



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)

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2025 EducationUSA Advising Services

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010349

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.432

Deadline for Applications: July 3, 2024

Executive Summary:

The Educational Information and Resources Branch (EducationUSA Branch or ECA/A/S/A) in the Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces a NOFO for up to three cooperative agreements to administer FY 2025 EducationUSA Advising Services, pending the availability of FY 2025 funds. EducationUSA is the U.S. Department of State's global network of over 430 educational advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories. EducationUSA advisers provide accurate, comprehensive, and current information about the full range of U.S. higher education opportunities, guiding prospective students to find the institution that best fits their needs. In addition, the EducationUSA network assists accredited HEIs to help institutional leaders meet their campus internationalization goals, including strategic guidance to U.S. institutions regarding relevant international higher education systems and partners to enhance their international networks and potential partnerships. The EducationUSA network, in collaboration with ECA, also provides information on the U.S. higher education system to foreign governments and institutions and encourages study abroad by Americans to expand their understanding of foreign cultures, communities, and countries.

With the goal of increasing student mobility between the United States and other countries through EducationUSA advising, ECA expects this NOFO will result in up to three cooperative agreements. Applicants can submit proposals for one, two, or all three of the components below:

- **Component A for EducationUSA Global Advising Services** to support advising operations worldwide including, but not limited to, the development and maintenance of IT infrastructure, training resources and materials, global strategic communications and outreach, and the employment and management of approximately 12 Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs). (Approximately \$6,600,000.)
- **Component B for EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia**, to support advising in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine. (Approximately \$1,500,000.)

- **Component C for EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa**, to support advising in Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen. (Approximately \$650,000.)

ECA reserves the right to add or remove countries designated in Component B or C depending on ECA and Department foreign policy priorities and the availability of funds.

In these cases, the recipient will need to submit an updated budget and budget narrative highlighting adjustments to the original budget submission.

It is ECA's intent to award up to three cooperative agreements for an estimated total amount of \$8,750,000, pending the availability of FY 2025 funds. Applicants may submit proposals for one, two, or all three funding opportunities, but they must clearly identify the proposal submitted as for Component A: Global EducationUSA Services; Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia; or Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa. **Applicants applying for more than one component must submit separate proposals for each component, with detailed budgets and budget narratives outlining a comprehensive strategy for the administration of each program component for which they apply. Applicants should include in their proposal a detailed staff budget with proposed level of effort** (please see section D.14. Budget Format for information regarding the budget format). See section B. Federal Award Information for additional details.

FY 2025 award recipients should be prepared to work closely with implementing partners funded by previous fiscal year awards across all components to maintain continuity of programming and operations during the award's period of performance. This would include, but is not limited to, the maintenance and transfer of developed IT platforms and systems; the EducationUSA fair registration and payment portal (Fair Portal) hosted at ; outreach and strategic communication strategies; and adviser training and development materials and timelines. Additionally, FY 2025 award recipient(s) for Components A, B, and C should be prepared to collaborate with each other to ensure the overarching successful implementation of EducationUSA program goals and objectives and ensure the effective integration and amplification of all EducationUSA activities across the global network. It should be noted that ECA will retain copyright use of EducationUSA outreach and event platforms and materials developed specifically for EducationUSA; platforms and materials will be utilized by ECA and current award recipients and will be considered proprietary.

To facilitate effective communication by ECA/A/S/A with the organizations cooperating in the administration of these programs, the award recipients must have the ability to work virtually across a range of platforms with partners in the EducationUSA global network.

Award recipient(s) must have offices and staff in the Washington, DC metropolitan area dedicated to working on this/these award(s). Applicants who do not currently have offices and program staff in the Washington, D.C. area should include in their proposals a detailed plan for establishing a staffed office in Washington, D.C. to work on this/these award(s) no later than October 1, 2024. The award recipient(s) bear the costs of establishing the offices and staff. No such costs may be included in the proposal.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Authority

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

A.2. Purpose

EducationUSA Advising Services' awards will support the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Export Strategy (NES), the Department of State's Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), and ECA's Functional Bureau Strategy (FBS), by increasing international student engagement with American peers, and subsequently expanding ties between the United States and foreign governments and its peoples through higher education. EducationUSA expands U.S. higher education networks and encourages international students to gain knowledge and skills on a U.S. campus and contribute to American communities, thereby sustaining economic growth and U.S. businesses and institutions. Successful applicants will submit a proposal that clearly links strategic communication and marketing, advising, and training activities to these goals in a thoughtful, practical, and effective approach.

EducationUSA's global network of educational advising centers is based at U.S. missions, as well as at a variety of institutions including, but not limited to, Fulbright Commissions, Binational Centers, American Spaces, universities, and NGOs. There are three categories of advising centers: Reference Centers (offer reference materials for the U.S. higher education search process); Standard Centers (offer reference materials and limited advising services by an EducationUSA adviser); Comprehensive Centers (offer full reference collection and comprehensive advising services by at least one full-time educational adviser).

Each year, U.S. missions around the world propose strategic priorities and plans for educational advising in their respective countries to ECA. ECA/A/S/A oversees the network of advising centers, engages U.S. missions in the annual strategic planning process, formulates policies for the network as a whole, and funds advising operations in part by the provision of funding to U.S. missions as well as via cooperative agreements with U.S. implementing partners. ECA/A/S/A oversees a central website for the network located at www.EducationUSA.state.gov, provides guidance on digital content, oversees various training programs for advisers, and coordinates global outreach and resources in partnership with domestic and international stakeholders. ECA/A/S/A program officers serve as experts on educational issues and support the management of EducationUSA global operations, including close coordination with Public Diplomacy Sections (PDS) of U.S. missions on their educational outreach strategies and operations. REACs, based overseas and employed by an NGO partner under a cooperative agreement with ECA (Component A herein), monitor the network of advisers and centers, lead adviser training in the field, and serve as regional experts on higher education for the network.

A.3. Component A: Program Specific Guidelines and Recipient Responsibilities

The award recipient will support advising operations worldwide, including EducationUSA centers and advisers as well as virtual advising. In collaboration with ECA, they will formulate and implement a global strategic plan to provide coordination and implementation of annual strategic planning; global strategic communications, marketing, and outreach; the employment, management, support, and professional development of approximately 12 REACs and related support staff to ensure in-depth support of all Component A programmatic activities. The recipient will support EducationUSA adviser training and professional development; development and maintenance of IT infrastructure; special programs and events; and program and operational policies and procedures. The recipient will utilize the results of REAC monitoring and other evaluation mechanisms to provide timely monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to ECA on and across all aspects of global advising.

The recipient may utilize subawards or identify and contract with outside consultants as needed, in close consultation with ECA, to support programmatic resource and activity development, including print and online products and initiatives, training, and evaluation and assessment tools and resources. ECA encourages applicants to propose innovative strategies for all aspects of the EducationUSA Global Advising Services program. The award recipient will be expected to have sufficient staff to ensure in-depth support for the below programmatic activities.

