



# 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 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders**  
**(YALI Fellowship)**  
**Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017991**  
**Application Deadline: May 26, 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 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders (YALI Fellowship)
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	DFOP0017991
<b>Announcement Type</b>	New Cooperative Agreement
<b>Deadline for Applications</b>	May 26, 2026, 11:59pm Eastern (Washington, DC time)
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	19.009

<b>Length of Performance Period</b>	18 months
<b>Number of Awards Anticipated</b>	1 award
<b>Award Amount</b>	Approximately \$15,000,000, pending availability of funds
<b>Total Available Funding</b>	\$15,000,000, 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>	July 27, 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 U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Study of the U.S. Branch invites proposal submissions for one cooperative agreement to design, implement, and oversee the FY 2026 YALI Fellowship. Established in 2014 the YALI Fellowship has built and maintained a network of approximately 7,800 young African leaders across sectors critical to U.S. interests and foreign policy priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The award recipient will be responsible for planning and administering all components and aspects of the YALI Fellowship including short-term academic residencies ("institutes") on U.S. college and university campuses for approximately 550 Fellows, Professional Development Experiences (PDEs) for approximately 50 Fellows, a Reciprocal Exchange component that includes approximately 80 U.S. participants, and follow-on alumni activities. Under this award, the first group of Fellows would travel to the United States for the institutes in summer 2027. The award recipient will design the Fellowship application materials, develop an

outreach and recruitment plan, receive and screen applications in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, and oversee the final Fellow selection and placement process. The recipient will recruit, select, and oversee subawards to approximately 22 U.S. educational institutions that will each implement a six-week long institute in one of three tracks: Business and Trade, Emerging Technologies, or Governance and Security.

Each institute should take place on an accredited U.S. college or university campus and provide a group of approximately 25 accomplished African innovators and professionals aged 25 to 35 with rigorous academic and practical coursework, showcasing American excellence in relevant fields. Institutes should also provide structured networking and professional opportunities for Fellows to build relationships with American businesses and industry leaders.

The PDEs are professional placements for a subset of Fellows at relevant U.S. public, private, and non-profit organizations and should take place immediately following the institutes.

The Reciprocal Exchange component should support approximately 80 U.S. citizens to travel to Sub-Saharan Africa to build upon strategic partnerships and business connections developed through the YALI Fellowship.

ECA will award one cooperative agreement to administer all program components. The anticipated total amount of funding available for this cooperative agreement will be approximately \$15,000,000, pending the availability of FY 2026 funds. Of this total amount, the recipient should be prepared to transfer approximately \$250,000 to each U.S. college, university, or non-governmental organization selected to administer an Institute under sub-award agreements.

ECA welcomes applications from U.S. public and private non-profit organizations, consortia of organizations, and accredited post-secondary U.S. education institutions meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) for more information.

## **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 \$15,000,000. 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, Project Objectives, Goals, and Instructions (POGI) document, 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 details one or more awards 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 in order for it to be eligible.

## **C. Program Description**

### **1. Authority.**

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

### **2. Purpose.**

The YALI Fellowship is the flagship program of the broader Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), which also includes the online YALI Network platform. The objective of the Fellowship is to promote a better understanding of American society, history, and culture and engagement with American innovators, educators, and institutions for emerging African thought leaders. The Fellowship also builds and maintains a prestigious network of influential professionals in critical sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through structured networking with Americans, Fellows develop a lasting connection to America and affinity for the American people. The Fellowship directly supports U.S. foreign policy goals for Sub-Saharan Africa, including strengthening U.S.-Africa relations in trade, education, and diplomacy. The Fellowship provides accomplished African innovators and professionals with six-weeks of rigorous academic and practical coursework at U.S. colleges and universities, an opportunity for approximately 50 Fellows to engage in the PDEs, and follow-on alumni programming. The Reciprocal Exchange component provides opportunities for U.S. citizens to travel to Sub-Saharan Africa for project-based engagement.

