

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Community Advocacy for Emerging Cuban Leaders

Announcement Type:	New Announcement
Funding Opportunity Title:	Community Advocacy for Emerging Cuban Leaders
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:	19.750
Funding Amount:	\$1,033,086
Number of Awards:	One award
Cost Sharing Requirement:	Not Required
Issuance Date:	May 23, 2018
Deadline for Receipt of Questions:	June 22, 2018
Closing Date for Submission of Applications:	July 6, 2018, 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Eligibility Category:	U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS; overseas non-governmental organizations (NGOs); U.S. and overseas institutions of higher education
	Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400g, it is U.S. Department of State policy not to award profit under assistance instruments.
Submission of Applications:	Application packages must be submitted via Grants.gov (www.grants.gov)
Funding Activity Category:	Democracy and Governance
Funding Type:	Discretionary
Authority:	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended
Source of Funding:	Economic Support Funds
Assistance Type:	Grant
Fiscal Year of Funding:	FY 2017
Fiscal Year of Obligation:	FY 2018
Electronic Requirement:	Yes
	E-mailed or faxed proposal packages will not be considered
Number of Applications:	One (1) per applicant organization
	NOTE: Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined proposal. One organization must be designated as the lead applicant. The lead applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed above.
Anticipated Award Date:	Within eight to ten weeks of the closing of this announcement. The successful applicant will receive notification. The U. S. Department of State is under no obligation to fund any of the proposals submitted under this funding opportunity.
Project Duration:	No more than 36 months

Est. Project Start Date: September 2018
Est. Project End Date: September 2021

This funding opportunity is posted on Grants.gov and may be amended and questions from potential applicants will be posted as an attachment to this NOFO. Applicants should regularly check the website for the most recent information pertaining to this NOFO.

DOS/WHA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

SAM.gov registration is required to receive a Federal assistance award. See the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information.

All applicants must provide a Unique Entity Identifier, or Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), when submitting application on Grants.gov.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) announces a Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support Community Advocacy for Emerging Cuban Leaders. Subject to the availability of funds, WHA intends to issue an award in an amount not to exceed \$1,033,086 in FY 2017 Economic Support Funds for a project period of no more than 36 months. The anticipated start date for this activity is September 2018, and WHA intends to support one award from this NOFO.

WHA invites U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS; overseas non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and institutions of higher education to submit proposals.

The Community Advocacy for Emerging Cuban Leaders Project will support the participation of several cohorts of emerging leaders from Cuban civil society in a six-month to year-long professional development project. Administered by a U.S. or international nonprofit organization, the project will bring small groups of civil-society leaders and/or young professionals to the United States or a third country for in-depth training in communications and presenting democracy-building and human rights ideas to audiences. Targeted skills to develop could include messaging to rural areas and other underserved Cuban populations, presenting a project or project idea to potential NGO partners, learning international communication tools and operating in the international organization community, and/or communication in closed societies, in addition to maximizing internet resources to achieve communications objectives, among other topics. Once completed, the participants will return to Cuba to conduct their own small-group trainings or projects to pass on the skills learned while in the project. Through participation in the project, participants will develop a set of leadership and communication tools and skills to support the development of democratic principles in Cuba.

WHA reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project and the availability of funds. The authority for this NOFO is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The CFDA Number for this funding opportunity is 19.750.

This NOFO consists of this cover letter plus the following sections:

- I. Funding Opportunity Description
- II. Award Information
- III. Eligibility information
- IV. Agency Contacts

The complete solicitation package includes the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions, which includes Application and Submission Instructions and Application Review Information. Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application should read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the project sought, the application submission requirements, and evaluation process.

This funding opportunity is posted on Grants.gov and may be amended. See the Application and

Submission Instructions for further details. **Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this NOFO.**

Any questions concerning this NOFO should be submitted in writing via email to the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at WHAGrants@state.gov by June 22, 2018 with the subject line Community Advocacy for Emerging Cuban Leaders. Responses to questions will be made available to all potential applicants through an amendment to this NOFO and posted on Grants.gov.