In consultation with ECA, the Component A recipient will conduct regular, interactive coordination and communication (including quarterly check-in meetings) with the award recipient(s) of Components B and C in relation to relevant EducationUSA activities including

adviser training, professional development activities, and other initiatives as appropriate and/or as directed by ECA in order to ensure the overall success of EducationUSA activities globally. The Component A recipient will proactively share and distribute adviser training and professional development resources, and EducationUSA global physical and digital assets, including global marketing and promotional assets, strategic communications resources and materials. In consultation with ECA, the recipient(s) of Components A, B and C will coordinate together in the ongoing implementation of an annual global strategic communications plan.

EducationUSA Global Advising Services includes the following program components:

1. Global Strategic Communications

In consultation with ECA, the recipient will provide strategic vision and ongoing recommendations to enhance the efficacy and impact of EducationUSA advising, programming, and services globally through a strategic plan, as outlined above. The strategic plan will be supported by an ongoing **EducationUSA Global Strategic Communications Plan**. The recipient will assist ECA in the development and implementation of the plan, which will be updated annually and serve as a guiding framework for the advancement of EducationUSA strategic priorities through all aspect of global communications. The plan will also provide a tactical guide and resource for the recipient(s) of Components A, B, and C for the overall coordination of EducationUSA's communications, digital presence, marketing, social media, and promotion throughout the global network in order to strengthen and build upon the unified global EducationUSA brand, tailored to key audiences when appropriate, and responsive to local and country-specific needs.

Proposals should illustrate how the recipient will capitalize upon and further disseminate past and ongoing print and digital materials developed to support EducationUSA global strategic communications, including those associated with past and ongoing marketing campaigns. The recipient will be responsible for ensuring the global standardization of the EducationUSA brand, including web and social media branding and communications, in accordance with official EducationUSA branding and identity guidelines as defined by ECA.

2. Global Advising Management

Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REAC): Regional Managers

The recipient will employ and manage a global network of 12 REACs to be located in strategic countries as determined by ECA. REACs are experts in higher education in the United States and internationally, preferably in one or more countries of the region of assignment; knowledge of a regional language is preferred. REACs receive policy guidance from ECA/A/S/A and Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions, and provide professional leadership and support to the EducationUSA network of advising centers to foster international student mobility with the United States and advance the U.S. government's

public diplomacy efforts. REACs supply ECA and Public Diplomacy Sections with regular updates on student mobility-related issues and relevant advising programming, counsel U.S. higher education institutions, and liaise with and advise EducationUSA advising center host institutions on adviser training and center operations. REAC positions may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA based on foreign policy priorities, overall network needs, and the availability of funds.

Twelve (12) REACs are currently based in Sub-Saharan Africa (two), Europe and Eurasia (two), East Asia and the Pacific (two), the Middle East and North Africa, and South and Central Asia (three), and the Western Hemisphere (three). Sufficient REAC administrative support, in the form of REAC assistants or other support staff as needed, should be employed to optimize REAC work, provide equitable support globally to assist REACs in performing their primary duties and ensure that REACs are legally employed to work in their respective locations. Proposals should describe the roles of REACs, REAC assistants, and headquarters program staff in program design and delivery. REAC support and responsibilities comprise the following, including but not limited to:

- REAC Support: The recipient will ensure that REACs are legally employed to work in their respective locations, and provide REAC, and REAC administrative support, salaries, benefits, employment contracts, orientation, training, and transportation; REAC office costs; assist with the logistics of securing housing for the REACs as relevant, as well as travel, conference, and other work-related expenses, in consultation with ECA. The recipient will monitor REAC safety and security in both their country of employment and during REAC travel, and consult with ECA on areas of concern. In consultation with ECA, the recipient will develop annual REAC Work Plans including strategic direction for the relevant sub-region, outreach and training, center site visit timeline, and a travel budget. The recipient will ensure that REAC performance evaluations encompass feedback from ECA and other relevant parties, including U.S. missions and Fulbright commissions. The recipient will coordinate and ensure timely collection of REAC reporting, conduct end-of-year REAC evaluations, and alert ECA when REACs do not meet performance metrics and/or upon reports of misconduct, including actions taken to respond to and correct the infractions and/or poor performance.
- Leadership and Expertise: REACs are responsible for engaging and serving as higher education experts/consultants for ECA, U.S. missions, leadership of advising center host institutions (including Fulbright Commissions, Binational Centers, American Spaces, etc.), and advisers in relation to advising center and program management. REACs also support their international student recruitment efforts, campus internationalization goals, international partnerships, and support for U.S. study abroad. REACs plan and conduct outreach through a variety of activities and events, and expand awareness of EducationUSA and U.S. higher education to promote EducationUSA services and

resources, encourage study in the United States, and disseminate knowledge and expertise among the U.S. higher education community.

- EducationUSA Advising and Center Management: REACs are responsible for providing training (in-person and/or virtual) to ensure that all advisers within the assigned region and centers possess the knowledge and expertise to successfully function at their designated advising level. REACs currently conduct one sub-regional adviser virtual training workshop per year. REACs recommend advisers for ECA approval to take part in additional training and professional development opportunities (including conferences, EducationUSA forums, and campus visits) to enhance advisers' knowledge and skills and to enable advisers to advance to higher advising levels.

REACs will develop an annual EducationUSA professional development and training resources dissemination plan; maintain and update information including, but not limited to, contact information of advising centers and advisers, and regularly updated adviser profiles on the EducationUSA website and other digital and print properties as necessary. REACs will coordinate and ensure that advisers regularly submit data required to track EducationUSA network programs and activities into the EducationUSA data reporting platform. As part of center management, REACs will monitor advising centers through periodic site visits in coordination with ECA and U.S. missions abroad to ensure advising centers are functioning properly and at their designated level as defined in Section A.2.; certify and maintain updated certification of advising centers according to the appropriate designation level (reference, standard, or comprehensive); and ensure periodic and timely content for reporting. REACs will alert ECA of any significant or sustained challenges with individual advisers or advising centers.

- Travel: In addition to conducting site visits, REACs attend approximately two to three international and/or U.S. domestic conferences per year. Note: Should travel restrictions be in place preventing required travel to centers, the award recipient must provide an alternative monitoring plan for ECA's input and approval. Total REAC travel costs should average approximately 3% of the total proposed budget under Component A.

Virtual Advising

As determined in consultation with ECA, the recipient will employ one or more virtual advisers for one or more countries. Pending the availability of funds, ECA reserves the right to expand virtual advising services to other countries to respond to growing global advising needs in accordance with foreign policy goals; countries will be determined in consultation with ECA and regional bureaus. The recipient should demonstrate the ability to directly manage and provide administrative support as determined to meet the needs of virtual advisers.

Virtual advisers provide advising and advising content in designated target languages for designated target populations to maximize the effectiveness of outreach and/or to provide outreach in locations where it may not be feasible or efficient to operate an EducationUSA center due to unforeseen logistical challenges. The recipient will develop dedicated resources for online EducationUSA advising outreach in Farsi, English, or other critical languages used in countries for which virtual advising services are provided.

