Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
FY 2026 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)
Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017852
Application Deadline: May 1, 2026

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A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	FY 2026 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)
Funding Opportunity Number	DFOP0017852
Announcement Type	New Cooperative Agreement
Deadline for Applications	May 1, 2026, 11:59pm Eastern (Washington DC time)
Assistance Listing Number	19.415
Length of Performance Period	30 to 33 months

Number of Awards Anticipated	1 award
Award Amount Award Amounts	approximately $5,000,000
Total Available Funding	$5,000,000
Type of Funding	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE) Funds
Funding Instrument Type	Cooperative Agreement
Anticipated Award Date	July 1, 2026

This notice is subject to availability of funding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government.

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

Pending satisfactory implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this award for two additional, consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

2. Executive Summary

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is pleased to announce an open competition for proposals to administer the FY 2026 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program. NSLI-Y increases the number of American youth (ages 15 to 18) who learn critical foreign languages in support of bolstering U.S. national security; promoting U.S. competitiveness and economic prosperity; and building mutual understanding with critical regions of the world. The award will support approximately 275 American teens to study critical languages through intensive overseas language programs in locations where the target languages are widely spoken, and through virtual programming. 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 cooperate with ECA in the overall administration of NSLI-Y and the

implementation of summer, academic year, and virtual programs according to the guidance in this solicitation.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply*:*
- U.S. not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- U.S. not-for-profit public and private educational institutions

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

2. Cost Sharing

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

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

a. All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see *Section E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines* for more information.

b. ECA's Grant Guidelines require that organizations demonstrate at least four years of experience in conducting international exchanges to be eligible for awards exceeding $130,000 in ECA funding. As noted in *Section A. Basic Information*, ECA anticipates issuing one award, for approximately $5,000,000. Therefore, organizations must demonstrate four years of experience in conducting international exchanges in your proposal to be eligible to apply under this competition.

c. All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, and the PSI; not doing so may result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

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

e. Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant

appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

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

f. Applicants who are current recipients of awards directly from ECA should make sure the application details one or more award that will be open with ECA at the start of the anticipated period of performance for this NOFO. Applicants who do not have current awards directly with ECA, please review the information in the PSI, section D, with additional information that <u>must</u> be provided in your application in order for it to be eligible.

C. Program Description

1. Authority

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

2. Purpose

The NSLI-Y program is designed to increase the number of young Americans with linguistic and cultural skills necessary to advance American interests on the global stage. Launched in 2006 to address the deficit of speakers of critical languages in the United States, NSLI-Y creates a pipeline of American youth with linguistic and professional skills needed for a wide variety of careers that directly strengthen U.S. national security and economic competitiveness.

NSLI-Y in-person overseas immersive programs and virtual programs accelerate and advance participants' language skills through structured classroom language instruction as well as less formal interactive and applied learning opportunities.

Virtual NSLI-Y is a 10-week virtual program for U.S. high school students who are at the absolute beginner level and have not studied the target language before. It provides students with an introduction to the target language and culture with the goal of sparking an interest in critical languages and regions and inspiring students to continue their studies both domestically and abroad.

3. Program Specific Guidelines

The FY 2026 award will be executed as a cooperative agreement between ECA and a single award recipient. The award will fund approximately 275 current or recently graduated American high school students to study Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Korean, or Russian in overseas summer and academic year programs, or virtually. Overseas programs will take place in countries and locations where the target language is widely spoken. Program locations and local host institution partners are subject to annual ECA approval. The award also supports programming for NSLI-Y alumni since the program's inception in 2006, totaling over 10,000 alumni to date.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OVERSEAS PROGRAMS

In FY 2026, the NSLI-Y program anticipates supporting approximately 215 participants in NSLI-Y programs located outside the United States. NSLI-Y overseas programs provide intensive language instruction in a classroom setting, as well as immersion in the cultural, social, and educational life of the receiving country/location for six to eight weeks over the summer or for an academic year. NSLI-Y overseas programs maximize language acquisition and cultural learning opportunities through a host family experience, language partners, and cultural activities.

The applicant may propose directly implementing overseas programs and may also identify and manage qualified organizations as sub-recipients to implement overseas programs, as needed. The applicant must work with all sub-recipients to design, plan, and implement NSLI-Y overseas programs that focus on language acquisition and cultural immersion. The applicant must demonstrate that each

implementing organization has significant and relevant experience and expertise in planning and carrying out programs in the respective language(s) and country(ies)/location(s) where it proposes to implement the program(s). All implementing organizations must be capable of handling emergencies and on-program support (OPS) issues in a timely and transparent way that permits information to be conveyed to the award recipient and to ECA. Once the award is in place and with ECA concurrence, additional sub-award implementing organizations may be added into the program if needed to meet program requirements. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all NSLI-Y overseas programs maintain program standards and meet all program requirements.

For FY 2026, NSLI-Y anticipates supporting the following languages.   Applicants are encouraged to maximize participant numbers and propose a greater number of participants per language, when possible, within the limitations of the budget:

- **Arabic**: approximately 38 for summer; approximately eight for academic year. Programs may be proposed countries/locations in North Africa, the Middle East, or the Gulf region, with the exception of Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Syria, and Yemen.
- **Chinese (Mandarin):** approximately 75 for summer; approximately eight for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Taiwan.
- **Korean**: approximately 36 for summer. Programs may be proposed for the Republic of Korea (South Korea).
- **Russian**: approximately 42 for summer; approximately eight for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Central Asia and the Baltic States. Programs should not be proposed for Russia, Ukraine, or Belarus.

An adequate number of alternates should be identified to replace finalists who may drop out prior to the start of the program. Programs should be proposed for all four languages, but do not need to be proposed for all potential locations. Specific locations should be where the target language is widely used in everyday life and conditions are suitable for implementation of a youth program.

ECA will select – and reserves the right to make changes to – eligible countries, locations, languages, number of proposed participants by language, program components, or other elements of the program design or implementation, considering any Department of State Travel Advisories and other relevant safety and security concerns, the availability of funding, or other factors determined by ECA. ECA reserves the right to transition one or more overseas programs to a

virtual format if needed to ensure the health and safety of the participants, the integrity of the program, or for other reasons. The proposal should demonstrate flexibility and creativity in program administration in response to natural events, disasters, or crises. Such conditions may create significant challenges to normal or routine program administration.

