Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):
FY 2024 Survey of International Educational Exchange Activity in the United States
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0009730
Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.432
Key Date/Application Deadline: June 29, 2023

Executive Summary: The Office of Global Educational Programs in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), announces an open competition for the FY 2024 Survey of International Educational Exchange Activity in the United States. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to conduct a comprehensive statistical survey (census) of foreign nationals enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions, foreign scholars at U.S. institutions, and U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit and to collaborate with national agencies, country representatives, and academic mobility researchers from around the world to collect and report accurate, timely and comprehensive data on global student mobility.

Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Authority
Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

A.2. Purpose
International educational exchange is sat the intersection of diplomacy, education, innovation, industry and workforce development. Contributing nearly $32 billion to the U.S. economy annually, international students also contribute to U.S. classrooms and communities and support future business, scientific, cultural, and diplomatic ties with the United States.

American students who study abroad build intercultural and professional skills and networks, positioning themselves to be leaders in an increasingly interconnected world. In order to assess and analyze international educational exchange to and from the United States, the recipient organization, in consultation with ECA, will administer a series of sequential surveys to accredited U.S. higher education institutions focusing on four main sectors: 1) foreign students, 2) foreign scholars, 3) U.S. students studying overseas in credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs, and 4) foreign enrollees in intensive English language programs in the United States. The recipient should also include data on numbers of foreign students enrolled at minority serving institutions and community colleges. The recipient may partner with relevant national agencies and/or academic mobility researchers to collect and report accurate and timely data on global student mobility, providing an important comparison point for U.S.-focused educational exchange activity.

A requirement for the execution of this survey is collaborating, under ECA's guidance, with the U.S. Department of State's EducationUSA network, which promotes U.S. higher education in countries around the world. This includes sharing of data to include numbers of students enrolled at U.S. institutions by state, academic level and field of study, with EducationUSA Program Officers, Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and EducationUSA advising centers. EducationUSA representatives may provide feedback and verification on country specific mobility data and support collection of data on foreign student perceptions of study abroad. EducationUSA centers operate in variety of physical locations including U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright commissions, binational centers, non-governmental organizations, universities and libraries. A complete list of centers is located at http://educationusa.state.gov. The recipient should similarly collaborate with the U.S. Department of State's USA Study Abroad programs and initiatives as relevant. More information is available at http://studyabroad.state.gov.

A.3. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Proposals should include a careful description of the methodology to be used to obtain the data called for in this solicitation. Applicant organizations should include in their proposals an efficient and economical approach to gathering data, and how they will ensure an adequate response rate from institutions surveyed.

Applicants should propose a detailed approach to ensure that relevant data is publicly accessible to U.S. and foreign government stakeholders, U.S. higher education partners, international education researchers, and the press. Since the surveys are publicly funded, primary data and associated analyses must be made available to the public at no charge with as wide a distribution as possible and must carry all relevant branding and association with the U.S. Government as described in ECA's Communications Guidance. Applicants should outline and provide a reasonable justification for any data that will not be made freely and widely available in its proposal.

Under this award, the recipient organization should consult with ECA prior to data publication regarding the survey's accessibility to the general public in electronic and print media. Applicant organizations may charge reasonable fees for distribution of printed reports and access to detailed and individualized reports that require time-intensive research in order to respond. Fees may also be charged to cover costs associated with convening conferences or workshops on student mobility. Any fees charged for providing this information and proceeds from sales of electronic or print materials, as well as registration fees, should be considered program income.

Applicant organizations are also encouraged to include in their proposals information about their capacity to carry out, at the request of ECA, electronic surveys that would focus on specific critical issues in international educational exchange that may arise during the period in which census data is being conducted for the larger survey. ECA reserves the right to determine the focus of reporting based on U.S. foreign policy goals.

ECA seeks a clear presentation and rigorous analysis of the data collected that will draw conclusions about trends in foreign student enrollments, numbers of foreign scholars on U.S. campuses and U.S. students studying abroad that can be used to guide policy discussions for both government and the educational community.

Collection of data regarding U.S. study abroad participation should address the demographic composition in a detailed manner, and should include participation by program length, student demographics, destination, home institution, field of study and academic level. The recipient must include in its report data about the number of U.S. students studying abroad in non-credit-bearing programs and credit-bearing programs of all types during 2022/2023 by academic year (fall 2022 through summer 2023), semester (fall 2022 or spring 2023), short-term (dates in fall 2022 through summer 2023) and summer (2023). To the extent possible, reporting on the composition of U.S. study abroad should include breakdowns by program length, student profile, destination, home institution, field of study and academic level. Proposals should describe the methodology that will be used to collect the data and how the material will be analyzed and presented to the public. The recipient should consult with ECA's USA Study Abroad Branch on potential special topics to highlight for reporting the data on U.S. study abroad participation rates.

