



# Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)  
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)  
FY 2026 Strengthening Talent, Research, Innovation and Vital  
Engagement (STRIVE) Program  
Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0018335  
Application Deadline: June 10, 2026**

- A. Basic Information**
- B. Eligibility**
- C. Program Description**
- D. Application Contents and Format**
- E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines**
- F. Application Review Information**
- G. Award Notices**
- H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**
- I. Other Information**

## **A. Basic Information**

### **1. Overview.**

<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	FY26 Strengthening Talent, Research, Innovation and Vital Engagement (STRIVE) Program
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	DFOP0018335
<b>Announcement Type</b>	New Cooperative Agreement
<b>Deadline for Applications</b>	June 10, 2026, 11:59pm Eastern (Washington DC time)
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	19.009
<b>Length of Performance Period</b>	Up to 48 months

<b>Number of Awards Anticipated</b>	1 award
<b>Award Amount</b>	Approximately \$2,000,000
<b>Total Available Funding</b>	\$2,000,000, pending availability of funds
<b>Type of Funding</b>	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE) Funds
<b>Funding Instrument Type</b>	Cooperative Agreement
<b>Anticipated Award Date</b>	September 15, 2026

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

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

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

## **2. Executive Summary.**

The STRIVE Program's goal is to strengthen U.S. global leadership by supporting U.S. higher education institutions to equip the next generation of American leaders with the vital knowledge, skills, and relationships needed to advance U.S. commercial and security interests. ECA previously engaged U.S. higher education institutions in similar activities through the IDEAS Program. The STRIVE Program increases the U.S. institutions and students engaging overseas while aligning activities to better support U.S. prosperity and security.

The STRIVE Program provides competitively selected subawards and resources to U.S. colleges and universities to establish international partnerships and programming that prepare U.S. undergraduate and graduate students for careers in industries critical to U.S. prosperity and security. The STRIVE Program has three main objectives:

- Increase the number of U.S. higher education institutions developing international partnerships to maintain U.S. global leadership and influence in

higher education, counter malign influence of other actors in foreign higher education systems, and align global academic innovation with U.S. priorities.

- Increase the number of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students studying, interning, apprenticing, and/or researching abroad on programs that prepare them to fulfill domestic labor needs, ensuring a skilled U.S. workforce that can effectively advance U.S. commercial and security interests.
- Increase the strategic locations where U.S. undergraduate and graduate students study, intern, apprentice, and/or research abroad. Growing foreign public's interactions with U.S. students, culture, and business practices helps lay the foundation for strengthened diplomatic, security, economic, and trade ties.

Pending availability of funds, the recipient will work in close consultation with ECA to implement two main components to achieve the STRIVE Program goal and objectives under this award:

1. **Small Grants Competition and Oversight:** The award recipient will implement at least one open, merit-based competition that will result in at least 25 subawards to accredited U.S. colleges and universities to develop international academic programs that equip U.S. students to meet domestic labor needs in industries critical to U.S. commercial and security interests. The developed programs can include credit-bearing study, internship, apprenticeship, and/or research abroad activities and be open to U.S. undergraduate and/or graduate students. The award recipient should look for efficiencies to maximize the amount of funding dedicated to subawards. The award recipient will monitor and support subaward recipients as they implement project activities and build institutional capacity to develop international programs aligned with U.S. economic and security needs.
2. **Higher Education Partnerships Initiative:** The award recipient will develop and implement a cohesive series of engagements to foster partnerships between U.S. and global higher education institutions that will lead to study, internship, apprenticeship, and/or research exchanges in one or more fields critical to U.S. commercial and security interests. The field(s) of focus will be determined in consultation with ECA but could include artificial intelligence / supercomputing, critical minerals, emerging technologies and innovations, and energy, among others. This initiative should include virtual and/or in-person seminars open to all U.S. and foreign higher education institutions, as well as an in-person forum held in conjunction with a major industry conference that will bring together

approximately 40 total U.S. and foreign higher education leaders to explore partnership opportunities.

