

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)**

### **FY 2026 Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) for Young Professionals and Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange (CBBSX)**

**Funding Opportunity Number: DFOP0018692**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)  
Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division**

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Citizen Exchanges' Youth Programs Division for the FY 2026 (academic year 2027-2028) Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) for Young Professionals. Proposals must conform to the solicitation, the guidelines in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any application not adhering to these conditions may be deemed technically ineligible.

These guidelines are in addition to the requirements outlined in the solicitation and PSI. In the event of a discrepancy between documents, the solicitation takes precedence.

## **I. STATEMENT OF WORK**

The CBYX for Young Professionals and Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange (CBBSX) advance America's national interests by building lasting personal and institutional relationships that promote prosperity and security between the United States and Germany.

### **Key Activities:**

#### **CBYX for Young Professionals:**

- Approximately 65 American and 65 German participants, ages 18.5-24, engage in year-long academic and professional exchanges.
- American participants complete two months of in-country German language training, study for one semester at a German university, technical, or professional school, and gain practical work experience.

- German participants study for one semester at a U.S. university, college, technical, or professional school and gain practical work experience.
- Both American and German participants live with host families throughout the program year.

**CBBSX:**

- Ten U.S. Congressional and 10 German parliamentary staffers participate in a short-term reciprocal exchange with each other's legislatures.
- The U.S. recipient organization provides travel and administrative support for outbound CBBSX exchanges by coordinating round-trip airfare for the U.S. delegation.
- The U.S. recipient organization coordinates Accident and Sickness Program for Exchange (ASPE) coverage for U.S. participants.

ECA will select one U.S. organization to conduct programming for approximately 65 American and approximately 65 German Young Professionals as part of CBYX, and travel and administrative support for approximately 10 American Congressional staffers as part of CBBSX.

**II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

For CBYX for Young Professionals in the United States, the U.S. recipient organization will conduct activities that support both the outbound program for Americans and the inbound program for Germans.

**Outbound Program:**

The U.S. recipient organization will conduct nationwide advertising and recruitment of U.S. participants, process U.S. applications (using a CBYX for Young Professionals specific application that ECA approves in advance), screen and select U.S. participants, provide pre-departure orientations, manage all administrative and logistical matters, and arrange domestic and international travel for U.S. participants.

**Inbound Program:**

The U.S. recipient organization will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientations for German participants, place them with host families or arrange other suitable housing, place them in colleges or universities, arrange internships in the participants' fields of study, and arrange American Excellence program enrichment activities in the United States. For the inbound program, the U.S. recipient organization will also recruit, screen, select, and orient U.S. host families; monitor,

supervise, and support German participants and U.S. host families; and manage all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel arrangements for German participants.

The partner organization in Germany (that the German Bundestag selects and manages) will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientations for U.S. participants, place U.S. participants with host families or arrange other suitable housing, place them in colleges or universities, arrange internships in the participants' field of study, and arrange program enrichment activities in Germany. The German partner organization also works with the Bundestag to select and prepare German participants for their exchange in the United States.

CBBSX extends CBYX programs to congressional and parliamentary staffers through a short-term reciprocal exchange between the U.S. Congress and German Parliament. Proposals for the Young Professionals program should include up to \$35,000 to provide administrative and logistical support for the outbound CBBSX program for Americans. This will include 10 U.S. Congressional staff traveling to Germany in 2028. The U.S. Congress is responsible for the selection of U.S. staffers, the U.S. Department of State conducts pre-departure programming, and the German Bundestag and Bundesrat fund and coordinate the activities in Germany. The U.S. recipient organization will collect required travel information, arrange and pay for travel, and enroll participants in the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchange (ASPE) medical benefit program.

Below is a specific list of all the requirements for the CBYX for Young Professionals program and CBBSX travel component. Applicant organizations should closely review these bullets and submit a 20-page narrative proposal that reflects an ability to achieve the program requirements. Proposals should ensure that they demonstrate the ability to achieve the goals of the program, comply with the requirements of the program, and address all six of the review criteria the NOFO document outlines.

