

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity

(NOFO): FY 2021 Professional Fellows Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0007943

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: June 7, 2021

Executive Summary: The Global Leaders Division (formerly known as the Professional Fellows Division) in the Office of Citizen Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) invites proposal submissions for the FY 2021 Professional Fellows Program (PFP) in the regions of Africa (AF), East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), the Middle East and North Africa (NEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and the Western Hemisphere (WHA). The Professional Fellows Program is a two-way global exchange program designed to promote mutual understanding, enhance leadership and professional skills, and build lasting and sustainable partnerships between mid-level emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States. The defining element of the program for non-U.S. participants is a substantive five- to six-week Fellowship program, including a four-week individually tailored working placement in a U.S. organization.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

It is the Bureau's intent to award approximately 12-14 cooperative agreements and to renew the cooperative agreements for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing them again. Please see Section B. "Federal Award Information" below for additional details.

A. Program Description

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

The Professional Fellows Program supports the following broad goals:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between mid-level emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States;
2. Provide opportunities for non-U.S. and American emerging leaders to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies regarding pressing challenges;

3. Enhance leadership and professional skills for both non-U.S. and American Fellows to encourage positive change in their workplaces and communities; and
4. Build a global network of like-minded professionals.

All proposals must include two-way exchange programs that comply with the country and theme guidance referenced in Section A.3. “Themes and Eligible Countries.”

The non-U.S. Fellows will travel to the United States for a professional Fellowship, which will be five- to six-weeks in length. The Fellowship will include an individually tailored working placement, “the Fellowship placement,” that is a minimum of four weeks in length. The U.S.-based exchange component will conclude with a capstone three-day Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., attended by participating Professional Fellows from all over the world. Please see the FY 2021 Professional Fellows Congress NOFO for additional information (SFOP0007945). Several months after the non-U.S. Fellows complete the U.S. Program, the American Fellows will travel overseas on an outbound program that is approximately two weeks in length and directly supports follow-on projects and long-term collaboration.

“Program participants,” referred to as “Professional Fellows” in this program, are defined as those individuals who travel under award funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country. Proposals must include approximately two to three non-U.S. participants for every one American participant. **Employees of the award recipient or any sub-award recipients are not eligible to participate in the Professional Fellows Program and cannot be included as program participants.**

Applicant organizations without an existing organizational presence in the target country must identify an overseas partner (“in-country partner”) with whom they propose to collaborate. ECA and the Public Affairs Section of the respective U.S. embassies reserve the right to approve in-country partners. In addition, proposals must demonstrate capacity in the United States to secure effective and appropriate host placements for the participants.

A.1. Project Outputs: Proposals should fully demonstrate capacity to provide the following project outputs:

a. Recruit and Select Fellows: In collaboration with ECA, each award recipient will recruit and select the non-U.S. Fellows and the American Fellows.

For recruitment of non-U.S. Fellows, each award recipient must develop an online Program Announcement and Program Application. Non-U.S. Fellows should be recruited in accordance with the specific guidance included below under “Themes and Eligible Countries.”

Non-U.S. Fellows must be selected through an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA and the public affairs section (PAS) of the respective U.S.

embassy. While PAS should be involved in participant selection, full responsibility for project coordination and implementation lies with the award recipient.

At a minimum, the participant selection criteria for non-U.S. Fellows for the Professional Fellows Program must include the below:

- emerging leaders in government, civil society, or the private sector who have demonstrated expertise pertaining to the respective theme of each proposal;
- mid-level professionals, 25 to 40 years old at the time of participation in the program, who, at a minimum, are currently employed and have two or more years of relevant professional work experience;
- candidates who have demonstrated proficiency in both written and oral English that qualifies them to have “working-level knowledge of English” that has been verified by the award recipient;
- candidates who are self-directed and able to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting; and
- candidates who are genuinely interested in developing an individual project of their own selection in their home workplace or community.

b. U.S.-Based Program for the Non-U.S. Fellows: Each award recipient will design and implement two U.S. programs for the non-U.S. Fellows that are each five- to six-weeks in length. Key program elements of the U.S. program must include:

1. A “pre-departure orientation” (PDO) in the home country before departure to the United States;
2. A program orientation upon arrival in the United States;
3. A substantive 4-week fellowship placement in a U.S. organization that is tailored to each non-U.S. Fellow’s work/interests;
4. Homestays for non-U.S. participants with an American family at least one week (or four weekends) in duration;
5. An individual plan for the fellowship placement and follow-on project for each non-U.S. Fellow;
6. Participation in the concluding Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. and Congress-related activities including online leadership training;
7. A plan for post-fellowship engagement with the non-U.S. Fellows; and
8. A debrief with U.S. Embassy representatives upon return to home country.