## **B. Eligibility**

### **1. Eligible Applicants.**

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- U.S. Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- U.S. Not-for-profit public and private educational institutions

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

### **2. Cost Sharing.**

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

### **3. Other Eligibility Requirements.**

- a. All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see *Section E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines* for more information.
- b. ECA's Grant Guidelines require that organizations demonstrate at least four years of experience in conducting international exchanges to be eligible for awards exceeding \$130,000 in ECA funding. As noted in *Section A. Basic Information*, ECA anticipates issuing one award, for approximately \$2,000,000. Therefore, organizations must demonstrate four years of experience in conducting international exchanges in your proposal to be eligible to apply under this competition.
- c. All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO and the PSI; not doing so may result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- d. All proposals must contain a SF-424, executive summary, proposal narrative, budget (SF 424A), detailed line-item budget, and budget narrative.
- e. Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant

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

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

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

## **C. Program Description**

### **1. Authority.**

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

### **2. Purpose.**

The STRIVE Program strengthens U.S. global leadership by ensuring that U.S. higher education institutions equip the next generation of American leaders with the vital knowledge, skills, and relationships needed to advance U.S. commercial and security interests. According to Open Doors data, only about 10 percent of U.S. undergraduate students study abroad, and nearly 65 percent of those who study abroad do so in Europe. As a result, America's next generation of leaders in business, science, and national security are not gaining the linguistic skills, global business experience, or networks that U.S. companies need to advance U.S. security and economic and trade ties across all world regions. Recent research from the Forum on Education Abroad and Lightcast estimates the net impact of study abroad

alumni on the U.S. economy as \$1.8 billion. In a survey of more than 1,200 U.S. businesses conducted by the Centers for International Business Education and Research, 96 percent reported that their performance would increase if employees had more international experience. The STRIVE Program addresses this by strengthening U.S. higher education institutions' capacity to create and deliver international study, internship, apprenticeship, and/or research programs that prepare U.S. undergraduate and graduate students with the skills that U.S. companies need to spur innovation, economic growth, and U.S. trade.

Additionally, as malign actors seek to influence foreign higher education systems, it is important that the United States has a strong global presence advancing academic policies that promote fair and open trade, technological innovation aligned with U.S. interests, and global prosperity. The STRIVE Program addresses this by increasing the number of U.S. higher education institutions and students engaging with counterparts abroad in critical fields and locations aligned with administration priorities. The program fosters enduring partnerships, promotes academic values such as transparency and merit, and strengthens foreign partners' ability to resist coercive practices, directly countering malign foreign influence. In so doing, the STRIVE Program helps position the United States as the international higher education partner of choice building a fair and open global academic, research, and business environment in which U.S. companies and communities can thrive.

### **3. Program Specific Guidelines.**

#### **Small Grants Competition and Oversight**

ECA anticipates that the award recipient will conduct at least one national open competition that will result in at least 25 subawards to accredited U.S. colleges and universities to develop international programs that equip students to meet local, state, and/or national labor needs in industries critical to advancing U.S. security, economic competitiveness, and trade. The developed programs can include credit-bearing study, research, apprenticeship, and/or internship abroad activities and be open to U.S. undergraduate and/or graduate students.

Applicants should propose and justify the number of subawards, maximum funding amount of subawards, and the subaward period of performance length. Applicants may propose one or multiple funding tiers. The maximum amount of program funds possible should go toward supporting subawards, though applicants should be sure to include appropriate levels of staffing to provide subaward applicant and recipient support, especially as this program is designed to increase the number of U.S. higher education institutions developing international partnerships aligned

with administration priorities, including institutions with little to no federal grants and/or international programming experience. For reference, past ECA programs that provided subawards to U.S. colleges and universities for similar activities provided tiered grants ranging between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Applicants that propose low subaward amounts may offer more than 25 subawards or a mix of low and high subaward amounts to maximize the amount of funding going to subawards as requested in the solicitation.