As part of emergency planning, all applicants must present a plan for transitioning some or all of the proposed NSLI-Y overseas sites to a virtual format, if deemed necessary by ECA. The final slate of all site locations and partners is subject to approval by ECA.

a. **Overseas Program Design:**

Unless otherwise directed by ECA, duration, dates, and size of overseas programs shall be as follows:

- Duration: Each proposed summer program should be six – eight weeks in country, not including the pre-program orientation. Each proposed academic year program should be eight – ten months.
- Dates: summer programs should take place in summer 2026 (June to mid-August), academic year programs should take place between September 2026 – May 2027.
- Size: The number of participants proposed per overseas site must consider the capability of each proposed site to provide a quality academic program, housing, and support to participants in all aspects of the program and especially for any safety or health issues that may arise. For overseas NSLI-Y programs, applicants should propose a minimum of five participants for each academic year program; and a minimum of 10 participants for each summer program.

For each language offered, multiple levels of language instruction must be offered to support students at the complete beginner to Advanced levels on the ACTFL scale, or equivalent.

Ensure that the overseas NSLI-Y program is comprehensive and consistent across all implementing organizations, and covers the following expenses:
- **Travel:** Round-trip travel between the participant's city of official residence, to the pre-departure orientation location, and to the overseas NSLI-Y program location.

- **Orientations:** Pre-departure, arrival, mid-program (academic year only), and re-entry.
- **Visas:** Receiving country entry/exit and transit visas, as needed.
- **Tuition and related academic expenses:** Including support and testing for placement and language acquisition.
- **Educational and cultural programming**: Including overseas language-focused excursions, volunteer opportunities, and guided internships, if applicable.
- **Meals:** Three meals per day.
- **Accommodations**: A host family for the entirety of each program is preferred; if students are in a dormitory or other supervised group housing for part of the exchange, there must be a host family stay for part of the program.
- **Health Benefits:** Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits, provided by the U.S. Department of State, or equivalent health benefits.
- **Stipend:** To cover additional living expenses if needed, as determined by in-country implementer and approved by award recipient.
- **Cell phones:** Including related expenses as outlined in the solicitation.
- **Additional Funds:** The NSLI-Y Program may cover incidentals in addition to the stipend, such as medical expenses, in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient(s) and approved by ECA.

The NSLI-Y Program **does not cover** the following:
- **Passports:** Costs associated with obtaining a valid U.S. passport, except in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient and approved by ECA.
- **Medical:** Required medical examinations and immunizations needed to travel to the receiving country or routine medical checkups.
- **Incidentals:** Pocket money outside of the stipend for souvenirs or additional events such as movies, ice skating, etc., except in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient, in collaboration with ECA.

The applicant must integrate the following components into program design at each site.

Design and Implement Overseas Language Programs: Design, plan, and implement overseas programs focused on language acquisition and cultural immersion, and work with implementing organizations to do the same for the programs they implement. The applicant will develop program standards and requirements in consultation with ECA and ensure that each implementing organization maintains program standards and meets all program requirements. The applicant and each implementing organization should provide a detailed program schedule for each program location. Program schedules must clearly delineate language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, and community service activities. Activities should be designed to ensure participants focus on the target language and culture. Schedules must be provided well in advance of the start of the programs for review by the award recipient and ECA.

Proficiency Goals, Curriculum, and Teacher Training: In consultation with ECA, propose, implement, and maintain appropriate standards and proficiency goals across program sites. Ensure that language instruction and program design is based on relevant standards and pedagogical best practices at each program site. Ensure that each program site creates a curriculum in line with NSLI-Y proficiency goals and conducts appropriate teacher training. Evaluate program sites on meeting NSLI-Y language goals and provide feedback to program implementers.

Language Instruction Standards: Develop, implement, and monitor language instruction standards for language instruction in the classroom and language-focused cultural activities and excursions for all NSLI-Y programs to meet NSLI-Y expected proficiency outcomes. Ensure that all summer programs include a minimum of 120 hours of classroom language instruction. Ensure that all academic year programs include a minimum average of ten hours per week of classroom language instruction for most weeks of the academic year. For both summer and academic year programs, classroom language instruction should generally not exceed five hours per day.

Language Assessment Placement Plan: Develop an assessment plan to measure the appropriate levels of instruction for participants at the start of and during the program. Ensure overseas implementing organizations are complying with the placement plan and placing participants in appropriate classes based on proficiency level.

Level of Instruction: Provide group classes to participants based on their language proficiency. Participants with widely varying levels of language knowledge

must not be placed in the same class. In general, classes should be limited to approximately 12 or fewer students. Overseas implementing organizations must be informed of student language levels prior to the program start date to make appropriate student groupings, assign qualified teachers, and adapt the curriculum as needed.

Language Instruction in the Primary Target Language and Local Dialect: A minimum of 70% of language instruction time must be devoted to the primary target language. A maximum of 30% of class time may be allotted to the local dialect, if applicable. This ensures that NSLI-Y students receive sufficient instruction in the primary target language and are given enough language instruction to be able to communicate with their host families and others in the local community. For Arabic, students should understand in which situations it is appropriate to use Modern Standard Arabic and in which situations it is appropriate to use dialect. This breakdown may be changed in consultation with ECA.

Enrichment Activities/Community Engagement: Include cultural enrichment activities that reinforce language learning, such as planned excursions, guided internships, activities with local peers, and extra-curricular activities. Cultural activities should enhance the participants' understanding of contemporary society, culture, media, political institutions, history, of the receiving country. Activities must be language-focused and promote NSLI-Y goals and objectives. The award recipient should consult with ECA to develop, to the extent possible, enrichment activities that align with foreign policy priorities.

Language Partners: Propose a plan to integrate language partners into the program design at each program site so that participants have an opportunity to engage with local peers outside of the classroom and connect to the local culture and community.

Community Service: Arrange or help facilitate volunteer community service activities during the academic year that provide opportunities for language practice and enhance understanding of local culture and society. ECA reserves the right to waive this requirement in situations where volunteer work is deemed inappropriate or risky. Community service for summer programs is optional.

Housing: Arrange appropriate housing during the program. All overseas programs must include a host family stay for all or part of the program to maximize participants' exposure to their target language and culture. A host family for the

entirety of each overseas program is preferred. Develop a process for identifying and screening host families for suitability. Ensure that proper host family reference checks are conducted, recorded, and maintained. Records must be kept for three years and made available to ECA upon request. Provide host families with a substantive orientation and maintain regular contact with host families throughout the program to answer questions and address concerns. Host families must have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations and may receive reasonable reimbursement to cover the costs associated with hosting a student, but not to serve as a financial incentive. The amounts of any stipends or allowances provided to host families should be justified based on the receiving country's local economy. All implementing organizations must maintain regular, at minimum monthly, contact with host families to answer questions, provide information, and assist in working out problems. Obtain concurrence from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate/AIT Public Diplomacy Section on the general locations of host families.

Ensure that non-host family housing arrangements, such as dormitories or group housing, provide safe, appropriate, and supervised living accommodations. Identify, screen, and orient the individual(s) responsible for supervising the participants in the group living environments.