To provide for a more detailed analysis and cross tabulation of the characteristics of foreign students and scholars studying in the United States, individual student and scholar profile data should also be collected. The survey should identify the number of foreign students and scholars studying, conducting research, and/or teaching at all accredited universities and colleges in the United States during the 2023/2024 academic year (fall 2023 through summer 2024). This data should include country-specific aggregate information that should list the

numbers of foreign students from a given country enrolled for academic credit in individual U.S. institutions and foreign scholars affiliated with U.S. institutions, which should include scholars conducting research and/or lecturing. The report should specifically include information about first-time enrollments or newly enrolled international students to facilitate the analysis of enrollment trends. In your proposal, please set forth the definitions of students and scholars according to visa type and category.

Scholarly analyses of survey data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included in the final report, which will be read by policymakers in government, the higher education community, and the private and nonprofit sectors, as well as practitioners in the field of international educational exchange. The proposal should include a thorough plan to make data and analyses available widely on-line and through national and educational media organizations. The report should include a narrative on the mechanics and uses of data analysis, highlighting how conclusions can be drawn from the data collected, the limitations of the data, and how the data can be of benefit to the educational institutions that supply it; for example, in advocacy for campus-wide international education strategy development or as a international recruiting or analytical tool. Applicants should include with the proposal a complete list of proposed chapter headings and sample analyses.

Proposals must include plans to establish an advisory board to assist in identifying and framing policy issues for consideration by policy makers. Board members would likely be drawn from a broad range of educational associations and organizations and would be appointed in consultation with ECA. Members should meet at least once a year and would provide perspectives on topics related to the internationalization of higher education. ECA representatives should be invited to attend advisory board meetings.

The proposal should explain the survey's counting methodology, the benefits of the chosen methodology versus other methods, and what potential gaps or discrepancies might be expected; it should also describe how the methodology will be explained to institutions invited to respond to the survey. Proposals should also include how proposed methodology will build on previously available analyses of longitudinal data and should show how proposed methodology can be included in a comparison of data over time. Proposals should reflect established policies, procedures, and standards regarding data collection, security and privacy protection, data inventories, data quality control, data access, and data sharing and dissemination.

Proposals should explain how institutions should respond to the survey regarding international students and scholars who are enrolled or affiliated but are not sponsored by the respective institutions. Proposals should also explain how institutions should respond to the survey regarding students whom they sponsor but who have employment authorization (such as F-1 Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training, and J-1 Academic Training) and

who are not currently enrolled. In addition, proposals should explain how fields of study will be defined to ensure, to the extent possible, consistent reporting by responding institutions.

ECA also encourages applicants to consider reporting on other topics of current interest in the final report, to be determined in coordination with ECA, such as:

1) How efforts of other countries to attract foreign students may have affected student flows to the United States;
2) How political and economic trends in other countries are reflected in student flows to the United States;
3) How economic trends in the United States, including tuition levels, the cost of living, or the relative strength of the U.S. dollar may have affected student flows to the United States;
4) The impact of international students and scholars and/or of U.S. study abroad on the academic offerings of U.S. institutions and departments;
5) The number of international students participating in non-degree, exchange or inbound study-abroad programs on U.S. campuses as full-time, non-matriculated undergraduate or graduate students while continuing to be enrolled in their home institution;
6) The number of international students taking part in U.S. study abroad programs overseas;
7) Current trends in study abroad programming, for example including length, destination, student profile, academic level, and/or field of study of program;
8) The percentage of graduating students who have participated in short-term or long-term study abroad programs, broken down by state, region, institution type or other factors;
9) U.S. institutions' activities to educate foreign students outside of the United States, through overseas campuses or distance education programs or other avenues, as these activities should not be counted or rolled up in the total figures of international students enrolled at U.S. higher education institutions described above;
10) The numbers of foreign students studying in intensive English language programs in the United States;
11) The geographic distribution of international students in the United States in comparison with the distribution of U.S. students and these two categories combined (total student populations);
12) The number of U.S. students directly enrolling and pursuing degree programs in institutions of higher education outside of the United States, in selected countries.

In addition to the above, proposals should explain how the following activities might be undertaken:

- Use SEVIS data (if available) to conduct policy-relevant analysis of emerging issues in consultation with ECA and to provide trend data pertaining to international students in the United States (for example, key places of origin, including countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East).
- Monitor secondary source material and reporting and/or conduct ad hoc surveys to provide context on global student mobility trends and international students' attitudes toward U.S. higher education. Topics might include a study of international students from key places of origin to determine their attitudes toward the United States and their perceptions of study in the United States, or an overseas survey of the attitudes and perceptions of international students enrolled in U.S. branch campuses in selected countries.
- Provide analysis on higher education trends in key regions as supported by survey data.
- Share survey data and reports as contributions to broader global mobility reports such as, but not limited to, Project Atlas.