Program activities in the United States for non-U.S. Fellows should also include a volunteer/community service element. Also, every effort should be made for the non-U.S. Fellows to engage with a range of American citizens regarding their work and their home country, such as through community/school presentations, media interviews, etc.

c. Fellowship Placements for the Non-U.S. Fellows: “Fellowship Placements” refers to the program component where the Fellow is placed in an office or organization relevant to his or her professional experience and/or interests. Each award recipient must secure, preferably, at least three weeks in advance of the non-U.S. Fellows’ arrival in the United States, a substantive and individually-tailored fellowship placement that is a

minimum of four weeks (20 weekdays) in length. The purpose of the fellowship placement is to provide non-U.S. Fellows with a professional development program that includes direct experience with the day-to-day workings of a U.S. workplace and the opportunity to form professional relationships with American colleagues. Some previous examples of fellowship placements for non-U.S. Fellows include non-governmental organizations (NGOs); legislative/government offices at the national, state, and local levels; and private businesses.

Proposals should discuss how the award recipient will recruit and select U.S. Fellowship placement organizations. To ensure that each non-U.S. Fellow has a substantive professional experience, each fellowship placement should involve the commitment of a designated placement host who understands the goals and objectives of the Professional Fellows Program. Applications that propose to secure one fellowship placement during the exchange rather than multiple, short-term placements with different U.S. organizations will be deemed more competitive under the Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives review criterion. Supplementary programming activities, in person or online, may be built into the four-week working placement period, such as group workshops or other enrichment activities.

Proposals should describe how the award recipient will work with each non-U.S. Fellow on the development of the Fellows' individual projects and implementation of these projects upon return to their respective home countries. It is recommended that time be devoted during the orientation program to focus on individual follow-on projects. Proposals should include a timeline for the non-U.S. Fellows to create drafts and final versions of the "Action Plan" for their "Individual Follow-on Project," as well as a process and deadlines for the Fellows to update the award recipient on his/her progress implementing the individual project.

d. Professional Fellows Congress for the Non-U.S. Fellows: At the conclusion of the U.S. Fellowship placement, the non-U.S. Fellows will participate in the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. There will be a Professional Fellows Congress in fall 2022 and a Professional Fellows Congress in spring 2023.

The Congress will provide the Fellows:

- the opportunity to network with colleagues from around the world, share their U.S. experiences, and learn from the experiences of other Professional Fellows;
- a contextual framework for the broader Fellowship experience and exchange program;
- an opportunity to examine ways an individual, organization, or interest group can generate change for the common good; and
- a greater understanding of public diplomacy in the global community.

The Congresses will be implemented by a designated award recipient, selected through a separate open competition, with the assistance of the ECA Global Leaders Division and the collaboration of all Professional Fellows Program award recipients. Proposals must demonstrate a willingness and ability to participate collaboratively in regularly scheduled

planning meetings for the Congresses via teleconference and/or on-line forum. In addition, all PFP award recipients will be expected to assist with identifying possible speakers, facilitating break-out sessions at the Congress, supporting Congress-related “products” or activities, integrating online leadership training into the Fellowship period, preparing Fellows for active participation during the Congress, etc. This collaboration is critical to making each Congress a success. Please see Section D.3m. “Allowable Costs” for additional information regarding the Professional Fellows Congresses.

e. Outbound Programs for American Fellows (“American Outbound Programs”):

The outbound programs should be approximately two- to three-weeks in length for American Fellows to travel to the participating countries. American Fellows will be selected in an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with the Global Leaders Division. American Fellows will be primarily selected from those individuals who serve as placement hosts to the non-U.S. Fellows at the U.S. Fellowship placement organizations and who had significant engagement with the non-U.S. Fellow placed in their organization during the U.S. Fellowship period. Americans can apply individually or collaboratively with the non-U.S. Fellow they hosted. The non-U.S. Fellows should be involved in the outbound phase of the program, including the conceptualization, scheduling and implementation of the program. Ideally, American Fellows would have experience pertaining to the non-U.S. Fellow’s individual outbound project and could contribute to the achievement of the goals of the non-U.S. Fellows’ projects. While there is no set age range for the American participants, the same 25-40 age range is preferred.

American outbound programs should be substantive. They must build on the U.S. Fellowship component, allow the American Fellows to conduct joint programming with the non-U.S. Fellows and their colleagues, directly support U.S. public diplomacy objectives, and advance the Professional Fellows Program goals of building sustainable and lasting professional partnerships. Proposals should describe the selection process for the American outbound components and how it will support the non-U.S. Fellows’ individual projects.