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

## **Overview of the Institutes**

The institutes should constitute a comprehensive, executive-style, six-week program that provides program content through a lens informed by American expertise and innovation that clearly demonstrates the United States' position as the premier global partner. Institutes should take place at accredited U.S. colleges or universities. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions of a 501(c)3 are eligible to apply as a sub-award recipient; however, the institutes should take place on a U.S. college or university campus. Proposals should include a tentative list of approximately 25 institutions that the applicant would invite to apply for sub-awards if selected as the award recipient.

The institutes should provide non-credit programs that include practical academic content, complementary site visits, cultural exchange activities, and networking opportunities. Each institute should examine U.S. innovation and leadership in one of three tracks: Business and Trade, Emerging Technologies, or Governance and Security. Based on these tracks, institutes should provide Fellows with ample opportunities to build relationships with American experts from a variety of industries and fields, especially those related to critical minerals, energy, and health.

The recipient will be responsible for providing subaward recipients with guidelines for program content to ensure a consistent level of quality across all institutes while maintaining alignment with program goals and objectives. In addition to the academic coursework, the institutes should include practical hands-on training related to the given track and facilitated networking opportunities with established leaders from American businesses and industries. Site visits in the community should provide Fellows with opportunities to observe and participate in varied aspects of American society and business as they relate to program themes. The institutes should also incorporate opportunities for Fellows to discuss how lessons learned from site visits connect to the academic program. Institutes may also include community service activities so Fellows can explore the role of non-profit organizations and volunteering in American society. ECA encourages applicants to incorporate multi-day off-campus field experiences during the institutes for Fellows to connect with organizations and individuals connected to institute tracks in locations distinct from their institute campus and/or to convene with Fellows from other institutes.

An important objective across all institutes is to develop the Fellows' U.S.-based networks, understanding of U.S. markets, and ability to negotiate with American associates to advance U.S. and African partnerships and investments in support of

shared prosperity and security. In addition to track-specific curricula, institutes should deliver a universal curriculum across all three institute tracks to support these goals and provide a common foundation for all Fellows. The curriculum should consist of group discussions, trainings, and exercises that focus on topics that may include consensus building, networking, negotiation, collective problem solving, effective communication and public speaking, management skills, and any other related topics.

Applicants should propose implementing a total of approximately 22 institutes, with at least five institutes in each of the three tracks and should demonstrate capacity to implement up to 25 institutes. The final number of institutes will depend on the final number of Fellows supported under the award, as determined in consultation with ECA.

Institutes should integrate all aspects of the program to increase Fellows' understanding of American society, innovation, and institutions as relevant to one of the three tracks. Institutes in all three tracks should explore intersections with topics critical to U.S. foreign policy priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Institutes for Business and Trade** should provide Fellows with an overview of the dynamic landscape of American business principles, strategies, and practices that drive innovation, job creation, and competitiveness in foreign established and emerging markets. Topics may include investment; international and regional trade; infrastructure and service delivery; responsible business conduct; public-private partnerships; bilateral trade policies; supply chains; emerging technologies and AI use in business; and financial management, among others. The institutes should encourage Fellows to formulate innovative and practical plans to expand their engagement in business and/or entrepreneurship in their communities and to develop new U.S.-Africa business connections that contribute to shared economic prosperity. Activities and site visits should include opportunities for Fellows to engage with leading enterprises and businesses to gain practical insights into the U.S. business environment and strategic opportunities for partnering with American industries.
- **Institutes for Emerging Technologies** should provide Fellows with an overview of U.S. innovation and leadership in emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning, biotech, robotics, and advanced computing. Institutes may explore the scientific development and practical application of

these technologies as they relate to specific industries such as global public health, mining, cybersecurity, education, agriculture, and resource management, among others. The institutes should encourage Fellows to harness transformative technologies to drive economic growth and resilience in their communities and develop new U.S.-Africa technological partnerships. Activities and site visits should include opportunities for Fellows to engage with American experts and tech innovators to gain practical insights into forward-thinking applications for emerging technologies and the benefits of collaborating with U.S.-based companies and investors.