The proposal should include a strategic communications plan for the launch of the report data during International Education Week. The recipient is charged with conducting a large public event to highlight the survey findings, underscore the value of international student mobility, and the benefits of U.S. study abroad programming. Through substantive collaboration with ECA, the recipient will conduct an event that shares key survey findings, underscores the value of international educational exchange research, and the data's practical use considering increased global competition to enroll international students. This event may be virtual.

In addition to launching the survey data, the strategic communications plan should outline how the applicant will conduct domestic outreach to U.S. higher education institutions to maximize the number of institutions receiving and completing the surveys. The applicant may wish to include engagement with ECA's EducationUSA and U.S. Study Abroad Branches to expand its domestic outreach efforts to institutions currently not receiving or reporting on the relevant populations. The proposal appendices may include a list of suggested domestic and international outreach events and conferences to broaden the network of survey recipients.

A.4. Recipient Responsibilities

The recipient's activities and responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:

1. Development of surveys and other analytical tools/methods to collect data on four main sectors: 1) foreign students in the U.S., 2) foreign scholars in the U.S., 3) U.S. students studying overseas in credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs, and 4) foreign enrollees in intensive English language programs in the United States;

2. Preparation and submission of a comprehensive project timeline to the program office for approval;
3. Collection, analysis and presentation of data on international students and scholars and on U.S. study abroad participants;
4. Produce a publication and present data survey results clearly and succinctly in print and electronic media; scholarly analyses of survey data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included, taking into consideration a wide range of prospective readers and policy-makers in government, academia, and private and nonprofit sectors;
5. Implement the collection and analysis of detailed individual-level data on international students studying in the United States to allow for cross-tabulations by place of origin, field of study, academic level, and other relevant variables;
6. Enhance data analysis by using SEVIS data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security if available, to conduct policy-relevant analysis of emerging issues in consultation with ECA and to provide trend data pertaining to international students in the United States;
7. Report on foreign students' use of opportunities such as Optional Practical Training;
8. Report on trends in Intensive English Language program enrollments by foreign students in the United States;
9. Report on participation rates by U.S. students and international students with disabilities;
10. Report on higher education trends overseas on a regional basis, following U.S. Department of State-defined overseas regional definitions, in addition to individual country data, and on country-by-country rankings according to academic level and type of institution, in consultation with ECA;
11. Propose suggestions for additional data collection and research for ECA approval, including on particular countries or regions, sub-populations of students, academic fields, unique challenges or opportunities, or other topics of current importance to one or more of the four surveys and related reporting;
12. Monitor and report on trends in global student mobility and how these trends affect student and scholar mobility to and from the United States, and utilize the results of the four surveys to contribute to broader reporting on global student and scholar mobility data and trends, including, but not limited to, Project Atlas, a partnership of public and private national level higher education data collection agencies, with the Institute of International Education serving as the secretariat;
13. Convene, in consultation with ECA, an Advisory Board consisting of ECA representatives and appropriate educational organizations to identify and frame policy issues that may need to be addressed by policymakers or that may have ramifications for the survey;
14. Ensure the utility and accessibility of data and reports for use by U.S. Department of State staff and EducationUSA partners;
15. Conduct expanded domestic and media outreach to ensure that data and reports are broadly accessible to key stakeholders and the public;

16. Propose actions to maximize engagement with U.S. higher education institutions to enhance the total number of institutions submitting data for analysis and reporting;
17. Conduct a public event, in coordination with ECA, to announce survey results timed to coincide with the opening of International Education Week in November 2024;
18. Develop a communications plan specific to International Education Week, in close consultation with the ECA program office and public affairs team, that addresses press engagement before, during, and after the data release;
19. Ensure program branding and attribution for all presentations and on all websites, social media, and press according to ECA's Communications Guidance, and
20. After consultation with ECA, deliver an agreed upon number of the printed survey reports to ECA for distribution and use as the Bureau deems appropriate by January 31, 2025.

A.5. Substantial Involvement

In a cooperative agreement, the Department's Office of Global Educational Programs is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. As part of routine monitoring the program office will provide policy guidance to the award recipient and participate in recipient meetings with relevant exchange organization pertaining to educational exchange activity.