ECA reserves the right to adjust the number of subawards and subaward funding limits based on availability of funding.

The award recipient should use the following minimum criteria to recruit and screen applicants:

- Applicants must be accredited U.S. higher education institutions physically based in the United States or its territories.
- Proposals must support the development and/or expansion of credit-bearing study, internship, apprenticeship, and/or research abroad activities for U.S. undergraduate and/or graduate students.
- Funding may not be used to support direct student costs, which include but are not limited to scholarships, tuition, international travel, and meals.
- Proposals can only support U.S. study abroad programming in foreign locations that meet criteria approved by ECA, including regional and safety considerations. ECA will confer with the award recipient prior to the launch of the small grant competition to determine these criteria.

The award recipient should oversee selection panels made of U.S. higher education representatives with relevant international education experience who will rank and recommend proposals for funding. At a minimum, successful subaward applications should include the following:

- A clear plan to develop and/or expand credit-bearing study, internship, apprenticeship, and/or research abroad programs that prepare U.S. students to meet local, state, and/or national labor needs.
- An outline of the skills U.S. students will gain on the international programs developed and how they address a specific domestic labor market need in a field and/or location critical to U.S. security, prosperity, or trade.
- A clear description of how the proposed plan directly addresses one or more identified U.S. foreign policy goals, a list of which will be provided by ECA.
- A clear description of how, as a direct result of the subaward, the applicant will in the near term increase the number of U.S. students it sends abroad

and/or the number of foreign destinations to which it sends students on credit-bearing academic programs.

- A plan for the sustainability of the proposed program after federal funding ends.

ECA reserves the right to provide additional eligibility, selection criteria, and subaward period of performance parameters, or to modify these requirements, as needed.

The award recipient will also provide ongoing monitoring and support to subaward recipients to ensure they are progressing toward STRIVE Program and subaward project objectives. Applicants should outline a plan for supporting subaward recipients that goes beyond required financial monitoring and helps build subaward recipients' ability to implement their STRIVE projects and administer international programs linked to domestic labor market needs. Sample activities could include but are not limited to holding scheduled and/or ad hoc check ins, leveraging in-house or outside experts to provide support or consultations on topics of need, hosting regular subaward recipient group discussions on shared challenges and successes, and/or connecting subaward recipients with mentors. The plan should include methods for virtually connecting selected institutions to build a peer support network.

### **Higher Education Partnerships Initiative**

The award recipient will develop and implement a cohesive series of engagements to foster U.S. higher education institutions' collaboration with foreign counterparts in one or more fields critical to U.S. commercial and security interests. The objectives of the Higher Education Partnerships Initiative are to expand the impact of the STRIVE Program beyond the selected subaward recipients, to share resources for building international academic programs aligned with administration priorities with the wider higher education community, and to help position the United States as the higher education partner of choice in strategic fields and locations. The field(s) of focus will be determined in consultation with ECA but could include artificial intelligence / supercomputing, critical minerals, emerging technologies and innovations, and energy, among others.

This component should include public seminar(s) and resource(s) that are broadly available to the U.S. and global higher education community, as well as an in-

person forum designed to directly foster connections that will lead to study, internship, apprenticeship, and/or research exchanges between selected U.S. higher education institutions and foreign counterparts. While this component must include content on increasing U.S. study abroad programming, it does not need to be the sole focus, and activities should also include content designed to foster partnerships that include two-way student, scholar, and/or researcher mobility.