- **Institutes for Governance and Security** should provide Fellows with an overview of U.S. policies and practices that advance peace, combat crime, and address security threats at local, regional, and international levels. Topics may include cybersecurity; international negotiation and dialogue; societal advancement; policymaking; good governance; secure borders; conflict resolution; and health security. The institutes should explore the institutions, policies, and practices that support fundamental freedoms, accountability, and security. The institutes should encourage Fellows to pursue policies and practices that foster safe, secure, and stable environments for investment and economic growth in their home regions. Activities and site visits should include opportunities for Fellows to engage with American community leaders, policymakers, and legal experts to gain practical insights into U.S. civil society and the benefits of stronger U.S.-Africa partnerships.

### **Overview of the Professional Development Experience (PDE)**

The award recipient will be responsible for arranging four to five-week PDEs in the United States for approximately 50 of the Fellows. The Fellows selected for the PDEs will have distinguished records of accomplishment in their organizations, institutions, and communities and will be well-positioned to serve as key partners for U.S. engagement in their professional fields. PDEs will take place at relevant U.S. organizations, companies, or agencies.

The PDEs are intended to provide Fellows with substantive professional experiences within U.S. companies or organizations to enhance their understanding of U.S. business, innovation, and leadership and establish professional relationships with U.S. industry counterparts. For U.S. companies and organizations, the PDEs afford a unique opportunity to build global networks and expand their work to, or

throughout, Africa. PDEs should be designed to offer an on-site, engaging experience for Fellows within relevant agencies and/or organizations.

Each Fellow should have one placement for the full duration of the PDE (rather than shorter successive placements) to allow the Fellow to get an in-depth understanding of the PDE placement. No more than one, or in exceptional cases two, Fellows per PDE cohort may be placed in one organization. In very limited cases, up to three Fellows may be placed in distinct offices or work units of one large organization. Proposals must discuss how the award recipient, in collaboration with ECA, will recruit and select appropriate U.S. organizations for placements. To ensure that each Fellow has a substantive professional experience, PDEs should involve the commitment of at least one designated on-site supervisor/mentor within the PDE organization who understands the goals and objectives of the YALI Fellowship. The supervisor/mentor will provide the Fellow professional insight in the appropriate field of expertise.

Please note that the award recipient must secure all placements of PDEs in advance of the Fellows' arrival in the United States.

### **Overview of the Reciprocal Exchange Component**

The recipient will be responsible for administering the YALI Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange component for approximately 80 U.S. citizens to travel to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Reciprocal Exchange component should provide small grants for individual or small groups of American professionals from the private, public, and non-profit sectors to collaborate with Fellowship alumni on projects that tackle strategic issues, foster lasting partnerships, contribute to market or network expansion, and increase ties between the United States and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Each Reciprocal Exchange project should receive up to \$6,000 per American participant, and no project should receive more than \$24,000 total in funding, regardless of the number of American participants. ECA anticipates that Reciprocal Exchanges may occur at any time during the award's period of performance and within each individual project's pre-determined period of performance. ECA will coordinate with the Bureau of African Affairs and provide guidance to the recipient on strategic topics and project themes to ensure alignment with U.S. government priorities.

The recipient is responsible for managing the application form for both the American professionals and for Fellowship alumni from all cohorts since the initiation of the program in 2014 (as project partners). Reciprocal Exchange participants must be selected through a merit-based competition. ECA will make final selections for Reciprocal Exchange projects in coordination with the recipient, regional bureau, and relevant U.S. Embassies and consulates.

### **Overview of Alumni/Follow-on Activities**

Proposals should provide plans for continued follow-on activities to ensure that ECA-supported programs are not isolated events. Proposed follow-on activities for alumni (Fellows and Reciprocal Exchange participants) should reflect the goals and objectives of the program. The proposal should include an outline and timeline of follow-on alumni programming, information on coordination with existing alumni efforts, and a description of how proposed activities will foster and maintain long-term linkages.

Proposals should reserve funds for on-demand alumni activities and event travel that align with program goals and U.S. foreign policy priorities. ECA welcomes proposals that include plans for thematic Alumni seminars, workshops, or other events in the region. Proposals should also include a way to recognize outstanding alumni who have a strong record of leadership and partnership with the U.S. in support of YALI and its goals. Applicants may also propose additional follow-on activities that encourage alumni to leverage their exchange experiences to advance U.S.-Africa partnerships.

