PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

FY 2024 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010284

Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Study of the U.S. Branch

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)/solicitation/limited competition issued by the Study of the U.S. Branch located in the Office of Academic Exchange Programs for the FY 2024 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. Your proposal must conform to the solicitation, the guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between documents, the solicitation is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

In a cooperative agreement, the Study of the U.S. Branch (ECA/A/E/USS) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The Branch may request that the recipient make modifications to the academic residency and/or educational travel components of the program. The recipient will be required to obtain approval of significant program changes in advance of their implementation. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined below.

Recipient Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

General Program Management

1. Work with the FY 2021 award recipient to ensure the success of the program under the new award (refer to NOFO sections A.7. Overview of Alumni/Follow-on Activities, A.10. Program Administration);
2. Coordinate and administer all components and aspects of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders including Leadership Institutes, pre-program English language component (pending the availability of funds), Summit, Professional Development Experiences (PDEs), Reciprocal Exchange component, and follow-on alumni activities;
3. Arrange and purchase all program travel in compliance with the Fly America Act, when

possible, including: international roundtrip travel for all Fellows to/from the United States, domestic travel to the Summit and PDEs, Reciprocal Exchange component travel, and any other alumni/follow-on activity event travel;

4. Maintain an official Mandela Washington Fellowship website and social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn) including maintaining, developing, and posting relevant content (Refer to NOFO sections A.8. Overview of Recruitment and Selection, A.9. Overview of Outreach);
5. Develop and implement an outreach plan and materials including brochures, one pagers and/or fact sheets, announcements, and other materials to communicate program information and demonstrate the significance of the Mandela Washington Fellowship (Refer to NOFO sections A.8. Overview of Recruitment and Selection, A.9. Overview of Outreach);
6. Create materials and PowerPoint presentations for U.S. Department of State staff and others to use at U.S. embassies for pre-departure orientations or other occasions that adhere to Section 508 compliance;
7. Manage and coordinate support for program participants and all Fellowship components, including the provision of reasonable accommodations for all Fellowship components;
8. Promptly inform ECA of any serious incidents or issues involving participants that may affect their participation in the program (including, but not limited to, medical emergencies and medical evacuations, including mental and physical health issues; natural disasters; arrests or other serious legal issues or misconduct accusations). Consult with ECA on the response to any serious incidents and on crisis management decision-making and operations, including responding to media queries. Provide timely progress reports on any necessary follow-up action;
9. Develop mandatory pre-departure online modules for all Fellows to complete prior to their participation in the Leadership Institutes;
10. Submit all print and online materials provided to or created for dissemination to applicants, participants, program partners, and U.S. government agencies, including U.S. embassies and consulates, and other entities to ECA for review before distribution;
11. Consult with ECA on a plan for notifying members of Congress of the participation of Fellows and Reciprocal Exchange Participants in and from their districts/states and send notification letters;
12. Clear with ECA, before dissemination, any communication with U.S. government agencies or entities, including U.S. Members of Congress, involving the Mandela Washington Fellowship;
13. Conduct performance monitoring that links outcomes of the program to stated program goals and objectives to ensure that all Institutes meet comparable high levels of quality in fulfilling program goals. This should be completed through pre-program (baseline), post-program, and alumni surveys;
14. Organize, staff, and coordinate a three to four-day Summit for all Fellows at the beginning or end of the Institutes;

15. Develop and propose innovative ideas for alumni follow-on activities and creative and effective ways to engage participants after their exchange;
16. Manage all ECA funds for the Fellowship components, including submitting required reports to ECA by the established deadlines;
17. Coordinate an annual planning and debriefing meeting with key personnel staff working on the Fellowship from both the recipient organization and ECA;
18. Provide a detailed staffing plan that include the names, titles, and portfolio breakdown of all staff who will work on the Mandela Washington Fellowship. Any changes to staffing plans and/or key personnel (to include program officers and higher) must be submitted to ECA for approval;
19. Prepare and print certificates of completion for Fellows and Reciprocal Exchange Participants who successfully complete their respective programs;
20. Assume overall responsibility for complying with all applicable tax treaties and Federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for participants; and
21. Develop health and safety protocols to protect the welfare of all participants; protocols should include plans to address participant safety in relation to any potential global, national, or local health crisis or emergency.