The next two sections describe recipient responsibilities for U.S. and German Young Professionals which include several important differences:

### **Recipient Responsibilities for U.S. Young Professional participants:**

#### Selection and Preparation

- Publicize the program nationwide, using a variety of methods including distribution of physical and digital promotional materials, engaging alumni and field staff, the media, and key professional organizations/networks wherever possible in efforts to maximize recruitment.

- Provide appropriate support throughout all phases of the program for any applicants and selected participants with identified disabilities.
- Develop a merit-based selection process for U.S. citizens based on provided eligibility criteria; all applicants should have completed secondary studies prior to the start of the program. Provide proposed selections and applicant data to ECA for final approvals prior to notification of applicants (please build in two weeks for this approval process).
- Ensure that review of applications and selection of finalists occurs before and separate from review of applicants' health forms.
- Obtain the signed U.S. Department of State CBYX for Young Professionals Terms and Conditions document from all U.S. applicants, as well as their parents or legal guardians (as applicable), prior to program participation.
- Make travel arrangements and facilitate the visa process, if necessary.
- Collect medical history and health records to facilitate participant safety during travel and while on program. Keep all records secure and share them only as required for ensuring the safety, health, and welfare of the participant.
- Conduct a pre-departure orientation for U.S. participants that includes the purpose of the program, the foreign policy context for the program, goals and expectations, program rules, information about Germany and German culture, safety and security, personal and cultural adjustment issues, as well as appropriate information on recognizing and preventing sexual harassment/abuse and how to report sexual harassment/abuse.
- Work with the German partner organization to conduct an appropriate arrival orientation.
- In accordance with the ECA program office's instructions, within 30 days of selection, provide ECA with the names of all U.S. participants, dates of birth, U.S. home addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, names of natural parents, current school/work affiliation, and confirmed information on the participants' Congressional representative districts.
- Enroll all U.S. participants in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program and explain the services American Citizen Services (ACS) at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate provides.

## Placement

- Coordinate information and logistics with the German partner organization regarding U.S. participants' arrival orientation, language training, school placement, housing and/or host family arrangements and program administration.
- Coordinate with the German partner organization to ensure that appropriate housing arrangements are made with a vetted host family or in other suitable housing. Participants should be placed with host families to the greatest extent possible.
- Work with the German partner organization to ensure that participants are placed in an appropriate school and location, and that internships are arranged according to the participants' field of study.
- In accordance with the program office's instructions, a minimum of one week prior to the U.S. participants' departure from the United States, submit information regarding participants' initial lodging arrangements in Germany. Update placement information as permanent placements and subsequent changes occur per instructions the program office provides.
- In accordance with the program office's instructions, maintain accurate records of U.S. participants' finalist information (including applications, signed terms and conditions, and other key documents).

### Participant Monitoring

- Work with the German partner organization to ensure the monitoring, supervision and support of U.S. participants according to all applicable German regulations and policies, mirroring to the extent possible the support and supervision that inbound post-secondary school exchange participants who visit the United States would receive.
- Work with the German partner organization to monitor participants' progress in academics, social adjustment, and program activities.
- Work with the German partner organization to identify when participants may need additional support and arrange for that support, as needed.
- Work with the German partner organization to find out about any serious On-Program Support (OPS) cases and inform ECA's Youth Programs Division. These cases may include hospitalizations or serious health issues, serious adjustment and/or behavior issues that may lead to an early return, or other situations which involve the health, safety, or well-being of the

participant. Document such reports in an Incident Report Form the ECA program office provides.

- Prepare documentation for ECA early return decisions, including incident reports, participant and natural parent statements (as applicable), and any other supporting evidence. The program organization should coordinate with the German partner to provide ECA with consistent and thorough documentation in the lead up to any early return requests. Obtain ECA and Bundestag concurrence on all early return decisions before participant travel. ECA and Bundestag retain final decision authority; no participant may be dismissed from the program without ECA and Bundestag concurrence.

