefit of the entire IVLP. The recipient will conduct Washington, DC hotel procurement for most large group projects.

The IVLP is bolstered by an extensive network of not-for-profit and volunteer implementing partners, U.S. interlocutors, interpreters and International Visitor liaisons (I/Ls), program alumni, and others. As directed, the recipient will support this infrastructure by coordinating trainings, meetings, webinars, and capacity-building efforts. These activities will increase skills, capabilities, knowledge, awareness, and collaboration across the IVLP network.

4. Recipient Responsibilities.

The recipient organization is responsible for the following:

- a. Support for IVLP On Demand Projects: Beginning in the calendar year 2026, ECA/PE/V anticipates implementing an increased number of in-house projects, up to sixty per year. The recipient will provide support for these in-house projects. Applicants must have the ability to implement a direct billing payment system with hotels in Washington, DC and across the United States for in-house IVLP On Demand projects.

Routine support responsibilities:

- Conducting briefings at each project's opening session covering the details of the project.
- Issuing tickets for domestic transportation (air and rail) for participants and assigned I/Ls.
- Issuing per diem via debit card for participants.
- Arranging charter transportation.
- Providing Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) accident and sickness coverage materials and identification letters to each covered participant.
- Paying project expenses and completing final budgets with funds from project-level budgets.
- Processing reimbursements to Global Ties U.S. community-based members (CBMs) and I/Ls as required by each project.
- Pre-paying or direct billing hotels throughout the proposed itinerary for each project.
- When necessary, arranging meeting space for required project meetings.
- Compiling program packets created by ECA/PE/V.

Costs of IVLP On Demand project expenses will be funded through a separate mechanism and should not be included in your proposal budget in response to this NOFO. Such project costs include those associated with participant and I/L travel (including lodgings, air, rail, and ground transportation), funds for participant and I/L meals and incidental expenses, costs of project meeting space, and other similar project expenses.

However, you should include in the line-item budget and budget narrative any fees associated with processing debit cards for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) payments to IVLP participants. In addition, the award recipient will share a plan on how it will issue and brief participants about the proper use of debit cards.

Additional support responsibilities, undertaken as needed:

- U.S. Federalism Lectures: In order to ensure that participants have a basic understanding of the U.S. system of government, the award recipient will arrange briefings on U.S. federalism for participants of in-house projects, as needed. Briefings should be conducted by Washington-area university political science or government professors and other qualified experts, and the proposal should list appropriate qualifications and the names and biographies of suggested federalism briefers. Any fees for individual federalism briefers will be authorized and paid as a project expense and should not be included in the proposal budget. Applicants should clarify the type of materials that will be provided to each participant and budget for all reproduction costs as part of this award.
 - Capitol Hill Insider Tours: The recipient will arrange tours through the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center and/or Congressional Offices for in-house projects, as needed, and provide briefings to project participants on the role of the U.S. Congress.
 - Home Hospitality: As needed, the recipient will provide opportunities for project participants to share a meal or a similar cultural experience as guests of Americans in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The proposal should provide a suggested list of home hospitality hosts in the Washington, DC area.
- b. Hotel Procurement in Washington, DC: The recipient will operate a hotel pricing program in Washington, DC, for the benefit of the entire IVLP, that meets all federal requirements for procurement. The recipient should designate one full-time equivalent (FTE) for continually building strong relationships and enhancing hotel procurement efforts in Washington, DC.

Hotel procurement responsibilities:

- Salary for a procurement expert to negotiate group rates and sufficient lodging capacity with hotels in Washington, DC in compliance with procurement guidelines; coordinate assignment of all large group projects to Washington, DC hotels (approximately 160-180 projects per year) in close consultation with ECA/PE/V/C/R; develop and maintain relationships with hotel contacts and coordinate on requests for proposals for larger special initiatives, as designated by ECA/PE/V; and review language in local hotel group contracts as appropriate. All hotel rooms and services must be negotiated at current U.S. government rates or below and approval will not be given for venues at a higher rate without justification and prior ECA/PE/V approval.
- Provide ECA/PE/V and NPA hotel coordinators with a list of approved hotels for use for smaller IVLP projects.
- Act as a liaison between hotel sales representatives and ECA/PE/V to identify and resolve issues, including those related to hotel pricing and cancellations.

- Provide hotel pricing analysis for ECA/PE/V as requested and establish a system of documentation, communication and review of internal and external comparative price data to assist in rate management for IVLP hotels.
- Work with Global Ties U.S.' CBMs to meet guidelines around hotel procurement for IVLP participants in their communities.