- **Public Seminars:** Applicants should outline a plan for designing and delivering seminar(s) and resource(s) for the wider U.S. and global higher education community on developing partnerships and international academic programs that advance administration priorities in one or more identified fields of focus. Applicants should propose and justify the number, length, and format of these seminar(s) and resource(s), for example through webinars, workshops, and/or resource guide development. ECA welcomes creative virtual, hybrid, or in-person activities to gather U.S. and foreign higher education institutions to explore best practices in developing partnerships and international academic programs aligned with administration priorities. Applicants can propose to limit the number or type of participants engaging in these activities if it best meets STRIVE Program goals, for example by focusing on partnerships in a strategic region of the world. Seminars though must be broadly advertised to industry stakeholders and open to qualifying institutions to register/apply. ECA encourages applicants to consult the National Security Strategy and other publicly available policy documents that articulate current U.S. foreign policy priorities as they consider potential areas of focus to propose for program activities.
- **In-Person Forum:** Applicants should propose an in-person forum held in conjunction with a relevant industry conference that will bring together approximately 40 total U.S. and foreign higher education leaders to explore potential partnerships and study, internship, apprenticeship, and research exchanges in the field(s) of focus. The program should include attendance at conference activities as well as bespoke seminars, networking events, site visits, and/or other engagements to foster learning and partnership exploration among participants. Applicants may also propose relevant post-conference activities to support continued collaboration as the budget allows. Proposals should outline a process for selecting the approximately 20 U.S. higher education representatives. The award recipient will also host an

application to select the approximately 20 international participants, whom relevant U.S. embassies and consulates will nominate.

- **Follow-On Microgrants:** Applicants should outline a plan for competitively awarding microgrants to in-person forum participants to expand the impact of their program. Eligible uses of funds should include, at a minimum, conducting site visits and other activities to foster collaboration between U.S. and foreign forum participants, as well as program participants hosting trainings for local peers to share best practices on partnership and U.S. study abroad program development. The process for awarding microgrants to foreign participants should include ensuring relevant U.S. Missions' concurrence on the proposed projects.

ECA anticipates this program component to comprise approximately \$475,000 of the STRIVE Program budget, including staffing and participant travel costs for in-person programming. Applicants may propose spending more or less on this portion of the program based on expected travel costs, length and design of program, and alignment with the overall STRIVE Program goal and objectives, keeping in mind ECA's preference for maximizing the amount of funds spent on subawards.

#### **4. Recipient Responsibilities.**

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Program Planning and Management
  - a. Develop a detailed program plan and timeline of key activities to administer the program for approval by ECA.
  - b. Provide an overall staffing plan, including level of effort for each position, sufficient to carry out program activities.
  - c. Conduct regular meetings in-person or virtually with the ECA Program Officer and key personnel. Provide ECA with minutes of these meetings, including action items and key deadlines.
2. Small Grants Competition and Oversight
  - a. Develop and implement a solicitation, application, screening, and merit-based review process for the national small grants competition(s) and resulting subawards. Submit the recommended institutions and alternates to ECA for concurrence before notifying applicants.
  - b. Propose strategies for supporting institutions with less experience in applying for subawards.

- c. Manage all subawards resulting from the small grant competition(s), both programmatically and financially. Outline a plan for monitoring, advising, and supporting subaward recipients as they implement their projects and build capacity to design and implement international academic programs linked to domestic labor market needs.
  - d. Check in virtually and/or in-person with subaward recipients and regularly provide ECA with a summary of any notable recipient activities.
3. Higher Education Partnerships Initiative Administration
- a. Design, plan, and implement a cohesive series of engagements to foster U.S. higher education institutions' collaboration with foreign counterparts in a field critical to U.S. trade and prosperity. This should include a series of activities designed for the wider U.S. and foreign higher education community, an in-person forum for higher education leaders held alongside a relevant industry conference, and a microgrants competition for in-person forum participants to expand the impact of their program.
  - b. Develop, collate, and share resources from the initiative with the wider higher education community through appropriate program platforms or ECA administered sites.
4. Outreach and Publicity
- a. Develop and implement an outreach and communications plan that generates a strong pool of eligible higher education institutions to participate in various program activities. The plan should also communicate the impact of the STRIVE Program to stakeholders and the public, including by providing updates on funded activities through appropriate program platforms or ECA administered sites. Emphasis should be placed on highlighting how the program advances U.S. security, trade, and prosperity and impacts U.S. communities.
  - b. This plan must also include the development and maintenance of a program website sharing information on program activities' applications and outcomes for interested applicants and the general public. The website must include a section dedicated to showcasing STRIVE Program and USG resources that support U.S. study, intern, apprenticeship, and research abroad programming that is easily searchable and accessible to a variety of audiences. ECA will consult on and contribute entries to this website section. The recipient will

coordinate with the previous IDEAS Program partner to transfer necessary archived information to the STRIVE website as applicable.