Francisco L. Palmieri
Acting Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
U.S. Department of State

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

U.S. foreign assistance for Cuba seeks to empower Cubans to determine freely their own futures by increasing human capacity, promoting community level engagement, and expanding civil society networks. Since 1996, the United States has provided assistance to increase the flow of information on democracy and human rights to Cuba through a variety of U.S. and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The U.S. Department of State has engaged with independent civil society groups on education, communication, and civic issues. The Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) seeks to build upon these earlier, successful capacity-building efforts and provide professional development opportunities to current and emerging civil society and community leaders through off-island communications training and site visits. Civil society organizations and individuals in Cuba have had few models to follow as they grow to serve the needs of their communities.

To support further progress, the U.S. Department of State has allocated \$1,033,086 in FY 2017 Economic Support Funds for a communications training project that supports the ability of emerging Cuban leaders in elevating independent actors and organizations in Cuba to coordinate among themselves on the island, to advocate for democratic principles, and to convey the needs of the Cuban people in the international community. Assistance to Cuba is governed by a complex series of statutory and other restrictions. The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (also referred to as the "Helms-Burton Act," P.L. 104-114) authorizes the furnishing of assistance and other support for individuals and independent NGOs to support democracy-building efforts for Cuba. All activities must be implemented in accordance with the relevant legislation, including a prohibition on any funds .

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the WHA-funded Community Advocacy for Emerging Cuban Leaders project is to allow the participants to establish themselves in Cuba as professional resources for grassroots efforts in democracy and human rights promotion and further opening of communications across the island and internationally. Project alumni will have the tools to promote causes by attracting wider audiences, communicating messages effectively to other leaders and partners, and mobilizing independent actors within civil society to promote freedom of expression and assembly.

PROJECT GOALS

The desired impact of this project is that a new generation of independent leaders will possess the skills and knowledge to bolster Cubans' abilities to develop independent civil society communities and express ideas regarding human rights and democracy to peers and the outside world. This cadre of professionals will model effective leadership of civil society organizations that are accountable to the public, promote community engagement, support diversity, and

further democratic practices in Cuba.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In order to fulfill this purpose and meet this goal, this project will build the professional capacity of 25-40 Cubans to advance community-focused causes related to human rights and democracy by providing a training and internship project in the United States or a third country within a three-year period. Participants will learn to function professionally and effectively, communicate new ideas to diverse audiences, and learn training skills in order to conduct training among their peers.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES

In order to fulfill and meet the above-stated purpose and goal, the recipient of this grant will fulfill several major components.

To promote networking among emerging civil society leaders, participants will travel to the United States or a third country in two to four cohorts over three years. Cohorts need not be the same size. Each cohort will follow the sequence of components below:

- A. **Orientation and Training:** Participants will start with a group orientation and professional development activities.
- B. **Site Visits/Observations:** Participants will participate in immersion experiences with well-organized NGOs, international organizations, think tanks, and/or academic institutions in the United States or the host country that are focused on human rights and democracy. Please note that preference may be given to those organizations in areas not typically visited or inhabited by the Cuban diaspora.
- C. **Capstone and Follow-On:** As part of the skills development project, participants will write a short paper and prepare a presentation for their interest-area proposal, including a plan to implement their proposal upon their return home to Cuba.

Applicants must describe the design and management of all of the components within the proposal narrative or in the attachments. Applicants should also be sure to describe the roles and responsibilities of the project management team and partner organizations or institutions.

1. Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment Plan and Partners:

Applicants for the administration of this project will describe in their proposals a robust recruitment and selection plan that will include:

- a) Outreach that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates
- b) Promotional materials that will be developed and disseminated
- c) Details on engaging geographically, racially/ethnically, and socio-economically diverse candidates
- d) Participant selection criteria and a candidate screening process

Staff of the recipient organization **should not plan to travel to Cuba** to conduct on-island recruitment. Therefore, applicants must provide detailed plans to recruit and interview candidates from the United States or a third country. Before final decisions are made, the recipient will recommend the principal and alternate participants to WHA.