3. Development and Maintenance of EducationUSA Digital Presence and IT Infrastructure

The recipient will oversee, maintain, and adapt technology systems and IT infrastructure that supports the current and future work needs and digital presence of EducationUSA, enhances clear communication of the program's goals and impact in a consistent way, and strengthens communications and outreach to and on-behalf of the U.S. higher education community. Proposals should illustrate how the recipient plans to manage, maintain, and continue ongoing development of digital operations and IT systems, including the development of a new website. The recipient will manage EducationUSA flagship digital platforms in accordance with best security practices as determined by the Department of State. The recipient will also ensure ongoing development and dissemination of publications, promotional materials, design elements, online materials, templates, and physical and digital assets, produced under previous and current awards, including in support of global marketing efforts. As necessary, the recipient will be expected to coordinate with the previous implementing partner to transition EducationUSA content and platforms to ensure the continuity of messaging and engagement across platforms. The recipient may wish to combine or maximize outreach efforts across platforms in order to expand engagement with international students, U.S. higher education, non-governmental partners, foreign governments, and other stakeholders.

The recipient will ensure the ongoing development and maintenance of an online EducationUSA Fair Portal to be utilized for all EducationUSA fairs, forums and events.

With ECA approval, the recipient may charge a convenience fee associated with costs related to payment processing; all income generated must be used to directly offset relevant fair registration and costs related to the implementation of the portal. Based upon the number of events processed through the Fair Portal during a typical year, the applicant may find it practical to budget a convenience fee for approximately 80 fairs. The recipient should also include a plan for the collection of delinquent payments.

The proposal should also include a plan for the continued development of fair-related data collection and evaluation through the Fair Portal including specified attendee metrics, feedback from participants, and the incorporation of best practices and lessons learned, and other information as specified and according to a schedule determined by ECA/A/S/A.

Digital Operations and IT Systems: The recipient will manage EducationUSA flagship social media accounts and other relevant platforms that may emerge in accordance with ECA guidance; a messaging platform built for teams, for all advisers, REACs, REAC assistants, Washington DC staff, and others as designated by ECA; and the implementation and management of EducationUSA.org's current cloud computing site, productivity, and collaboration tools, including digital asset management, for all EducationUSA staff, ECA, and others as designated by ECA. The recipient will maintain the cloud computing site in accordance with established terms of use and security protocols, including ensuring that all users have submitted written agreement to abide by ECA's terms prior to receiving access. To further advance and support EducationUSA's digital presence and IT systems the recipient will:

- In consultation with ECA, develop an updated EducationUSA program website at a dedicated, distinct program website URL and ensure the program website is accessible, user- and mobile-friendly, cross-browser compatible, and agile to function, and host large data and multimedia content, including but not limited to, high-quality videos, images, and an interactive map. The website should include back-end access for advisers and accredited U.S. HEIs. Proposals must include a work plan and timeline for the review and revision of the website. The recipient will also be responsible for approving accredited U.S. HEI website login requests and regularly moderate and review accredited U.S. HEI content submissions.
- Write and manage contracts for technical resources, such as pertinent software licenses for social media, communications, and design use. Current vendors include Adobe Creative Cloud, Calendly, Canva, Cvent, Hootsuite, iStockPhoto, LinkedIn, MailChimp, Survey Monkey, vFairs, Zerion, Zoho, Zoom, and bit.ly. The proposal may include other vendors as long as proper vetting is completed, the cost is reasonable and allocable, and it is available in a global market.
- Provide technical support to REACs, advisers, accredited U.S. HEIs, and program staff who are experiencing difficulties utilizing EducationUSA platforms or tools.
- Ensure the overall digital security of the EducationUSA network worldwide, including all EducationUSA branded social media and other digital accounts in accordance with best security practices as defined by the Department of State, including, but not limited to, the use of multi-factor authentication across IT systems. The recipient will provide account access to ECA as needed to ensure security.

The award recipient must have staffing capacity, infrastructure, and expertise to maintain IT Systems (content platforms/data/email/digital asset management) and related services and service provider contracts. Costs to manage the current suite of IT systems should be approximately 3% of the total proposed budget. Costs to manage the development, launch, and maintenance of a new website should be approximately 10% of the total budget.

Promotional and Training Materials: All materials and publications must be submitted to ECA for final approval. ECA will retain copyright use of materials and will determine how and where to distribute EducationUSA and/or international student mobility materials. The recipient will develop, design, oversee, and maintain materials, publications, and platforms including, but not limited to:

- An annual digital [Global Guide](#) with content solicited from REACs and award recipient staff in accordance with ECA guidelines. The Global Guide assists HEIs in identifying successful international student recruitment strategies, listing opportunities, challenges, and trends in each world region, and including information such as outreach means, economic and demographic considerations, and foreign government and other scholarships.
- A digital version of the U.S. higher education informational resource “If You Want to Study in the United States” series to be regularly updated based upon new information.
- A monthly electronic newsletter and/or other relevant resources to highlight EducationUSA programs and resources for the U.S. higher education community.
- An online learning platform to host current and to-be-developed trainings, presentations, digital assets, and other professional development resources for advisers, REACs, REAC assistants, Washington DC staff, representatives of accredited U.S. HEIs, and others as designated by ECA. The award recipient should be prepared to identify and collect data analytics regarding adviser engagement as deemed necessary by ECA.
- An EducationUSA data reporting platform for advisers, REACs, Washington DC staff, and others as designated by ECA, for use as needed in relation to all EducationUSA programming and network activities.

4. Adviser Training and Professional Development

The recipient will design and implement adviser training and related events to build capacity for EducationUSA advising centers, outreach, and virtual advising in order to support uniform approaches to the delivery of advising center services. The recipient should demonstrate the capacity to implement adviser training and related events in a virtual or in-person format, and will develop content to deliver trainings locally, regionally, internationally, and in the United States, including on the periphery of major events such as professional conferences and EducationUSA Forums, as well as through formal and informal shadowing/mentoring and small group meetings. REACs should be utilized as trainers and content creators. REACs will recommend advisers for attendance at relevant conferences, events and other trainings, based on a regular assessment of country, advising center, and adviser professional development needs. Completion of relevant advisers’ training course/s will be a requirement for adviser participation in the ECA-funded professional development programs. The recipient will support adviser training and development through the following responsibilities, including but not limited to:

EducationUSA Adviser Training Institutes (ATI)

The recipient will organize and deliver approximately three **virtual** ATIs designed for up to 90-100 advisers each year, with the goal of increasing the number of trained EducationUSA advisers where possible. ATIs and related trainings are offered at one of three levels of proficiency (further described below). ATI training content should be designed in accordance with an established list of EducationUSA Adviser Competencies and build substantive hard and soft skills that are responsive to the needs of advisers and strengthen strategic engagement with the U.S. higher education community. The recipient will consult with ECA to determine which level of trainings to offer each year in order to provide the appropriate training content. The award recipient will monitor and evaluate the quality of each ATI.

- **Level 1** training focuses on working with students and building their knowledge of U.S. higher education, issues related to students' academic experiences in the United States, the U.S. State Department, and EducationUSA policies and procedures.
- **Level 2** training includes aspects of Level 1, as well as topics including advising center management, strategic planning, and advocating for U.S. higher education and representing EducationUSA.
- **Level 3** training focuses on enabling advisers to serve as a resource for their peers, develop specific areas of expertise, deliver training, and contribute to the knowledge base of the network.
- **ATI Essentials:** A condensed version of the ATIs which can be implemented for part time advisers or advisers not able to complete the full-time course. The ATI Essentials can reflect a condensed version of Onboarding, Level 1, 2, or 3 training themes.
- **Onboarding** training is mandatory and focuses on providing new advisers with the most important information to begin their adviser tenure. It provides an overview of the new adviser orientation and fundamentals of advising in a global cohort-based setting.

