



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)
FY2026 American Music Mentorship Program
Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0017971
Application Deadline: May 29, 2026**

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J. Basic Information

1. Overview.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE	FY 2026 AMERICAN MUSIC MENTORSHIP PROGRAM (AMMP)
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER	DFOP0017971
ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE	New Cooperative Agreement
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS	29 May, 2026 11:59pm Eastern (Washington DC time)
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER	19.415

LENGTH OF PERFORMANCE PERIOD	18 months
NUMBER OF AWARDS ANTICIPATED	1 award
AWARD AMOUNT	approximately \$700,000
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$700,000, pending availability of funds
TYPE OF FUNDING	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE) Funds
FUNDING INSTRUMENT TYPE	Cooperative Agreement
ANTICIPATED AWARD DATE	September 1, 2026

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

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

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

2. Executive Summary.

The FY 2026 American Music Mentorship Program (AMMP) cooperative agreement will implement a mentorship exchange pairing international mid-career music industry professionals who manage, produce, distribute, and promote music - with U.S. music industry mentors. Rather than focusing solely on performers, AMMP aims to strengthen music industry infrastructure and create pathways that expand global market access for American music.

AMMP's FY 2026 theme, *Made in America: Influence and Innovation of the American Music Industry*, emphasizes commercial and creative development through residencies and training to strengthen participants' capacity to effectively partner with American creative industries. The program fosters professional development, knowledge sharing, and new industry pathways such as licensing, co-production, and distribution to position the American music sector as a platform for innovation

and cross-border collaboration, underscoring its role as a driver of American economic growth and cultural influence.

Mentees from three to five countries will participate in a two-week U.S. residency followed by monthly virtual sessions with American music industry mentors over approximately 10 to 12 months to sustain collaboration. Through curated mentorships these professionals will gain access to the U.S. music industry, enhance technical and business skills, and build lasting networks. Mentees will engage with experts from small companies, independent labels, and larger businesses during the residency, participating in workshops, forums, collaborations, and site visits.

An outbound component will send approximately 10 U.S. mentors and instructors overseas for approximately one week to engage with local music industries, expand networks, and share best practices.

AMMP is implemented through a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and a leading private sector organization in the U.S. music industry. This collaboration combines U.S. government leadership in cultural diplomacy with industry expertise to advance innovation and global engagement in the U.S. creative industries. The private sector partner leads recruitment and selection of U.S. mentors from its membership and provides access to creative, business, and technical leaders, while ECA provides strategic oversight and ensures alignment with U.S. foreign policy objectives. The FY 2026 award recipient will serve as the implementing partner, managing program logistics, coordinating activities, and facilitating mentorship exchanges in close collaboration with both partners.

The award recipient must manage complex logistics, strict timelines, private sector partner and participant needs, program promotion, and share updates with all stakeholders.

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 \$700,000. 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. Applicants who are current recipients of awards directly from ECA should make sure the application details one or more award that will be open with ECA at the start of the anticipated period of performance for this NOFO. Applicants who do not have current awards directly with ECA, please review the information in the PSI, section D, with additional information that must be provided in your application in order for it to be eligible.

C. Program Description

2. 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.

3. Purpose.

The American Music Mentorship Program (AMMP) advances U.S. strategic interests by showcasing American creativity and strengthening the global competitiveness of U.S. music professionals. Through peer-to-peer mentorship, the program equips mid-career international music professionals with technical and business skills while promoting U.S. industry standards and values. AMMP uses cultural exchange as a form of commercial diplomacy—expanding access to foreign markets for U.S. creative sectors, fostering partnerships that benefit American professionals, and reinforcing the United States as a premier destination for cultural investment and innovation. By drawing international attention to the U.S. music industry, the program strengthens the global presence of American music enterprises and affirms U.S. leadership in music strategy and cultural innovation.

The program also advances U.S. foreign policy priorities by leveraging the strength of the American music industry—one of the nation's most competitive and globally influential creative sectors—to build durable, industry focused partnerships. By pairing international professionals with experienced U.S. mentors in areas such as artist development, production, leadership, business strategy, rights management, legal practice, and live event operations, AMMP highlights American excellence in entrepreneurship, intellectual property protection, and creative enterprise. This exchange model promotes transparent business practices, supports the expansion of legitimate markets for U.S. music and services, and strengthens relationships with partners committed to growth, innovation, and creative freedom. Through targeted, skills-based engagement, the program reinforces the global leadership of the U.S. music sector while advancing economic opportunity and mutually beneficial cultural exchange.

