

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
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Tomorrow's Leaders Study Abroad Oversight, Monitoring and Support
Opportunity Number: SFOP0005046

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	5/8/2018
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	5/31/2018
Application Deadline:	6/21/2018
Expected Date of Notification:	8/30/2018
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) U.S-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) manages the Tomorrow's Leaders (TL) Undergraduate Scholarship Program, an innovative civic leadership opportunity for approximately 55 qualified yet underserved students at select U.S.-accredited universities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The scholarship program targets students from around the region who are academically qualified, but who are otherwise unable to afford American-style higher education. Students are civically minded and are given additional leadership and community action activities to advance their knowledge, skills, and abilities to be MENA-based community leaders after graduation.

As part of the TL program, approximately 25 qualified students are afforded the opportunity to conduct one semester of studies at U.S. universities each fall and spring semester. This solicitation will enhance TL Study Abroad Oversight, Monitoring, and Support by: a) providing oversight, monitoring, and support to students studying in the United States, b) analyzing, assessing, and making recommendations for improvements to the study abroad component of the TL program, and c) liaising with TL undergraduate scholarship program implementers.

Eligible Countries and Territories:

In this announcement, we seek to support projects that assist Middle East and North Africa students selected as part of the Tomorrow's Leaders program as they conduct a semester of academic training and practical civic engagement **in the United States**. Students come from across the MENA region, including: Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one (1) application. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

Background Information about NEA/AC: The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

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APPENDICES (*Posted with NOFO*)

APPENDIX 1— Budget Sample Template and Budget Narrative Guidance

APPENDIX 2—Logic Model Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Tomorrow's Leaders Study Abroad Oversight, Monitoring, and Support. With this program announcement, NEA/AC seeks to promote a shared understanding of civic engagement and participatory governance principles through innovative programming that provides university-level scholarships, internship opportunities, and service-learning activities at U.S.-accredited institutions of higher learning based in the MENA region.

The primary objective of the Tomorrow's Leaders (TL) scholarship program is to build a cadre of university-age leaders who are civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled, who will become the community, business, and national leaders of the future. The program intends to nurture leadership skills and the spirit of civic engagement and volunteerism among outstanding students at U.S. accredited institutions of higher learning based in the MENA region. Each year, TL funds approximately 55 scholarships for underserved and qualified students at select U.S.-accredited universities in the MENA region (currently Lebanon).

As part of the TL program, approximately 25 qualified students are afforded the opportunity to conduct one semester of studies at U.S. universities each fall and spring semester. This solicitation will enhance TL Study Abroad Oversight, Monitoring, and Support by: a) providing oversight, monitoring, and support to students studying in the United States, b) analyzing, assessing, and making recommendations for improvements to the study abroad component of the TL program, and c) liaising with TL undergraduate scholarship program implementers.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research identifies education as a necessary tool for preventing political extremism, building civil society, fostering innovation, and empowering students to become positive contributors to change in their communities. There is a need to harness that potential of talented yet financially disadvantaged youth, enabling them to gain skills necessary to create positive impact in their communities and become productive members of the workforce.

Participating in an international experience propels students towards greater acceptance and understanding of an array of different cultural and community perspectives; advances their interest in global issues and increases their maturity, self-confidence and self-esteem. Students who participate in these programs find themselves more comfortable in foreign environments and are often more appealing to prospective employers due to the experience they gained while living overseas and knowledge obtained of another language and culture.

The TL program affords qualified students the opportunity to study abroad in the United States. However, their experience is limited due to these students' reliance on services provided by the host U.S. institutions and their own networks during study abroad. In addition to challenges with culture shock, students miss opportunities to volunteer or immerse themselves in unique U.S.

civic-action experiences, such as visiting landmark regions of the United States off the beaten path such as the King Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Based on NEA/AC assessments and experience managing the Tomorrow's Leaders program, NEA/AC has identified a need to increase oversight, monitoring and support to TL students during their study abroad experience.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will result in Tomorrow's Leaders students that:

1. Safely, successfully, and contentedly complete their study abroad semester in the United States;
2. Advancing their knowledge, understanding, and experience of civic leadership and community action in the United States; and
3. Gaining an experience that prepares them to become action-oriented citizens in their countries.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

NEA/AC seeks to support projects that will provide Tomorrow's Leaders Study Abroad Oversight, Monitoring, and Support.

