

## **U.S. Embassy Baghdad Public Affairs Section**

Request for Proposals: 2017 Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) for High School Students

Funding Opportunity: DOS-Baghdad-PD-2016-02  
CFDA: 19.021

Opening Date: April 01, 2016  
Closing Date: May 16, 2016

### **SUMMARY**

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad invites eligible organizations to submit proposals to develop and implement the 2017 Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) for High School Students. The goal of IYLEP is to foster the next generation of Iraqi leaders by exposing Iraqi high school students to U.S. society and culture and providing them skills development in leadership, civic education and responsibility, diversity awareness and tolerance, and civic engagement. Proposals should include a U.S.-based exchange component and explain how program activities will promote mutual understanding between American and Iraqi youth. IYLEP advances the cultural and social exchange component of the 2008 U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement. Subject to the availability of funds, the Embassy expects to award one cooperative agreement for up to \$1,300,000 to carry out IYLEP for High School Students.

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 other countries of the world.”

Eligibility: Applicants must:

- Be a U.S. non-profit organization meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c) (3); an internationally based non-profit organization; an academic institution; or other institution for which profit is not a primary motive;
- Have demonstrated experience administering exchange programs focused on youth; and
- Have the capacity to operate in Iraq, or have or develop active partnerships with organization(s) operating in Iraq.

All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet Number (DUNS) and a CCR (CAGE) number prior to funds disbursement. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or requesting on-line at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Objective of IYLEP is to cultivate the next generation of Iraqi leaders by exposing Iraqi high school students to U.S. society and culture and providing them skills development in leadership, civic education and responsibility, diversity awareness and tolerance, and civic engagement. It is designed to promote mutual understanding between citizens of the United States and Iraq through a significant U.S.-based exchange experience. IYLEP for High School Students proposals should describe a program that will engage approximately 100 Iraqi secondary school students aged 15-17 with at least one academic year of study remaining as well as ten Iraqi adult mentors. Student and mentor participants should be identified through a transparent and open competition in which leadership capacity and English proficiency can be demonstrated. The centerpiece of the program should be a four-week program in the United States that includes significant interaction with American youth and civic organizations.

U.S. program activities should include, but not be limited to:

- Academic and leadership training on U.S. college campuses;
- Visits to U.S. high school summer programs;
- Volunteer work with community organizations;
- Participation in cultural programs;
- Meetings with U.S. youth organizations; and
- Visits, homestays, and activities with U.S. families.

The anticipated timeline for the 2017 IYLEP for High School Students is:

|                        |                                                          |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| September 2016:        | Outreach and recruitment begins.                         |
| January 2017:          | Participant selection is finalized.                      |
| February-May 2017:     | Visa applications are processed.                         |
| June 2017:             | Program orientation is held in Iraq.                     |
| July-August 2017:      | Participants travel to the United States.                |
| October-December 2017: | De-briefing sessions with returned participants in Iraq. |
| February 2018:         | Alumni networking reunion held in Iraq.                  |

**Organizational Capacity:** Applicant organizations must demonstrate the capacity to implement youth exchange programs and to work in Iraq, either directly or through a partner organization. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to work in both of Iraq's national languages, Arabic and Kurdish, and to carry out program activities in all 18 provinces of Iraq.

**Guidelines:** The award will begin on or about September 1, 2016. The award duration will be 15-20 months and will cover all aspects of program planning, participant recruitment, candidate interviews and selection, in-country pre-departure orientations, U.S.-based exchange activities, and follow-on activities in the participants' home communities, including an alumni networking activity focused on re-entry to Iraq leadership development and community service activities. Applicants should propose a specific program timeline that includes exchange dates in the

summer of 2017, but the exact timing may be altered through mutual agreement between the Embassy and the award recipient.

**In consultation with Embassy staff, the awardee will:**

Conduct open and competitive recruitment for the program in both public and private high schools in each of the 18 provinces of Iraq to seek a diverse applicant pool with appropriate gender balance and that is representative of Iraq's geographic and socio-economic diversity. Proposals should address how recruitment would seek a diverse composition of participants from all socio-economic spheres, in particular the inclusion of future Iraqi leaders from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who possess sufficient English to succeed on the program but not necessarily the high level of fluency that some more economically advantaged youth might demonstrate. In order to promote such a mix of participants, awardee should consider candidates whose English proficiency is "good", vice previous program requirements of "very good." For this program, that means the English proficiency of candidates need not be native-speaker-level fluent, but must be at a level that does not require full-time translation or interpretation assistance. Awardee will:

- Arrange interview panels of prospective participants in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, and elsewhere as needed in Iraq; panels should be made up of a minimum of three persons with a mix of program staff, IYLEP alumni, and U.S. Embassy representatives;
- Serve as the primary point of contact and source of information for students and their families in Iraq and the United States throughout the entire program process;
- Coordinate with the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on providing information to generate documents, including the Department of State issued DS-2019, for U.S. visa issuance for participants;
- Manage all logistical elements of the exchange, including facilitating Iraqi students' travel to the Embassy for U.S. visa interviews, international and U.S. domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, group meals, and disbursement of pocket money;
- Design and conduct a program orientation for Iraqi participants and the parents of high school participants prior to their travel to the United States to review program logistics and agendas;
- Design and conduct a program orientation in the United States for Iraqi participants and U.S.-based program staff and partners;
- Organize and carry out the U.S.-based program as described in the award agreement;
- Provide a closing session to summarize and evaluate the program, prepare participants for their return home, and further prepare them for follow-on activities and alumni programs;

- Plan and organize follow-on activities in their home communities in Iraq to help participants implement what they learned in the United States;
- Organize one alumni networking and leadership conference for IYLEP for High School Students in Iraq.