### Programming

- Coordinate with the German partner organization to provide appropriate enhancement activities for the participants that promote the goals of the program.
- Coordinate with the German partner organization to provide appropriate language training, which German government funds support, to U.S. participants.
- Coordinate with the German partner organization on a re-entry orientation for U.S. participants prior to their departure from Germany. The re-entry orientation should bring closure to the participants' exchange experience and prepare them for the return home.
- Report highlights of U.S. participants' on-program activities, including any press coverage, to the ECA program office. The Program Organization should provide an informal weekly roundup of key program activities and participant highlights, with particular attention to those that align with administration priorities. These can be compiled and included as an appendix to the mandatory semiannual reports. This will allow timely transfer of information to the program office as well as documentation for the official record of the program.
- Work with ECA and the CBYX Administrative Component partner (who manages logistics for program-wide workshops and meetings and supports coordination among CBYX stakeholders) to plan and implement the program-wide re-entry event, which brings together U.S. participants from the CBYX High School, Vocational, and Young Professionals programs.

The recipient organization should plan for their participants and approximately three staff to join this event in Washington, D.C. in June 2028. (In June 2028, all American CBYX participants will convene in Washington, D.C., as they return home from their year-long program. This will be a minimum of two nights, including half a day of activities with U.S. Department of State and substantive programming on Capitol Hill to encourage Congressional engagement with CBYX alumni.) The ECA point of contact listed in the NOFO can provide agendas of past program-wide re-entry events upon request.

## **Recipient Responsibilities for German Young Professional participants:**

### Preparation

- The German Bundestag and German partner organization select German Young Professional participants, but the U.S. program organization must work with the German partner organization to ensure that participants receive both an appropriate pre-departure orientation and arrival orientation that follows all orientation guidance in 22 CFR Part 62. Pre-departure and arrival orientations should include information on the purpose of and the foreign policy context for the program; goals and expectations; program rules; practical logistical information; personal and cultural adjustment issues; and information on recognizing and preventing sexual harassment/abuse and how to report sexual harassment/abuse.
- Work with the German partner to facilitate travel and the visa process (including printing and delivery of participant DS-2019s), if necessary, and ensure that the German partner makes appropriate travel arrangements. ECA does not require routing participants via Washington, D.C.
- Collect medical history and health records to facilitate participant safety during travel and while on program. Keep all records secure and share them only as required for ensuring the safety, health, and welfare of the participant.
- Facilitate administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel to placements and any group activities.

### Placement

- Provide appropriate support throughout all phases of the program for selected participants with identified disabilities.
- Recruit, screen, and orient host families or make other suitable housing arrangements, following all applicable regulations in 22 CFR Part 62. **Best efforts should be made to place all participants with host families.**
- Participants should be placed in locations that allow for opportunities in their field of study.
- Place participants in schools and facilitate internship placements, following all applicable regulations in 22 CFR Part 62.
- Each German Young Professional participant in an accredited two- or four-year college for the first part of the program and then in an internship setting that clearly support the academic study program and the professional goals of the participant. Programming may provide full-time or part-time study and internships but should result in approximately one semester of full-time study (12 or more semester hours) and one semester of full-time internship over the course of the year.
- To save costs, the organization is encouraged to seek tuition waivers and cost sharing with cooperating colleges. Participants are expected to be fluent in English; however, participants may select an English class as part of their regular course of study.
- Facilitate and place every participant in an internship that supports the participant's professional goals.
- Arrange a Congressional Internship in Washington, D.C. for a minimum of six weeks for at least five German participants as part of the CBYX Congressional Internship Program (CIP). CIP is meant to provide participants, selected by the U.S. recipient organization through a competitive process, with hands-on experience in Congressional offices where they learn about U.S. government and legislative processes while also raising program awareness among legislators.
- Note: A stipend for participant meals, incidentals, and reasonable local transportation expenses (for both the academic and the internship phases of the program) may be included in the budget, but the stipend may be substantially reduced or eliminated for participants living with host families and/or working in paid internships. Where possible, hosting arrangements should be found that do not require subsidization.

- Ensure that all placement information for each participant is recorded in the CBYX online database or as directed by the ECA program office in order to meet program and legal requirements.
- Ensure that all change of placement data is recorded in the CBYX online database as outlined in the CBYX Inbound Operational Guidelines.