This solicitation invites applications in support of increasing civic participation and youth engagement in the MENA region.

Funds are available to support projects with potential to promote this objective through activities that provide oversight, monitoring, and support for TL students studying abroad in the United States. The first cohort of students for this program will study abroad beginning in Fall 2018. As such, activities are expected to be phased in over time and should be clearly identified as such in the work plan.

Currently, summer study abroad is not allowed due to the short summer time-frame for adjustment and classes and the decreased presence of American faculty/students on campus during summer sessions.

Project activities should include:

- a. Liaising with TL undergraduate scholarship program implementers.
 - a. Coordinate with MENA-based university implementers on pre-departure orientation logistics and communications with students. Ensure student travel is coordinated efficiently and effectively;
 - b. Work with MENA-based university implementers on logistics, administrative, and other requirements for study abroad students, such as clarifying insurance requirements of each university as needed;
 - c. Work with MENA-based university implementers to ensure students are registering for the appropriate number and type of courses while studying in the United States to have on-time graduation; and Provide students information on U.S. institutions, including available community or student resources.

- b. Providing oversight, monitoring, and support to onboarding students to study in the United States:
 - a. Monitor and evaluate host campus performance and ensure that the coordinators are pro-actively supporting the students at a consistently high level across all campuses;
 - b. Establish communication line with students before arrival;
 - c. Ensure students are provided orientation documents and information upon arrival in the United States. Applicants should consider whether an in-person orientation at a central location is feasible and useful or if a virtual orientation program would be better to advance the TL;
 - d. Verify pre-arrival orientation information for U.S. travelers includes information detailed in 22 CFR 62.10(b)(1-9), requiring J-1 visa recipients receive materials detailing 1. The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program 2. Home-country physical presence requirement 3. Arrival notification requirements (*e.g.*, procedures that exchange visitors, spouses and dependents are to follow upon entry into the United States in reporting their arrival to the sponsor and reporting to the location of their program);
 - e. Serve as Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO), coordinating with U.S. university institutions, verifying and/or entering complete and correct of DS-2019 information and providing final copies to U.S. traveling program participants;
 - f. Verify arrival orientation information for U.S. travelers includes information detailed in 22 CFR 62.10(b)(1-9), requiring J-1 visa recipients receive materials detailing 1. Local community resources (*e.g.*, public transportation, medical centers, schools, libraries, recreation centers, and banks) 2. Name and address of the sponsor and the name, email address, and telephone number of the Responsible Officer Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) 3. The Office of Designation's address, telephone number, facsimile number, website and email address, and a copy of the Exchange Visitor Program brochure or other Department of State materials as appropriate or required. This information is available on the Department's website at: <http://j1visa.state.gov/>. 4. Wilberforce Pamphlet on the Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers 5. The requirement that an exchange visitor must report to the sponsor designee within ten calendar days any changes in his or her telephone number, email address, actual and current U.S. address and site of activity;
 - g. Monitoring as ARO, coordinating with U.S. university institutions to ensure J-1 exchange visitors in all categories report to the sponsor within ten calendar days any change in his or her telephone number, email address, actual and current U.S. address, and site of activity and appropriately update data in SEVIS online system;
 - h. Providing oversight, immediately notifying MEPI of any students that do not comply with terms and conditions required of J-1 visa exchange visitors;
 - i. Field student inquiries and concerns (*e.g.* availability of halal food options, traveling outside of the United States while in J-1 status, *etc.*);
 - j. Assist students with legal, medical, and other issues that arise in the United States in consultation with NEA/AC, such as assisting students in navigating the justice