The award recipient is responsible for maintaining an alumni database with updated records of all Fellowship program alumni since 2014. The FY 2026 award recipient will be responsible for working with the FY 2024 award recipient to transfer previous data. Each applicant must confirm that its system for collecting and storing data on Fellows and alumni is compatible with ECA's systems. For current and future alumni, the database must continue to include biographical information on all Fellows; track media mentions and success stories; and include functionality to easily search for notable Fellowship alumni by name, Fellowship institute name, cohort year, professional sector, keywords, and other search criteria. Applicants should designate approximately one full-time position to oversee alumni activities, assigning additional staff as needed. The award recipient will report to ECA on the outcomes and effectiveness of all alumni activities.

## **Overview of Recruitment and Selection**

Proposals must demonstrate the capacity for the recipient to conduct a recruitment and selection process for Fellows and Reciprocal Exchange participants. The recipient will be responsible for developing and executing creative and comprehensive plans for the recruitment of qualified applicants through a merit-based competition for all YALI Fellowship opportunities. The recruitment plans should clearly state the primary purpose and audiences for key messages, making sure to differentiate between recruitment and general program marketing and promotion. Successful recruitment plans will provide specific strategies for attracting well-qualified pools of applicants.

The recipient will be responsible for creating an online application form for a merit-based competition. The application form and process should align with a comprehensive plan for selection and placement of Fellows. Plans for recruitment, selection, and placement should allow for U.S. Department of State involvement. Selection plans should explore the use and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the applicant screening and review process, as appropriate and reasonable. The recipient will also be responsible for developing application forms for the Reciprocal Exchange and other alumni opportunities such that U.S.-based professionals and Fellowship alumni from all cohorts since 2014 can apply. U.S. embassies and consulates (posts) throughout Sub-Saharan Africa will play a significant role in recruitment and selection. ECA anticipates that posts will interview semi-finalist candidates and submit a slate of potential finalists. Proposals should include information about how the recipient plans to collaborate with posts in recruitment and selection efforts. The recipient will be responsible for developing training materials and opportunities for embassy employees involved in these efforts. ECA will approve a final list of eligible countries and participant numbers for selection.

## **Overview of Outreach**

In addition to recruitment plans, the proposal should include an outline to describe how the recipient will promote the YALI Fellowship to various audiences and media outlets, including print, online, and broadcast, to reach the widest possible audience of qualified applicants, potential institute partners, and other relevant audiences. The proposal must also include a community outreach plan to educate U.S. citizens on the YALI Fellowship and how it benefits America and Americans, particularly those who will interact with Fellows during their time in the United States. Outreach should include print and virtual content.

Additionally, the proposal should address the recipient's ability to maintain the YALI Fellowship website and all its components, including a private Fellowship Portal for alumni and selected finalists and alternates to access program information and resources. Content must be current and accurate. ECA may request changes to website content as needed. On occasion, ECA may request that the recipient assist in promoting and coordinating opportunities for Fellowship alumni with other elements of YALI including the YALI Network.

The recipient must notify and consult ECA before responding to any media inquiries regarding the Fellowship. Publications, program materials, the website, and all other platforms must be in accordance with U.S. Department of State and ECA branding guidelines. The recipient must submit the outreach strategy and all publication materials, including cover designs, to ECA for approval prior to publication and dissemination.

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

The activities and the roles and responsibilities of the recipient for this program are outlined in the attached POGI document.

#### **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
  - o Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
    - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their program experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
    - E1.1.04: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the United States Government (core indicator)
    - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program (core indicator)
    - E1.1.10: Percent of foreign participants who traveled to the United States for the first time during their program (core indicator)
    - E1.1.11: Percent of American participants indicating a change in their understanding of their host country's culture and values
    - E1.1.17: 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)
    - E1.1.19: Percent of foreign participants agreeing with statements in support of democratic values (core indicator)
- Objective 2: Increase the impact that participants and alumni have on their communities / countries
  - E2.0.01: Percent of foreign participants that volunteer in their host communities
  - E2.0.04: Number of hours that foreign participants spend volunteering in their host communities
  - o Sub-Objective 2.2: Foster participants' belief that civic engagement benefits communities/countries
    - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country (core indicator)
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions

- E3.0.02: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of Americans (core indicator)
- E3.0.04: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of third country nationals
- E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant (core indicator)
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
  - E4.0.01: Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation
  - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of their program participation
  - Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
    - E4.1.01: Total number of participants (core indicator)
    - E4.1.02: Total number of program cohorts (core indicator)
    - E4.1.04: Number of professional placements
    - E4.1.11: Number of American reciprocal exchange participants
- 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=WBHC1oLNZvl>. 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. 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.