### Participant Monitoring

- Ensure the monitoring, supervision, and support of participants, host families, and local support volunteers (such as college coordinators) to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of participants.
- Monitor participants' progress in academics, social adjustment, and program activities.
- Identify when participants may need additional support and arrange for that support, as needed, including for internships. Notify ECA's Youth Programs Division early on if a participant is having trouble securing an internship.
- Notify ECA's Youth Programs Division of serious On-Program Support (OPS) cases, including, but not limited to hospitalizations or serious health issues, serious adjustment and/or behavior issues that may lead to an early return, or other situations which involve the health, safety, or well-being of the participant. Document such reports as early as possible in an Incident Report Form provided by the program office and outlined in the CBYX Inbound Operational Guidelines (also provided by the program office).
- Prepare documentation for ECA early return decisions, including incident reports, participant and natural parent statements (as applicable), and any other supporting evidence. The program organization should provide ECA with consistent and thorough documentation in the lead up to any early return requests. Obtain ECA and Bundestag concurrence on all early return decisions before participant travel. ECA and Bundestag retain final decision authority; no participant may be dismissed from the program without ECA and Bundestag concurrence.

### Programming

- Encourage/facilitate participants' interaction with their Congressional representatives during the program in the local congressional offices and, when possible, the Washington, D.C. offices.

- Provide enhancement activities for German participants on the topic of “American Excellence” that develop leadership skills and encourage learning about U.S. society and government per ECA program office guidelines. Activities should expose participants to learning about U.S. business, technology and innovation, government structures, American heritage and principles (including freedom of speech), and community engagement opportunities.
- Distribute to all CBYX for Young Professionals participants all information that the ECA program office provides regarding Department-initiated and program-related activities that may arise during the year.
- Facilitate the distribution of information provided by the ECA program office regarding alumni networks and activities.
- Provide to the program office on a regular basis program highlights and images of significant participant activities, including any press coverage, to help promote the benefits of the CBYX for Young Professionals program. The Program Organization is encouraged to consider providing an informal weekly roundup of key program activities and participant highlights. These can be compiled and included as an appendix to the mandatory semiannual reports. This will allow timely transfer of information to the program office as well as documentation for the official record of the program.
- Conduct a debriefing/re-entry orientation for German participants to bring closure to the exchange experience and prepare them for the return home. Planning for these orientations must include advance consultation with the ECA program office regarding proposed dates and locations. ECA does not require these activities to take place in Washington, D.C., but should be invited to these events to allow for end of program participant monitoring whenever possible.

### **Recipient Responsibilities for the Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange (CBBSX) Travel Component**

- Collect biographical information and necessary travel-related information from the ten U.S. Congressional staff selected to participate in the exchange.
- Arrange and pay for travel to and from Germany for the selected U.S. Congressional staff (roundtrip economy class airfare, a minimum of one checked bag per participant, seat assignments, and economy plus upgrades

where the Fly America Act allows, as well as local transportation costs to and from airports).

- Provide support in case of flight delays/cancellations and baggage or other issues during U.S. delegation travel.
- Enroll the U.S. delegates in the Department of State's ASPE program for the duration of the exchange in Germany.

The following detailed guidance applies:

1. Program Promotion: Participate in program-wide promotional activities including, but not limited to:

- a. Nominating a unique German participant for CBYX Participant of the Month at least three times each academic year.
- b. Ensuring that information about CBYX for Young Professionals is easily accessible on the organization's webpage and that it is clearly indicated that the organization is an implementing partner for this U.S. Department of State and German Bundestag program.
- c. Including information on host family recruitment sites for potential U.S. host families to learn about the benefits of hosting a U.S. Government-sponsored exchange student vs. private sector students, as part of an effort to educate more Americans about ECA and U.S. Government exchange programs.
- d. Coordinating with the ECA program office to share information about participant selection and placement with the program's namesake, the U.S. Congress.

2. Partnership with German Organization(s): Demonstrate the ability to cooperate with a foreign partner in implementing the exchange. If ECA selects your organization to implement the program, you will need to enter into a written partnership agreement with an assigned German partner and submit a copy of this agreement to ECA. Please contact the ECA program officer if you require more information about the German organization involved in implementing CBYX for Young Professionals.