Participants:

Project participants will be Cuban citizens and residents who demonstrate an interest in communications, and/or other leadership roles. As emerging leaders, participants may be university students or young professionals. The participants should also demonstrate the aptitude (maturity, independence, self-reliance, etc.) for success in a project abroad. Participants must demonstrate a stated desire to return and work in the management of independent organizations and/or activities in Cuba. The implementing organization's recruitment plan must actively seek a candidate pool representing gender, racial, socio-economic, and geographic diversity in Cuba. The implementing organization must actively recruit women and minorities as participants.

Location of Activities and Visa Requirements:

The United States and/or a third-country location identified by the applicant. Preference may be given to those organizations that have the ability to implement this project in areas not typically visited or inhabited by the Cuban diaspora.

- In the United States: If project activities are to take place in the United States, each participant must be able to receive the appropriate U.S. visa and commit to returning to Cuba upon completion of the project. The award recipient must have the capacity to issue the relevant forms to support the students in obtaining appropriate visas. In addition, all participants in U.S.-based activities must also receive intensive English-language training to further enable their communications skills as well as adaptation to life in the United States. For U.S. activities, participants should have basic English language ability when applying, although fluency/advanced skills are not required.
- In a third country: If project activities are to take place in a third country or countries, each participant must be able to receive the appropriate visa(s) and commit to returning to Cuba upon completion of the project. Applicants may propose activities in a third country or countries, but applicants should note that the Department of State does not advise holding third-country activities in Venezuela, Nicaragua, or Bolivia. English language skills are advised, but will not be a requirement if events are to take place outside the United States. The award recipient and all sponsored participants must comply with all visa regulations in the relevant country or countries.

Applicant should specify plans for incorporating English- or Spanish-language events, including all training, site visits, and the capstone.

Pre-departure Orientation:

The award recipient will provide participants with a substantive pre-departure orientation – any combination of video-conferencing, in-person sessions, written materials (provided in hard copy, USB drives, or CD/DVD), and/or low-bandwidth websites – to effectively prepare them for the project. This will include the provision of details on the project components, cross-cultural

adjustment, travel and financial matters, terms and conditions of the project, and health insurance. Guidance should also outline what to bring to the project's host country or countries, how to communicate with home, and other logistical matters.

2. International Activities

- **Orientation and Training:** Participants will start with a group orientation in the United States or host country and up to one month of specialized training and site visits to familiarize them with democratic practices in the United States or host country. This orientation should include a wide range of topics and skills necessary to adjust to living in a new country. The training will focus on professional development needs for emerging civil society leaders, including information technology training for research, documentation, advocacy, and outreach, as well as train-the-trainer and training/teaching skills and activities aimed at increasing the impact of the project once participants have returned to Cuba. Training should also cover the topics of ethics, accountability, and social inclusion.
- **Site Visits/Observations:** Participants will participate in immersion experiences with NGOs, international organizations, think tanks, and/or academic institutions in the United States or the host country that are focused on human rights, democratic governance, or civic participation. Note that none of these organizations should be devoted to or work extensively with Cuban studies or Cuban activists. These visits will expose participants to a range of organizations and communications strategies that support their interest in facilitating communication independent of state authority and with the international community. Participants should develop a proposal for their own project when they return home in an area of interest to them, and engage with organizations that work to further these areas. By visiting with the organizations and observing the formal activities, participants will be able to explore methods for effective communication, conflict resolution, reaching disparate audiences, and engagement in international fora. These visits can last anywhere from one day to one month, but should demonstrate a measurable value-add for participants' skills and abilities, training, and/or interest-area knowledge.

In the proposal narrative and/or attachments, applicants to this NOFO should describe how they will recruit potential host organizations, where these organizations and activities will take place, support the living situations of the interns in international communities, and ensure that the internships deliver professional development opportunities appropriate for the interests and background of individual participants. As previously noted, applicants should specify the plans for conducting activities in English, Spanish, or a mix of both, depending on project location(s).