## **7. 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.

## **8. Virtual Exchange Component.**

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

activities given the potential limits to internet access from participants in some locations and while continuing to advance foreign policy objectives and achieve lasting benefits for U.S. citizens and international participants.

In addition to planning for virtual exchange activities if in-person programming is prohibited, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage virtual programming technologies during or in addition to in-person programming. ECA encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s) is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project-by-project basis.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

## **11. Substantial Involvement.**

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

- a. Oversee all communications with U.S. embassies and consulates, the Bureau of African Affairs, and the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs regarding the recruitment and selection of participants and other aspects of the Fellowship;

- b. Work with award recipient on a plan for notifying Congressional representatives of the participation of Fellows and Reciprocal Exchange Participants in and from their districts/states and send notification letters;
- c. Collaborate on and approve recruitment and outreach plans, including corresponding materials;
- d. Approve participant eligibility requirements and selection criteria;
- e. Approve the final selection of Fellows and Fellow placement as well as the PDE and Reciprocal Exchange participants and locations; the Department of State will be involved in the selection process and will approve final selection of all Fellows;
- f. Review and provide input on PDE placement sites and plans; and
- g. Assist with participant emergencies when necessary, including but not limited to, serious health issues and crises, evacuations, and repatriation of remains.

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

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

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

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

Applicants must submit a budget (SF-424A), detailed line-item budget, and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

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

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

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

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

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

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

For questions about this announcement, contact: Natalie Spencer, U.S. Department of State, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, ECA/A/E/USS, 202-632-9445, SpencerNR@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 is completed on any issued award. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts.

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

### **Exemptions**

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-25/subpart-1/section-25.110) for a full list of exemptions.

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

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

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

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

### **5. Submission Instructions.**

## **Method of Submission**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

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

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

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

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

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

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

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

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

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

### **Application Deadline Date**

**May 26, 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:

- h. 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 Requirement 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. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan**

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

- To the best of the recipient's knowledge, neither the recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#);
- The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#) and is compliant with it; and compliance plan must be consistent with the requirements of [2 CFR 175\(b\)\(4\) and \(5\)](#).
- That the recipient has procedures to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in them.

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

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

*(a) Definitions.*

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

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

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

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

*(b) Prohibition.*

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

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

*(c) Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.*

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

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

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

## **F. Application Review Information**

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

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

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

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

## **2. Review Criteria.**

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

- a. **Quality of the program idea and planning:** Proposals should exhibit originality and clearly demonstrate how the applicant will meet the objectives laid out in this solicitation. Competitive proposals will be comprehensive and feasible, presenting a coherent program that clearly promotes ECA's mission.
- b. **Institution's record/ability:** Proposals should demonstrate the institution's record of successful exchange programs and responsible fiscal management. ECA will consider the past performance of prior ECA recipients, including the timely submission of reports, and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be fully qualified to achieve the project's goals.
- c. **Follow-on activities and multiplier effect:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity after the ECA supported program ends, ensuring that programs are not isolated events. Follow-on activities should strengthen long-term partnerships and individual linkages.
- 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 direct institutional funding contributions.

### **3. Indirect Costs.**

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

### **4. Risk Review.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **G. Award Notices**

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

and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer (as identified in the application) for review and countersignature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the fully signed award document.

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

### **Unsuccessful applicants:**

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

### **Payment Method:**

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

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

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

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

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

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - 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).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
  - [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
  - [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
  - [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
  - [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
  - [2 CFR 600 - DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
  - [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)
  - Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

## **2. Reporting.**

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

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

### **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> 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