The program offices substantial involvement in this award includes:

1. The facilitation of communications with EducationUSA Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and advisers, U.S. embassies, and offices within the U.S. Department of State, related to the annual dissemination of related data and reports;
2. Review and approval the recipient's public presentations and reports, survey content, and other relevant materials before dissemination;
3. Review and approval of the overarching data collection survey plan, timeline, and dissemination and/or communications strategy.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A.5. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.
Fiscal Year Funds: 2024
Approximate Total Funding: $500,000, pending the availability of funds
Approximate Number of Awards: 1
Approximate Average Award: $500,000 pending the availability of funds
Minimum "Floor" of Award: None
Maximum "Ceiling" of Award: $500,000 pending the availability of funds
Anticipated Award Date: October 1, 2023, pending the availability of funds
Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2025

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

The Department reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

U.S. public and private academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons, and other not-for-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D.3. and D.5. below).

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements

The following additional eligibility requirements apply to this NOFO announcement:

a.) ECA's grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to $130,000 in ECA funding. ECA anticipates making one grant/cooperative agreement, in an amount of $500,000 to support all costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

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

c.) 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.

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

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

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

D.1. Solicitation Package Location

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

D.2. Content and Form of Submission

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.15. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3. Unique Entity Identifier Number

You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access http://www.dnb.com or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in

the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

D.4. Required Proposal Elements

All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative. The proposal narrative should be no more than 20 pages.

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

All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

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. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

D.6. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

Prior to making a Federal Assistance award over $250,000, the Federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIIS, they can comment on any information about its organization that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

D.7. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic

All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic 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 SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.8. For Informational Purposes Only - Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

ECA places critically important emphases 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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.9. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to ECA's authorizing legislation, "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, geographic location, education, income, socio-economic status, and other diversity dimensions, that may hinder inclusion. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. Programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and

abroad. Please refer to the "Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility" review criterion of this document for more information on how this will be reviewed as a part of any application. Please also refer to the "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility" section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating DEIA into the proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," ECA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Distinct from grants or cooperative agreement monitoring and participant monitoring, performance monitoring is designed to assess progress against a program's goals and objectives. A performance monitoring framework is vital to tracking the direction, pace, and magnitude of change that result from ECA programs.

ECA created the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework to measure the performance of ECA programs. **The MODE Framework provides standard indicators and corresponding survey questions to ensure consistent measures across all ECA programs.**

Due to the nature of the award, this activity is not subject to the MODE Framework requirements. However, it is required that the applicant provide confirmation that their organization will support the Bureau's overall performance monitoring efforts as necessary. The applicant should also include a plan for measuring their success in achieving the stated objectives of the ECA funded activity.

D.11. Virtual Exchange Component

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

D.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients
All ECA Recipients must adhere to the requirements in ECA's Communications Guidance on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.13. Budget Format
Applicants must submit SF-424A – "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget, a detailed budget, and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.13.a. Allowable costs for the program include the following:
1) Salaries and fringe benefits; travel and per diem;
2) Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, etc.;
3) Overhead expenses and auditing costs

D.14. Key Personnel
ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/).

D.15. Application Deadline and Method of Submission
Application Deadline Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023
Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Search Grants" portion of the system.

D.16. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures
Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

D.16.a. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov
Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

D.16.b. How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov
For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html

D.16.c. Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues
Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays.
Email: support@grants.gov

D.16.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission
Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, D.C. time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system and will be found technically ineligible.

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

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

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error

messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

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

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

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

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

D.17. Intergovernmental Review of Applications

Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Review Process

ECA will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to ECA grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the U.S. Department of State's

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the ECA's Grants Officer.

E.2. Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to ECA's mission.

2. Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives: A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

3. Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA): Proposals should show substantive support of ECA's policy on Diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and program design, content and implementation, including individual participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEIA plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEIA. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities.

4. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by ECA's Grants Division.

5. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Proposals should identify and outline clear activity goals and objectives, provide a plan to report outputs of the program's activities, and provide a clear description of your data collection strategy. The M&E narrative sections will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided information on the minimum data required as per the solicitation. Award recipients will be required to submit intermediate reports analyzing your findings to ECA as a part of your regular program reports.

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

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Award Notices
Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal ECA procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the ECA's Grants Division. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer as identified in the application.

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

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:
Terms and Conditions applicable to all ECA agreements include:

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

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

For a copy of the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, or to review other Department of State assistance information, please download from:
https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/

F.3. Reporting Requirements
All reports must be submitted in a timely manner. You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the cooperative agreement; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer.) The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic.

2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: http://www.dpm.psc.gov/. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to SAMS Domestic, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

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

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

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about this announcement, contact: Jamie Sharp, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S, SA-5, 4th floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-632-9446, sharpj2@state.gov.

All correspondence with ECA concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

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

H. Other Information

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any ECA representative. Explanatory information provided by ECA that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards will be subject to periodic programmatic and financial reporting and evaluation requirements as outlined in the NOFO.

Scott Weinhold April 28, 2023
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State