- **Capstone:** As part of the skills-development activities, participants will write a short paper and prepare a presentation for their interest-area proposal. This proposal and presentation will be the culmination of the project. The audience should consist of, but is not limited to, possible partners/contributors to the proposal and/or human rights organizations in Cuba or internationally. A successful capstone presentation will incorporate the skills learned over the course of the project, and allow for networking

among potential future partners/donors/implementers that can continue to work with the participant in their interest area. Participants will also develop a plan of action to implement in Cuba that includes organizing their own training sessions to pass on the skills learned. The proposed implementing organization should be prepared to provide follow-on support to participants, perhaps through a mentorship project developed with civil society actors in the host country and Latin American countries.

3. Follow-on with Alumni

Staying engaged with alumni is important for evaluating the success of the project, building a community of independent organizations and actors on the island, and continuing to support alumni in engaging in networks of their professional peers in the United States and in Latin America. Applicant organizations should describe various approaches to facilitate this engagement. All proposed follow-on activities for alumni must be developed in close consultation with WHA and reflect the goals and objectives of the project. Proposals should include an outline of and timeline for follow-on alumni programming, information on its coordination, and a plan to foster and sustain longer-term linkages with alumni.

4. External Evaluation

As part of the award, the recipient organization must identify an external evaluator that will complete a comprehensive evaluation of the results of the project, guided by the stated purpose and goals. During the course of the project, participants will learn effective communication skills, strategies for reaching disparate audiences, learning to build messages and keep momentum in messaging, as well as hone critical thinking, interpersonal, goal-setting, and organization skills. To the extent possible, given limitations on access to alumni and the time frame of the award, the evaluation should also measure the longer-term impact of the award, including the participants' abilities to more effectively lead, manage, and grow independent messaging and communications projects or networks in support of democratic principles in Cuba. The proposal must include a plan for this evaluation.

BUDGET GUIDANCE

The Federal grant amount of \$1,033,086 will support the participation of 25 to 40 emerging leaders in a professional development project over a maximum of three years. In past years, WHA projects have included a cost per participant of \$10,000 to \$14,000, but factors such as the length of the project, cohort size, and activity locations will affect the costs for each participant. The budget will include roundtrip airfare between Cuba and the selected country or countries; room and board; local transportation; provision of orientation, training, and a closing capstone; and other project-related expenses.

Allowable project costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recruitment and advertising materials and expenses
- Pre-departure orientation expenses
- Passport and visa fees, as necessary, including travel costs for interviews
- Roundtrip airfare between Cuba and the selected project countries

- Monthly stipend for room and board
- Winter clothing, if necessary
- Travel within project locations and local transportation (excluding automobile purchases)
- Orientation and training expenses (e.g., travel, lodging, meals, materials, honoraria for speakers)
- Health insurance (accident and sickness) – compliant with host-country legislation
- Contingency funds for unexpected travel or other issues

NOTE: Grant funds may not be used for expenses related to spouses, children, or family relocation or reunification.

DESIRED RESULTS AND ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS

By the end of the project, participants should have the ability to establish themselves in Cuba as professional resources for grassroots efforts in democracy and human rights promotion and further opening of communications across the island and internationally. Alumni will have the tools to promote causes by attracting broad audiences, communicating messages effectively to other leaders and partners, and mobilizing independent actors within civil society to promote freedom of expression and assembly.

The applicant will develop a Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) with annual and end-of-project targets and results anticipated for key performance indicators. The following table shows required indicators that must be measured, as well as illustrative targets, that the recipient will be responsible for monitoring and reporting during and after the project. The applicant should propose additional outputs, indicators, and/or targets as necessary. WHA will regularly monitor the project's performance to assess whether project activities are on track and targets are being achieved.

Outcome indicators for the project are provided below. As part of the proposal, the applicant is expected to identify targets for these indicators based on what it can reasonably achieve within the performance period of the project, based on the expected overall project results described above.