Collection and Maintenance of Program and Participant Data

1. Maintain and regularly update the database of participants and ensure the protection of personally identifiable information (PII). This will be done in consultation with ECA and the assistance of the FY 2021 award recipient;
2. Maintain accurate and up-to-date records on all Congressional interactions related to the Mandela Washington Fellowship;
3. Submit written weekly updates to ECA during the Leadership Institutes and PDEs, as well as required annual and final program reports by the established deadlines and other ad hoc reporting as appropriate;
4. Enroll the participants (both Fellows and American Reciprocal Exchange participants) in the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE), for the duration of the program and issue an ASPE identification card for each participant; and
5. Create and issue DS-2019 forms for the participants' J-1 visas.

Recruitment and Selection

1. Develop and implement recruitment and selection procedures in close coordination with ECA to administer a merit-based open competition process for applicants; work closely with ECA on the development of selection criteria;
2. Develop and implement a recruitment plan and corresponding promotional materials, including, but not limited to, print and online content, social media, radio advertisements, and videos for dissemination to U.S. embassies and consulates to support and enhance their recruitment of Fellows;
3. Manage the selection process for the Fellows, Institute Partners, PDEs, Reciprocal Exchange component, and other alumni opportunities in coordination with ECA;

4. Develop and maintain an online application and applicant and participant database system;
5. In close consultation with ECA, develop and coordinate informational materials and training opportunities targeted for employees of U.S. embassies and consulates involved in the recruitment and selection process; and
6. Provide regular updates to ECA on recruitment and selection outcomes throughout open application and selection periods.

Design, Management, and Monitoring of Leadership Institutes

1. Design, implement, and oversee approximately 28 six-week Leadership Institutes at accredited U.S. colleges and universities throughout the United States. Each Institute will host approximately 25 Fellows;
2. Identify diverse, qualified U.S. host institutions through an open competition, and issue guidance on the development of curricula and other activities to ensure consistency and quality across all Institutes;
3. Organize and implement a virtual or in-person host retreat, after the selection of Institute Partners, and periodic virtual webinars, prior to the start of the Leadership Institutes, for all Institute Partners;
4. Provide and monitor sub-awards to the host institutions to conduct the Leadership Institutes;
5. Manage Fellow placement at host institutions in cohorts by track while maintaining gender, country balance, and diversity to the extent possible;
6. Support and monitor the Institutes through regular communications with the host universities and through site visits;
7. Develop a robust universal leadership curriculum to be utilized by all selected Institutes during their leadership programming focused around a specific leadership methodology, practical leadership skills building, or other theme that can be standardized and incorporated into each Institute's curriculum. The leadership curriculum must include a leadership assessment for each Fellow to analyze their leadership strengths and weaknesses;
8. Coordinate, in conjunction with host institutions, logistical and administrative arrangements for Fellows such as pre-departure information, U.S. airport pick-up and drop-off, Institute orientation, lodging and meals, domestic travel and airline baggage allowances for the Summit, and the disbursement of program funds including travel allowances, in consultation with ECA; and
9. Coordinate, in conjunction with host institutions, logistics related to necessary medical treatment, emergencies, or management of any special circumstances including reasonable accommodations.

Design, Management, and Monitoring of Professional Development Experiences (PDEs)

1. Design and oversee four-week, follow-on PDEs for approximately 100 Fellows selected in advance from among the Mandela Washington Fellows;

2. Manage Fellow placement at PDE sites;
3. Coordinate logistical and administrative arrangements for PDE Fellows such as orientation, lodging, domestic travel to placement sites, and the disbursement of program funds including meal allowances, in consultation with ECA; and
4. Coordinate logistics related to necessary medical treatment, emergencies, or management of any special circumstances including reasonable accommodations.

Design, Management, and Monitoring of the Reciprocal Exchange Component

1. Coordinate and support a Reciprocal Exchange component for a minimum of 100 U.S. professionals to travel to Sub-Saharan Africa;
2. Develop a merit-based recruitment and selection process to identify project proposals that aim to positively contribute to communities in Sub-Saharan Africa and build upon relationships and collaborations established during the U.S. exchange; and
3. Prepare and print certificates of completion for Fellows who successfully complete their respective programs.

Substantial Involvement:

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

1. In collaboration with the recipient, provide advice and assistance to sub-award recipients/Institute staff;
2. Oversee all communications with U.S. embassies and consulates, the Bureau of African Affairs, and the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs regarding the recruitment and selection of participants and other aspects of the Fellowship. The Department of State will be involved in the selection process and will approve final selection of all Fellows. It is anticipated that U.S. embassies will interview semi-finalists and submit a slate of potential finalists;
3. Review and provide input on PDE placement sites and plans;
4. Work with award recipient on a plan for notifying Congressional representatives of the participation of Fellows and Reciprocal Exchange Participants in and from their districts/states and send notification letters;
5. Collaborate on and approve recruitment and outreach plans including the corresponding materials;
6. Approve the final selection of Fellows and Fellow placement as well as the PDE and Reciprocal Exchange Participants and locations;
7. Assist with participant emergencies when necessary, including but not limited to, serious physical and mental health issues and crises, evacuations, and repatriation of remains; and
8. Approve staffing plan structure and any changes that are made.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Program Overview

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State invites proposal submissions for the design and implementation of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders for approximately 700 young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa.