- c. The plan must include, at a minimum, developing social media content for sharing on ECA platforms, disseminating newsletter(s) to share program updates with key audiences, developing appropriate print and electronic materials, notifying Congressional representatives and state governors of subaward recipients from their districts/states as directed by ECA, and participating in relevant conferences.

#### 5. Alumni Tracking and Engagement

- a. Provide an alumni engagement strategy and timeline. This should include a plan for continued contact with STRIVE subaward recipient institutions and Higher Education Partnership Initiative participants to ensure they are tracked over time and offered on-going engagement opportunities to encourage continued development of international academic programs for U.S. students aligned with domestic labor needs. Activities should also engage IDEAS subaward recipients institutions.
- b. Maintain a database of all STRIVE and IDEAS subaward recipients and ensure it protects personally identifiable information. The recipient will coordinate with the previous IDEAS Program partner to transfer necessary data as applicable.

#### 6. Data and Reporting

- a. Maintain and regularly update a program database that ECA can also access and that can be used to track and report on applicant and subaward/participant information, protecting personally identifiable information.
- b. Submit semi-annual program and financial performance reports that address, at a minimum, the following topics: past and planned program activities, updates on the achievements of the implementing organization and subaward recipients, financial status (e.g., identify significant financial variations from original budgets), and the strengths and weaknesses of program design and implementation.

#### 7. Program Performance and Monitoring

- a. Present a plan to monitor and evaluate the program's success during the program and after its completion. The plan should include qualitative and quantitative measures agreed upon with ECA. Please

see section 5. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) below for more details.

## 5. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

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

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

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

- Demographic Questions as outlined in the *Indicator Book* on page v and *Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)* (See the MODE Resource Guide - <https://app.box.com/s/qjo8icwj46tc8h1i1qtg80zl7ibwgtua> – found on our website <https://www.state.gov/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/>)
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
  - Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
    - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their program experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
    - E1.1.04: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the United States Government (core indicator)

- E1.1.13: Percent of foreign participants who are more likely to recommend the United States as a good place to study
- E1.1.17: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the American people (core indicator)
- E1.1.18: Percent of foreign participants indicating an increase in understanding of United States culture and values (core indicator)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
  - E3.0.02: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of Americans (core indicator)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
  - Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
    - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core indicator)
- Objective 6: Increase capacity of U.S. partner institutions to achieve program strategic goals
  - E6.0.02: Percent of ECA-funded U.S. Higher Education Institutions that created new study abroad/exchange partnerships
  - E6.0.04: Percent of ECA-funded U.S. Higher Education Institutions that report an increase in U.S. study abroad students
  - E6.0.05: Percent of ECA-funded U.S. Higher Education Institutions that have a formal strategic plan for creating and/or expanding study abroad
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
  - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys (core indicator)

### **Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs)**

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

similar information to that found in the suggested PMP format, in a presentation of your choice. Successful PMPs (or similar documentation) should include the following:

- Objectives. Programmatic objectives are statements of the condition(s) that state what the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the MODE Framework or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives.
- Indicators. Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives and sub-objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations (meaning, breakdowns of the data by subgroups; the PMP lists the demographic questions required to obtain the information necessary to report the disaggregations). Each indicator should also include a target number to be achieved. A target is a planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe.
  - If you do not use the PMP format provided, note that any performance monitoring reference document the applicant submits should include the information in the column headers (Indicator Name, Definition, Target, Survey Question, etc.) in the PMP attachment at a minimum.
  - In addition to those indicators outlined in above, the applicant may propose additional custom, program-specific indicators in the PMP (ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each custom programmatic objective).
  - During the period of performance of the award, the ECA program office may further revise, add, or remove indicators. Therefore, the applicant's PMP and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established.