- system for submitting any necessary police reports and accompanying students when needed/feasible;
- k. Advise on student course loads and registration, ensuring students can successfully graduate on-time; and
 - l. Award recipient(s) should process tax forms for international participants with assistance from qualified tax professionals.
- c. Fostering students' civic engagement:
- a. Research, propose, and facilitate volunteer opportunities for students to enhance their civic and leadership skills.
 - b. Facilitate civic-oriented enrichment opportunities for students to opt into, or apply to, in atypical areas of the United States (e.g. NOT typical touristic destinations that students can visit on their own such as New York City or Washington, DC: instead plan visit to penitentiary to discuss rule of law/corrections systems, volunteer opportunity at women's or homeless support shelter, visit to Montgomery, Alabama to discuss civil rights, etc.).
 - c. Ensure sharing students' civic engagement blogs or reports to their host institution and the MEPI website.
- d. Monitoring students' progress during their study abroad experience
- a. Visit and/or conduct virtual outreach to students studying in the United States on a regular basis and provide reporting to NEA and MENA-based university implementers (must define "regular" in proposal in terms of frequency and proposed timing).
 - b. Obtain mid-term grades for all TL students, if needed, advise the students on ways to improve progress, and make recommendations to NEA and MENA-based implementers on whether any study abroad students should be sent home early because they are unable to maintain good academic progress.
 - c. Develop an online survey for all TL students to obtain feedback on the TL program overall, while also reviewing options to improve the study abroad component of the program. Applicants should propose a monitoring and evaluation framework as part of the proposal.
- e. Analyzing, assessing, and making recommendations for improvements to the study abroad component of the TL program:
- a. Work with U.S. universities to assess U.S. benefit structure and prepare recommendations for NEA/AC and TL undergraduate program implementers (e.g. student living stipend/allowance levels, meal plan options, etc.).
 - b. Obtain information on U.S. university resources available to students, such as health and wellness centers, career counseling, networking opportunities/engagements, and support groups most useful to TL students; assess resources and engage U.S. universities where possible to improve resources made available to TL students.
 - c. Analyze selected U.S. universities at mid-program stage to make recommendations on universities that are best-suited to receiving and supporting TL students.

- d. Analyze whether the number of U.S. universities should be reduced to improve quality and impact for TL program. In recent years, students have studied abroad at public and private universities in states such as Arizona, California, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., sometimes in cohort groups and sometimes individually.

Project beneficiaries shall include:

Individuals selected as Tomorrow's Leaders, are enrolled with good standing in pre-identified TL universities (currently based in Lebanon), and are approved for study abroad (approximately 25 students per semester).

Note: Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal, and should refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in [Section VII](#) while drafting all materials.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Social welfare projects: Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.' and Entertainment costs (*e.g.*, receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model can be generated using the template in Appendix II.

Successful applicants will work with the MEPI program and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams to create a plan based on the proposed logic model to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design, and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$285,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$285,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$150,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Not Required but encouraged
Estimated Length of Project Period:	18 to 24 months

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$285,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately one award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to two years, depending on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is August 1, 2018. NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

Non-Competing Continuation

Continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; grantee's progress in meeting grant requirements, including timely submission of required reports and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award; timely submission of a request for additional funding; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

Pending successful implementation of this project for the initial estimated length of time as indicated above, and pending the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, NEA/AC may extend this grant for additional time, not to exceed a five (5) year total project period. Please note that this NOFO requires that applicants submit additional budget materials to plan for potential out-years per non-competing continuation. See Section VII Application and Submission Information for more details.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

Examples of NEA/AC responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in development of program policies and procedures;
- Collaboration in designing surveys, research methods, or other tools;
- Collaboration in design of enhanced civic action opportunities for students;
- Collaboration in coordination with TL implementing partners.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S.
 - Non-profit organizations;
 - For-profit organizations;
 - Private institutions of higher education;
 - Public or state institutions of higher education;
 - Public international organizations;
 - Small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of study abroad programs.

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in managing study abroad programs.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Section B* below.

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the United States, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as

a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). This applies to BOTH prime applicants and any local partners receiving federally funded sub-awards. Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

UEI Number

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary [Standard Industrial Code](#) (SIC), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. **If an organizations account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details*. Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the [SAM User Guide](#)), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 001-334-206-7828.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1. Cost-Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is NOT an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may submit only one (1) application. Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b):

Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding. **Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3.** **NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlines below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encourage to review the [Application Evaluation Criteria section](#) of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.**

Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 15 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strong encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

Organizational Chart

The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person. (2 pages maximum)

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission:

Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget

- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instruction, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Narrative.**

In addition to the detailed budget for up to two years, applicants shall submit a notional budget for up to three additional years, or a total five year program budget.