4. Program Specific Guidelines.

Program Structure

The FY 2026 cooperative agreement will support a professional mentorship exchange pairing up to 20 international mid-career music industry professionals (mentees) with American music industry professionals (mentors). The program consists of three interconnected components: a two-week U.S. residency for mentees, approximately one year of monthly virtual mentoring sessions, and a one-week outbound exchange sending up to 10 U.S. mentors and instructors overseas. The Department of State will select participating countries (three to five) in consultation with regional bureaus and in coordination with the private sector partner.

Program Design

The applicant will propose a mentoring and hands-on training program that leverages the full spectrum of talent, technical skills, and business expertise across the U.S. music industry—from individual experts to small and mid-sized companies to larger organizations. The program should advance commercial diplomacy and promote American cultural capital by supporting U.S. music industry professionals and strengthening the global presence of the U.S. music industry.

Proposals should include:

- **A program concept** that aligns with AMMP's goals and structure
- **A clear rationale** for proposed activities, professional tracks, and the sequencing of residency, virtual mentoring, and outbound components
- **An explanation** of how the program will build practical skills, professional networks, and sustained collaboration

Inbound U.S. Residency

Timeline: For proposal purposes, applicants should plan for the first U.S.-based exchange to occur in October 2027. The timeline must accommodate the needs of ECA and the private sector partner.

Location: ECA and the private sector partner will determine the residency site location with input from the selected award recipient. The location may include more than one city depending on budget and the needs of mentees and mentors. For proposal purposes, applicants should consider Los Angeles or New York as the sole residency location. The applicant may suggest other cities, but final determination will be made by ECA and the private sector partner, focusing on locations where the private sector partner has a robust existing presence to minimize mentor travel and maximize opportunities for professional site visits.

Program Design Requirements

The two-week inbound residency will bring international participants to the United States for professional and technical support through tailored peer mentorships, expert fora, workshops, and other engagement opportunities. These activities should immerse mentees in the U.S. music marketplace, providing direct access to industry leaders, innovative business models, and best practices that drive the American music sector's global success.

The residency program will be developed in consultation with ECA and the private sector partner to ensure program objectives are met and should:

- **Allow for full group and small group interactions** to encourage a community of cross-sector industry professionals
- **Provide a common workspace or hub** where professionals can congregate daily to work or hold meetings and consultations with experts
- **Offer peer mentoring and hands-on training** that takes full advantage of the professional range, technical skills, and business expertise found throughout the music industry
- **Include site visits** to music industry facilities, businesses, and organizations that provide mentees with firsthand exposure to how the U.S. music industry operates. Site visits are essential to the program because they allow mentees to observe best practices in action, understand the infrastructure and business models that support the American music sector, and build direct connections with industry professionals in their work environments. These visits should be tailored to professional tracks and may include recording studios, performance venues, music publishing houses, artist management firms, record labels, streaming platforms, performing rights organizations, and other relevant industry locations
- **Include facilitators** to lead workshops and discussions and create activities that provide networking opportunities and enhancement activities leveraging the educational, cultural, and professional opportunities in the host city. Facilitators will complement mentor expertise and address mentee needs
- **Include a reverse mentorship component** in which mentees share their knowledge and expertise about the music industry with mentors and other U.S. music industry experts
- **Include other virtual components** designed by the applicant

Proposals should include:

- The applicant's detailed plan for the U.S. residency should include workshops, site visits, mentoring sessions, and networking opportunities. The proposal should describe how the applicant will:
- **Begin with orientation** covering expectations, program guidelines, cultural considerations, conduct standards, and safety
- **Prepare participants** through a program plan that readies mentors and mentees for their roles and optimizes virtual engagements
- **Conclude with a closing session** that brings together mentees, mentors, and industry leaders to review outcomes, identify opportunities for continued collaboration, and present mentees' action plans
- **Recognize achievements** through a closing event proposed by the applicant
- The closing session should include mentees sharing and receiving feedback on action plans that establish specific ways for continued engagement with mentor networks during the year-long virtual sessions. Mentees should also discuss how they plan to share acquired skills with emerging music industry professionals and local creative communities in their home cities, countries, and regions. The closing ceremony may include an award presentation and/or other activities.