Meals: Provide participants with three meals a day for the duration on the program. It is expected that the majority of meals will be provided by host families, educational institutions, and/or arranged group meals with other students. Participant stipends should cover the costs of additional meals as needed.

Stipends: Participant stipends are allowable for participants to cover incidental expenses. If proposed, all participants within one country and on the same duration of program (summer or academic year) should receive the same stipend amount, regardless of implementing organization.

U.S. Embassy Liaison and Consultation: Ensure that all implementing organizations and overseas partners establish a working relationship with the Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the relevant U.S. embassy, consulate, or the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT). During the program-planning phase, implementing organizations must contact PDS to obtain concurrence on program placement locations, including the host language institution/host school, and host family or other long-term accommodation locations (regions neighborhoods, etc.).

Implementing organizations must invite the PDS to participate in the arrival orientation and request a briefing by the embassy's Regional Security Officer or other U.S. embassy/consulate/AIT official to address matters of safety and security. If the program site is not in a city with an embassy/consulate/AIT, the implementing organization should consider routing travel through a city that will allow for embassy/consulate/AIT involvement. If an in-person briefing is not feasible, the implementing organization must provide a virtual briefing.

Implementing organizations should consult PDS staff regarding proposed activities with participants and/or alumni of other ECA programs. Implementing organizations should invite PDS staff to participate in NSLI-Y program events, as appropriate. If the political situation in any location results in the need for the embassy/AIT to assume more responsibility, the overseas implementing organization should work with the embassy/AIT as appropriate.

Staffing: Identify a lead for each program site. Ensure that all program sites are appropriately staffed and have the physical space (i.e., classrooms, common areas) to ensure the successful delivery of high-quality language immersion program and provide adequate support and guidance to participants.

Assign and train a Resident Director/Local Coordinator who speaks both English and the target language to each program site. The Resident Director/Local Coordinator serves as the primary on-site resource and supports participants regarding academic, social, disciplinary, and/or personal issues on program.

Resident Director/Local Coordinator Training and Support: Facilitate additional training for resident directors, local coordinators, or other equivalent in country staff who implement student on-program support. Trainings and support systems should be flexible and able to provide needed assistance across the program regardless of local technology or staffing structure. Funds may be used to send staff to private trainings in limited situations. Plans for training should be discussed with ECA in advance of the training.

b. Participant Monitoring and Support

Participant Monitoring: Participant well-being is a top priority of the U.S. Department of State. The applicant must propose a plan for monitoring participants' safety and welfare while on program that parallels, to the greatest extent possible, the standards for J-1 visa regulations for international secondary

school students found in 22 CFR 62. This includes the identification and use of appropriate means of verifying the integrity and suitability of each host family. Ensure that all implementing organizations and any volunteers and staff who have regular contact with the NSLI-Y participants have undergone screening for suitability.

In keeping with the J-1 visa regulations, immediately report to ECA any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation, harassment, or abuse or harm of an exchange student participant. Furthermore, inform ECA promptly of any behavior, incident, or serious problem that could result in a request for program dismissal and/or bring the Department of State or the exchange program into notoriety or disrepute. The award recipient must ensure that all implementing organizations have a plan for monitoring participants on a regular basis and provide adequate support and guidance to participants during their program. All implementing organizations must maintain, at a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the participant and monthly contact with the host family, addressing legitimate concerns in a timely fashion and apprising ECA in a timely manner about significant issues. All records and data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and be provided to ECA upon request.

Overseas program staff should be available to participants throughout the duration of the program to help ensure health, safety, and emotional well-being of participants and deal effectively with misunderstandings, adjustment issues, and emergencies. Staff roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and explained to participants. The award recipient must provide guidance and training to overseas staff on handling student support issues. Each program site must have a trained, English-speaking Resident Director/Local Coordinator whose primary responsibility is participant support. The award recipient must ensure that all staff who have regular contact with participants have undergone a reasonable level of screening for suitability and adhere to professional standards of conduct, including standards on sexual harassment and abuse.

The award recipient must ensure that all participants abide by U.S. and local laws; the NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions; and other program standards and requirements. In consultation with ECA, the award recipient must develop disciplinary procedures that include ECA approval for termination and dismissal from program. Convey

serious issues and concerns to ECA in a timely fashion and inform ECA immediately of any requests from participants to voluntarily leave the program.

In addition, in order to ensure participant safety and well-being, applicants must provide a comprehensive plan to address emergencies that may occur before or during the program that may impact individual participants or the entire group. The plan must clearly identify lines of responsibility and communication with ECA, sub-recipients, institute staff, participants, and appropriate U.S. Embassies/Consulates/AIT.

Applicants must also develop a plan to implement some or all of the language programs virtually if deemed necessary by ECA. Virtual programming should include language instruction, language partner activities, cultural enrichment activities, pre- and post-program language assessment, program monitoring and outcome tracking, and participant support mechanisms.

On-Program Support (OPS): Management of OPS is among the most important functions. The award recipient must provide support to participants in dealing effectively with misunderstandings, adjustment issues, and emergencies, provide guidance to implementing organizations on handling OPS issues, as necessary, and promptly convey serious issues and concerns to ECA. Management of OPS must be detailed in a monitoring plan included in the proposal. The award recipient must work with ECA in developing a communication and reporting plan to ECA/Embassy/Consulate/AIT on OPS issues.

Emergency Contact Information and Access: Supply each participant with a cell phone, charger, and provider service to ensure a way to communicate with in-country representatives in an emergency. Ensure that ECA, participants, and their parents/guardians have access to emergency contact information for the award recipient, the U.S.-based implementing organization, and the overseas implementing organization prior to international departure

c. Pre-Program Planning and Activities

The award recipient will be responsible for the following pre-program responsibilities and requirements:

Terms and Conditions: In consultation with ECA, develop the NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions for the overseas programs. The key conditions, benefits, and terms of

the program should be fully described to candidates and their legal guardians before they accept the award. Ensure that all participants and their legal guardians agree to and sign the Terms and Conditions, as well as other forms and documents as required by ECA.

Release Form: Share with all participants and their legal guardians the official Minor Participant Name and/or Likeness Release form provided by ECA to permit the award recipient, implementing organizations, Department of State, and United States Government to use their image and name for program promotion or other similar purposes.

Medical Clearance: Propose a process to collect and evaluate health history information for finalists and alternates to ensure that participants can participate in the program safely. Work with ECA and implementing organizations to make reasonable accommodations for participants as needed. Protect all Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Health Benefits: Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits program and facilitate claims as necessary. Applicants may propose using a different health plan for participants but must demonstrate that the alternate plan provides comparable or more comprehensive coverage. Coverage must begin when students depart the United States and conclude when they return to the United States. A copy of the alternate health insurance policy should be included with the proposal.

