

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

**FY 2024 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010259
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 2024 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship. Your proposal must conform to the solicitation, the guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between documents, the solicitation is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of U.S. embassies and consulates in Europe are supporting the engagement of youth through the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship -- an intensive and substantive four-week-long program in the United States.

Recipient Responsibilities:

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

1. Recruitment and Selection of U.S. Participants
 - a. Develop plans for outreach and recruitment that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates that represent the diversity of the United States.
 - b. Develop an application and screening process.
 - c. Conduct an open competition to select ten U.S. participants, ages 16-18, with clearly identified criteria for the selection process.
 - d. Recommend the final participants and alternates to ECA.
2. Preparation
 - a. Contact all participants before the exchange to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests.

- b. Work with PAS of participating U.S. embassies to implement pre-departure orientations for participants. The pre-departure orientation should include general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training.
- c. Hire and train program staff, as needed, to accompany participants during the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff.
- d. Design and conduct an orientation(s) for program staff, American participants and their families, and those individuals participating from the U.S. host communities (including host families) on the goals of the program and on the cultures and sensitivities of the exchange visitors. The orientation for Americans may be held in person or conducted virtually.
- e. Make housing arrangements for all participants. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families for homestays of at least one week and preferably longer, for participants during their stay. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families and others living in the home who are 18 years or older. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of participants.
- f. Make domestic travel arrangements for the participants.
- g. Make arrangements to provide adult flight chaperones for transatlantic air travel.
- h. Enroll all participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Plan for Exchanges (ASPE). More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/about/gov/usdos>.

3. Exchange Activities

- a. Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive four-week long program on the stated themes. Exchange activities must promote program goals.
- b. Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.
- c. Engage participants in at least one facilitated community service activity during the U.S. program to demonstrate American volunteerism. The program should provide context for the participants to undertake the service activity – identifying community needs, the nature of volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event, but is integrated into the larger program curriculum, and helps participants see how they can apply the experience at home.
- d. Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' health and well-being, including preventing and dealing with health issues, misunderstandings, or adjustment issues that may arise.

- e. Provide a closing session to summarize the project activities, prepare participants for their return home, and action plans to include follow on conference or program.
- 4. Work in consultation with ECA and PAS sections in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
- 5. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of any sub-award relationships with partner organizations.
- 6. Design and implement a performance monitoring plan that assesses the outcomes of the program (See section D.10 Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the NOFO solicitation).
- 7. Social Media and Website
 - a. The award recipient will establish and maintain a web presence that will provide current information about the program and its alumni.
 - b. Additionally, the award recipient will coordinate social media engagement for the program in coordination with ECA and in accordance with ECA's social media guidelines to ensure media is appropriate for the level of sensitivity and maintains the online security of those involved.
 - c. Proposals should present a clear social media plan for program promotion, recruitment, alumni engagement, and outcome amplification.

Substantial Involvement:

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

- 1. Recruit and select the European participants, arrange their international travel, and, in coordination with the award recipient, oversee their follow-on activities.
- 2. Approve the proposed slate of final and alternate U.S. candidates.
- 3. Approve recruitment materials, application forms, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Participants: Participants will be teenagers between the ages of 16 and 18 who have a strong interest in learning more about the global issues and diplomatic relationships, the role of a free press and free expression (such as advocacy and debate in a democracy), and/or have an interest in public or community service. Participants may represent as many as 45 countries in Europe (countries to be determined in consultation with the regional bureau and posts), as well as the United States. ECA will determine the final participants.

English proficiency is required. Participants will demonstrate the academic aptitude for a program of this nature, as well as personal qualities that will enable them to be successful exchange participants, including maturity, strong social skills, flexibility, and open-mindedness. These factors are particularly important given the diverse group nature of the program.

Participant Selection: The PAS at the U.S. embassies in participating countries will nominate the foreign participants. They will send participant nominations to ECA in Spring 2024. The award recipient will be responsible for recruiting and screening the American participants through an open competition process and will present the proposed slate to ECA for approval also in Spring 2024.

Logistics: The U.S. embassies will provide participants in the program with their international airline tickets, based on a destination and arrival date specified by the U.S. organization. Since some of these participants will be minors, may be inexperienced travelers, and may be traveling from their home country alone for the first time, applicants will present a plan for flight escorts, who will travel from one or two major Western or Central European cities to and from the United States.