Online EducationUSA Adviser Training Modules

The recipient will maintain, update, and manage a suite of both mandatory and optional training modules on a centralized online learning platform (see Program Specific Guidelines: Component A, Section 3). Content should include an introduction to EducationUSA advising, an in-depth course on advising practices, technical training on social media and web tools, and other online professional development and training as identified in consultation with ECA to ensure continuing education and professional development of the adviser corps. The award recipient should work with ECA/A/S/A, REACs and Level 3 advisers to ensure that the adviser training materials are updated as needed and available in an online course format; current online trainings utilize Canva. The recipient may also rely on outside consultants and experts as necessary.

Sub-Regional and Thematic Training Workshops

Approximately six overseas **virtual** sub-regional or thematic training workshops to be conducted annually by REACs, with content developed in consultation with ECA/A/S/A. The recipient will coordinate REAC and HEI-led professional development sessions for advisers at each of the annual EducationUSA regional forums.

Adviser travel and supporting costs: The recipient will oversee travel and logistics for selected EducationUSA advisers to approved conferences, EducationUSA DC and regional forums, and campus visits, including: organization of travel, hotel reservations/lodging and meals and event registration payments for non-LES (Locally Employed Staff) advisers (including advisers who attend the conference with funding from sources other than this agreement); provide other required support, including supporting ECA/A/S/A in arranging campus visits for advisers before and/or after conferences; and maintain communication with U.S. missions, advising centers, and participating advisers to ensure seamless coordination of travel logistics in advance of and during travel and throughout participation at selected events and activities.

Travel arrangements may include identifying roommates for advisers to save lodging costs. The recipient should be prepared to provide supplemental per diem for additional travel days to/from the relevant campus if circumstances require (as requested and in consultation with ECA/A/S/A). All costs on site during campus visits, including meals and accommodations are borne by the host campus. The recipient must ensure that non-LES advisers attending approved events and professional development opportunities have travel insurance which covers medical expenses incurred in the United States, and that is valid during the event and related periods of travel. Insurance will include a minimum of: \$100,000 (USD) in accident and sickness expense benefits, medical or surgical treatment, services and supplies, hospital services, local ambulance, visits to a physician's office, medical evacuation and repatriation of remains, and accidental death and dismemberment. Covered expenses should have a co-pay of no more than \$75 USD per visit (yearly maximum of \$500).

EducationUSA Advising Resources: The recipient will ensure that resources are consistently updated and incorporate specialized content related to advising in close consultation with ECA/A/S/A, including a new adviser welcome packet, the REAC handbook, the "If You Want to Study in the United States" series, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and others. The recipient will upload completed resources on the aforementioned online learning platform, the EducationUSA program website, and EducationUSA center websites as directed by ECA/A/S/A. The recipient should be prepared to assist in the translation of key advising materials or messages into priority languages in consultation with ECA/A/S/A.

5. EducationUSA Outreach and Events

With guidance from ECA, the recipient will organize and host several EducationUSA domestic and international events throughout the year to ensure that EducationUSA is well represented at industry events. The recipient will organize and manage EducationUSA representational space and REAC and adviser participation at approved events, and will maintain communication with posts, advising centers, and participating advisers to ensure seamless coordination of logistics and travel in advance of and throughout approved events and activities. In consultation with REACs, the recipient will provide a proposed list of domestic and international events and participating advisers to ECA/A/S/A for approval.

The recipient will be responsible for comprehensive event management for the following EducationUSA outreach events:

- EducationUSA Forum to be held in Washington, DC The EducationUSA Forum, a biennial two-and-a-half-day symposium in Washington, DC, hosts approximately 700 participants total for an in-person event, including accredited HEI representatives and approximately 50 EducationUSA advisers and 12 REACs. The award recipient should also be prepared to assist, at ECA's request, with logistics surrounding possible side meetings with international education stakeholders before and/or during and after the Forum.

The recipient should demonstrate the capacity to implement components of the Forum in a fully virtual format if deemed necessary, pending consultation with ECA. If a hybrid or virtual format is approved, the recipient will be expected to submit an alternative plan for ECA's review and approval. The plan must include an updated budget and budget narrative highlighting adjustments to the original budget submission.

- EducationUSA Regional Forum to be held each year outside the United States to strengthen increased student mobility from the relevant region. The regional forum will take place for approximately two or three days and will attract approximately 80-100 EducationUSA advisers from the relevant region with an equal or greater number of fee-paying U.S. higher education institutions, as well as stakeholders from the relevant world region.

Comprehensive event management for the EducationUSA DC and Regional Forum includes, but is not limited to, the event budget; coordinating content (to be provided by REACs, ECA/A/S/A program officers, advisers, and volunteer higher education institution representatives); managing contracts for venue, accommodations, audio/visual (A/V) and internet, and catering; arranging advisers' travel, REAC travel, insurance, per diem and logistics. The recipient will develop and distribute promotional materials, and will manage contracts for the creation of any future EducationUSA promotional materials, including, though not be limited to: exhibit installation, signage,

and related design elements, event program books, and other promotional resources and designs as determined in consultation with ECA.

With ECA approval, the recipient may charge an event registration fee; all income generated must be used to directly offset relevant EducationUSA program costs including, but not limited to, EducationUSA adviser travel and per diem, venue rentals, etc. During a typical year of network events, past revenue generation has produced significant programmatic funds. The applicant may find it practical to budget for approximately 7% of the overall budget submission for revenue generated from initiatives listed above.

- Conference and exhibition representation events: The recipient will manage the participation of REACs and advisers to participate in approximately two to three international, and four to six domestic, higher education conferences, including those listed below (numbers of advisers to attend are estimates). The recipient will pay necessary registration fees or higher education organization membership costs; secure and managing conference exhibition space to showcase the EducationUSA network; and support the work of ECA/A/S/A to facilitate adviser participation in conference sessions and relevant pre- or post-conference workshops.

Conference and/or membership benefits will be utilized primarily by the recipient and its staff, REACs, and advisers to advance EducationUSA outreach priorities and showcase the network's global advising capacity and resources. Should there be remaining conference or membership benefits, the recipient should consult with ECA/A/S/A on how to leverage the benefits to maximize approved EducationUSA global outreach activities per the final award including, but not limited to, utilization by ECA staff focused on international student mobility.

It should be noted that ECA reserves the right to adjust attendee numbers and approve alternative and/or additional conferences to those listed below, in line with the final approved award budget.

- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 2 advisers
- Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE), 3 advisers
- European Association for International Education (EAIE), 3 advisers
- International Association for College Admission Counseling (International ACAC), 9 advisers
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators national conference, 10 advisers
- National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC), 3 advisers

- National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP), 3 advisers
- Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), 3 advisers

6. EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Program

The Opportunity Funds Program, managed by ECA/A/S/A in collaboration with REACs, advisers and Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions, is a cohort advising program for high-achieving, financially-disadvantaged international students that provides specialized advising, and pays the up-front costs for students to apply to U.S. HEIs, with the expectation that participants will be able to gain admission and secure scholarships from U.S. institutions. Proposals should include details on the management and collection of Opportunity Funds program data through a data platform that allows for regular data reporting according to a schedule to be determined by ECA. The recipient will coordinate with recipient(s) of Component B and C to ensure required Opportunity Fund program data is entered into the data platform. The recipient will liaise with system designers on data collection updates as needed, and coordinate with ECA on policy and messaging.