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

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

### **Program Performance M&E Narrative**

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

- An overview of resources available to the applicant that outline the team structure and responsibilities surrounding performance monitoring.
- The mechanism(s) through which surveys and other data collection tools (if applicable) will be administered, including which platform will be used, and when and how surveys will be advertised to participants – detailing strategies to ensure adequate survey response rates (<https://app.box.com/s/pn6tavyg7sh064i502fzap49ox63y38a>), and to reduce selection and non-response bias.
- A brief explanation of data analysis and reporting procedures.
- An overview of a proposed learning plan and feedback loops to ensure that the Grant Officer (GO)/Grant Officer Representative (GOR) are informed on performance monitoring issues at regular intervals.

### **Nonmandatory Use of the Qualtrics MODE Survey Builder Data Collection System**

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

## **MyGrants RPM Reporting Requirements**

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

### **6. Allowable Costs.**

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
  - Staff, subawardee, and Initiative participant travel (all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act)
  - Staff, subawardees, and Initiative participant per diem (domestic per diem rates may be accessed at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>)
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual
  - Subawards
  - Subject matter experts/consultants (if needed)
  - Web presence/ online application/ program information and data reporting mechanism management
  - Other justifiable contractual items directly related to implementing program activities
- Other Direct Costs
  - Communication costs
  - Evaluation
  - Follow-on activities
  - Meetings and conferences
  - Monitoring
  - Network charges
  - Rent and facilities

- OMB Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F Audits
- Publicity
- Program materials
- Reasonable accommodations
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities
- Indirect costs

### **7. Cost Share.**

ECA encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution may be reduced in like proportion.

### **8. Freedom and Democracy Guidelines.**

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

### **9. Virtual Exchange Component.**

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

after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s) is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project-by-project basis.

#### **10. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients.**

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

#### **11. Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial.**

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

#### **12. Substantial Involvement.**

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

- Review and concurrence on program print and digital materials, as advised by ECA, including press or public responses, prior to publication or completion.
- Review and approval of overall recruitment and outreach strategy for the subaward competition and Higher Education Partnerships Initiative.
- Review and approval of official program web presence, social media platforms and strategy, and overall content creation.
- Review and concurrence on program materials, including Request for Proposals (RFP) and public/recipient materials.
- Approval of the recommended selection and notification processes for all open competitions, including monitoring of selection committee panels.
- Concurrence on recommended subaward recipients, budgets, and plans.
- Concurrence on recommended participants in Higher Education Partnerships Initiative activities.

## **D. Application Contents and Format**

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

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the PSI, which contains guidelines for proposal preparation.

### **1. Budget Format.**

Applicants must submit a budget (SF-424A), detailed line-item budget, and a budget narrative. See the PSI section III for more information on the budget requirements.

Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

### **2. Content of Application.**

Please see the PSI for information about the application and formatting guidelines.

## **E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines**

### **1. Address to Request Application Package.**

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

### **2. Department of State Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Heidi Manley, U.S. Department of State, Office of Academic Exchanges, ECA/A/E, 202-632-9354, [ManleyHL@state.gov](mailto:ManleyHL@state.gov).

All correspondence with ECA concerning this solicitation should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation. Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the deadline has passed, ECA staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

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

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

#### **Required Registrations**

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

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

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

All federal award recipients must maintain a current registration in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting are completed on any issued award. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts.

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

## **Exemptions**

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

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

## **4. Required Registration with MyGrants.**

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

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

## **5. Submission Instructions.**

### **Method of Submission**

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

### **Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures**

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

### **How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov**

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

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

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

### **How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov**

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

### **Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues**

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

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

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

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

## **6. Submission Dates and Times.**

### **Application Deadline Date**

**Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 11:59pm Eastern (Washington DC time)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **7. Funding Restrictions for this Announcement.**

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

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

### **b. Certification Regarding Compliance with Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws**

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

- i. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
- ii. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

### **c. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and Any Other Applicable Foreign Funding Disclosure Requirements for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE).**

Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

- Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is

material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

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

(a) *Definitions.*

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

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

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

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

(b) *Prohibition.*

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

- (1) Delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;
- (2) Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and
- (3) Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system .