Mentor Participation

Mentors will participate onsite for four days during the two-week residency program and will be available to meet with mentees during that time. Following the in-person program, mentors will meet virtually monthly with mentees for up to one year. Mentors will provide behind-the-scenes access, bolster mentees' technical skills, and build foundations for lasting professional networks.

Virtual Mentoring

To reinforce program impact, the in-person residency will be followed by monthly virtual mentor-mentee meetings for approximately one year. Proposals should describe how these sessions will be scheduled, supported, and tracked, including regular check-ins to ensure progress toward program goals.

Applicants may also consider virtual pre-departure orientations for mentees prior to U.S. travel and for mentors and instructors prior to overseas travel.

Outbound Overseas Exchange

Timeline: For proposal purposes, applicants should plan for the first

outbound exchange to take place in **April 2028**. The timeline must reflect the needs of ECA, the private sector partner, and participating U.S. Embassies.

Program Design

In collaboration with ECA, U.S. missions, and the private sector partner, the applicant will develop a one-week outbound program that sends up to 10 American mentors and instructors overseas to engage with international counterparts. The outbound component is developed in coordination with the participating U.S. embassy or consulate.

The applicant should present a concept that reflects local industry conditions and Embassy priorities. Activities may include workshops, consultations, networking events, media engagements, follow-on sessions, and other professional activities designed to:

- Promote collaboration
- Share U.S. industry expertise
- Support creative and technical development
- Strengthen professional relationships

The outbound exchange should expand international networks, create opportunities for American music professionals, and reinforce the United States' role as a leader in the global music industry.

We encourage creative approaches that demonstrate the applicant's understanding of music industry dynamics, cross-cultural exchange, and the coordination required among multiple stakeholders. Proposals should show how the applicant will design a cohesive program that builds meaningful relationships, develops practical skills, and creates lasting impact for participants and the broader music industry.

Participant Profile and Selection

This program connects mid-career music industry professionals from participating countries with experienced mentors from the U.S. music industry. As the award recipient, you will manage a comprehensive selection process in coordination with ECA, U.S. Embassies and Consulates, and our private sector partner.

Participant Profiles

Mentees should be mid-career music industry professionals, typically ages 21 to 45, with demonstrated experience building creative talent and music industry infrastructure in their home countries. All mentees must

demonstrate English language proficiency and identify a specific professional goal or challenge at the program's outset to guide their mentorship experience.

Mentors will be U.S. music industry professionals recruited by the private sector partner. They will participate in four days of onsite residency and conduct monthly virtual sessions for one year, both before and after the in-person exchange.

Professional Tracks

ECA and the private sector partner will establish annual professional tracks based on country and regional needs. Mentees will be paired with mentors working in corresponding fields. Professional tracks may include:

- Audio production and engineering
- Artist development and A&R (Artists & Repertoire)
- Talent management and booking
- Publishing and performing rights organizations
- Business strategy and leadership
- Legal and intellectual property
- Live events and festival production
- Public relations and marketing

Needs Assessment and Recruitment Profile

The awardee will conduct a needs assessment of local and regional music industries in countries selected by the Department of State. This assessment must be developed in coordination with ECA, the private sector partner, and participating U.S. embassies and consulates. Based on this assessment, you will create a recruitment profile that U.S. embassies and consulates will use to nominate mentee candidates.

Mentee Selection Process

Your proposal should describe how you will design and manage the mentee recruitment, review, and selection process. This process must center on U.S. embassies and consulates' recommendations and approval, requiring close coordination with U.S. embassies, ECA, and the private sector partner. The awardee will draft justifications recommending mentees for the Department of State's final determination and selection.

The selection criteria should address professional experience, leadership potential,

and alignment with program tracks. Where feasible, the recruitment strategy should aim to bring multiple mentees from a single country who bring complementary skills to strengthen collaboration and post-program knowledge sharing.