Pre-departure Orientation: PAS staff will provide participants with a pre-departure orientation, reviewing the details of the program, cross-cultural issues, travel, and financial matters. The award recipient will provide written materials electronically in support of this orientation prior to the participants' departure from home. In any country where the award recipient has its own staff or the staff of an established partner organization available, they may work out orientation arrangements with PAS on a country-by-country basis.

U.S. Program: The program should include interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities to learn about the fundamentals of a civil society, community service, conflict resolution, critical thinking, tolerance and respect for diversity, and building leadership skills. Training and joint project activity will focus on providing participants with a deeper understanding of common global issues and diplomatic relationships, and how they in turn can influence others through media outlets, by examining freedom of speech issues, media ethics, and the role of media in creating or solidifying stereotypes.

The activities could include a mix of seminars, workshops, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, a volunteer service project, leadership training exercises, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Programming should include additional Americans wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule.

The exchange also will include a one-week educational tour to another geographical region of

the United States and a closing workshop in Washington, DC.

Suggestions include the following:

- Workshops on conflict resolution, civic education, current events, media literacy and disinformation, global challenges
- Community service/volunteer activities with American youth
- Exercises related to increasing tolerance and international cooperation and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the project's themes
- Workshops that explore the scientific legacy of Benjamin Franklin, specifically the intersection of politics and science
- Visits to historical sites, government centers, community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about the principles of government, history, and society with tourism
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical, camping and other extracurricular activities that provide opportunities to participants to work and play together
- Arts and cultural activities

The program staff will host a closing workshop for participants just prior to departure, which will focus on summarizing the experience, developing plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. The participants should be encouraged and assisted in developing projects to implement after they return home. The ideas and plans should spring from the participants, but the program staff should be prepared to assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the U.S.-based project and during the follow-on period.

Housing Accommodations: Homestays with local families must be arranged for all participants for at least one week of the exchange. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate adult supervision is an acceptable arrangement for other segments of the program, such as the educational tour.

Applicants must present in their proposals a clear and detailed recruitment, screening, and selection process for host families. The award recipient must also provide the families with an orientation prior to the arrival of their exchange participants, emphasizing the goals of the program. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in host family recruitment and selection. Host families may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. Exchange participants should be afforded private space in the home. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations.

Applicants must explain how they will provide adequate supervision of participants when not in homestays.

Follow-on Activities: Follow-on activities will be organized for alumni. The award recipient will need to be prepared to work with PAS in each country to design activities for alumni, such as mini-grants or online collaborative projects, and mentor them in their implementation of these activities. Given the wide range of countries, this may need to be managed online and/or through low-tech methods that do not require in-country staff. ECA seeks creative ideas to ensure that the alumni can effectively pursue the remaining activities of the program, particularly ideas that amplify the program effects through their peers. Alumni tracking is crucial for the evaluation of the program and for the implementation of follow-on programs. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the U.S. Department of State. Promote follow-on activities with program alumni that reinforce the concepts imparted during the program. Help them apply what they have learned to serve their schools and communities. Applicants should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers, in order to amplify the program effects. Please refer to the PSI for additional guidance.

Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation: See section D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the NOFO solicitation for more information.

Other Notes: The award recipient is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. The Bureau requires the recipient organization to communicate with ECA and the PAS of the relevant U.S. embassies on a regular basis about program activities, including participant and host family recruitment and selection, pre-departure and welcome orientations, publicity, and follow-on activities. The recipient must inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and it must obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

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

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted 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. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs," (only required for organizations if its representations and certifications have not been completed in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). If an organization is exempt from registering in SAM.gov, then it would still need to provide the form as part of its application.)
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), form 990 Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only required for organizations that engage in lobbying activities), etc.

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 outcomes)
 - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - d. Fields covered
 - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative:

In no more than 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages [with one-inch margins, size 12 font], provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major programs activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

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

• **Additional Information to be Submitted**

- Detailed Budget:(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
- Letters of endorsement
- Resumes and CVs Add one of the two following notes – (resumes of all staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

IV. OTHER AWARD INFORMATION

Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

ECA places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22

CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://J1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation
U.S. Department of State
SA-5, Floor C2, Room C2L13
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20522

V. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The solicitation document indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline.** For further information regarding this program, call Program Officer Ashraf Sarsour at (703) 628-2288, Youth Division; email: sarsouraa@state.gov.