Travel Arrangements: Arrange related domestic and international round-trip travel for participants for program participation. Ensure that implementing organizations arrange all travel in accordance with the Fly America Act. Provide an adult flight chaperone with necessary language skills for group flights to and from all overseas destinations, unless this requirement is waived by the award recipient with ECA's concurrence. Provide dates of international and domestic travel to ECA in advance of travel.

Travel Documents: Provide information to participants about obtaining valid U.S. passports. Facilitate and pay costs for obtaining all necessary visas, including transit visas.

Standardized Language Assessment: In consultation with ECA, identify and use a standardized language assessment tool to evaluate the baseline (pre-program) and

post-program oral proficiency language skills of participants in the overseas programs. After the completion of the post-program assessments, provide ECA with the assessment results, including analyses by language and program site. Share results with implementing partners and if necessary, work with implementing partners on program adjustments if needed.

Communication with Participants: Ensure that implementing organizations contact participants in a timely fashion in advance of departure to provide them with program information, language preparation materials, flight details, and accommodations information. Communicate with participants to address any concerns or questions during the program.

STEP Registration: Provide information to all participants and their legal guardians about the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and ensure that all participants are registered in STEP prior to the start of the program.

d. Orientations

Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO): Ensure that all NSLI-Y programs include a substantive participant PDO held in a logistically convenient location. Invite ECA to participate in all PDOs and provide copies of agendas to ECA in advance. Provide guidance to implementing organizations to ensure that all key topics are covered and a common approach to PDOs is maintained across programs. Topics must include, but are not limited to, program goals and expectations, cross-cultural training, receiving country information, language program tips and requirements, personal safety and security, mental health, online safety, and information on identifying and reporting sexual harassment and abuse. Ensure that each participant receives the name and contact information for the participant's resident director and/or local coordinator, an emergency contact, and health benefits information. Emphasize to participants that NSLI-Y is a U.S. Department of State program.

In-Country Partner Orientation: Orient all in-country teaching staff and administrators about NSLI-Y goals and objectives, required language classroom hours, learning styles of American high school students, and relevant safety and security guidelines in advance of the arrival of NSLI-Y participants.

Host Family Orientations: Ensure that all host families receive an orientation that includes information about NSLI-Y goals and objectives (indicating it is a U.S.

Department of State program), responsibilities of being a host parent, support available to host families, and an introduction to the inter-cultural experience of hosting an American high school student.

Arrival Orientation: Organize an in-country arrival orientation. Contact the embassy/consulate/AIT far in advance of arrival to arrange participation in the orientation, as noted above. Inform participants of relevant local and country-specific information including personal and general safety considerations, as well as emergency services offered by the embassy/consulate/AIT to American citizens.

Mid-Program Workshop: All academic year programs must include a mid-program workshop during which participants share and reflect upon their experiences, discuss concerns, and speak one-on-one with the resident director/local coordinator.

Re-entry Orientation: Provide a re-entry orientation to prepare participants for their return to the United States. Re-entry orientations must include a discussion of the following topics: required post-program language testing; post-program evaluation; tips for cultural re-entry; ideas for future language study; information about other U.S. government scholarships for continued language study; internships and careers that utilize language skills; and suggestions for sharing the NSLI-Y experience with other individuals and groups in the United States. The re-entry orientation should also encourage participants to join the NSLI-Y alumni association and register on the Department's International Exchange Alumni website (https://alumni.state.gov).

Academic Year Programs should include a re-entry workshop component in the Washington, D.C. area to allow for returning participants to share their experiences with ECA if feasible and cost-effective.

IMPLEMENTATION OF VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
The award recipient will be responsible for implementing Virtual NSLI-Y. In FY 2026, NSLI-Y anticipates supporting approximately 60 students in virtual programs.

For Virtual NSLI-Y, the award recipient must design, plan, and implement online language learning programs at the beginner level. The award recipient should recruit qualified and vetted online instructors to provide a minimum of 30 hours of live, interactive online classroom instruction at the novice level via a videoconference platform. Teachers should receive orientation to the goals of the

program and maintain an appropriate curriculum for language instruction based on participant level, relevant standards and pedagogical best practices for online learning. The curriculum should also include cultural learning opportunities and activities such as guest speakers, virtual tours of historic sites, peer engagement, etc. Student progress and learning outcomes will be evaluated by teachers through assignments and quizzes.

The program should take place during the Fall or Spring terms and should take place after school at a time that accommodates students from multiple time zones. Class sizes should be limited to approximately 10 students. For FY 2026 NSLI-Y anticipates supporting the following languages for virtual programing:

- Arabic: Approximately 20 participants.
- Chinese (Mandarin): Approximately 20 participants.
- Russian: Approximately 20 participants.

For Virtual NSLI-Y, ensure the program covers the following expenses:
- Language Instruction: A minimum of 10-weeks/30 hours of instruction with an experienced language instructor through videoconferencing tools.
- Program materials/textbooks.
- Virtual Cultural learning and cultural enrichment activities.
- Digital Platform: For assignments, projects, etc., if needed.
- Certificate of Program Completion: All templates should be approved by ECA.

Participant costs for NSLI-Y virtual programming **do not cover** the following:
- Travel of any kind
- Internet access, software, or hardware
- Stipend
- Health benefits

a. **Other Deliverables for Virtual NSLI-Y**

The award recipient will also be responsible for the following:

Terms and Conditions: In consultation with ECA, determine terms and conditions and other program standards for Virtual NSLI-Y. Ensure participants abide by the terms and conditions on program and that all participants and their parents/legal

guardians sign the Virtual NSLI-Y Terms and Condition prior to the start of the program.

Monitoring Participants: Develop a plan to monitor participant safety, performance, participation, and wellbeing on a regular basis in an online environment and manage on-program support issues effectively. Ensure that Virtual NSLI-Y implementing organizations and any volunteers and staff who have regular contact with the NSLI-Y participants have undergone screening for suitability. Develop a plan for providing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Provide on-program support reports to ECA concerning serious or disciplinary issues, including recommendations for dismissal.

Communication with Participants: Ensure that information about program arrangements and logistics is communicated to participants in a timely fashion.

Orientations: Provide a virtual pre-program orientation for participants which covers key topics such as program goals and expectations, and instructions for using the online platform(s). Ensure that each participant receives the name and contact information for program staff who can assist with technical questions or issues on program. Provide a virtual post-program closing ceremony that celebrates the success of program participants and connects them to future critical language study opportunities.