Supporting Mentor Recruitment

While the private sector partner will lead mentor recruitment and selection, you will play a supporting role. Your proposal should describe how you will coordinate with the private sector partner by sharing mentee profiles and other relevant details to assist in recruiting appropriate mentors.

Matching Process

The mentor-mentee matching process will be conducted jointly by ECA, the private sector partner, and you, with the private sector partner taking the lead. Matches will be based on the interests, skills, and experience of mentees and mentors. Your proposal should demonstrate your aptitude and strategy for supporting this critical matching process to prepare all participants for success.

Required Timeline:

Mentees and mentors must be matched at least two months prior to the program opening, with mentor commitments confirmed at least three months in advance.

Logistical Coordination

Your proposal should describe how you will make logistical arrangements for mentors, including travel, scheduling, and virtual engagement coordination. You will facilitate the year-long virtual mentorship sessions and coordinate travel for mentors visiting mentees' home countries every other year.

Proposals should include:

- **A comprehensive recruitment and selection plan** for mentees that demonstrates coordination with U.S. embassies and consulates
- **A clear methodology** for conducting the needs assessment that will inform professional tracks and participant selection
- **A strategy for supporting** the private sector partner's mentor recruitment efforts, including how you will share participant information effectively
- **Clear selection criteria** addressing professional experience, leadership potential, and alignment with program tracks
- **A detailed approach to the matching process** that shows how you will collaborate with ECA and the private sector partner while preparing participants for success

- **Logistical coordination plans** covering travel, scheduling, virtual engagements, and support for the year-long mentorship relationship
- ECA encourages creative approaches that demonstrate your understanding of the music industry, cross-cultural mentorship dynamics, and the coordination required among multiple partners. Your proposal should show how you will balance embassy input, participant needs, program objectives, and logistical realities to create meaningful mentor-mentee relationships.

Staffing and Facilitating the Program

Staffing Plan

The applicant should propose a sample schedule and staffing plan that demonstrates the applicant's network of professional contacts. Proposals should include suggestions for U.S.-based individuals or organizations to staff the program and describe the roles and responsibilities of all staff, facilitators, or collaborators in terms of project logistics, management, and oversight.

The applicant will recommend and recruit staff to coordinate and lead the program as well as coordinate with ECA and the private sector partner to select music industry technical experts to facilitate workshops. Like the participants, staff and facilitators should be mid-career professionals, creating peer-to-peer relationships.

The proposal should outline how staff and facilitators will be recruited in coordination with ECA and the private sector partner and approved by both.

Communications and Program Materials

The production and publication of print and online program materials should be designed and developed in collaboration with ECA, the relevant U.S. embassies and consulates, and, as needed, the private sector partner. Relevant materials (digital and print) may include promotional materials (for use in the United States and abroad) and programmatic materials (such as program books, orientation or mentoring guidelines).

Materials and designs must be approved by ECA, and where relevant the private sector partner, prior to publication and/or distribution. The applicant must allow ECA a minimum of three weeks for this review process.

The applicant must coordinate all public announcements regarding AMMP (including press releases, website updates, etc.) with ECA's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic

Communications (PASC). Printed materials and websites must adhere to the guidelines referred to in C.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients.

Program Tracking

The applicant should create and provide ECA with a tracking system, such as on Google or Airtable, to communicate and track all program components, follow-on programs, and other related activities. This tracking system should provide up-to-date program details, such as, but not limited to, dates, progress, status, and outcomes.

5. Recipient Responsibilities.

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

Phase 1: Program Planning and Design

- a. Conduct a needs assessment of local and regional music industries in selected countries, in coordination with ECA, the private sector partner, and U.S. Embassies. Use this to inform professional track selection and mentee recruitment profiles.
- b. Work with ECA and the private sector partner to establish annual professional tracks based on identified needs.
- c. Design a comprehensive selection process for mentees, obtain ECA approval, and ensure nominations and vetting by U.S. embassies.
- d. Provide mentee profiles to the private sector partner to assist with mentor recruitment and selection.
- e. Develop a detailed program timeline covering all phases.
- f. Recruit staff and facilitators (with ECA and private sector approval) ensuring mid-career professionals for peer-to-peer engagement.
- g. Design a responsive program structure for mentees and mentors (mentoring sessions, workshops, networking, cultural excursions).
- h. Develop orientation and closing session plans for mentees and mentors.
- i. Design and facilitate a reverse mentorship component for mentees to share expertise with U.S. mentors.
- j. Develop a comprehensive media and public relations strategy (with ECA approval) and follow ECA guidance for digital content.
- k. Ensure branding compliance (credit language, U.S. flag, Department of State Seal on all materials).