7. Program Evaluation

The recipient will incorporate feedback, evaluation/assessment, and reporting into every aspect of all program components and activities: global strategic communications; REAC training and monitoring activities; events (including fairs), Opportunity Funds program, and adviser training. The recipient will be responsible for gathering, collecting, consolidating, and reporting, through required semi-annual reports, formal and informal feedback, and assessments of all relevant activities from that period, and for ensuring that REACs undertake all relevant monitoring site visits and submit reports in a timely manner, in addition to ad hoc reporting requested by ECA as necessary. Specific evaluation activities will include: ongoing review of REAC functions and responsibilities as provided in the REAC Handbook; Annual review and evaluation of REACs' performance and accomplishments; Monthly report on principal EducationUSA social media properties and web metrics; Evaluation of EducationUSA training and signature events (including the Washington, DC and Regional Forums); and Annual evaluation of above program components in conjunction with ECA.

The award recipient will be expected to ensure that their evaluation framework is in keeping with ECA's requirements and expectations for overall reporting and should be prepared to work with ECA's monitoring and evaluation team as appropriate.

A.3.a. Component A: Substantial Involvement

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A is also substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring and guidance. ECA/A/S/A's additional activities and responsibilities for **Component A** are as follows:

- Engages on the selection and hiring of new REACs as well as advisers in high-profile countries.
- Assists REACs in obtaining access to and related support from, as relevant, U.S. embassies and consulates, Department of State/ECA offices, Binational Centers, American Spaces, Fulbright Commissions, heads of advising center host institutions, and other institutions as needed.
- Plays a coordination role between recipients of EducationUSA Advising Services involved in Opportunity Funds Program management, coordinates policy and messaging related to the Opportunity Funds Program and liaises with REACs regarding data entry by all participating EducationUSA centers.
- Establishes guidance for program design templates, written and digital products, technology resources, and social media platform management to ensure that materials and resources align with EducationUSA's coordinated annual strategic communications plan and marketing strategy and State Department requirements. ECA will retain copyright use of materials and will determine how and where to distribute EducationUSA and/or international student mobility materials.

ECA's routine monitoring and oversight of these activities will encompass the review and approval of key personnel, especially for REAC positions, will be a consultative process. It should also be noted that ECA will review and coordinate approvals on substantive changes to program delivery methods due to travel restrictions that prevent in-person events from implementation in coordination with ECA's Grants Division.

A.4. EducationUSA Regional Advising Services: Components B and C Program Specific Guidelines and Recipient Responsibilities

In cooperation with ECA, one or more award recipient(s) will manage EducationUSA advising operations in the following regions:

- **Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia**, to support advising in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.
- **Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa**, to support advising in Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen.

The location of EducationUSA advising centers in these regions may be affected by political considerations and could be based remotely, as appropriate. ECA will decide, in consultation with the award recipient(s) and officers at U.S. missions, such as the Regional Security Officer (RSO), on center relocations for the safety and security of advisers and students. ECA reserves the right to increase, add, or reduce countries and regions based on U.S. foreign policy priorities and the needs of the program and available funding.

ECA may conduct joint occasional meetings with award recipients to ensure collaboration across the network where appropriate, including adviser training, professional development activities, strategic communications, and other initiatives as appropriate or directed to ensure the overall success of EducationUSA activities globally. The recipient(s) will share, and distribute EducationUSA professional development and training resources, EducationUSA strategic communications content, and EducationUSA promotional assets, and coordinate with the recipient of the Component A award in the ongoing development, distribution, and implementation of an annual global strategic communications plan.

EducationUSA Regional Advising Services includes the following program components:

1. Regional Expertise and Engagement

Component B and C recipient(s) should demonstrate a deep area and regional expertise in and across the countries within the particular component. Proposals should highlight regional networks including, but not limited to, government organizations, HEIs, and other higher education stakeholders, and the applicant should be prepared to assist and support educational outreach activities of U.S. missions through their regional networks. Proposals for Components B and C should also explain how the ECA-funded EducationUSA program would be implemented alongside any non-EducationUSA educational advising activities, other ECA-programs, or the recipient organization's proprietary programs to the best effect.

Proposals should include plans to maximize cross-regional programming to increase the impact and reach of EducationUSA activities and to advance EducationUSA strategic priorities across countries. Cross-regional programming may include virtual advising, strategic communications and global marketing, and events. ECA also encourages new innovations to advance cross-regional EducationUSA programming. In consultation with ECA, and pending the availability of funds, ECA reserves the right to expand the administration of the Opportunity Funds program (defined below in Section 7) within and across the regions defined in Components B and C. Cross-regional cohort programming would include countries approved by ECA during the annual strategic planning process.

In consideration of the possibility of ongoing regional and/or country conflicts and the resultant challenges to prospective students in-country, and neighboring countries, the recipient should demonstrate the capacity to adapt advising operations in response to evolving student needs, both in-person and/or virtual, if deemed necessary, pending consultation with ECA. If revised advising operations are approved, the recipient will be expected to submit an alternative plan for ECA's review and approval. The plan must include an updated budget and budget narrative highlighting adjustments to the original budget submission.

2. EducationUSA Center Operations

The recipient will establish and manage EducationUSA advising centers in specified countries/locations to provide educational advising services to prospective international students on U.S. study opportunities at accredited U.S. HEIs, and also services to accredited U.S. HEIs. Proposals should indicate that the organization has the institutional capacity to host and support advising centers abroad and should describe in detail for each country the entire range of EducationUSA advising activities, including group and individual consultations, and the use of virtual outreach platforms. The recipient will manage and oversee all operations at each proposed center including staffing (in-person and/or virtual), financial management, and all services and resources, including, but not limited to, strategic communications, resource development, and outreach activities (in-person and/or virtual). Proposals should provide a clear plan indicating level of engagement with the target audience via in-person, virtual, and hybrid programming.

Each center should provide, **free of cost**, basic educational advising services and outreach activities that follow EducationUSA's "Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study", and other specific EducationUSA and ECA higher education programs, campaigns, and initiatives, to the full range of potential international students interested in U.S. study, including to underserved populations and locales outside capital/major cities. Proposals should highlight the use of any region-specific tools that maximize the advising centers' ability to reach and assist target audiences, and that allow students to connect with prospective U.S. HEI contacts. Proposals should outline how centers will ensure that the necessary equipment and platforms (outlined below) are accessible for students to fully utilize center resources, engage with accredited U.S. HEIs, and participate in EducationUSA virtual events. Centers are encouraged to work with local alumni of accredited U.S. HEIs to enhance outreach and orientation activities; special topic lectures and expert speakers are also encouraged.

Centers must include the following **free basic services** to all prospective students and accredited U.S. HEIs including, but not limited to:

- For students: Accurate, comprehensive, and current information on U.S. higher education institutions and programs (in digital or print format), including college preparatory; U.S. institution accreditation; student visa regulations and requirements, standardized tests, scholarships and grant opportunities (including U.S. government-sponsored programs); information about life as a student in the United States. All resources and information must maintain an unbiased representation of the full range of U.S. HEIs.
- In consultation with ECA, regular comprehensive group sessions (in-person and/or virtual) that overview the U.S. higher education system, the application process for undergraduate and graduate admission, and targeted resources for U.S. higher education research. Sessions should be responsive to local needs and demand.
- Pre-Departure Orientations (a fee for venue rental and/or refreshment can apply).