The main components of the FY 2024 Mandela Washington Fellowship will take place in summer 2025 to include six-week intensive Leadership Institutes conducted by approximately 28 U.S. institutions of higher education on their campuses, a Summit for all Fellows, follow-on PDEs for approximately 100 Fellows, a Reciprocal Exchange component for a minimum of 100 U.S. professionals, and follow-on alumni activities.

Should funding become available, the Fellowship may expand its programming to include up to 800 Fellows, placed at 32 accredited U.S. colleges and universities in cohorts of approximately 25. Programming would also expand to include a pre-program English language component for a minimum of 40 Fellows that would take place virtually and in-person before the start of the Fellowship. Applicants should demonstrate they have the capacity to support additional Fellows and an English language component.

Please refer to the NOFO for Fellowship overview. Proposals should describe in detail the capacity of the applicant to fulfill all requirements of the NOFO and POGI. Proposals should include a detailed and specific recruitment and selection plan and offer specific strategies for placement of Fellows at appropriate host institutions and at appropriate PDE hosts. Proposals should provide evidence that the applicant is able to recruit diverse, qualified colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations to host Leadership Institutes on a college or university campus in the United States. Proposals should also address the applicant's regional, exchange, or other expertise that would contribute to successful administration of the program. Accommodations and logistics should also be explained in detail in the proposal for each Fellowship component.

It is essential that proposals provide a full, detailed, and comprehensive narrative describing how the award recipient will achieve the objectives of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for all components (for budget guidance please see Section III. Proposal Contents). The U.S. Department of State will review the proposal based on its completeness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail, and against each of the criteria stipulated in the NOFO.

B. Program Dates

Main activities for the base year of the FY 2024 Mandela Washington Fellowship cooperative agreement will take place in summer 2025. Each Institute should be six weeks in length

(approximately 45 days including the Summit). All Institutes should begin and end on the same dates to coordinate with the timing of the Summit. PDEs must be at least four weeks in duration and start immediately following the Institutes or following the Summit, depending on if the Summit takes place before or after the Institutes.

Pending the availability of funds, the English language component should take place in-person two weeks before the start of the Institutes.

C. Program Administration

Proposals must include a staffing plan that details how staff will fulfill responsibilities. The applicant should propose appropriate staffing levels and structure to effectively implement all proposed activities and initiatives. The staffing plan as well as titles may vary; however, the following positions must be included. The award recipient must designate a project director to oversee all aspects of this program. The project director will coordinate logistical and administrative arrangements; work with ECA to ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process; ensure an appropriate level of consistency among the different host institution programs; oversee Summit, PDEs, Reciprocal Exchanges, and all alumni programming; and oversee the communications plan including the website, among other duties. The project director will serve as ECA's primary point of contact. Staffing must also include distinct and separate positions that will oversee all aspects of the Leadership Institutes, Summit, Reciprocal Exchange component, and alumni programming activities; these components should have at least one designated person who spends 100 percent effort working on each of these aspects of the program.

The award recipient must identify academic directors at each host institution, who will be present throughout the Institutes in their entirety to ensure the continuity, coherence, and integration of all aspects of the six-week program. The academic director will plan and implement the program, oversee the day-to-day management, monitor Fellows, and report to the award recipient. In addition, administrative directors or coordinators should be identified by each host institution to oversee all Fellow support services, including supervision of the program participants and budgetary, logistical, participant health and safety, and other administrative arrangements. Other staff should be designated as appropriate. All staff who work directly with Fellows must be in-person for the duration of the program except in cases when changing political, health, environmental, or other similar circumstances require a suspension or halt of in-person activities.

Data Management: The award recipient should have the capacity to maintain an alumni database to electronically maintain applicant and participant data for all Mandela Washington Fellowship alumni since 2014. All applicant and participant data collected must protect and secure all PII. All statistical information gathered and compiled by the recipient on the program participants should be electronically transferable to ECA in a safe and secure manner.

Therefore, proposals must confirm that the intended system for collecting and storing data on participants protects PII and is compatible with ECA's systems.

D. Mandela Washington Fellows

Each Institute will host approximately 25 Mandela Washington Fellows. The Fellowship aims to include Fellows from all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. A final list of eligible countries will be determined by the U.S. Department of State.