Phase 2: Pre-Program Preparations

- a. Designate a project manager(s) to oversee all activities, serve as primary ECA contact, and coordinate stakeholder communications.

- b. Maintain ongoing coordination with ECA and private sector partner throughout all phases.
- c. Ensure mentors are matched with mentees at least two months prior and confirm mentor commitments three months in advance.
- d. Provide mentors with background briefs on music industry landscapes and challenges.
- e. Conduct virtual introductions and orientations for mentors and mentees; clarify expectations.
- f. Conduct pre-travel orientations (virtual and in-person) covering program expectations, logistics, safety, cultural awareness, and codes of conduct.
- g. Provide U.S. embassy public diplomacy staff with program materials before pre-departure orientation.
- h. Enroll participants in ECA's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE).
- i. Manage and arrange all travel, immunizations, and pre-travel preparations for participants and facilitators.
- j. Identify and secure accessible, safe facilities for in-person activities.
- k. Secure and manage a common workspace or hub for daily program activities.

Phase 3: Program Implementation

- a. Implement mentorship exchange activities (U.S.-based and international), including logistical arrangements for up to 20 participants inbound and up to 10 participants outbound.
- b. Coordinate and host meetings with ECA and private sector partner to review progress and finalize decisions.
- c. Coordinate site visits to music industry facilities tailored to professional tracks.
- d. Facilitate cultural excursions for participants to engage with local communities and institutions.
- e. Support mentor-mentee relationships through virtual sessions, provision of program materials, and ongoing communication.
- f. Schedule, support, and track monthly virtual mentor-mentee meetings for one-year post-residency.
- g. Facilitate development of mentee action plans for continued engagement and knowledge sharing.
- h. Develop and implement a one-week outbound program sending U.S. mentors overseas for workshops and networking.
- i. Design and implement a closing event to recognize achievements.

Phase 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- a. Provide day-to-day monitoring to prevent or manage issues during the program.
- b. Maintain a tracking system for real-time visibility into progress and outcomes.
- c. Conduct a post-program survey of mentors and mentees per ECA's M&E guidelines.
- d. Provide ECA with regular program highlights and summaries during and after program completion.
- e. Comply with all financial and program reporting requirements, including stipend/honorarium disbursements and sub-award management.

6. Goals and Objectives.

Goals

Advance U.S. Leadership and Global Competitiveness in the Music Industry

Elevate the visibility and influence of the American music industry by showcasing the breadth of U.S. creative talent, business expertise, and industry innovation. Strengthen the United States' position as a global leader in music, creative entrepreneurship, and commercial diplomacy.

Promote American Cultural Capital

Share the creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and high artistic merit of American music with international audiences. Use music as a platform to foster relationships, highlight America First priorities, and build positive narratives about the United States.

Empower American Music Professionals and Expand Global Market Access

Provide U.S. music industry professionals with opportunities to develop new skills, build international networks, and access emerging markets. Support American professionals in identifying new commercial opportunities and expanding their global reach.

Foster Cross-Border Collaboration and Innovation

Encourage creative partnerships, co-production, and knowledge exchange between American and international music professionals. Build enduring relationships that drive innovation and support the growth of the global music ecosystem.

Support the America First Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy Objectives

Align program activities with America First priorities, using music as a tool to advance the Administration's foreign policy goals, strengthen people-to-people ties, and support the development of creative industries worldwide.