(c) *Exemptions, Exceptions, and Waivers.*

The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines

that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 ([41 U.S.C. 3901](#) note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].

## **8. Other Submission Requirements.**

- a. Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov.
- b. All proposals must contain a SF-424, executive summary, proposal narrative, budget (SF 424A), detailed line-item budget, and budget narrative.
- c. Key Personnel  
ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (\*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Applicants should also identify what proportion of their time will be used in support of the program. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions.
- d. Intergovernmental Review of Applications  
Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **F. Application Review Information**

### **1. Review Process.**

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

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

Proposals recommended by an ECA grant panel will be reviewed for compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines, and assessed for risk. Final

funding decisions are made by the ECA's Assistant Secretary. Only an ECA Grant Officer has the final authority to issue assistance awards.

## **2. Review Criteria.**

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

- a. **Quality of the program idea and ability to achieve program objectives:** 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 and achieve program objectives. The plan should follow the program guidelines described in this solicitation and should be likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.
- b. **Institutional capacity and record:** Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results. Applicant organizations should demonstrate an institutional record of success in executing national competitions, managing multiple subawards, providing programmatic support to U.S. higher education institutions administering international academic programs, and implementing activities designed to foster individual and institutional learning and collaboration. The proposal must also demonstrate that the applicant has internal controls in place to manage federal funds. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients, including the timely submission of reports, and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- c. **Follow-on activities and multiplier effect/impact:** Proposals should strengthen long-term ties between countries that advance American interests, including sharing of information and creating long-term institutional and individual linkages. Proposals should support this by including plans for continued follow-on activity after the ECA supported program ends, ensuring that programs are not isolated events.
- d. **Performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E):** Proposals should have a fully developed M&E plan that includes goals, objectives, and indicators. The plan should be feasible and aligned with the M&E section of this solicitation. Proposals should include a realistic learning plan that outlines how your organization plans to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices. All submitted M&E plans will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided at least the required

information outlined in the M&E section of this solicitation and demonstrated the applicant's capacity to carry out the M&E plan.

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

### **3. Indirect Costs**

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

### **4. Risk Review**

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award, the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance
- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

### **5. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov.**

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

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

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

### **G. Award Notices**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal ECA procedures. The award or cooperative agreement will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer in ECA's Grants Division and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer (as identified in the application) for review and countersignature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the fully signed award document.

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

**Unsuccessful Applicants:**

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

**Payment Method:**

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

**H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**

**1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.**

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

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider proposals for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this NOFO in accordance with the following:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:

- Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR Part 200.205),
- Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
- Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR Part 200.322), and
- Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR Part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- 
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

## 2. Reporting.

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

- a. **Performance Progress Reports (PPRs)** shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 90 days after the reporting period; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. All reports and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this award in MyGrants.
- b. **The Federal Financial Reports (FFR SF-425/SF-425a)** must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the recipient must upload the approved report to MyGrants, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the recipient's eligibility for future awards.
- c. Required **MODE data** (see Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation section) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. MODE data reporting shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. The frequency of these reports will be determined by DOME and the Program Officer. Either a standard report template (if using the MODE Survey Builder) or aggregate data and the raw data file (if Recipient uses their own survey platform) must be uploaded by the Recipient as an RPM Performance Report under the corresponding record for this award in MyGrants.
- d. A **final program and financial report** no more than 120 days after the period of performance of the award ends or termination of the award.
- e. **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:

- 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.
- 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.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

### **3. Branding and Marking**

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

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

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

### **I. Other Information**

#### **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. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov>. The Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation can be reached by email at <mailto:eJVisas@state.gov>.