NSLI-Y PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The award recipient will be responsible for managing the administrative components of the NSLI-Y program comprising the following key areas of responsibility: recruitment, outreach, and program promotion; application, selection, and notification of participants; and alumni programing and tracking. The award recipient will also be responsible for program planning and management and financial oversight and reporting as it relates to the award.

a. **Recruitment, Outreach, and Program Promotion**

Outreach and Recruitment: Propose a comprehensive outreach plan to publicize the NSLI-Y program broadly and to recruit a strong pool of qualified candidates. The outreach and recruitment plan should describe how the NSLI-Y program will be publicized to potential applicants, to U.S. high schools and other relevant organizations, and to the general public. Outreach efforts should be robust and

aim for a quality pool of semifinalists and alternates from all 50 U.S. states. Plans should clearly outline what materials and strategies, such as printed material, social media, etc., will be used to reach recruitment goals. The recruitment plan will be subject to ongoing coordination and approval by ECA. ECA may request that the award recipient collaborate with other ECA-sponsored programs on some outreach activities. Ensure that the following minimum criteria are used for recruitment.

Eligibility Criteria for Overseas Programs: NSLI-Y participants must be:
- U.S. citizens;
- 15 to 18 years of age at the approximate beginning of the program (beginning of the program can be defined as early as when the scholarship is accepted; one cut-off date for summer programs and one for academic year programs is allowed);
- Enrolled in high school or equivalent home school program at the time of application; and,
- Have a minimum 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale or equivalent.
- Adhere to the ECA eligibility policy, including for alumni of NSLI-Y and other ECA Youth Programs Division exchange programs.

Eligibility Criteria for Virtual NSLI-Y Programs: Virtual NSLI-Y participants must be:
- U.S. citizens;
- 15 to 18 years of age at the approximate beginning of the program (beginning of the program can be defined as early as when the scholarship is accepted);
- Enrolled in a high school or equivalent for the 2027-28 academic year;
- Living in and attending school in the United States;
- Beginner in the target language; and,
- Has not previously participated in any NSLI-Y program or another U.S. Department of State exchange program

ECA reserves the right to amend the eligibility requirements and will provide additional eligibility requirements to the recipient organization.

Print and Electronic Materials: Ensure that all print and electronic materials (online application, websites, digital resources, brochures, press releases, announcements, etc.) developed for promotional purposes and related to the program comply with ECA's Communications Guidance. Use the U.S. Department of

State seal, the U.S. flag, and the NSLI-Y logo on all materials related to the program as delineated in ECA's Communications Guidance. Obtain ECA concurrence on all print and electronic materials related to NSLI-Y in advance of publication and distribution. ECA retains copyright use of, and may distribute, materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Publicity: On a regular and timely basis, provide ECA with participant, alumni and program highlights, photos, videos, press coverage, and any content that may be used to publicize the program. Inform ECA of any publicity that highlights the NSLI-Y program or NSLI-Y participants, or otherwise strengthens recruitment and outreach efforts, particularly those that involve government officials and the media. When the media interacts with NSLI-Y participants or alumni, the award recipient should make every effort to identify NSLI-Y as a U.S. Department of State program, unless otherwise advised by ECA or the Public Diplomacy Section of a U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

NSLI-Y Digital Presence: As directed by ECA, develop and maintain a dedicated and dynamic NSLI-Y Program website that is mobile responsive and/or contribute NSLI-Y content to ECA digital efforts. The NSLI-Y website should include comprehensive information about the program, including information on the overseas programs and virtual programming; application information and frequently asked questions; and may include, as directed by ECA, program highlights; impact stories and data; and alumni resources. If requested by ECA, maintain an engaging presence on social media accounts for recruitment and program promotion, or contribute NSLI-Y content for ECA social media, as requested. Regularly consult with ECA on guidelines for content for social media.

b. **Application, Selection, Placement, and Notification**

Application: Establish, maintain, and update a comprehensive and secure online application for overseas programs and virtual programs. Applications must also be designed to elicit information for applicants that are relevant to the selection process. Monitor the online system to limit and address technical problems. The award recipient must accommodate applicants who cannot apply online. All application materials and associated data should be available in a sortable, searchable, database format that can be easily shared with ECA upon request. Historically, 2,500-4,000 applications are received each year. Respond to and manage all general inquiries and application questions. Record and track all inquiries related to problems or issues with any part of the application process.

Selection Process: Plan for and conduct a transparent merit-based selection process with clearly defined criteria and a scoring matrix for assessing applicants for overseas and virtual programming.

At minimum, successful applicants should demonstrate maturity and an ability to succeed in an intensive, demanding language study program overseas or virtually. Successful applicants should also demonstrate an intent to continue their language and culture study beyond the scholarship period and a desire to apply their critical language and cultural skills later in their academic and/or professional pursuits. ECA will approve the overall selection plan and specific selection criteria. Suggested revisions and additions may be made in consultation with ECA.

U.S. Department of State Approval: Present the final recommended participants and alternates to ECA for approval, providing an overall analysis of the results including but not limited to number of participants by language, home state, participation in previous ECA programs and other categories as requested by ECA.

Program Placement: Assign finalists and alternates to particular programs based on language level and other relevant criteria to ensure that each participant is placed into an appropriate and challenging program, and when possible, contributes to positive group dynamics. The proposal should address how the participants' language skills will be assessed for placement purposes and on what basis program assignments are made. Notify all implementing organizations of finalists and alternates from the national application pool assigned to them.

Applicant Notification: Prepare and send notifications to all finalists, alternates, and non-selected applicants on ECA approved templates. Applicants for overseas programs should be notified in time to secure necessary visas before programs begin. Manage the acceptance process, advancing alternates to replace declinations on a timely basis and with ECA approval. Prepare ECA approved program descriptions for each overseas program based on a standard template. Inform participants of their program placement (including implementing organization, city, and school) at the time of scholarship notification, unless this is not possible due to security or other concerns about the location or program. Inform participants of specific housing accommodations (host family name, location and, if applicable, dormitory or group housing location) no later than one week prior to departure from the United States and preferably earlier.

Additional Deliverables:

- Conduct a technical review of applications for eligibility and completeness.
- Develop and implement best practices and training for staff and volunteers who work on the proposed selection process. These best practices and trainings should aim to ensure consistency and standardization.
- Develop a mechanism to evaluate the application and selection process and share analyses, results, and any suggested changes to recruitment and selection with ECA.

c. <u>Alumni Programming and Tracking</u>

Develop a plan for post program and alumni activities. Consult with ECA to include foreign policy priorities, to the extent possible, in alumni activities. Plans for program alumni support should include the following:

Alumni Association: Manage an alumni association that includes alumni from all NSLI-Y program years. Provide opportunities for alumni to develop their leadership skills. Work with the alumni association leadership to set goals and priorities, plan and implement activities, recruit additional alumni, and encourage alumni to share their overseas experiences with their schools and their communities. Provide financial and programming support for participation in alumni activities, including travel as appropriate, for alumni of all NSLI-Y program years.