Objectives

- Showcase American music industry leadership through residencies, workshops, and mentorships that connect U.S. professionals with international counterparts.
- Facilitate professional exchanges that enable American mentors to share expertise, foster cross-cultural dialogue, and promote best practices in music production, management, and distribution.
- Bring international mid-career music professionals to the United States for a two-week immersive, hands-on training and networking with American industry leaders.
- Send American music professionals overseas to engage in a week of workshops, consultations, and collaborative projects that expand their international networks and market opportunities.
- Support the development of action plans and ongoing collaborations that extend beyond the program, enabling participants to apply new skills, share knowledge, and contribute to their local music communities.
- Create opportunities for educational outreach, community engagement, and public performances that highlight the impact of American music and foster mutual understanding.
- Build the capacity of creative leaders and institutions to develop new skills, partnerships, and business models that promote entrepreneurship and industry growth.
- Strengthen the global presence of American music enterprises by facilitating connections with international partners, industry stakeholders, and audiences.
- Encourage participants to serve as cultural ambassadors, sharing their experiences and insights with peers, communities, and the broader creative sector.

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

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

programs.

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

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

- Demographic Questions as outlined in the **Indicator Book** on page v and **Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)** (See the MODE Resource Guide – <https://app.box.com/s/qjo8icwj46tc8h1i1qtg80zl7ibwgtua> – found on our website <https://www.state.gov/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/>)
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
 - 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)
 - E1.1.12: Percent of foreign participants indicating a change in understanding of third-party countries' cultures 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
 - 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
 - E4.0.05: Percent of participants who report an increase in technical 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)
 - E4.1.11: 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.

7. Allowable Costs.

- a. All proposed costs must be reasonable, allowable, , and allocable.
- b. Cover the cost of and arrange for all international and domestic travel (complying with the Fly America Act) and lodging for U.S. and foreign participants, including travel for visa interviews when necessary, transit costs, ground transportation costs, airline baggage, and seat fees. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in ECA-sponsored programs.
- c. In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with visa interviews or DS-2019 pick-up.
- d. Accident and Sickness Coverage. Enroll participants in a health insurance plan for the period of the exchange. Participants can be enrolled in ECA's ASPE with no charge to the cooperative agreement. Alternatively, you may use your own plan if it offers the same or better coverage- and costs no more

than \$50 per person per month; premiums may be included in the agreement request. Please see section E. Healthcare Coverage of the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for more information. The Bureau's coverage may cover medical costs, such as, but not limited to, vaccinations and medications as necessary when traveling overseas.

- e. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend/honorarium disbursements to the participants and management of sub-award relationships with partner organizations. There must be a summary budget, as well as breakdowns reflecting both non-participant and participant support budgets. The applicant may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.
- f. All budget guidelines must be followed. The budget should indicate any cost sharing in the form of in-kind or cash contributions to the program from sources other than the Department of State. See the PSI in the Solicitation Package for information on cost sharing and the cost of audits.
- g. Include a Summary and Detailed Budget on a separate page before the line-item budget. Following the line-item budget, please include a Budget Narrative that concisely explains how costs were calculated and the rationale for including them in the budget.
- h. Housing in the United States and overseas. The award recipient will be responsible for providing clean, safe, and reasonably located housing for participants, and as needed for the program leaders, workshop facilitators, mentors, and recipient organization staff, during their stay in the host cities. Hotel stays should not exceed government per diem rates for lodging.
- i. Transportation. The award recipient will be responsible for providing methods of transportation for all non-local participants during their stay in the host cities.
- j. Orientation Costs. The award recipient will provide participants informational materials about AMMP and the logistics involved in traveling to the United States and overseas. This information will be included in virtual pre-departure orientations for the AMMP participants led by the applicant in coordination with the Department of State. The award recipient will also conduct a comprehensive orientation for all of the AMMP participants upon their arrival in the program location.
- k. Closing Session Costs. The award recipient will be responsible for organizing and paying for a closing session at the end of the residency for mentees and mentors.
- l. Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria amount for consultants can be up to