Upon completion of the selection process, the proposed slates of American outbound participants with summary information including biographical information, proposed destination cities, country, and timeframe, must be submitted to the appropriate program officer in the Global Leaders Division within approximately six-weeks of the conclusion of the spring and fall Professional Fellows Program.

f. Collaboration with the Public Affairs Section of the Respective Embassy(--ies):

Award recipients must work closely with the public affairs section of the respective embassy(ies) to develop plans for project implementation, including the recruitment and selection of non-U.S. Fellows, follow-on projects, and other in-country program activities. It is important that all proposed American outbound program schedules are reviewed by the Global Leaders Division and PAS at a minimum of one month prior to the start of any outbound travel. Since many American Fellows will be experts on issues pertinent to various U.S. foreign policy objectives in the respective country, the willingness of the American Fellows to take part in public diplomacy outreach can greatly complement in-country PAS programs, thereby enhancing the impact of the

exchange and its value to our PAS colleagues. The proposal should address plans for maintaining a close working relationship with PAS throughout the life of the award.

g. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) and Arrival Orientation: For both non-U.S. and American Fellows, the award recipient will be responsible for conducting a pre-departure orientation through coordination with PAS (prior to departing their home country) and an arrival orientation through coordination with ECA (upon arriving in the United States). For non-U.S. Fellows, the PDO and arrival orientation should cover, at a minimum:

- travel logistics, including arrival information and J-1 visa regulations;
- project goals, programmatic expectations, performance measurement;
- proposed U.S. placements;
- a detailed Program Schedule including program activities and deadlines, information about the community where each Fellow will be located, the concluding Professional Fellows Congress; and,
- a briefing on cross-cultural issues including day-to-day considerations of living and working in the United States as well as professional standards of conduct.

h. Debrief with Embassy Representatives upon Return to Home Country: Proposals should include a plan for a scheduled debrief with Embassy representatives after the non-U.S. Fellows return to their home country.

i. Post-Fellowship Engagement: Proposals should include concrete plans for developing innovative and sustainable enhancement activities that reinforce project goals after the non-U.S. Fellows return to their home country. Proposals should clearly articulate how the award recipient will provide ECA with regular updates on the non-U.S. Fellows' individual follow-on projects as well as professional successes resulting from their participation in the Professional Fellows Program.

j. Alumni Programming: The proposal should include a defined strategy for alumni engagement that supports the goals of the Professional Fellows Program and ECA. The proposal should include:

- an outline of proposed activities for alumni engagement;
- strategies to connect new alumni with past program participants, if applicable; and
- a description of (or a plan for) how long-term linkages within the alumni community will be encouraged, coordinated, and integrated into existing Bureau initiatives.

k. Monitoring and Evaluation: For detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation, please refer to: 1) Section D.3h. "Program Monitoring and Evaluation"; and 2) Section E.1. "Review Criteria", specifically for the review criterion entitled "Program Monitoring and Evaluation."

Award recipients will be expected to assist with administering ECA-generated pre- and post-surveys to all Fellows, and use this data to evaluate the program. Award recipients may also employ a professional evaluator not associated with the award recipient to collect and analyze data, draw conclusions, and make recommendations when warranted.

l. Web-Based Technology: Proposals should explain how the program model will use the internet and other web-based tools to enhance and support key goals and objectives. These include but are not limited to networking among program participants, encouraging professional resource sharing, and supporting continued professional development. Special emphasis should be placed on the ways in which technology will facilitate communication among selected non-U.S. Fellows and their Fellowship placement organizations before, during, and after the Fellowship program, strengthen group identity, and streamline key administrative and programmatic processes such as recruitment and follow-on/alumni activities.

m. Public Outreach Efforts and Social Media: “Telling the story” is a vital element of successful public diplomacy programs. Proposals should provide a clearly articulated public outreach and social media strategy in order to strengthen the identity of the Professional Fellows Program, increase the program’s visibility within local communities in the United States and abroad, and raise awareness of the importance and impact of educational exchanges.

Proposals should identify ways to engage with non-U.S. and American Fellows, relevant U.S. Embassies, ECA, and other key stakeholders through social media. Plans may include, but are not limited to, using social media for recruitment and outreach efforts, engaging with ECA or U.S. Department of State social media sites, tweeting program updates, and using blogs or other platforms to document and share participant experiences and success stories, etc. Proposals should also explain how social media will be used to engage program alumni.

Proposals should also indicate a willingness to follow ECA communications guidance, as well as guidance in the PSI regarding acknowledging ECA’s financial support and use of the Department seal.

A.2. Key Administrative Elements:

a. Visas for Entry into the United States and Foreign Countries:

To procure U.S. visas for the non-U.S. Fellows, the award recipients will work with ECA and PAS at the respective U.S. Embassy. Award recipients will need to collect and submit to ECA all required biographical information on the non-U.S. Fellows that is necessary to complete the DS-2019 form required for their J-1 visas. To procure foreign visas for the American Fellows, if necessary, the award recipients will work directly with the respective foreign embassy in the United States. For further information, please see the section below entitled, “Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J Visa.”

b. International Air Travel:

Award recipients must comply with all federal regulations regarding the use of U.S. government funds including the Fly America Act. These regulations apply to both U.S. and non-U.S. travelers.

c. Projected Program Timeline: ECA envisions the Professional Fellows Program calendar as follows:

Fall 2022 U.S. Program for the non-U.S. Fellows:

- September 2021 – February 2022: Recruitment and selection of non-U.S. Fellows for the two U.S. Programs;
- March – June 2022: Securing placements for the fall 2022 U.S. program;
- August – September 2022: Travel by the first cohort of non-U.S. Fellows for the fall 2022 U.S. program. Travel should be carefully planned around **the fall 2022 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., tentatively scheduled for September 2022;**
- October 2022: Planning for the first cohort of American outbound Fellows to travel overseas; and
- November 2022 – June 2023: Travel by the first cohort of American outbound Fellows overseas

Spring 2023 U.S. Program for the non-U.S. Fellows:

- November 2022 – February 2023: Securing placements for the spring 2023 program;
- March 2023 – April 2023: Travel by the second cohort of non-U.S. Fellows for the spring 2023 U.S. program. Travel should be carefully planned around **the spring 2023 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C., tentatively scheduled for April 2023;**
- May 2023: Planning for the second cohort of American outbound Fellows to travel overseas;
- June 2023 – September 2023: Travel by the second cohort of American outbound Fellows overseas

A.3. Themes and Eligible Countries: All proposals should carefully incorporate the specific requirements noted below, especially those that are unique to a particular region. **ECA reserves the right to modify the final list of participating countries and regions, and the scope of any resulting cooperative agreement, including in any of the subsequent solicitations.**

1. GOVERNANCE AND SOCIETY

Proposals submitted under the Governance and Society theme can include professionals involved in the legislative process; governance; public administration; policy making; political campaigns/political parties; the legal field; journalism; non-governmental organizations; innovation and technology; or empowering women, children, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

Proposals submitted under the Governance and Society theme should explore the relationship between the public sector and broader society. Proposals should support professionals involved in the legislative process; good governance; public administration; public affairs; policy; political campaigns; law and judicial reform. Proposals submitted

under this theme might include an emphasis on rule of law; access to justice; civil liberties and political rights, citizen engagement and advocacy; participatory government; anti-corruption; transparency and accountability; cyber security; digital technologies; media; innovation and technology; and climate change.

Fellowship placements may be in legislative/government offices at the national, state, or local level; non-governmental organizations; or other relevant organizations.

Africa (AF) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, and Togo.

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Eligible Countries/Locations:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Burma, Hong Kong, Mongolia, and Papua New Guinea.

Europe and Eurasia (EUR) Eligible Countries:

EUR proposals must include at least four countries in Group 1 or at least four countries in Group 2.

Group 1: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine

Group 2: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

Middle East and North Africa (NEA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least four of the following countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. Proposals should also explore how governments can promote multi-sector approaches to community issues including, but not limited to, public health challenges and equitable access to resources.

South and Central Asia (SCA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Western Hemisphere (WHA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least four of the following countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Proposals should also promote the social inclusion of marginalized groups such as people of African and/or indigenous descent.

2. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Proposals submitted under the Economic Empowerment theme can include professionals involved in entrepreneurship; small and medium enterprises; start-ups; incubators/accelerators; social entrepreneurship; business administration; business

education; community training programs; non-governmental organizations; or government.

Proposals submitted under the Economic Empowerment theme should explore how systems can support innovation and sustainable economic development. Proposals should support professionals involved in small and medium business development; business administration; business education; economic development policy, social entrepreneurship, community training programs, innovation and technology, and emerging technologies. Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis on starting or growing small businesses; community-based and educational training programs; global competency and employment readiness; the role of government in promoting economic growth; sustainable development; education to employment; climate change; and the economic empowerment of women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

Fellowship placements may be in businesses; non-governmental organizations; technology hubs; economic/business-related organizations; or government offices.

Africa (AF) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Europe and Eurasia (EUR) Eligible Countries:

EUR proposals must include at least four countries in Group 1 or at least four of the countries in Group 2.

Group 1: Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and Slovenia

Group 2: Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Denmark (Greenland), Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, and Spain. **EUR proposals involving countries in Group 2 should focus on empowering marginalized populations.**

Middle East and North Africa (NEA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least four of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. Proposals should also address the use of innovation and technology to increase employment opportunities for marginalized populations, including at risk youth, women and girls, and minority populations.

South and Central Asia (SCA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Western Hemisphere (WHA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least four of the following countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. Proposals should include a special focus on addressing the root causes of irregular migration.

3. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Proposals submitted under the Civic Engagement theme can include professionals involved in non-governmental administration; community development; advocacy; education; journalism; law; youth initiatives; strengthening resilient communities; or empowering women, children, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

Proposals submitted under the Civic Engagement theme should explore how individuals can organize around community issues and support professionals involved in non-governmental management; community development; advocacy; education; journalism; law; youth initiatives; and the empowerment of minorities including women, persons with disabilities and marginalized populations. Proposals submitted under this theme might include an emphasis in non-profit management; community-based policy and advocacy; digital technologies; environmental planning and readiness; staff training and development; volunteer management; community outreach and engagement; creating strategic partnerships and coalition building; storytelling; conflict resolution and peace building; resilient communities; and climate change.