Fellows will be highly motivated young professionals who have demonstrated leadership through academic work, community involvement, professional careers, and extracurricular activities. They will be between the ages of 25 and 35 at the time of application submission and should have a demonstrated interest in at least one of the Fellowship tracks, in learning more about the United States, and in developing skills and a professional network in their field. Every effort should be made to attain gender diversity and to recruit participants who are from non-elite or underprivileged backgrounds, who are from both rural and urban areas, and who have had little or no prior experience in the United States or elsewhere outside their home country. Ideally, all Fellows will have strong English language skills as the program will be conducted entirely in English.

ECA encourages the recruitment of applicants who have disabilities. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to ensuring that Africa's young leaders with disabilities are able to participate fully in the Fellowship through reasonable accommodation and support. The award recipient will be responsible for working with the host institutions to provide reasonable accommodations that will allow for a full and engaging experience for all Fellows during the Leadership Institutes.

E. Recruitment and Outreach

Recruitment for the Mandela Washington Fellowship should be conducted through an open, merit-based competition. In addition to planning for the recruitment of applicants to the Mandela Washington Fellowship, proposals should include a comprehensive outreach plan to communicate program information and demonstrate the significance of the Mandela Washington Fellowship. A detailed plan for recruitment and outreach should include:

- Recruitment materials for dissemination to U.S. embassies and consulates to support and enhance their recruitment of Fellows, including, but not limited to, print and online content, social media content, radio advertisements, and videos. All recruitment materials should be accessible by design. Additionally, applicants should demonstrate the ability to translate a limited number of recruitment materials into French and Portuguese;
- Communications guidance materials for exchange participants and partners of the

Mandela Washington Fellowship;

- General outreach materials including but not limited to brochures, one pagers and/or fact sheets, announcements, and significant experience or outcome stories; outreach materials should be accessible by design and include print and virtual content;
- Community outreach materials to educate U.S. citizens on the Mandela Washington Fellowship, particularly those who will interact with Fellows during the Institutes, Summit, and PDEs;
- A strategy for managing the social media assets of the Fellowship to regularly disseminate information about applications (when applicable), program significance, and larger YALI program initiatives (when applicable). ECA must be given administrative access to such accounts and will provide oversight;
- A roadmap for collecting, analyzing, reporting, maintaining, and presenting impact data from Mandela Washington Fellowship partners and alumni. Special emphasis should be given to data visualization;
- Providing analytic information and reports about all digital media assets;
- Development of Congressional notification letters and accompanying promotional inserts for U.S. Members of Congress, highlighting the U.S. institutions, organizations, and individuals in their respective state or district who are participating in Fellowship activities, as well as Reciprocal Exchange Participants;
- Management of outreach in preparation for and during the Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit in collaboration with ECA, including the program office and the Public Affairs and Strategic Communications staff, as well as interagency partners;
- Appropriate staffing levels and structure to effectively implement all proposed activities and initiatives; and
- Details on how all activities and materials will comply with all current and future guidance and regulations from ECA's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications.

The award recipient will also be responsible for maintaining the Mandela Washington Fellowship website and all its components in a dynamic and interactive manner, including the private Fellowship Portal. At a minimum, the website should:

- Be updated regularly and include relevant Mandela Washington Fellowship information including overview, mission, and goals of the Fellowship;
- Maintain alignment with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web standards for accessibility and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act;
- Highlight accomplishments, experiences, influence, and diversity of current and past program participants and partners;
- Provide information about current application and partnership opportunities;
- Include a link to the online application platform for Fellowship applicants (as referenced in section F. Fellow Application Screening and Selection Process, below).

- Maintain a page about the Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit;
- Maintain a page about any alumni and follow-on activities available to eligible Fellowship and Reciprocal Exchange alumni;
- Maintain and update a public database of all past and current Fellows;
- Maintain a directory of all past and current program partners; and
- Provide a secure Fellowship Portal to contain additional information about the Fellowship. The Fellowship Portal should be accessible to Fellowship and Reciprocal Exchange Alumni and selected Fellowship finalists (and alternates, as necessary.)

Applicants are encouraged to provide cost share towards recruitment and outreach each year.

All print and online materials provided to or created for dissemination to applicants, participants, program partners, U.S. government agencies, including U.S. embassies and consulates, and other entities should be submitted for ECA review and approval before distribution. Prior to ECA review, all print and online materials should be carefully drafted, edited, and revised to meet standards commensurate with the prestige and character of the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

Any communication with U.S. government agencies or entities, including U.S. Members of Congress, involving the Mandela Washington Fellowship should be cleared by ECA before dissemination.