It is recommended that the U.S.-based program include visits, activities, and homestays with American families. The awardee will be responsible for arranging these with properly screened and briefed host families for a significant portion of the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for host families and other members of household who are more than 18 years of age.

The U.S.-based component should include a separate program and activities for the adult mentors designed to improve their skills in leadership, youth counseling, cultural understanding, group organization, and other fields. The mentor program should run concurrently with the youth program and be held at the same location.

The awardee must demonstrate a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while in the United States, including proper staff supervision and mechanisms for resolving problems that might arise. Program staff and adult mentors should assist youth participants with cultural adjustment, provide context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff.

The Embassy will be substantially involved in carrying out this project, including, but not limited to:

- Approving all 2017 IYLEP for High School Students recruitment, application, publicity, notification, topics/themes of academic training, and other materials;
- Approving lists of all selection panel members and approving questions to be asked during candidate interviews.
- Approving final candidate and alternate selection;
- Monitoring and evaluating the program through regular communication with the award recipient and site visits as necessary.
- Publicizing the program on Embassy social media platforms.

Embassy staff will assist in coordinating with the Embassy Consular Section in arranging visa application appointments. Participation in IYLEP is contingent upon the ability of the visa applicant to receive the J Exchange Visitor Visa.

## **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Applications must be prepared and submitted using the Public Diplomacy Grants Program Application form, available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or by request from [baghdadpdgrants@state.gov](mailto:baghdadpdgrants@state.gov). Please submit questions and completed applications to [baghdadpdgrants@state.gov](mailto:baghdadpdgrants@state.gov).

Cost-sharing is strongly encouraged. Cost sharing can take the form of both allowable direct and indirect costs. For accountability, the recipient must maintain records to support all costs claimed as part of the cost-share agreement. Such records are subject to audit. Please refer to 2 CFR 200.306 Cost Sharing or Matching.

All sections of the application must be completed. In addition to information about project personnel as requested on the application form, please provide complete resumes for key personnel, such as Project Director.

The deadline for receipt of applications is May 16, 2016 close of business Baghdad, Iraq time. The Embassy reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and/or participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program, the availability of funds, and concurrence of the applicant.

The Embassy Public Diplomacy Grants Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals received in response this NOFO:

**Introduction/General Summary:** The general summary must describe the need for the program with regards to: location, the extent and nature of the program and the population being targeted for the program. It should identify, if any, the existing resources in the location, as well as general internal and external support mechanisms.

**Project Goals and Objectives/Implementation Plan:** Proposals should address the goals of the 2017 IYLEP for High School Students program as outlined in this solicitation. Proposals will be evaluated for originality, substance, precision, and relevance to IYLEP goals. They will be evaluated for the potential for long-term impact and sustainability of IYLEP in developing Iraq's future leaders. The Embassy Public Diplomacy Grants Committee will closely consider whether the overall goals lead to the objectives of the program. Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly relate to meeting the goals and objectives, and applicants should include information on how they will measure activities' effectiveness. The Grants Committee will evaluate the activities planned in terms of their relevance to the current situation and the program goals and objectives, the feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the program will continue beyond the conclusion of the funding period.

**Organizational Capacity:** Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, previous experience with similar programs, and organizational background in the country/region as these relate to the proposed activities. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed program. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to work in English, Arabic and Kurdish. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to carry out programs in Iraq.

**Budget:** Costs should be reasonable and realistic in relation to the program activities. Applicants are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible so that the committee can determine the extent to which the request represents an efficient use of U.S. government resources. The budget should be consistent with the narrative description of the program and should reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by Title 2 CFR 200.306 (part 230) on cost principles for non-profit organizations.

**Monitoring and evaluation plan:** Proposals should have a clear quarterly monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure proper implementation of the project;

**Key Personnel:** The organization is to demonstrate the competency of the staff involved in the project implementation;

**Cost Sharing:** It is always encouraged in order to demonstrate the level of commitment to the idea and the project.

**Indirect Cost Rate:** Consideration will be given of the indirect cost rate proposed by the applicant.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Applicants can expect to be notified of the status of their application within 30 days of the submission deadline. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the United States government. It does not commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. The U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Embassy.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information, please contact the U.S. Embassy Baghdad at [baghdadpdgrants@state.gov](mailto:baghdadpdgrants@state.gov).