All proposed hotel sites and copies of the hotel proposals are subject to ECA/PE/V/C/R approval, and ECA/PE/V/C/R reserves the right to request renegotiation of any and all hotel agreements/services not adhering to the above conditions.

- c. Trainings, Meetings, Webinars, and Capacity-Building Efforts: In consultation and coordination with ECA/PE/V/C/R, the recipient will conduct trainings, meetings, webinars, capacity-building efforts, and/or other similar activities to reinforce the overall goals of the IVLP.

The recipient will help coordinate up to four trainings, meetings, webinars, capacity-building efforts, etc., per year. An example slate of such activities for a given year could include:

- Two workshops for I/Ls
- A virtual training for I/Ls or a webinar for IVLP alumni
- A capacity-building effort to increase engagement with U.S. interlocuters

The budget should include staffing to allow the recipient to coordinate meeting room space, transportation, and appropriate meals, and should include honorarium for two-three professionals based on the needs of the activity and ECA-approved honorarium rates. The recipient should plan to support the attendance of at least 50 individuals at each capacity-building activity.

5. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

In establishing strong performance management practices, ECA is concerned with collecting indicator data on exchange participant outcomes. Because the IVLP is managed by a number of different implementers, a determination has been made that the primary responsibility for collecting MODE Framework indicator data on International Visitor participant outcomes will lie with the Office of International Visitors (ECA/PE/V). Therefore, your proposal should confirm that your organization will support the Bureau's overall performance monitoring efforts established for the IVLP as necessary.

6. Allowable Costs.

- a. Staff Salaries and Benefits;
- b. Office and Program Supplies;
- c. Telephone and Communications;
- d. Staff Travel and Per Diem (only for activities authorized by ECA/PE/V)
- e. Automatic Data Processing Equipment Maintenance and IT Costs;
- f. Indirect Costs;

g. Reasonable Accommodations.

The proposal budget may only include staff expenses and overhead costs to implement the required services. All proposals must demonstrate sound financial management and appropriate internal financial controls.

All transportation costs related to administration of the program (e.g., traveling to ECA for meetings, travel expenses to attend local program openings, or travel related to development of resources) can be included in this request and should be adequately described in the budget submission. All expenses related to any allowable project travel (e.g., a project opening outside of Washington, DC) should not be included in this proposed budget.

The recipient will have two types of printing costs associated with IVLP administration: general printing and project-specific printing (e.g., program books). All printing related to general administration of the program should be adequately described in the budget proposal. However, if printing costs can be directly identified for a specific project, they should not be included in this budget.

7. Cost Share.

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.

8. Freedom and Democracy Guidelines.

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," the Bureau "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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Substantial Involvement.

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

- a. Selecting all participants of in-house IVLP On Demand projects.
- b. Approving the number and timing of any trainings, meetings, webinars, capacity-building efforts, and/or other similar activities.
- c. Reviewing hotel requirements for all trainings and similar activities, and providing final approval of selected hotels.

D. Application Contents and Format

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals.

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the PSI document, which contains guidelines for proposal preparation.

1. Budget Format.

Applicants must submit a budget (SF-424A), detailed line-item budget, and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. The budget must show all staff expenses and overhead costs. Cost sharing is encouraged and should be shown in the budget presentation.

2. Non Competitive Continuations (NCCs).

ECA intends to use NCCs based on the requirements discussed below and subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

For competitions that will include a NCC, applicants must submit the following as a part of your initial proposal:

- A complete SF-424A which includes the budget request for the base year of the program.
- A detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding. This should include a brief commitment to implement the program for one/two additional NCC years. (Please refer to the PSI for budget guidance.)
- An estimated summary budget presenting the total projected costs for the anticipated total duration of programming – the base year plus one/two NCC years.

3. Content of Application.

Please see the PSI for information about the application and formatting guidelines.

4. Staffing/Resumes/Personnel.

Applicants must include complete and current resumes of all individuals who will be working full-time on the IVLP. If individuals are not fulltime employees indicate the percentage of their time spent on the IVLP. A staffing list should include job titles, salary level, and years of service with the organization. No resume should exceed two pages.

5. Requirements for Past Performance References.

In addition to Letters of Endorsement, the Department of State will also use past performance as an indicator of an applicant's ability to successfully perform the work under the Institution's Record review criterion. A separate attachment of the proposal must contain any letters of endorsement and between three and five references who may be called upon to discuss recently completed or ongoing work performed for professional exchange programs (which may include the IVLP). The references must contain the information outlined below. The Department of State may contact representatives from the organizations cited to obtain information on the applicant's past performance. The Department of State also may obtain past performance information from sources other than those identified by the applicant.