F. Fellow Application Screening and Selection Process

The award recipient must have a comprehensive and detailed selection plan that includes specific strategies for placement of all Fellows at appropriate host institutions. The recipient should design an application form that will be posted on the independent program website (see section E. Recruitment and Outreach). At minimum, the Mandela Washington Fellowship application form should collect essay responses, a rank order list of each applicant's preferred Institute theme, and demographic information. The application form should include an essay prompt requiring each applicant to explain how they will use the experience upon their return home. The Fellowship application form should include an opportunity for applicants to apply for PDEs (see section I. Summit for more information). The online application platform should be integrated with an online platform for participant selection (see below).

Each eligible applicant must:

- Be a citizen of and reside in an eligible sub-Saharan African country. Persons holding U.S. citizenship or permanent residency are ineligible;
- Speak, read, and write proficiently in English;
- Be aged 25-35 at the time of application submission;
- Have a proven record of leadership and accomplishment in business or entrepreneurship, civic engagement, or public/government service;

- Demonstrate a commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship; and
- Be committed to return to Sub-Saharan Africa and contribute skills and talents to build and serve their communities.

ECA welcomes innovative proposals for a merit-based selection process. The award recipient should conduct a technical review of all applications received to narrow the pool of viable applications for further review stages as part of a multi-stage process. The technical review should include checks for eligibility, authenticity, and completeness, including a plan for identifying and managing application essays that are plagiarized or generated using artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Proposals should also explore the potential use of AI tools to assist with the technical review process and following review stages as appropriate and reasonable. The recipient should outline its strategy to staff and/or recruit reviewers and use a transparent, merit-based review process, with clearly identified criteria for assessing and assigning scores to applications. Professionals engaged in fields relevant to the program such as African or other international affairs, business leadership, public management, and education may be recruited to assist with the reading and evaluation of applications, with a majority of readers based in the United States. U.S. embassies and consulates must be given access to the online application for conducting interviews and adding final comments. U.S. embassies and consulates should receive final reader scores no later than late November each year. ECA will provide final approval of the selection of Fellows. An outline of this process and a draft application form should be submitted in the proposal appendices.

An online platform should be used to facilitate the selection process. The online selection platform should:

- Allow multiple configurations of user accounts for various stakeholders to view applications and enter scores, as relevant, including but not limited to independent evaluators, support staff at U.S. missions abroad, and ECA staff;
- Allow users at U.S. missions abroad to sort, filter, and bulk download applications based on relevant applicant demographic categories and reader scores; and
- Provide a dashboard view and/or downloadable reports for select users to view application statistics including application numbers by citizenship and resident country and basic demographic information.

G. Training for U.S. Embassy and Consulate Stakeholders

The award recipient will collaborate closely with the U.S. Department of State to plan and implement a training event for approximately 30 employees of U.S. missions abroad who will support outreach, recruitment, selection, Pre-Departure Orientation activities, and alumni activities (see sections E. Recruitment and Outreach, F. Fellow Application Screening and Selection Process, and L. Logistical Considerations, respectively).

The event should:

- Take place over the course of two to three days;
- Include appropriate interactive workshops and seminars for both new and experienced Fellowship stakeholders at U.S. embassies and consulates, including a thorough overview of relevant policies and procedures, time to debrief and share best practices, and training activities for relevant online systems and platforms;
- Provide opportunities for attendees to interact and share experiences and best practices with each other, both formally and informally; and
- Provide event space and all housing and meal arrangements for registered attendees (U.S. missions abroad will be responsible for airfare costs).

Please note while the U.S. Department of State will collaborate closely with the award recipient in the planning and implementation of this event, including selecting the dates and location for the event, the recipient will have primary responsibility for event planning and implementation, and meeting the objectives outlined above.

H. Leadership Institutes

Please refer to NOFO section A.3. Overview of the Leadership Institutes. Proposals should provide evidence that the applicant is able to recruit diverse, qualified U.S. colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations to host Leadership Institutes on a college or university campus in the United States. Particular effort should be made to recruit host institutions that represent the diversity of U.S. higher education, including minority-serving institutions such as HBCUs and HSIs, state colleges and universities, and institutions located in underserved geographic locations, including rural and economically less advantaged communities. Proposals should also address the applicant's regional, exchange, or other expertise that would contribute to successful administration of the program.