<i>Outcome Indicators</i>	<i>Targets:</i>
Number of individuals who report acquiring a robust body of knowledge about multiple facets of democratic advocacy.	TBD
Number of individuals who report increased ability and confidence in communicating with a wide variety of audiences.	TBD
Number of individuals who utilize their U.S. experience to elevate independent communications across Cuba and in the international community.	TBD
Number of individuals who report a more robust understanding of international organization functions and communications practices.	TBD

Output indicators and illustrative targets that should be used for the project are provided below. The applicant should review these and either confirm the illustrative targets or

propose alternative targets, as appropriate.

<i>Output Indicators</i>	<i>Illustrative targets:</i>
Pre- and post-activity surveys conducted to assess participant's development	Two per cohort
Number of people who have completed USG assisted civic education projects	At least 25
Number of participants who conduct follow-on activities in Cuba to further train colleagues in advocacy skills.	At least 25

The recipient will be required to collect baseline data for all the PMP indicators during the first year of the project, as well as pre- and post-activity surveys with each cohort to determine the change in each participant's knowledge, understanding, and skill set. In addition, applicants should define certain terms included in the outcomes and indicators at the very beginning of the project so that it is possible to measure the change during and at the end of the project. Such baseline information will be critical for both monitoring and evaluation of project progress and results.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

The U.S. government may issue one award resulting from this NOFO to the responsible applicant whose application conforming to this NOFO is the most responsive to the objectives set forth in this NOFO. The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate applications, and (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more information on how to apply to this NOFO, including information on the proposal's content and formatting. Please use both the PSI and this announcement to ensure that the proposal submission is in full compliance with the requirements. Proposal submissions that do not meet all of the requirements outlined in the NOFO and PSI will NOT be considered.

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION:

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), it is U.S. Department of State policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. **NOTE:** Overseas-based nonprofit organizations are legally required to comply with the 2 CFR 200.

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 an application. In addition, a final award of any resultant grant agreement cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal WHA procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

It is the responsibility of the recipient of this NOFO to ensure that it has been recorded as received by Grants.gov in its entirety. **The Department bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.**

The federal award signed by the Department Grants Officer is the authorizing document.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports (to include the SF-PPR, as the cover page) and Quarterly Financial Reports (SF-425) unless otherwise stipulated in the final Agreement. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance and indicate the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award task/goal noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

NOTE: It is the Department of State's policy that English is the official language of all documents. If reports or any supporting documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, it must be stated in each version that the **English language version is the controlling version.**

Mandatory disclosures (2 CFR 200.113)

The non-federal entity or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. Non-federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in §200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

A Federal awarding agency, prior to making a federal award will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

OTHER INFORMATION

Applicant organizations must demonstrate commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation. Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with or support to individuals or organizations associated with terrorism.

Proposals that reflect any type of support for elected members of government or for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker will NOT be considered.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

(1) Eligible Entities: Applicants that are eligible to apply are U.S.-based non-profit/nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS; overseas non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and institutions of higher education.

Applicants must demonstrate experience and/or understanding of the unique requirements of operation in Cuba or other similar closed societies. Successful applicants will also show a robust ability to plan for emergencies and other contingencies, and to work quickly to mitigate any issues.

To be eligible for a grant award, in addition to other conditions of this NOFO, organizations must have a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. Proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker, including elected members of government, will NOT be considered. It is the legal responsibility of the Recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in any sub-awards issued under this grant award.

(2) WHA encourages applications from potential new partners.

IV. AGENCY CONTACTS

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this NOFO must request it in writing by the deadline for questions specified in the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly and publicly to all other prospective applicants as a Questions and Answers amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

Please be sure to check Grants.gov for any updates or amendments to the NOFO and to see published Questions and Answers regarding the NOFO.

Any questions concerning this NOFO must be submitted in writing by email to WHAGrants@state.gov by the deadline for questions indicated at the top of this NOFO's cover letter. Please use the name of the project and your organization's name in the subject line.