3. Insurance: The Bureau offers the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) plan for participants in the program at no cost to award recipients. Applicants must submit the health and accident insurance plans that they intend to use for the German participants of this program. German partner organization insurance will cover American participants, but you must also enroll

them in ASPE as supplemental coverage. Applicants are encouraged to use ASPE for the German participants but may choose to use their own plan instead. Detailed information on ASPE can be found in 10 FAM

240: <https://fam.state.gov/fam/10fam/10fam0240.html>. You can find the current plan information at [www.usdos.sevencorners.com](http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com). Organizations wishing to use a different plan for German participants must demonstrate that such alternate plan provides comparable or more comprehensive coverage. Coverage must begin when participants arrive in the United States and not conclude until they return home. If you do not use ASPE for German participants, the proposal must include a copy of the proposed insurance policy and you should include the cost of the insurance in the budget. The insurance you propose to use must meet the requirements of 22 CFR 62.14.

4. Fiscal Management and Reporting: Proposals should briefly describe how applicants will ensure proper accounting for and management of sub-award recipients (if applicable) as well as ensure they perform required audits. Proposals should demonstrate organizational ability to meet all reporting deadlines and requirements this solicitation outlines.

5. Follow-On: Proposals must also include a plan for follow-on contact with alumni after they return home and for their inclusion in future CBYX and program organization activities. All award recipient staff should be familiar with the U.S. Department of State's digital and other resources that may be of interest to alumni. Proposals should include a plan for encouraging participants to register and maintain updated contact information with the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Alumni website: [exchangealumni.state.gov](http://exchangealumni.state.gov). To better explain the benefits and how to access resources, staff may request guest access to the Exchange Alumni website from the ECA program office. While award recipients may also provide their own resources and on-line opportunities for alumni, these may not replace encouraging involvement with U.S. Department of State online communities. In cases where there might be potential overlap, proposals should explain how this overlap will benefit the program and its alumni.

### **III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner.

Since applicants have no opportunity to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria the solicitation and other guidelines set forth as

clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

**NOTE:** Applicants may only submit proposals through Grants.gov in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) - Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items. Title all documents appropriately and clearly.

### **Program Narrative**

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
  - a. Number and description of participants
  - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
  - c. Geographic breadth of program, both U.S. and overseas
  - d. Fields covered
  - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

## Narrative

In twenty (20) double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment, orientation, academic component, American Excellence enhancement activities program, participant monitoring)
4. Program Performance Monitoring
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Applicants are encouraged to review the six selection criteria the NOFO outlines and the additional information in the PSI to ensure that the proposal addresses each of these criteria

- **Additional Information to Submit**

- A budget overview in the format outlined in the PSI document.
- Include a detailed budget in Microsoft Excel format which must contain:
  - A participant support line of at least \$6,000 to use to accommodate participants who may require extra support to fully participate in the program including, but not limited to, those with disabilities or financial hardship.
  - Staff travel to Washington, D.C. to take part in the American program-wide re-entry event in June 2028.

Budgets also typically include:

- Orientations for participants and host families, as well as costs for re-entry orientation.
- American Excellence enhancement activity costs.
- Travel and related costs (visa fees, etc.) for participants – including international travel for U.S. participants traveling to Germany.
- Staff travel to conduct participant monitoring.

- Staff travel for one person to Washington, D.C. to attend the two-day ECA Youth Programs annual meeting.
  - Stipends and honoraria for non-salaried staff and volunteers.
  - Identifying, screening (e.g. criminal background checks and interviewing), selecting, and orienting host families.
  - Monitoring participants and host families, troubleshooting, counseling and moving participants, as necessary.
  - Program materials.
  - Overhead costs (e.g. salaries, communication, supplies, etc.).
  - Insurance costs, if not using ASPE.
  - Host family and participant stipends, as needed.
- A detailed budget narrative that explains costs for each line in the detailed budget.

PLEASE NOTE: 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.

- Calendar of activities/itinerary, if applicable.
- Letters of endorsement.
- Resumes and CVs of all key staff (no resume should exceed two pages).
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

#### IV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

**The solicitation document indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which you must submit proposals. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program, contact Asha Beh, CBYX Program Officer in the Office of Citizen Exchanges' Youth Programs Division at [BehAC@state.gov](mailto:BehAC@state.gov).**