NSLI-Y Alumni Representatives: Conduct an annual competition among recent NSLI-Y alumni to select alumni representatives. Provide training and support for alumni representatives to assist in program promotion, outreach, networking, and other proposed activities decided in consultation with ECA.

Language Study and Career Opportunities: Propose and/or develop creative and effective ways to assist alumni in continuing their foreign language and cultural studies in high school, in post-secondary educational settings, or in other settings. Follow-on activities should also introduce alumni to internship and career opportunities in which they can use their language and cultural skills.

International Exchange Alumni Engagement: Encourage participants and alumni to register on the International Exchange Alumni website

(https://alumni.state.gov/). Share opportunities that are available to International Exchange Alumni with NSLI-Y alumni.

Alumni Program Linkages: Encourage linkages to other federally sponsored language programs to share resources, pursue common goals, and inspire NSLI-Y alumni to pursue critical language learning.

Tracking Alumni: Track NSLI-Y alumni from all program years to determine whether and how their NSLI-Y language learning has influenced or affected their post-secondary experience and career choices. If requested, conduct an alumni survey.

Alumni Involvement in NSLI-Y: Encourage and facilitate the involvement of NSLI-Y alumni in supporting the current and future program through recruitment, publicity, outreach, virtual exchanges, mentoring, pre-program preparation, and program planning.

d. <u>Program Planning and Management</u>

Staffing Plan: Provide an overall staffing plan including level of effort for each position. Allocate one lead individual to manage the project. ECA will approve key project staff, as well as any changes in key staff during the period of the award.

Coordination: Provide overall coordination of key program activities with ECA. Conduct regular meetings in-person or virtually with the ECA Program Officer and key personnel. Collaborate with ECA on minutes of these meetings.

Operational Guidelines: Review and refine, with ECA concurrence, comprehensive operational guidelines, including procedures for emergency situations. Distribute the guidelines to implementing organizations and ensure that they understand, implement, and adhere to them. Operational Guidelines help ensure consistency of policy and procedures across all organizations and sites.

Program Plans: Provide to ECA a detailed schedule and plan for each overseas program. Describe in detail the major components of the program (as applicable), including location and dates; host institution; staffing; orientations; hours of language instruction per week; educational and cultural enrichment activities; participant living arrangements; and any other relevant data requested by ECA.

Annual Meeting: Plan and implement an in-person (preferred) and/or virtual meeting for implementing organizations and relevant ECA staff to ensure a single worldwide program identity is cultivated and to discuss policies, procedures, and best practices. This multi-session meeting should be held in January or February of the program year and be planned in close consultation with ECA. The meeting may be held either in Washington, DC, or online, as approved in advance by ECA. Each implementing organization should be represented by at least one participant at the meeting. ECA must be notified in advance about all attendees.

Annual Planning Meeting: Organize an annual planning meeting, either in Washington, DC or online for key recipient personnel and ECA staff. Provide ECA with minutes and deliverables from these meetings.

Congressional Notifications: Assist ECA in notifying Congressional Representatives and Senators of finalists selected from their district or state, if requested by ECA.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation: Present a plan to measure the success of the NSLI-Y overseas programs and virtual programming, during the program implementation, as well as at the end of the program, and success of alumni meeting program goals over the long-term. ECA expects that the award recipient will be able to provide relevant output and outcome data, including on overall participant satisfaction with the program, language acquisition, cultural learning, and further academic/professional interest in the target language and/or region and/or other critical languages and regions. Data collection should also include assessment of program-specific aspects, such as logistical arrangements and program components. The recipient is also expected to assess the success of implementing partners in meeting program goals, participant support, and adherence to NSLI-Y operational guidelines, and other relevant criteria. These requirements are in addition to section 5, the Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) section in the NOFO.

Program Partner Capacity Building: Although not required, proposals and budgets may include activities to strengthen partners' capacity for language-teaching and/or hosting American students.

Build Relationships: For purposes of program promotion, leveraging resources, providing alumni opportunities, and strengthening the National Security Language Initiative, the award recipient should cultivate relationships with organizations that

implement other government-sponsored critical language exchange programs including, but not limited to, the Critical Language Scholarship Program (CLS), the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, the Boren Awards, and The Language Flagship. Facilitate interactions and cooperation between NSLI-Y participants and the participants and/or alumni of other U.S. Department of State programs.

Documentation: Provide and maintain detailed documentation of all program policies and procedures, including a separate section on emergency management and protocols for review and approval by ECA. Emergency management should clearly identify lines of responsibility and communication with ECA, sub-recipients, program staff, participants, and appropriate U.S. embassies or consulates, as applicable.

Databases: Ensure that lists of all finalists conform to ECA database requirements and are submitted in the requested format on dates as agreed upon by ECA and the award recipient for each summer, academic year, and Virtual NSLI-Y cohort. Secure and protect any personally identifiable information. All statistical information collected on ECA program applicants and participants should be transferable to databases maintained by ECA.

Communication with ECA: Respond in a timely manner to inquiries about the program from ECA.

General Communication: Respond in a timely manner to inquiries about the program from members of the public, potential applicants/parents, high schools, and relevant organizations.

Other Deliverables:

- Consult ECA on NSLI-Y overseas and virtual programing award terminations, revocations, and recouped funds, and provide documentation of these actions to ECA, at a date/time agreed upon with ECA.
- Audit internal functions, systems, and controls as necessary, and report any irregularities if necessary or required per audit guidelines.
- Ensure that participants and staff comply with the Fly America Act and other relevant regulations when using NSLI-Y funds to purchase international plane tickets and other requested costs.

4. Recipient Responsibilities

The Award recipient responsibilities include the following broad categories (detailed in section 3. Program Specific Guidelines):

- Implementation of the NSLI-Y program, including overseas and virtual programing for approximately 275 participants as described in this solicitation.

- Administer the NSLI-Y program as outlined in this solicitation, which includes:
  - Recruitment, outreach, and program promotion.
  - Application, selection, placement, and notification of participants in NSLI-Y overseas and virtual programs.
  - Alumni programming and tracking.
  - Program Planning and Management
  - Financial Oversight and Reporting

5. Goals and Objectives

NSLI-Y Program Goals:
1) To increase the number of American youth who learn critical languages in support of U.S. national security and economic competitiveness.
2) To create a cadre of Americans in various professional fields who are able to effectively engage with regions of the world that are strategically important to the United States.
3) To cultivate leadership, communication, and inter-cultural competence skills among American youth.
4) To spark a lifetime interest in critical foreign languages and cultures among American youth.

Overseas NSLI-Y Programs Expected Program Outcomes:
1) Participants will demonstrate a substantive, measurable increase in language proficiency (oral comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing), as verified through a standardized language assessment tool for oral proficiency.
2) Participants will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the receiving country's society, institutions, and culture.
3) Participants will share American culture with their overseas peers, and alumni will share their overseas experiences with others in their U.S. schools and communities.