Fellowship placements may be in non-governmental organizations; community-based organizations; civic education organizations; advocacy organizations; government offices; or relevant organizations.

Africa (AF) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Eligible Countries/Locations:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Hong Kong, Mongolia, People's Republic of China, and Taiwan.

Europe and Eurasia (EUR) Eligible Countries:

EUR proposals must include at least four countries in Group 1 or at least four countries in Group 2.

Group 1: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia

Group 2: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey

Middle East and North Africa (NEA) Eligible Countries/Locations:

Proposals must include all four of the following countries/territories: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and West Bank/Gaza. Proposals must explore issues related to environmental impact on communities and civic engagement including, but not limited to, water scarcity and equitable access to water.

South and Central Asia (SCA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include all of the following countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Western Hemisphere (WHA) Eligible Countries:

Proposals must include at least four of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Chile, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay. Proposals must include a special emphasis on building resilient institutions and countering malign outside influence.

A.4. Contact Information by Region: The program officers noted below are available to answer questions regarding programs in the various regions:

AF	Anne Shue ShueA@state.gov	NEA	Nalinee Cain CainNL@state.gov
EAP	Chris Remsen RemsenCM@state.gov	SCA	Karin Brandenburg BrandenburgKL@state.gov
EUR	Linnéa Allison AllisonLE@state.gov	WHA	Rachel O'Hara OharaRM@state.gov

A.5. ECA Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, the ECA Global Leaders Division is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. Responsibilities of the ECA Global Leaders Division include:

- a. Participate and provide guidance in the design and execution of all program activities and program timelines, including approving the selection of all non-U.S. and American Fellows, U.S. placement organizations for the non-U.S. Fellows, and program schedules;
- b. Approve key personnel changes at the implementing partner organization who will work on the program. Additionally, the ECA Global Leaders Division will approve, in advance, all international travel paid for using ECA funds ;
- c. Approve changes to partner organizations, including in-country partner organizations and sub-award recipients;

- d. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or complex matters that arise throughout the duration of program, including assisting with participant emergencies;
- e. Issue participant DS-2019 forms and assist with SEVIS-related issues;
- f. Liaise with relevant PAS staff at the respective U.S. Embassies and country desk officers at the State Department particularly in terms of recruitment, selection, web-based publicity efforts, and D.C.-based opening and closing events so that the overall program better aligns with mission priorities;
- g. Work with award recipients to publicize the program through various media outlets (such as the social media platforms of ECA and PAS), including approving all program publicity, outreach efforts, and other materials;
- h. Assist in the coordination of the D.C.-based Professional Fellows Congress; and
- i. Monitor and evaluate the program through site visits or debriefing sessions.

A.6. Recipient Responsibilities

Responsibilities of award recipients under the FY 2021 Professional Fellows Program cooperative agreements are as follows:

- a. For non-U.S. Fellows, develop and implement a minimum five to six-week U.S. program that includes: an in-person or virtual pre-departure orientation (PDO); a comprehensive arrival orientation; a minimum four-week individually-tailored placement with a U.S. organization (preferably selected by an open competition); participation in the three-day Professional Fellows Congress and Congress-related planning activities; thorough monitoring of Fellows and the placement experience; a short or long-term homestay experience in the U.S. and cultural activities that promote direct engagement with average Americans, such as meeting with student or community groups, and meals with an American household, etc.;
- b. For American Fellows, develop and implement an approximate two to three-week American outbound program that includes: coordination with the Fellow(s) from the respective foreign country, an in-person or virtual PDO, a substantive American outbound program, a comprehensive arrival orientation, and engagement with PAS, as possible, that may include presentations/lectures by any of the American Fellows on their respective professional expertise;
- c. Participate in a “group organizational meeting” that will be held in Washington, D.C. for all award recipients of the Professional Fellows Program. The meeting will be approximately two days in length and will be held on a mutually agreed upon date. Award recipients who will need to travel to D.C. for this meeting should budget appropriately for travel, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses;
- d. For both non-U.S. and American Fellows, arrange and cover the cost of all appropriate program-related travel such as transportation, lodging, and meals and incidental expenses, etc.;
- e. Enroll both non-U.S. and American Fellows in the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program and issue health benefits identifications cards;
- f. Provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities who may be

selected for participation in the program as non-U.S. Fellows or as American Fellows. Proposals may allocate up to 5-7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose;