- For accredited U.S. HEIs: Information about international student mobility, local education systems, and contact information and listings of major local high schools and accredited or government-recognized universities.
- Resources for HEIs to plan for and implement international student recruitment trips, including the facilitation of local outreach; opportunities to display materials, if space permits.

Centers must include the following specified infrastructure including, but not limited to: appropriate technology for students to access and research the EducationUSA website and U.S. HEIs, including computers available for student use; appropriate space for students to research and engage with U.S. institutions of higher education and submit applications (in-person and/or virtual) and participate in EducationUSA virtual events; and space suitable for conducting individual or group advising sessions (in-person and/or virtual) including projected digital presentations. Centers should provide relevant office and communications equipment, including software, that expedite the processing of inquiries, facilitate educational advising, and increase communication among centers and the REAC, ECA, Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions, and the U.S. headquarters of the award recipient(s). Proposals should include an estimated center budget; fee-based services should be listed, including the amounts charged, to ensure compliance with EducationUSA practices and standards (see detail below). The recipient is not responsible for covering the cost of basic reference materials on U.S. higher education. Some materials may be funded through the annual strategic planning process.

Fee-based Services

If the award recipient plans to charge students for services, a detailed justification and fee schedule should be included in the proposal, along with a statement indicating the anticipated revenue from proposed fees. The fee schedule should be at or below area market rates for the same or similar services and should allow the award recipient to reach students from a variety of economic backgrounds. If fees are related to advising activities supported by this cooperative agreement (not the administration of Fulbright or other scholarship programs), income must be reported under this program and contributed as cost-sharing in the cooperative agreement budget. Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for more information regarding program income. ECA reserves the right to determine which services are to be included under the EducationUSA banner. Semi-annual financial reports should show the actual amount of revenue generated and that the funds are applied to support approved EducationUSA advising services as described in the final award.

Funding under this agreement may not be used to support the fee-based placement services of students at specific universities, though EducationUSA may engage with and support individuals, organizations, or higher education institutions that provide fee-based

placement services or work with those who do, within the parameters of existing EducationUSA policies.

3. Regional Advising Management

Proposals should outline a comprehensive EducationUSA staffing plan that covers all geographic regions included under the proposal with sufficient level of effort to fully support the proposed advising duties, responsibilities, and public engagement activities pertaining to the award. In consultation with ECA/A/S/A, the award recipient(s) of Components B and C will facilitate open communication and coordination between EducationUSA advisers and Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions to ensure that educational advising activities meet the needs and follow the strategic objectives of U.S. missions. Wherever appropriate, and in consultation with ECA/A/S/A, the recipient(s) will conduct outreach activities in collaboration with staff of Public Diplomacy and Consular Sections.

The recipient(s) will facilitate open communication and coordination among EducationUSA advisers and regional REACs, and the leadership of the recipient(s') organization in the adviser host country and U.S. headquarters. As needed, the recipient(s) of Components B and C will also manage and serve as primary point of contact for the provision of U.S. W8-BEN tax forms as required for REACs. The recipient(s) will outline and reinforce EducationUSA policy with advisers, and will coordinate with ECA, REACs, and the award recipient of Component A as necessary to ensure the overall successful implementation of EducationUSA policies across the network.

EducationUSA Staffing Plan

The EducationUSA staffing plan for Components B and C should contain the following items including, but not limited to: Description of staff duties and responsibilities pertaining to the award; activities pertaining to duties outside the scope of the award, if relevant, and a description of how information would be shared with advisers. Where relevant, the recipient may choose to differentiate between levels of advisers, to include senior advisers and country coordinators in consultation with ECA.

A comprehensive plan will provide staff training to anticipate and manage safety and security situations that may arise at an advising center and illustrate the safety and security measures in place to help assure the well-being of advisers, stakeholders, and visitors at advising centers. Plans should include the percentage of time each employee would devote to advising activities (in-person and/or virtual), as well as to non-advising activities (including, but not limited to, work on behalf of other ECA assistance awards, if applicable), and should describe staff evaluations, including the evaluation cycle, and the framework and process for providing salary increases. The recipient should provide locally competitive adviser salaries commensurate with all required skills for the position. Adviser salaries

should be sufficient to recruit and retain qualified advisers that are able to meet all advising requirements outlined herein.

The recipient(s) will coordinate as needed with the award recipient of Component A to ensure advisers' submission of statistical information (in-person, outreach, virtual contacts, and other information), and Opportunity Funds program data, via the electronic data reporting system managed by the award recipient of Component A. Submissions will be on a monthly basis or as directed by ECA.

Virtual Advising

As determined in consultation with ECA, the award recipient(s) of Component B and C will employ one or more virtual advisers for one or more countries/locations. Pending the availability of funds, ECA reserves the right to expand virtual advising services to other countries to respond to growing global advising needs in accordance with foreign policy goals; countries will be determined in consultation with ECA and/or regional bureaus. The recipient should demonstrate the ability to directly manage and provide administrative support as determined to meet the needs of virtual advisers.

Virtual advisers provide advising and advising content in designated target languages for target populations in locations where it may not be feasible or efficient to operate an EducationUSA center due to logistical challenges. The recipient will develop dedicated resources for online EducationUSA advising outreach in English and/or other critical languages used in countries or regions for which virtual advising services are provided.

For Component B only: Pending the availability of funds, ECA reserves the right to expand virtual advising to other countries or across regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, or to expand virtual advising to include priority languages such as Arabic, Farsi, or French.

For Component C only: Pending the availability of funds, the recipient will employ at least one virtual Arabic language adviser to coordinate regional virtual engagement using a variety of platforms across the region to engage key audiences. Plans should include support for a virtual Arabic language adviser to be located in the region and to oversee a regional virtual strategy. Other virtual advising may be included to support one or more countries and will be contingent upon the availability of funds and regional needs.

4. Strategic Communications

Proposals should illustrate how the recipient plans to advance EducationUSA strategic priorities through all aspects of marketing and communications, including a plan to leverage current and previous strategic communications content, promotional assets and other materials developed to support EducationUSA strategic communications. The recipient may wish to combine or maximize outreach efforts across platforms in order to expand

engagement with international students, U.S. higher education, non-governmental partners, foreign governments, and other stakeholders.

In support of EducationUSA's coordinated communication and marketing strategy, the recipients of the Components B and C awards will engage with ECA on social media campaigns, communications strategies, and any challenges that may arise. The recipient will also coordinate with ECA and the award recipient of the Component A award to support the implementation of an annual **EducationUSA Global Strategic Communications Plan** that will guide overall the coordination of EducationUSA communications, marketing, and promotion throughout the network to strengthen and expand EducationUSA mission priorities.

EducationUSA Branding: The EducationUSA logo and branded global marketing materials is critical to the identity of the network. Proposals for Components B and C should explain how recipients will ensure that all centers funded under a cooperative agreement for Components B and C use the logo consistently and follow guidelines laid out in the EducationUSA brand identity guide provided by ECA and adhere to ECA's Public Affairs and Strategic Communications (PASC)'s guidelines. Proposals should include information about any homepages or websites developed by or for centers.