- Name of the reference organization
- Project name
- Project description
- Performance period of the contract, cooperative agreement, or grant
- Amount of the contract, cooperative agreement, or grant
- Technical contact person and telephone number for referenced organization
- Administrative contact person and telephone number for referenced organization.

6. Sample Materials.

Applicants must include a separate and clearly labeled attachment containing the following:

- Samples of at least two schedules for international exchange or training programs that they have coordinated within the past four years that demonstrate their organization's competence and abilities to conduct the activities outlined in the NOFO.
- Samples of orientation and self-evaluation materials used in past international exchange or training programs.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package.

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>.

2. Department of State Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Benjamin Olsen, U.S. Department of State, Office of International Visitors, ECA/PE/V, (202) 256-3024, OlsenBC@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.

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.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Required Registrations

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov.

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. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

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.

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 prior to registering in SAM.gov.

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://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](https://www.ecfr.gov/title-2/chapter-25/subchapter-1/section-25.110) for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. 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 system 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.servicenow.com/ilms/>.

5. Submission Instructions.

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.

Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants>).

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/applicants/applicant-registration>

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/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants>

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

6. Submission Dates and Times.

Application Deadline Date**Monday, September 8, 2025 Eastern.**

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 Grants.gov 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 the Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility>

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal (<https://www.grants.gov>) 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.

7. Funding Restrictions for this Announcement.

a. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

b. Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal or representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

c. Iran Programming

A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 239A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact Alison Moylan at MoylanAP@state.gov for additional information.

d. 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 Alison Moylan at MoylanAP@state.gov for additional information.

8. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
- 2) It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

9. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements.

Applicants are advised that institutions of higher education (IHEs) must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

- Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

10. Other Submission Requirements.

- a. Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov.
- b. All proposals must contain a SF-424, executive summary, proposal narrative, budget (SF 424A), detailed line-item budget, and budget narrative.
- c. 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,

roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Applicants should also identify what proportion of their time will be used in support of the program. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions.

- d. Intergovernmental Review of Applications
Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

F. Application Review Information

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. Applications may also 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.

Proposals recommended by an ECA grant panel 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.

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 review.

- a. **Institution's Record:** 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.
- b. **Evidence of Understanding/Program Planning:** Proposals should convey that the applicant has a good understanding of the overall purpose and goals of the IVLP. Proposals should contain a detailed work plan that demonstrates substance and precision and is responsive to the requirements stated in this NOFO.
- c. **Ability to Achieve Objectives:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results.

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

3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov.

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 (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

G. 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 an authorized Grants Officer in 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 a Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer (as identified in the application) for review and countersignature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the fully signed award document.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding.

Unsuccessful applicants:

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.

Payment Method:

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS).

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. 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.

The Department of State will review and consider proposals for funding pursuant to this NOFO in accordance with OMB guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, including the following:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
 - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)

- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

2. Reporting.

Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The FAA 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:

- a. **Performance Progress Reports (PPRs)** shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual, quarterly, or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. All reports and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this award in MyGrants.
 - Because the competition will allow for the exercise of NCCs, it is critical that applicants 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.
- b. The **Federal Financial Reports** (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: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms>. 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 awards.
- c. A **final program and financial report** no more than 120 days after the period of performance of the award ends or termination of the award.
- d. **Quarterly Funding Projection** Requests are due approximately fifteen days following the end of the calendar year quarter, or as otherwise requested from ECA/PE/V.

3. Non Competitive Continuations (NCCs).

ECA intends to use NCCs based on the requirements discussed below and subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

After award, to exercise the NCC mechanism, the recipient must submit:

- Performance and financial reports on time.
- A request in writing to ECA within 30 days of receiving the NCC invitation from ECA.

- A summary budget that projects expenses through the current year's end.
- A detailed budget outlining expenses for the requested NCC year.
- A brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

Program Monitoring

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

- 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.
- Review and evaluate all quarterly or semi-annual program and financial reports.

Prior Grants Officer approval is required to utilize any remaining unobligated funds 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 use the remainder of the unobligated balance. The Grants Officer may use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period at their discretion. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to utilize the remainder of funds. ECA will communicate any final determination and approval to use the remainder of any funds via a cost amendment, including any adjustment to new obligation amounts.

I. Other Information

For Informational Purposes Only - 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. 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