- g. In collaboration with the ECA Global Leaders Division and PAS, develop a clearly articulated strategy to incorporate PAS in all aspects of the program, including, but not limited to: recruitment, selection, PDOs, post exchange program debriefs at PAS, American outbound programs, and alumni engagement;
- h. Develop a comprehensive recruitment strategy for selecting non-U.S. and American Fellows that clearly delineates the participation selection criteria for the program, and adheres to ECA's goals for a merit-based open competition;
- i. Develop a comprehensive application review and selection process for Fellows, and keep the ECA Global Leaders Division informed while the process is underway. The review and selection process should include virtual or in-person English language interviews for semi-finalists during the second round of the selection process to ensure that all applicants selected as non-U.S. Fellows will be able to communicate effectively in their U.S. placements;
- j. Design and launch a web-based application that can collect and share program applicant information with the ECA Global Leaders Division. The application link should be shared with the Division in advance of the recruitment periods;
- k. Utilize the internet and other outreach tools to facilitate pre-program communication among Fellows once selected, the implementing partner organization, the in-country partner, the U.S. placement organization, and home-stay families. The type of information envisioned to be communicated to Fellows before the actual exchange program begins includes important program-related information, community resources for the respective U.S. placement cities, pre-program assignments, individual project expectations, Congress-related information, and personal travel logs;
- l. Conduct a substantive orientation for U.S. placement organizations that includes the provision of programmatic guidelines and materials, as well as a delineation of roles and responsibilities;
- m. Integrate the Professional Fellows Congress leadership development training module into the program;
- n. Consult closely with the ECA Global Leaders Division regarding developing a comprehensive outreach strategy for highlighting participant achievements both while in the United States and after their return home including the use of online and other social media platforms;
- o. In coordination with the ECA Global Leaders Division and the Congress-implementing organization, support the planning of the fall 2022 and spring 2023 Professional Fellows Congresses in Washington, D.C. **Note: For each Congress, four nights lodging expenses will be paid for by the Professional Fellows Congress award recipient. Organizations interested in additional nights before or after the Congress will need to be covered by the award recipient;**
- p. Evaluate, in close consultation with the ECA Global Leaders Division, the program and its impact on non-U.S. and American Fellows during their Fellowship program and after they return to their home countries. Evaluation plans should include how the award recipient will capture results of the non-U.S.

Fellows' individual small projects, and how and when those results will be provided to the Global Leaders Division;

- q. Manage financial aspects of the program (including timely disbursement of participant stipends, housing allowances, accident and sickness benefits, hosting agreements, and other activity costs) and promptly report any irregularities in the budget or spending to the ECA Global Leaders Division;
- r. Participate in a mid-program review with the ECA Global Leaders Division in person or by telephone that identifies early any programmatic and/or budget concerns;
- s. Report programmatic, financial, and statistical information to the ECA Global Leaders Division including a brief monthly email update and/or phone call outlining general programmatic activities conducted during the past month and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted in the following month;
- t. Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from the ECA Global Leaders Division;
- u. Manage participant emergencies in collaboration with the ECA Global leaders Division; and
- v. Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, including, but not limited to, submitting timely financial and program reports and proper budget oversight.

A.7. What to Include in Your Proposal

Proposals should consist of five main electronic files in addition to the required SF424 forms: 1) an executive summary; 2) a proposal narrative; 3) attachments; 4) a budget; and 5) a budget narrative. All of the documents described below that can be submitted as attachments should be submitted in one document labelled, "Attachments" as opposed to submitting multiple documents as attachments.

a. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should be one page in length and include: the project title (a descriptive title that describes the type of Fellows and countries involved), the theme under which the proposal is being submitted, the goals of the project, the names of all sub-award recipient organizations responsible for project implementation, the numbers of Fellows (both non-U.S. and American), the number and approximate dates of proposed exchanges, and the expected placement locations in the United States. Proposals must also clearly state for each exchange component the number of days Fellows will spend in-country excluding international travel days.

b. Proposal Narrative

In 20, double-spaced pages, the proposal narrative should address all items specifically referenced in this NOFO, in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), and those items noted below:

- **Project Goals, Objectives, Anticipated Outcomes**

Proposals should include a clear, succinct statement of project goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes that expand upon the Professional Fellows Program's goals as stated in Section A of this NOFO. Objectives should be described in

specific, measurable, and realistic terms that are achievable within the scope of the project, both in terms of time and funding.

- **Background Information on the applicant organization and all sub-award recipient organizations (both U.S.-based organizations and foreign-based organizations)**

For each organization, the mission, the date of establishment, relevant expertise, past programmatic work, and ongoing programmatic work should be described. Previous awards from the Bureau since 2010 (especially those involving the exchange of young professionals), including both grants and cooperative agreements, should be listed by office (Citizen Exchanges, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges, etc.), project name, countries, year, and amount. Proposals should describe previous collaboration with proposed partner organizations, as well as clearly delineate a division of responsibilities between all organizations that will be involved in the project.

c. Budget

For more budget information including specific allowable costs, refer to both Section D.3m entitled “Allowable Costs,” as well as the PSI. Proposals should describe how the award recipient will conduct budget oversight as it relates to project management. In addition, proposals must include a detailed budget narrative.

d. Attachments

The items below may be included as attachments:

- A Project Management Plan for the entire life of the project that lists, in table format, outputs (major tasks that will be implemented by the award recipient and partner organizations), dates, and the organization/staff responsible;
- Letters of commitment and/or letters of support from: 1) proposed sub-recipient organizations (both U.S.-based and foreign-based); 2) proposed or past Fellowship placement organizations; and 3) preferably, from past exchange program participants;
- Resumes (no more than two pages in length) of proposed key staff at the applicant organization and all partner organizations that will be involved in the implementation of the project; and
- Draft program implementation materials such as U.S. program schedules, American Outbound program schedules, the program announcement, the program application, the agenda for the pre-departure orientation and the arrival orientation, and materials on any other key program elements.
- Proposals should describe in detail the applicant organization’s proposed plan for monitoring and evaluation. For further guidance, please see Section D.3h. “Program Monitoring and Evaluation.” Detailed evaluation plans that put the narrative over the 20-page limit and sample evaluation surveys or other evaluation tools may be included as an attachment.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed above under "ECA Responsibilities."

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2021

Approximate Total Funding: \$7,520,040

Approximate Number of Awards: 12 - 14

Approximate Average Award: \$400,000 - \$550,000. Note that proposals for all geographic regions that include a minimum of four countries will be considered for projects of a larger participant scope and a funding level of approximately \$500,000, and up to, but not exceeding \$750,000. Awards in the \$400,000 - \$550,000 range should support approximately 20-30 non-U.S. participants and 8-12 U.S. participants.

Floor of Award Range: \$400,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$750,000

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2021

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 30, 2023

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of these programs and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew these cooperative agreements for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing them again.

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.

C. Eligibility Information:

C.1 Eligible applicants. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D.3a and D.3c below).

C.2 Other Eligibility Requirements

- a. Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates awarding 12 – 14 cooperative agreements, in an amount of over \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- b. Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

Proposals must be two-way exchange programs that comply with the specific guidance included above at A.3. “Themes and Eligible Countries.” Proposals that do not comply with the guidance at “Themes and Eligible Countries” will be declared ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- c. Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

C.3 Cost-Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost-sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost-sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost-sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget’s Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA’s contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

D. Application and Submission Information: Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package: Please contact Anne Shue in the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Global Leaders Division, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20522-0503, email: ShueA@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

On all other inquiries and correspondence, please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number at the top of this announcement and contact the appropriate program officer who is listed at Section A.4. “Contact Information By Region.”

D.2 To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under Section D.3n. “Application Deadline and Methods of Submission.”

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

D.3b. Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget and budget narrative. Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM): All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting is completed on any issued award.

Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

D.3d. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS):

Prior to making a Federal Assistance award over \$250,000, the Federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIIS, they can comment on any information about its organization that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

D.3e. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.3f. Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J Visa: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award

recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3g. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and represent the diversity of political, social, and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Proposals should provide a clearly articulated plan for incorporating diversity into all aspects of the program and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section of this document, as well as the DIVERSITY FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into proposal submissions.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3h. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Please Note: The Bureau plans to add standardized indicators and corresponding data collection questions for performance monitoring during the period of performance of this award. Therefore, proposed performance monitoring plans and data collection instruments should be flexible enough

to incorporate those once established. Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3i. Virtual Exchange Component: Award recipients should have the ability and capacity to transition to virtual implementation strategies that continue to advance foreign policy objectives and achieve lasting benefits for U.S. citizens and international participants. Proposals must include innovative options for virtual activities to augment, or substitute for, in-person engagement with all program stakeholders when changing political and/or environmental situations result in restrictions on international travel that require ECA to temporarily halt in-person exchange activities. Proposals must also address how the organization will conduct virtual exchanges for participants who have limited access to internet and/or limited access to a computer or mobile device.

Additionally, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3j. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients: All ECA recipients must adhere to the requirements in ECA's Communications Guidance regarding the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3k. Budget Format: Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative

and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.3l. Key Personnel: ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>).

D.3m. Allowable Costs: Allowable costs for the program include the following:

Travel: International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; and ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for participants in Bureau-sponsored projects.

Per Diem: For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at: http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78

Book and Cultural Allowances: Participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50. Interpreters should be reimbursed up to \$150 for expenses when they escort participants to cultural events. U.S. project staff, trainers or participants are not eligible to receive these benefits.

Consultants: Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day per session. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that figure. Subaward recipient organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective award recipient and subaward recipient should be included in the proposal. Such subawards should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget. Contractors/contracting organizations may also be employed in which case the written agreement between the award recipient and the contractors/contracting organizations should be included in the proposal.

Room Rental: The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.

Materials: Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for Fellows. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget.

Supplies: Applicants may propose to use award funds to purchase supplies, such as computers and printers; supply costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.

Working Meal: One working meal may be provided during each U.S.-based and foreign-based component. Per capita costs for working meals may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental and other overhead charges. The number of invited guests may not exceed Fellows by more than a factor of two-to-one. Please note: inviting speakers to stay for lunch does not constitute a working meal.