Logic Model:

Applicants shall provide a logic model to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

Project Timeline:

Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the template provided in **Appendix 4**. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. Please note that additional guidance on this item is also included in Appendix 4. This section **may not exceed 2 pages.**

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions:

For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. **If the position is already filled:** Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.

OR

2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

For information on both vacant positions and already hired personnel, applicants are strongly encouraged to use the template provided in **Appendix 5**. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. **NOTE:** If an applicant is proposing sub grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included**. This section of the application **may not exceed 5 pages**.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: **NOTE: This item is required only IF applicable.** Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than the 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Additional Documents

If desired, applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. Additional documents are not required and there is a 10 page limit for this section of the application.

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in [Section A.1](#) and [A.2](#) above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either [Grants.gov](#) OR [SAMS Domestic](#). Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in [B.3](#) above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their application; do not submit an application through both systems.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

C.1. Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the “Register” link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

C.2. SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to <http://mygrants.service-now.com>, and click the “create an account” hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled “User Registration Request;” complete the online form and click the “Submit” button. Users will receive an activation email entitled “Verify Your Grants Account Registration;” click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on 21 June, 2018.

There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of

the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

2. Audit Requirements

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (*Program-specific Audit* means an audit of one Federal award program. *Single Audit* means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf>

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

3. Compliance with Applicable Federal Funding Regulations and DOS Terms and Conditions

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with [2 CFR 200](#) and [2 CFR 600](#) as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the [Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and [2 CFR 200](#) and [2 CFR 600](#) as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (30 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results.

- **Timeframe:** The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- **Milestones:** The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- **M&E:** The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them. Proposes a monitoring and evaluation framework and monitoring frequency, timing, and methods for all monitoring and evaluation activities including monitoring of students.

Project Design (40 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- **Responsiveness to NOFO:** Explain how the applicant's proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO and address all of the required activities in pages 7-9 of the NOFO.
- **Rationale:** To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- **Project Management:** Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation and closing.
- **Partnerships and Buy-ins:** The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- **Feasibility:** The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- **Division of Labor:** The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.

Organizational Capacity (20 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., study abroad oversight, monitoring, support).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [Part V](#) and have submitted all required documents outlined in [Part VI](#). Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in [Part VII, Section A](#). Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via

email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by August 30, 2018. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

Other required reporting will include:

- 1) **Annual Branding and Marking Plan** – to be submitted to NEA/AC for approval within 30 days of award, using an agreed upon template
- 2) **Detailed Annual Work Plan** - to be submitted to NEA/AC for approval within 30 days of award, using an agreed upon format
- 3) **Emergency / Incident Reporting** – the recipient must promptly (within 48 hours) report to NEA/AC student emergencies that come to its attention, including but not limited to student travel difficulties, legal issues, and health or safety issues. An initial report may be by phone if email is not possible, to be followed **up in writing within a reasonable number of business days.**

- 4) **Articles /social media posts**– the recipient will produce at least 2-3 articles/social media posts each semester highlighting student academic and civic experiences in the U.S.
- 5) **Annual Student Safety, Security, and Wellness Plan / Report** - Within 30 days of award and at least annually thereafter, the Recipient must submit a plan for student safety, security, and wellness in a format agreed with NEA/AC. The plan must outline applicable policies and procedures and also include statistical and anecdotal reporting on any related issues.
- 6) **Program Manual** – within 60 days of award, the recipient will submit a program manual to NEA/AC for approval. The Manual will be updated on an ongoing basis and at least annually, with updates also submitted for approval.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) business days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

Applicants will not be required to conduct vetting. All program participants are pre-selected and vetted.

E. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

F. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Part III, Section B.1. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

G. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsr.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Grants Officer

Sara Curley

nea-grants@state.gov

All questions and a confirmation of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by 31 May, 2018 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on [SAMS Domestic](#) and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

The intent to apply is a notification to the Bureau of Near East Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination via email expressing the intent to submit a proposal under this announcement. The notification does not require any specific format or template, and unless specifically indicated, the notification is not mandatory.

The intent to apply is optional and will not be binding.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using grants.gov to submit an application, contact the grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center

(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding creating an account or using [SAMS Domestic](#) to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

[ILMS Self Service Portal](#)

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment

on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.