4) Alumni will continue their language learning, apply their linguistic and cross-cultural skills in their academic, career, and community activities, and/or participate in other exchanges and educational activities to further language learning.

Virtual NSLI-Y Expected Program Outcomes:
1) Participants will demonstrate language proficiency at the Novice-Low level on the ACTFL Oral proficiency rating scale or equivalent for the target language, as assessed by instructors.
2) Participants will demonstrate awareness of global competence and increased understanding of cultures where the target language is spoken.
3) Alumni will continue their language learning, apply their linguistic and cross-cultural skills in their academic, career, and volunteer activities, and/or apply to participate in other exchanges and educational activities to further language learning.

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

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

ECA created the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework to measure the performance of ECA programs. **The MODE Framework provides standard indicators and corresponding survey questions to ensure consistent measures across all ECA programs.** More resources and guidance documents on the MODE Framework are available online at: https://www.state.gov/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/.

The proposal must include the MODE Framework objectives and indicators listed below (note that, because not all MODE objectives and indicators are relevant for a program, the numbering below will not be sequential). In addition to the ECA-required objectives and indicators, applicants may also select additional MODE Framework indicators (see the **_Indicator Book_** on the MODE Framework website), or design custom objectives and indicators that are specific to the proposed program and this proposal.

- Demographic Questions as outlined in the **Indicator Book** on page v and **Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)** (See the MODE Resource Guide – https://app.box.com/s/qjo8icwj46tc8h1i1qtg80zl7ibwgtua – found on our website https://www.state.gov/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/)
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
  - o Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
    - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their program experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
    - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program (core indicator)
    - E1.1.11: Percent of American participants indicating a change in their understanding of their host country's culture and values
    - E1.1.16: Percent of virtual exchange (VE) participants who report VE as their only likely way to interact with citizens from other countries in the future
- Objective 2: Increase the impact that participants and alumni have on their communities / countries
  - o Sub-Objective 2.2: Foster participant's belief that civic engagement benefits communities/countries
    - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country (core indicator)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
    - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant (core indicator)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
    - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of their program participation
    - E4.0.09: Percent of participants reporting an increase in language skills as a result of their program participation
  - o Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
    - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core indicator)
    - E4.1.02: Total number of program cohorts (core indicator)

- ▪ E4.1.06: Number of participants in programs with formal, dedicated language learning activities
    - ▪ E4.1.15: Number of participants in virtual exchange (VE) programs
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
    - ▪ E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core indicator)

Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs)

ECA recommends the use of a PMP to serve as the primary reference document for performance monitoring for this award. If used, the PMP is an important part of any proposal, as it outlines how the applicant plans to track progress towards the proposed program's goals and objectives through indicators and corresponding data collection questions. A PMP document that includes all MODE Framework indicators is a part of this solicitation's attachments. Specific instructions on how to modify the PMP to be responsive to this solicitation are included in that document; there is also a support video available for more information on how to fill out the PMP: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBHC1oLNZvI. While ECA recommends the applicant use the PMP format provided, this is not a requirement. If a PMP is not included in the proposal, applicants should provide similar information to that found in the suggested PMP format, in a presentation of your choice. Successful PMPs (or similar documentation) should include the following:

- Objectives. Programmatic objectives are statements of the condition(s) that state what the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the MODE Framework or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives.
- Indicators. Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives and sub-objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations (meaning, breakdowns of the data by subgroups; the PMP lists the demographic questions required to obtain the information necessary to report the disaggregations). Each indicator should also include a target number to be achieved. A target is a planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe.
    - o If you do not use the PMP format provided, note that any performance monitoring reference document the applicant submits should include the

information in the column headers (Indicator Name, Definition, Target, Survey Question, etc.) in the PMP attachment at a minimum.

- o In addition to those indicators outlined in above, the applicant may propose additional custom, program-specific indicators in the PMP (ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each custom programmatic objective).
- o During the period of performance of the award, the ECA program office may further revise, add, or remove indicators. Therefore, the applicant's PMP and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established.

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

Regardless of the survey platform used, **all** MODE Framework survey questions outlined above are **required** (i.e., should be forced response); please see the Consent Language in the MODE Framework *Indicator Book* for more information on how to convey this to participants/survey respondents.

Program Performance M&E Narrative

Proposals should include information within the program narrative section(s) that outlines how the applicant intends to measure the indicators listed above. This will be separate from the PMP and should include but not be limited to:

- An overview of resources available to the applicant that outline the team structure and responsibilities surrounding performance monitoring.
- The mechanism(s) through which surveys and other data collection tools (if applicable) will be administered, including which platform will be used, and when and how surveys will be advertised to participants – detailing strategies to ensure adequate survey response rates (https://app.box.com/s/pn6tavyg7sh064i502fzap49ox63y38a), and to reduce selection and non-response bias.
- A brief explanation of data analysis and reporting procedures.

- An overview of a proposed learning plan and feedback loops to ensure that the Grant Officer (GO)/Grant Officer Representative (GOR) are informed on performance monitoring issues at regular intervals.

Nonmandatory Use of the Qualtrics MODE Survey Builder Data Collection System

ECA has created a guided tool (the MODE Survey Builder) within the Qualtrics survey platform for ECA implementing partners to generate surveys to facilitate the seamless collection and reporting of MODE Framework data. The MODE Survey Builder offers implementing partners a guided workflow that will generate a ready-to-send MODE survey, allows the addition of custom survey questions, and offers a standard report template for a quick overview of survey results that can be submitted in MyGrants (see section below) to fulfill RPM Reporting Requirements. Use of the Qualtrics survey platform can be utilized at no cost to implementing partners. Additional information about the MODE Survey Builder can be found here: https://app.box.com/s/jjr98hmx6deorxj3lwgaxjrwdfec2r91 and here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jus4fRqOTcM. You can propose use of an alternate survey tool or use the MODE Survey Builder, but if you are utilizing the MODE Survey Builder, you must indicate such in your proposal.

MyGrants RPM Reporting Requirements

MyGrants is a database solution that serves as the official system of record for all U.S. Department of State and ECA awards. The Results Performance Monitoring (RPM) module within MyGrants is an extension module that enables users to report performance monitoring data in the same system where they currently manage federal assistance actions. As part of ECA's efforts to streamline data collection and management, the recipient(s) of this award will be required to input performance reporting data outlined in this solicitation into the MyGrants RPM. The data stored in the MyGrants RPM will provide ECA with a bureau-wide, uniform M&E reporting tool that is already linked with other elements of the awards familiar to existing awardees.

7. Cost Share

ECA encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain

written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution may be reduced in like proportion.

8. Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

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

9. Virtual Exchange Component

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

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

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

10.   Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients

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

11.   Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial.