Return Travel Allowance: A return travel allowance of \$70 for each non-U.S. participant may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

Re-Entry Seminars: Costs related to providing non-U.S. Fellows a re-entry seminar may include per diem, hotel accommodations, material development, and other related expenses.

Health and Travel Insurance: The award recipient will be responsible for enrolling both non-U.S. and American Fellows in the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the proposal budget. Applicants may include costs for travel insurance for both non-U.S. and American Fellows in the budget.

Wire Transfer Fees: When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to foreign-based partner organizations. Award recipients are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes: Visas for non-U.S. Fellows are provided by DOS and should not be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including travel for interviews, delivering or picking up passports, etc.

Administrative Costs: Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. Proposals are benefitted by administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources. Award recipient staff travel should NOT be included in the exchange participant numbers.

Reasonable Accommodations: Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose, and reflect plans to make the

necessary program modifications or participant numbers should these funds be used for reasonable accommodations

Professional Fellows Congresses: Allowable costs associated with the Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C. are:

1. Travel to/from Washington, D.C.: Domestic travel to Washington, D.C. for the Congress, including ground transportation to and from the airport to the conference hotel. Program plans that conclude with the D.C.-based Congress, send non-U.S. Fellows home directly from the Washington area at the conclusion of the Professional Fellows Congress.
2. Non-Congress related activities: ECA encourages award recipients to incorporate additional programmatic time in the D.C. metro area (before or after the Congress), using the opportunity to arrange meetings with government agencies, national organizations, and other key stakeholders. Costs for ground transportation, lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses for all additional days/nights in the D.C. area should be included in individual proposal budgets.

Note: Food and lodging for non-U.S. Fellows and award recipient staff (limited to two staff per organization) attending the Congress will be covered by the Congress award recipient under a separate award and should NOT be included in individual proposal budgets for this competition.

Alumni Activities: Reasonable costs related to alumni activities may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on activities. Proposals should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively utilize technology and online networking sites to enhance and amplify alumni programming. Organizations can propose small grants or a small grant competition for the Fellows to compete for to encourage their continued work on and implementation of their individual projects.

Organizational meeting in Washington, D.C.: Award recipients who will need to travel to Washington, D.C. for this meeting should budget appropriately for travel, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses.

Pandemic-related expenses: Pandemic-related expenses, if any, that are deemed necessary for implementing the two-way exchange program should be described in detail in order to receive consideration.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3n. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Monday, June 7, 2021

Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Search Grants” portion of the system.

D.3o. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, D.C. time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their

application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3p. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where

appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's grants officer.

E.1 REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank-ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, direct linkage to the goals of the Professional Fellows Program, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Proposals should demonstrate a realistic and achievable scope that fits within the budgetary and time parameters set forth in the NOFO. Proposals that secure one Fellowship placement during the exchange rather than multiple, short-term placements with different U.S. organizations will be deemed more competitive under the Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives criterion. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how project objectives and key project elements, especially the development of individual projects by the non-U.S. Fellows, will be achieved through programmatic activities.

2. Support of Diversity: Proposals should reflect substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be integrated into all aspects of the program including participant recruitment and selection, placements, program materials, etc. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate Fellows with physical disabilities. Applicants should refer to the Bureau's "Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines" in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI).

3. Institutional Capacity and Track Record: Proposals should include (1) the institution's mission and date of establishment; (2) detailed information about proposed partners including a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities; (3) an outline of prior awards, U.S. government and/or private support received, for programs of a similar nature; and (4) descriptions and resumes of key staff who will implement the program. The proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

4. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique

plus description of a methodology that will be used to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports.

5. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1 Award Notices: Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, and 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 be transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer as identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition following the completion of the review process.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>
<https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

F.3 Region and Topic Specific requirements: The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3a. Prohibition on the use of Federal Funds to Promote, Support, or advocate for the legalization or practice of Prostitution: The U.S. Government is opposed to prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. None of the funds made available under this agreement may be used to promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be

construed to preclude assistance designed to ameliorate the suffering of, or health risks to, victims while they are being trafficked or after they are out of the situation that resulted from such victims being trafficked.

The recipient shall insert the foregoing provision in all sub-agreements under this award.

This provision includes express terms and conditions of the agreement and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Department of State prior to the end of its term.

F.3b. Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza Programming: All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Nalinee Cain at CainNL@state.gov for additional information.

F.4. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the cooperative agreement year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#).
- 2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 120 days after the expiration or termination of the award;

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3h. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.5. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1.) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2.) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA program officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Anne Shue, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PF, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, ShueA@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:

Notice:

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 published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the 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 will be subject to periodic programmatic and financial reporting and evaluation requirements as outlined in the NOFO.

Matthew Lussenhop
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

March 31, 2021