- \$300. These honoraria amount limit can be higher to accommodate special circumstances. However, ECA review and approval will be needed in those special circumstances. NOTE: While in the United States, the mentors are selected by the private sector partner and are providing their services pro-bono with the expectation of only four days onsite during the residency. The virtual mentoring session is also pro-bono. When traveling abroad, mentors will receive stipends and per diem like other program participants.
- m. Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective applicant and the subcontractor should be included in the proposal. Subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.
 - n. Venue/Conference Room Rental. Venue and room rental rates will need to be reviewed and approved by ECA.
 - o. Sound Equipment, Videography, and Photography. Rates will need to be reviewed and approved by ECA.
 - p. Materials Development. Proposals should contain costs to purchase, develop, and print brochures, and other promotional materials.
 - q. The proposed budget should include but not be limited to the following program expenses:
 - a. Maximum limits on cooperative agreement funding for specific expenses are as follows (if costs for these expenses exceed these limits, organizations are encouraged to cost share any rates that exceed the amounts listed below:
 - books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant
 - consultant/interpreters/program leaders/workshop facilitators/escorts/performers fees and honoraria-\$300/day
 - cultural allowance -\$150/participant
 - stipend for mentees should be between \$500-\$1500, unless applicant is able to cost-share this expense to exceed \$1500. The stipend is inclusive of all virtual components of the program.
 - per diem-standard government rates for participants. Mentors are volunteering their time while in the U.S., but mentors who are selected to travel for AMMPs should receive the standard envoy rate of \$300/day honorarium and government per diem rates and lodging. Refer to the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities, which can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates.
 - Performance monitoring and evaluation costs up to 3% of the

cooperative agreement beyond what is described in Section D.10 Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

- b. Domestic and international travel for participants, domestic travel for staff, and (if needed) domestic travel for workshop facilitators and mentors. Mentor travel within the U.S. for the U.S.-based residency should be minimized. Travel expenses should include transit costs if applicable, (American carriers or code-share airlines must be used for overseas travel whenever possible and adhere to the Fly America Act). For outbound exchanges, the participating U.S. embassy or consulate may cost share in-country costs (lodging, transportation, per diem), but it is not guaranteed. The budget should anticipate these costs.
- c. Airport taxes and country exit fees.

8. 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.

9. Program Information and History.

Launched in 2024, AMMP established a dynamic platform for mid-career international music industry professionals to engage with U.S. mentors through structured mentorship and networking. AMMP was created to champion innovation and promote economic opportunity within the global music sector, strengthening cross-cultural collaboration. Building on its initial success, AMMP expanded in 2025 to welcome participants from additional regions, and enrich the professional exchange, positioning the United States as a leader in creative industry development.

For the first time, with this new cooperative agreement, AMMP will introduce an outbound component, sending American music industry professionals overseas to foster new opportunities, deepen professional development, and expand the reach of American commercial and creative leadership. This next phase will expand opportunities for U.S. mentors, building lasting international networks and advancing the principles of innovation, partnership, and economic growth in the U.S. music industry.

10. 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.

11. Virtual Exchange Component.

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

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

ECA's existing web and social networking platforms. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project-by-project basis.

12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients.

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

13. 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.

14. Substantial Involvement.

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

- a. Identify countries from which the international participants will be selected and to which mentors will travel. Provide contact information at posts and facilitate communications.
- b. Collaborate with the award recipient to develop appropriate workflow processes to ensure effective communication between the Department of State and the private sector partner.
- c. Participate in the selection process and give final approval of the mentees.
- d. Collaborate with the recipient on outreach to mentors and host organizations and facilitation of relationship with the private sector partner.
- e. Approve residency sites.
- f. Assist in arrangements for the orientation and opening activities as well as closing sessions and debriefing sessions.

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: Program Officer Julia Gomez-Nelson, U.S. Department of State, Cultural Programs Division, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, ECA/PE/C/CU, 202-'632-6409 nelsonjg2@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 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-A/part-201/subpart-1/section-201.110) 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

7. Submission Dates and Times.

Application Deadline Date

Friday, May 29, 2026 11:59 p.m. EDT

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. Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border.

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal or representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

c. 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.

d. 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.

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

8. 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/ Program planning/ 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. The plan should follow the program guidelines described in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate how your institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible.
- b. **Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institutional resources to achieve the program results. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs and responsible fiscal management. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients.
- c. **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.

- d. **Cost-effectiveness:** Proposals should keep the overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate.

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/>
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9. 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, 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 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.
 - f. 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.

1. 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/>

K. 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.

ECA 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