Digital Security: The recipient will manage EducationUSA flagship social media accounts in accordance with best security practices as determined by the Department of State including, but not limited to, the use of multi-factor authentication across IT systems. The recipient will provide account access to ECA as needed to ensure security.

5. Adviser Training and Professional Development

Proposals should describe an appropriately-tiered professional development plan for advisers, which clearly defines the adviser training needs according to the region, optional areas of training that may be relevant, and leverages the use of all available training resources specific to the regions in Component B and C, and also includes, where relevant, collaboration with REACs who provide and coordinate regional adviser training and training content under Component A (see A.3., section 4). The training plan should also include a mechanism to track and ensure that advisers have successfully completed their global training plans and additional trainings based on specific needs according to advisers' local context. Proposals may include more substantive appendices addressing training needs should sufficient space not be available within the executive narrative.

ECA will offer appropriate professional development opportunities, such as workshops and other training programs for EducationUSA advisers; ECA will review and select adviser participants. Many of these services will be financially supported by ECA through the Component A award. ECA expects that the Components B and C award recipient(s) will coordinate with the Component A recipient to support adviser participation in professional

development activities and training, in alignment with their adviser training plan. While providing coverage for daily advising activities, ECA encourages the recipient(s) of Components B and C to support additional engagement or professional development opportunities through direct funding or cost-share.

6. EducationUSA Outreach and Events

The award recipient will organize, run, and evaluate EducationUSA fairs and events (in-person or virtual) in consultation with REACs, Public Diplomacy Sections at U.S. missions, and ECA/A/S/A. To maximize the professional delivery and coordination of fairs and events, the award recipient will utilize the online EducationUSA Fair Portal hosted at <https://www.educationusafairs.org> to announce, register, and accept payments for all EducationUSA fairs, no matter how established. The award recipient will serve as the primary point of contact and coordination for U.S. HEIs registering for EducationUSA fairs through the Fair Portal, and for additional fair and event support and resources. ECA expects that the recipient(s) of the Component B and C awards will coordinate as needed with the recipient of the Component A award which has operational management of the Fair Portal.

The proposal should also include a plan for the continued development of fair-related data collection and evaluation through the Fair Portal including specified attendee metrics, feedback from participants, and the incorporation of best practices and lessons learned, and other information as specified and according to a schedule determined by ECA/A/S/A.

The award recipient will provide the following event services including, but not limited to: managing hotel contracts and materials shipping; online registration support to assist local EducationUSA host institutions who are unable to provide the needed logistical framework to support EducationUSA fairs; supervise and coordinate adviser contributions to fair marketing campaigns and social media; and manage project budgets. Income generated from fairs and events may be used to offset the cost of event implementation and/or support EducationUSA related activities, such as professional development of EducationUSA advisers or other priorities, in consultation with ECA.

7. EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Program

The Opportunity Funds Program, managed by ECA/A/S/A in collaboration with REACs, advisers and Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions, is a cohort advising program for high-achieving, financially-disadvantaged international students that provides specialized advising, and pays the up-front costs for students (including testing, application fees, or airfare) to apply to U.S. HEIs, with the expectation that participants will be able to gain admission and secure scholarships from U.S. institutions.

Proposals should include administration of the Opportunity Funds program for the region in countries approved by ECA during the annual strategic planning process. The proposal

budget should include funding for this program based on maintaining a consistent number of participating students and centers in each country that currently has a program. In the past, funding comprised approximately 6% of the overall budget submission for Component B and 3% of the overall budget submission for Component C.

The recipient will work closely with ECA to adjust Opportunity Funds programming and budgeting, as needed, if country participants or priorities change. Award recipient(s) of Component B and C should coordinate with the award recipient of Component A to ensure required Opportunity Fund program data is entered into the EducationUSA data reporting system.

8. Regional Monitoring and Oversight

As part of routine engagement, the award recipient(s) of Components B and C will provide ECA with regular updates from the recipient's overseas office leadership on substantive engagement with U.S. missions including, but not limited to, operational challenges and staffing, EducationUSA in-person and/or virtual outreach engagements, and the coordination the recipient's EducationUSA outreach plans and EducationUSA country strategic planning to support and expand overall EducationUSA strategic vision and objectives for the relevant country and region.

In support of the comprehensive and successful oversight of EducationUSA advising in the region, the proposal should illustrate a plan for strengthened engagement between the recipient's organization, the Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions, and EducationUSA centers and advisers, with the active support of the recipient's overseas office leadership as relevant, to ensure clear communication and further the successful collaboration and coordination of EducationUSA advising operations.

9. Program Evaluation

The recipient will incorporate feedback, evaluation/assessment, and reporting into every aspect of all program components and activities: EducationUSA center operations, advising management, strategic communications, adviser training, outreach and events (including fairs), the Opportunity Funds program, and monitoring and oversight. Surveys and feedback mechanisms should be built into all relevant events, including adviser training and professional development.

The recipient will be responsible for gathering, collecting, consolidating, and reporting, through required semi-annual reports, formal and informal feedback, and assessments of all relevant activities from that period, in addition to ad hoc reporting requested by ECA as necessary. Specific evaluation activities will include: ongoing review of adviser functions and responsibilities; staff evaluations, including an annual review and evaluation of advisers' performance and accomplishments; monthly report on principal EducationUSA

strategic communications, including social media campaigns and online engagement; and an annual evaluation of above program components in conjunction with ECA.

The award recipient will be expected to ensure that their evaluation framework is in keeping with the Bureau's requirements and expectations for overall reporting and should be prepared to work with the Bureau's monitoring and evaluation team as appropriate.

A.4.a. Components B and C: Substantial Involvement

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/A is also substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring and guidance. ECA/A/S/A's additional activities and responsibilities **for Components B and C** are as follows:

- Engages on the selection and hiring of new EducationUSA advisers and EducationUSA virtual advisers in conjunction with REACs.
- Facilitates, monitors, and encourages regular and open communications and relationships among REACs, EducationUSA advisers, adviser host organization supervisors, Public Diplomacy Sections of U.S. missions, Department of State/ECA offices, Binational Centers, American Spaces, Fulbright Commissions, recipient organizations, and other institutions.
- Reviews and coordinates approvals on all proposals for the closure of existing or the opening of new EducationUSA centers.
- Plays a coordinating role between recipients of Components A, B, and C herein involved in Opportunity Funds Program management, coordinates policy and messaging related to the Opportunity Funds program, and liaises with REACs regarding data entry by all participating EducationUSA centers.
- Establishes guidance for program design templates, written and digital products, technology resources, and social media platform management to ensure that materials and resources align with EducationUSA's coordinated annual strategic communications plan and marketing strategy and State Department requirements. ECA will retain copyright use of materials and will determine how and where to distribute EducationUSA and/or international student mobility materials.

The review and approval of key personnel is part of routine monitoring and filling vacancies, and will be a consultative process.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under Substantial Involvement in section A.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2025

Approximate Total Funding: \$8,750,000, pending the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: Three

Approximate Average Award: \$2,917,000, pending the availability of funds.

Minimum “Floor” of Award: \$600,000, pending the availability of funds.