The Leadership Institutes should:

- Consist of a carefully integrated series of practical academic content that considers lesson plans, appropriate guest speakers, engaging discussions, individual and group classroom activities, and reading assignments. Sessions should be interactive and allow ample time for the exchange of views among Fellows and presenters. Fellows should be exposed to a variety of presenters representing diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and occupational fields on the topics and issues to be explored;
- Incorporate site visits that are relevant and complementary to the practical academic content. Locations may include government offices (meetings with executive representatives, legislators, and judicial representatives), think tanks, non-governmental organizations, historical sites, schools, businesses, places of worship, museums, newspapers, etc. Any engagement with federal government agencies in the Washington, DC area must receive prior clearance and approval from ECA;

- Include at least one leadership training session per week as part of a robust universal Leadership curriculum implemented across all three Institute tracks. The leadership component should be interactive and provide Fellows with basic leadership skills, and consist of group discussions, workshops, and exercises that focus on the topics listed in the NOFO;
- Include up to 15 hours of hands-on community service and/or volunteer activities during the six-week program with a local nonprofit or community organization. The community service component should be related to the Institute track, theme, or sub-theme and should include an introduction to volunteerism in the United States and allow time for Fellows to debrief after each service activity;
- Include cultural exchange activities that expose Fellows to U.S. traditions and diverse cultures in the United States such as Fourth of July celebrations, sports games, and diverse community events. ECA encourages organized optional cultural and weekend activities (such as group nights at the theater, concerts, sporting events, and city tours) that take place in person or virtually to give Fellows the opportunity to experience the diversity of the United States, while fostering group cohesion;
- Offer some free time for pursuing individual interests, unstructured networking and socializing with Fellow participants and American students, exercising, and rest. The program schedule should also include adequate time for reading and preparation of academic assignments;
- Include a structured way for Fellows to network and present on their country's history and culture to diverse groups of Americans;
- Cover all logistics including providing Fellows with administrative and academic orientations to the United States and to the host institution campus. Fellows should be fully briefed on the administrative details of the program, including campus and local resources, security, medical issues, houses of worship, and meals. It is expected that Fellows have routine access to program staff for program-related inquiries;
- Include an academic orientation that will provide Fellows with a concise overview of the Institute, including principal objectives and major track themes and subthemes. The academic director should also use this opportunity to discuss guidelines for class participation that encourage active participation by all class members, respect for the views and identities of other participants, concise comments and questions that keep the participants on-topic, and other ground rules that will promote effective class discussion throughout the program; and
- Provide all transportation, housing, and meal arrangements for the Fellows.

I. Summit

Please refer to NOFO section A.5. Overview of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit. The Summit should:

- Take place over the course of three to four days and may include one day for networking;
- Feature inspirational, distinguished American leaders and/or other prominent leaders as plenary or other speakers, who will be identified, recruited and confirmed by the recipient, with ample lead time prior to the Summit;
- Allow Fellows from all Institutes to interact and share experiences with each other, both formally and informally;
- Incorporate discussions or interactive sessions on cross-cultural issues and relevant topics;
- Include appropriate workshops and seminars that further complement and reinforce the academic themes explored during the Institute;
- Allow Fellows the opportunity to interact with senior U.S. government, business, and civic leaders and members of the diplomatic community;
- Provide opportunities for staff from U.S. host institutions to network and learn best practices from one another;
- Address alumni and follow-on activities, in consultation with ECA and other U.S. government agencies, for all Fellows;
- Host a briefing or debriefing session for host Institute staff at the end of the Summit; and
- Provide event space and all housing and meal arrangements for Fellows and Institute staff.

Please note while the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. government representatives will collaborate closely with the award recipient in the planning and implementation of this Summit, the recipient will have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, recruiting and confirming Summit speakers well in advance of the event, and meeting the objectives outlined above.

J. Professional Development Experiences (PDEs)

Please refer to NOFO section A.4. Overview of the Professional Development Experience. Proposals should include a detailed and specific recruitment and selection plan and offer specific strategies for placement of Fellows at appropriate PDE hosts.

The PDEs should:

- Be four weeks long; PDE Fellows should also have the option to complete an extended virtual experience or project with the U.S. host;
- Take place immediately following the Summit or immediately following the Leadership Institutes, if the Summit takes place before Institutes;
- Take place at a relevant NGO, business, university, or governmental agency in the

United States and represent a diverse set of experiences;
- Be substantive and appropriate and tie into the Fellow's Institute track, theme or professional interest;
- Be planned and implemented for approximately 100 of the Fellows; each host organization should host only one or in exceptional cases two Fellows per PDE cohort. In very limited cases, host organizations with multiple offices may host up to three Fellows in different cities;
- Encourage opportunities for PDE Fellows and host organizations in the same area to network during the PDEs;
- Include all housing and meal arrangements and transportation requirements; and
- Include at least one U.S. mentor/supervisor at the host organization site who will oversee and monitor the PDE Fellow.