ECA is excited to play a key role in making the Semiquincentennial – commonly known as "Freedom 250" – a truly global celebration.   As the period of performance for this award is scheduled to cover part or all of calendar year (CY) 2026, the applicant may wish to consider ways the program can
celebrate Freedom 250.   Any Freedom 250 focused activities or plans will be subject to ECA approval and direction, and changes may be requested by ECA.   Use of any ECA-provided Freedom 250 brand elements will be subject to advance ECA approval and require adherence to Department of State and ECA guidelines for such branding.

12. Substantial Involvement

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

- Provide guidance and concurrence on participant outreach, recruitment,
- and selection strategy.
- Review and concur on general program location, host family/housing location, and host language institution or school for all overseas programs.
- Review and approve modifications to program locations and languages, participant numbers, implementing organizations, or program structure.
- Review implementing organizations' program descriptions and program plans/schedules for language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, community service projects, peer tutoring, and excursions for overseas programs, and for online instruction and activities for Virtual NSLI-Y programs.
- Support inclusion of overseas NSLI-Y participants in appropriate embassy/consulate/AIT activities.
- Facilitate cooperation with other federally supported programs aimed at critical language learning and studying abroad as needed.

- Consult on participant support issues and concur on all participant early returns from overseas programs and dismissals from Virtual NSLI-Y programs.
- Consult on alumni activities and follow-up events, including possible activities with the private sector.

D. Application Contents and Format

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

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

1. Budget Format

Applicants must submit a budget (SF-424A), detailed line-item budget, and a budget narrative.

Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. A detailed budget and budget narrative for applicant and proposed sub-award implementing organizations must be included.

2. Content of Application

Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for information about the application and formatting guidelines.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package.

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

2. Department of State Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Kaveri Advani, U.S. Department of State, Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PY, advanike@state.gov.

All correspondence with ECA concerning this solicitation 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 deadline has passed, ECA staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

The terms and conditions published in this solicitation are binding and may not be modified by any ECA representative. Explanatory information provided by ECA that contradicts published language will not be binding.

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

Required Registrations

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

A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.

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

All federal award recipients must maintain a current registration in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting is completed on

any issued award. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See 2 CFR 25.110 for a full list of exemptions.

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

4. Required Registration with MyGrants

All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's MyGrants system by accessing https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com and clicking the "create an account" link. MyGrants is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used MyGrants as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

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

5. Submission Instructions

Method of Submission

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Search Grants" portion of the system.

Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

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

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

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

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

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

6. Submission Dates and Times

Application Deadline Date

Friday, May 1, 2026. 11:59pm EST.

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

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you begin the submission process through Grants.gov well in advance of the application deadline.

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

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

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

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

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

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

7. Funding Restrictions for this Announcement

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

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

b. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws

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

I. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;

II. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

c. **Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and Any Other Applicable Foreign Funding Disclosure Requirements for Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)**
Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

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

d. **Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan**

Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds $500,000:

- To the best of the recipient's knowledge, neither the recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);

  The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175(a) and is compliant with it; and compliance plan must be consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 175(b)(4) and (5).

- That the recipient has procedures to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in them.

Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

e. **Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities**

(a) *Definitions.*

American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at https://www.sam.gov

FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.

Unmanned aircraft means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

Unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.

(b) *Prohibition.*
Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

(1) delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;

(2) operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and

(3) using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system.

c) *Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.*
The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 (41 U.S.C. 3901 note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].

8. Other Submission Requirements

a. Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov.

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

c. Key Personnel
   ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Applicants should also identify what proportion of their time will be used in support of the program. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions.

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

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Process

ECA will check that all proposals meet the technical requirements in this solicitation. Proposals that do not meet the guidelines, including those under the eligibility section above or in the PSI, will be ineligible for further review.

All *eligible* proposals will be reviewed by the program office before being reviewed by an ECA grant panel. Applications may also be reviewed by Public Diplomacy sections overseas, State Department regional bureaus, or other State Department offices, as appropriate. All reviewers, including the ECA grant panels, will review any eligible proposals based on the criteria below.

Proposals recommended by an ECA grant panel will be reviewed for compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines, and assessed for risk. Final funding decisions are made by the ECA's Assistant Secretary. Only an ECA Grant Officer has the final authority to issue assistance awards.

2. Review Criteria

An ECA grants panel will competitively evaluate all technically eligible applications according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered, and all carry equal weight in the proposal review.

a. **Program planning:** Proposals should have a detailed agenda and work plan that demonstrates your institution's ability to carry out the program. The plan should follow the program guidelines described in this solicitation and should be likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

b. **Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs and responsible fiscal management. ECA will consider the past performance of prior ECA recipients, including the timely submission of reports, and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

c. **Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity after the ECA supported program ends, ensuring that programs are not isolated events.

   d. **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Proposals should have a fully developed M&E plan that includes goals, objectives, and indicators. The plan should be feasible and aligned with the M&E section of this solicitation. Proposals should include a realistic learning plan that outlines how your organization plans to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices. All submitted M&E plans will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided at least the required information outlined in the M&E section of this solicitation and demonstrated the applicant's capacity to carry out the M&E plan.
   e. **Cost-effectiveness and cost share:** Proposals should keep the overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost share through other private sector support and institutional direct funding contributions.

3. Indirect Costs

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

4. Risk Review

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award, the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:
   a. Financial stability
   b. Management systems and standards
   c. History of performance
   d. Audit reports and findings
   e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

5. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

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

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

G. Award Notices

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

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

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

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

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - o Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - o Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
  - o Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
  - o Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

- 2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT

- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION

- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)

- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY

- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: https://www.federalregister.gov/

2. Reporting

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

g. **Performance Progress Reports (PPRs)** shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual, quarterly, or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. All reports and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this award in MyGrants.

h. The **Federal Financial Reports** (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the recipient must upload the approved report to MyGrants, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the recipient's eligibility for future awards.

i. Required **MODE data** (see Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation section) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. MODE data reporting shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. The frequency of these reports will be determined by ECA/P/MELI and the Program Officer. Either a standard report template (if using the MODE Survey Builder) or aggregate data and the raw data file (if Recipient uses their own survey platform) must be uploaded by the Recipient as an RPM Performance Report under the corresponding record for this award in MyGrants.

j. A **final program and financial report** no more than 120 days after the period of performance of the award ends or termination of the award.

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

l.   Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.

m.   Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three workdays prior to the official opening of the activity.

3. Branding and Marking

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System. Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual 10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions.

For more information, visit: https://brand.america.gov/

I.   Other Information

For Informational Purposes Only - Adherence to All Regulations Governing The J Visa

ECA places critically important emphasis on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at http://j1visa.state.gov or from:

Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation
U.S. Department of State
SA-5, Floor C2, Room C2L13
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20522