Maximum “Ceiling” of Award: \$6,600,000, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: October 1, 2024, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 30, 2027

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

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

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

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

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements

The following additional eligibility requirements apply to this NOFO announcement:

- 1.) Grants or Cooperative Agreements awarded to organizations which do not demonstrate at least four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$130,000.
- 2.) 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 B above, ECA anticipates issuing up to three cooperative agreements with a minimum award of \$600,000. Therefore, organizations that do not demonstrate four years of experience in conducting international exchanges in your proposal are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- 3.) All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- 4.) In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 & D.5. for more information.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

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

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

D.1. Solicitation Package Location

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

D.2. Content and Form of Submission

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.16. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3. Unique Entity Identifier Number

All organizations are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. 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. ***Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications. A UEI is issued as part of the required SAM.gov registration below in section D.5.***

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

D.4. Required Proposal Elements

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

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

All organizations must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov. ***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.*** Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

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://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

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 number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

D.6. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly, FAPIIS)

- 1.) 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);

- 2.) An applicant, at its option, may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. Currently, federal agencies create integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov;
- 3.) The 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 §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

D.7. 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 by accessing <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. MyGrants is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used MyGrants as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

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

D.8. 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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

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

Pursuant to ECA's authorizing legislation, "diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, geographic location, education, income, socio-economic status, and other diversity dimensions, that may hinder inclusion. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. Programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. Please refer to the "Support of DEIA" review criterion of this document for more information on how this will be reviewed as a part of any application. Please also refer to the "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility" section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating DEIA into the proposal.

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

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

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

ECA created the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework to measure the performance of ECA programs. **The MODE Framework provides standard indicators and corresponding survey questions to ensure consistent measures across all ECA programs.** More resources and guidance documents on the MODE Framework are available online at:

<https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and>

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

D.11. Virtual Exchange Component

When changing political, health, environmental, or other similar circumstances require a suspension or halt of in-person activities and where ECA determines that a virtual alternative is appropriate and viable, award recipients should demonstrate the ability and capacity to transition from in-person to virtual programming. Organizations should consider how they will implement virtual 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 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.

D.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients

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

D.13. Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial

ECA is excited to play a key role in making the Semiquincentennial – commonly known as "America250" – a truly global celebration. As the period of performance for this award is scheduled to cover part or all of calendar year (CY) 2026, the applicant may wish to consider ways the program can celebrate America250. Any America250 focused activities or plans will be subject to ECA approval and direction, and changes may be requested by ECA. Use of any ECA-provided America250 brand elements will be subject to advance ECA approval and require adherence to Department of State and ECA guidelines for such branding.

D.14. Budget Format

Applicants must submit SF-424A (Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs) along with a detailed, line-item budget for the entire program and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.14.a. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

Component A: Global EducationUSA Services

- Salaries and benefits for Global EducationUSA Services leadership personnel including, REACs, REAC assistants, and virtual distance EducationUSA advisers.
- Salaries and benefits for Global EducationUSA Services staff, as determined consultation with ECA, to support functions listed in section A. Program Description.
- REAC professional development and support for effective communication and distribution of information.
- REAC, REAC assistant, EducationUSA adviser, and award recipient staff travel.
- Overseas adviser professional development workshops, forums, and other opportunities, including travel cost as stipulated in section A. Program Description for advisers that are not employed by a U.S. mission; conference registration and lodging reservations for all participating advisers.
- Campus visit logistics for adviser professional development activities.
- Logistical support for domestic and international education fairs and conferences, as described in A. Program Description.
- Tools, resources, and staff support for any expanded virtual advising, including adviser professional development, EducationUSA advising delivery, brand promotion, and global strategic communications for the network.
- Course development and delivery for EducationUSA adviser professional development.
- Outreach, publicity, and approved special project costs, including annual design packet and program website development and/or maintenance.
- Costs related to the EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program.
- Costs related to IT systems and platforms, including virtual platforms, the EducationUSA DRS, Fair Portal, and program website. Costs related to contracting with experts/consultants for relevant content creation.
- Office supplies and expenses, including rent, equipment, communications, postage, and shipping.
- Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program costs.

Component B: EducationUSA Advising Services in Eurasia and Central Asia Countries and Component C: EducationUSA Advising Services in the Middle East and North Africa

- Advising center staff salaries and benefits.
- Relevant costs associated with virtual advising.
- Outreach costs, including local transportation.

- Marketing, publicity, and approved special project costs.
- EducationUSA Fair organization: venue, publicity and related costs.
- Costs related to the Opportunity Funds advising program.
- Resource materials and computer equipment for centers and coordinators.
- Office supplies and expenses, including rent, equipment, communications, postage, and shipping.
- Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, and related expenditures.
- Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program costs.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.15. Key Personnel

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

D.16. Application Deadline and Method of Submission

Application Deadline Date: Wednesday, July 3, 2024

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

D.17. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

D.17.a. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

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

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their

registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

D.17.b. How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

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

D.17.c. Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

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

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays.

Email: support@grants.gov

D.17.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

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

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

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXX) 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 Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

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

D.18. Intergovernmental Review of Applications

Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.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 and may 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. Recommended proposals 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 Grants Officer has the final authority to issue assistance awards.

E.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 evaluation.

- 1.) **Quality of the program idea and Program Planning:** Proposals should be original, well-defined, and relevant to ECA's mission. 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.
- 2.) **Ability to achieve program objectives:** Proposals should demonstrate how your institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible.
- 3.) **Cross-cultural sensitivity and area/regional expertise:** Proposals for Components A, B, and C should demonstrate a depth of knowledge, expertise, and established networks in the countries/regions supported by each Component.
- 4.) **Support of DEIA:** Proposals should show how the program and your institution supports ECA's policy on diversity. Proposals should have a clear DEIA plan that is integrated into all aspects of program administration, design, content, and implementation. Proposals should demonstrate how DEIA will enhance the programs' goals, objectives, and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEIA plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEIA.
- 5.) **Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by ECA Grants Division. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients, including the timely submission of reports, and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- 6.) **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Proposals should identify and outline clear activity goals and objectives, provide a plan to report outputs of the program's activities, and provide a clear description of your data collection strategy. The M&E narrative sections will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided information on the minimum data required as per the solicitation. Award recipients will be required to submit intermediate reports analyzing your findings to ECA as a part of your regular program reports.
- 7.) **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.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Award Notices

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

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

F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

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.

Terms and Conditions applicable to all ECA agreements include:

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

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

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

F.3. Region and Topic Specific requirements

The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3.a. Iran Programming

A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of

Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact Eythan Schiller at 202-368-1637 or email: SchillerE@state.gov for additional information.

For assistance awards involving the Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza:

F.3.b. Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza Programming

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Eythan Schiller at 202-368-1637 or email: SchillerE@state.gov for additional information.

F.4. Reporting Requirements

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

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the period of performance of the award ends; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's MyGrants.
- 2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a

financial report has been approved by the Department, the recipient must upload the approved report to 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 Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

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

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to ECA in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information.)

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

F.5. 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:

- 1.) 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.
- 2.) 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.

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about this announcement, contact: Program Officer Eythan Schiller, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/A, 202-368-1637, SchillerE@state.gov.

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

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

H. Other Information**Notice**

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

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

May 1, 2024