K. Reciprocal Exchange Component

The Reciprocal Exchange component should:

- Provide small grants for a minimum of 100 U.S. professionals to travel to sub-Saharan African countries for up to 30 days to continue collaborative work with Mandela Washington Fellows from all cohorts since 2014. Projects may include more than one U.S. participant. Hybrid collaborations may be permissible in lieu of U.S. participant travel to Sub-Saharan Africa; and
- Provide opportunities for Americans and young African leaders to form lasting partnerships, expand markets and networks, and increase mutual understanding between the United States and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These opportunities could include virtual engagement pre- or post-travel to enhance the effects of the in-person exchange.

Proposals should include a detailed and specific outreach and selection plan for the Reciprocal Exchange component. The recipient must develop a competitive and merit-based application process that adheres to the following criteria:

- U.S. professionals must be U.S. citizens currently living in the United States and must not have previously received more than two Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange award(s).
- Fellows, who host and partner with the U.S. participants, must be considered alumni of the Fellowship by the U.S. Department of State and must not have previously received more than two Reciprocal Exchange award(s).
- Successful applications to the Reciprocal Exchange component should:
    - Describe the anticipated effect(s) on the Fellow's home institution, community, and/or country;
    - Describe the anticipated effect(s) on the U.S. professional's home organization

and community;
- Demonstrate joint engagement between the Fellow and U.S. professional in project design and implementation;
- Clearly articulate the need for travel by the U.S. professional to support the project or the need for hybrid implementation; and
- Provide measurable goals and clearly specify project activities during travel.

The award recipient should conduct a technical review of all applications received for eligibility and completeness. The award recipient should use a transparent, merit-based review process, with clearly identified criteria for assessing the applications. An applicant list must be sent to U.S. embassies in-country for the approval of final project locations and dates. ECA will provide final approval of participants.

L. Logistical Considerations

- The recipient should plan to **process participant forms** including, but not limited to, Medical Forms, program Terms and Conditions, and Media Release Forms, among others, which will be signed by participants. The recipient should notify ECA of any potential issues or concerns.
- **Housing and meal arrangements** are an important dimension of program planning and must be discussed in detail in the proposal. In general, during the six-week Leadership Institutes, Fellows should be housed in university housing or at a nearby extended stay hotel. The proposal should indicate options for housing, including food options accommodating religious and other dietary restrictions. If possible, Fellows should have access to kitchen facilities, either in their own rooms or in a common area. A combination of a cash allowance for food, which will permit Fellows to eat at local restaurants or purchase groceries, combined with a cafeteria meal plan, is strongly recommended. During the PDEs, appropriate housing and meals must also be arranged. During the Institutes and PDEs, housing should be easily accessible to the classroom and/or PDE site and, ideally, within walking distance. To the extent permitted by the budget, Fellows may receive up to the U.S. government per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses at the various program locales. See http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem for current U.S. government per diem rates.
- **Participant health and safety** is an ECA priority. The recipient should take into account the health, safety, and welfare of participants at all times during the program. This includes assisting participants to understand the ECA-sponsored ASPE plan and to navigate the complex healthcare system in the United States. The recipient and sub-recipients should also help participants understand and navigate national, state, local, and campus policies as they relate to any public health issues.
- **Pre-Departure Orientations** (PDOs) will be organized for all participants with both virtual and in-person components. The recipient should host a PDO webinar series to prepare all participants for the Fellowship. Topics may include, but are not limited to,

program terms and conditions, setting expectations, diversity and inclusion, cross-cultural adjustment, health and safety guidelines and practices, and logistics. If conditions allow, U.S. embassies and consulates will also provide at least one day of in-person content, in conjunction with participant visa interviews, prior to Fellows' arrival in the United States. The recipient will be responsible for developing materials and ensuring they are made available to Fellows and U.S. embassies and consulates in ample time before the start of the Institutes.

- The recipient is responsible for disbursing at least $200 and up to $400 as a travel allowance to each Fellow to support them during their travel to and from the United States. Most Fellows will receive the $200 travel stipend.
- **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation** should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that any academic, administrative, and personnel problems are identified and acted upon promptly during the Institutes, and to measure program performance as outlined in NOFO section D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The award recipient will deliver and administer pre-program (baseline), post-program, and alumni surveys. At the conclusion of the Institutes, recipients should ensure that Fellows have time reserved to complete the post-program survey. Additionally, the recipient will be responsible for conducting alumni surveys as determined in consultation with ECA. Please note, ECA intends to administer alumni surveys at one, three, five, and ten years after program completion to disseminate and collect impact information from all ECA alumni. All four alumni surveys will be hosted, administered, and analyzed on ECA's survey platform. The award recipient will be responsible for coordinating with ECA on any alumni surveys to minimize duplicative questions and potential survey fatigue.

Please note: All Fellows are required to return to their home countries following the conclusion of the program (either after the Summit or PDEs). The J-1 visa allows for a 30-day travel period, commonly referred to as the grace period, following the conclusion of exchange program activities. If a participant chooses to remain in the United States for any or all of the grace period, it is at their own expense. Fellows should be permitted to travel within the United States during their Institutes or PDEs as long as they attend all required activities and receive the necessary approval to travel. Family or friends may be permitted to visit the Fellows while the latter are in residence at the host institution or PDE placement, at the discretion of the award recipient and in consultation with ECA, provided that such visits will not prove disruptive to the program. At no time will family or friends be permitted to accompany the participants during scheduled program activities, whether such activities are mandatory or optional.

M. Alumni/Follow-on Activities

Follow-on activities should be well developed, but also remain flexible enough to allow for changes based on the needs of the participants and funding. Alumni activities should be financed using the line item budgeted for follow-on activities. Applicants are encouraged to

provide significant cost share towards alumni engagement activities each year.

Proposals should include minimally the following alumni opportunities:

- An application-based grant component encouraging alumni to implement projects developed during, prior to, or following the U.S. exchange component that address issues of strategic importance in the alumni's home community;
- An application-based small grant component advancing the spirit and legacy of Nelson Mandela through community-based volunteer activities organized by alumni (currently the Mandela Day Service Grants);
- An application-based impact award recognizing a member of the Fellowship alumni network who embodies the tenets of servant leadership and advocates on behalf of the Fellowship (currently the Leadership Impact Award);
- A digital engagement plan to provide alumni with access to online resources, databases, and opportunities to further their professional development;
- An opportunity allowing alumni to travel and engage with experts at events on themes relevant to their business, organization, or profession;
- An application-based grant supporting follow-on work of American Reciprocal Exchange alumni in the United States; and
- Funds reserved for on-demand alumni programming, to be used at ECA's discretion.

The U.S. Department of State will facilitate continued engagement by program participants in alumni activities. The Fellows should return home with new ideas, expanded contacts, and action plans for future months. ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs will work with the Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs and other government agencies to facilitate follow-on communication and activities with participants and with U.S. missions abroad.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner.

Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word

- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) - 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.
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," (only required for organizations if its representations and certifications have not been completed in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). If an organization is exempt from registering in SAM.gov, then it would still need to provide the form as part of its application.)
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), form 990 Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only required for organizations that engage in lobbying activities), etc.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
    a. Number and description of participants
    b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall significance)
    c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
    d. Fields covered
    e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative
In twenty double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring)
4. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

1. Detailed Budget
   - All budget guidelines must be followed. The budget should indicate any cost sharing in the form of in-kind or cash contributions to the program from sources other than the U.S. Department of State. See PSI in the Solicitation Package for information on cost sharing and the cost of audits.
   - Please be sure to include a Summary Budget on a separate page before the Detailed Budget. The Summary Budget should clearly indicate the number of program participants and provide an overall unit cost per participant, as well as a unit cost breakdown by program and administrative costs. Please note the summary budget includes estimated cost projections for the base year and non-competitive continuation (NCC) years of the award. You are not required to provide a detailed budget for the NCC until ECA decides to exercise the non-competitive continuations, pending the availability of funds and successful performance.
   - Following the Detailed Budget, please include a Budget Narrative that concisely explains how costs were calculated and the rationale for including them in the budget. The Budget Narrative should also explain costs for sub-recipients. Please make note of the following in the Budget Narrative:
     - If you do not have an established negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), please explain what costs are excluded when calculating the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTD.C.) base in accordance with 2 CFR 200.68 and 2 CFR 200.414.
     - List and explain the participant support costs.
   - Applicant institutions should attempt to maximize cost-sharing throughout the program by enlisting the support of the U.S. private sector, including foundations and corporations.
   - The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.
   - Proposals should include a detailed budget for anticipated funding that totals

approximately $17,885,000 for approximately 700 Fellows, placed at approximately 28 Institutes.

2. Calendar of activities and sample syllabus
3. Letters of endorsement
4. Resumes and CVs (resumes of all staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
5. First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

IV. OTHER AWARD INFORMATION

Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

ECA places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of 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 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.

V. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The solicitation document indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline.** For further information regarding this program, call Jessica Zanikos at (202) 374-6991, ECA/A/E/USS; email: ZanikosJL@state.gov.