

Department of State

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

(NOFO): FY 2023 Ambassador Fund for Summer Work Travel

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0009179

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 19.451

Key Date/Application Deadline: October 31, 2022

Executive Summary: The Office of Private Sector Exchange (BridgeUSA) of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the administration of the FY 2023 Ambassador Fund for Summer Work Travel (AFSWT). BridgeUSA plans to issue one cooperative agreement of approximately \$465,000, pending the availability of FY 2022 recovery funds that are being carried over for obligation in FY 2023, to implement the BridgeUSA AFSWT program. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to provide approximately 150 Summer Work Travel scholarships to foreign university students evenly distributed across Africa (AF), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), East Asia and Pacific (EAP), Near East and North Africa (NEA) and Western Hemisphere (WHA) regions.

AF: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. **35 participants across the region.**

EUR: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Greece, Kosovo, Poland, Portugal, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Ukraine. **35 participants across the region.**

NEA: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. **20 participants across the region.**

EAP: Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Laos, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. **25 participants across the region.**

WHA: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. **35 participants across the region.**

ECA reserves the right to add or remove eligible countries and/or regions prior to the issuance of the award. The proposal must demonstrate the applicant's flexibility to work with ECA and demonstrate the interest and ability to deliver customized AFSWT experiences. No invitations to participate in the BridgeUSA AFSWT program may be issued without U.S. Department of State approval.

The award recipient will recruit participants from marginalized populations (e.g., social, political, and economic). The program will be administered over 36 months from the date the award is made. The scholarships would cover participants' program fees, including placement at a U.S.-based host organization, health benefits coverage, visa, and SEVIS-related fees, and airfare.

The award recipient shall abide by the rules and regulations governing the Summer Work and Travel program (SWT) as stipulated in 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program regulations. The award recipient must either be a designated J-1 sponsor or, if not currently designated, must identify a designated J-1 sponsor as a subaward recipient. Applications must include a Letter of Commitment from the chosen sub-award recipient. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov>. For additional information on current designated sponsors, applicants should contact: Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, Floor C2, Room C2L13 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20522. The award recipient shall abide by the rules and regulations governing the (J) visa Exchange Visitor Program as stipulated in 22 CFR Part 62 <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-I/subchapter-G/part-62#part-62>

The purpose of the BridgeUSA AFSWT Scholarship Program is to provide underserved foreign college and university students with opportunities to interact with U.S. citizens, experience U.S. culture while sharing their own cultures with Americans they meet, travel in the United States, and work in jobs that require minimal training and are seasonal or temporary to earn funds to help defray a portion of their expenses. Employment is of a seasonal nature when the required service is tied to a certain time of the year by an event or pattern and requires labor levels above and beyond existing worker levels. Employment is of a temporary nature when an employer's need for the duties to be performed is a one-time occurrence, a peak load need, or an intermittent need. It is the nature of employers' needs, not the nature of the duties that is controlling. Participation in this category is for foreign nationals who are bona fide foreign post-secondary students, who at the time of application are enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or a full-time course of study at a foreign ministerially recognized post-secondary academic institution and whose purpose is to work and travel in the United States for up to four months during the break between academic years.

The BridgeUSA AFSWT award recipient will have the primary oversight responsibility for recruitment and selection of a diverse group of participants. Participating U.S. Embassies will be encouraged to identify eligible participants and submit candidate nominations to the award recipient through ECA program office. The U.S. Embassies and award recipient would publicly award the AFSWT, provide participants with additional screening, job interviews and placements, and support for the duration of their scholarships. The award recipient will work in partnership with BridgeUSA to coordinate the administration of the exchange program, as outlined in 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program regulations (Subpart A and Subpart B), support networking and alumni activities for program participants, and develop a robust evaluation system to measure program effectiveness. This will include developing program marketing and recruitment resources, administering pre-arrival and in-country orientations, and

managing all other program-related activities. Additionally, the award recipient will launch and facilitate, for the duration of this cooperative agreement, a BridgeUSA AFSWT social media site (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.) for participants and alumni, who must sign a media consent waiver. The social media platform will be used for current and former participants to share experiences, exchange ideas, and stay connected beyond the end of the program. The award recipient will work with BridgeUSA to connect participants and alumni with ECA's International Exchange Alumni network.

The AFSWT Scholarship recipients may be subject to 212(e) two-year home residency requirement. More information on this requirement can be found at www.travel.state.gov.

Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

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.

Purpose: In order to enhance the U.S. Department of State's engagement with BridgeUSA program participants in support of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy objectives, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA), Private Sector Exchange Directorate (ECA/EC), is issuing a NOFO for \$465,000, pending the availability of FY 2023 funds, to conduct the FY 2023 AFSWT. One of the most effective ways to combat disinformation about the United States and democracy is to provide people with a new framework for seeing the United States and understanding democracy --- and that can only happen via first-hand experience. This is an opportunity for foreign university students to travel to the United States for longer periods of time so they can better understand the United States and Americans. Summer Work Travel is a unique opportunity where youth can experience first-hand American culture and traditions.

Background: Through its oversight of BridgeUSA, the Office of Private Sector Exchange (BridgeUSA) supports the mission of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) by facilitating educational and cultural exchange programs for approximately 300,000 program participants who come to the United States each year to participate in 13 different program

categories. BridgeUSA designates and monitors approximately 1,500 “sponsor organizations” that recruit, place, and monitor “exchange visitors” from more than 200 countries and territories.

Through people-to-people exchanges, BridgeUSA supports the Department’s foreign policy objectives and strategic priorities, e.g., creating resilient communities, countering disinformation by supporting civil society, and promoting open transparent institutions, global health, climate change, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and human rights. Since 2006, over four million program participants have participated in BridgeUSA programs. Program participants who experience successful BridgeUSA programs become “citizen ambassadors” who share their new understanding of American values with their friends and family upon return home. In partnership with designated sponsors, BridgeUSA recognizes that the foundation of successful exchanges is ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all program participants. Other factors that contribute to successful experiences include safe and secure housing and transportation; integration into the community/workplace; and acquisition of new skills, including improved English language proficiency. The Department and program sponsors continuously seek ways to improve all programmatic components to ensure the development of a large cadre of program alumni who serve as lifelong citizen ambassadors.

Goals: The mission of BridgeUSA provides opportunities for international candidates looking to travel and gain experience in the United States. The multifaceted programs enable foreign nationals to come to the United States to teach, study, conduct research, demonstrate special skills or receive on the job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years. BridgeUSA’s mission – to increase mutual understanding between Americans and people of other countries – remains vital to U.S. national security and building people-to-people connections around the world. Through the FY 2023 AFSWT, BridgeUSA aims to:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States;
2. Provide opportunities for BridgeUSA participants to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies to develop solutions to pressing local and global challenges;
3. Increase Americans’ global competitiveness through new and expanded partnerships with BridgeUSA alumni professionals from around the world;
4. Create resilient communities and address disinformation by supporting civil society, open transparent institutions, global health, climate change, diversity and inclusion, and human rights; and
5. Build a global network of like-minded professionals committed to creating positive change in their workplaces and communities.

In close coordination with the Office of Private Sector Exchange, the award recipient should be prepared to administer the BridgeUSA AFSWT Program in accordance with 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program regulations, and as specified in the cooperative agreement, including but not limited to recruitment, screening and selection of candidates, distribution of scholarship

funds to participants, placement of participants with pre-selected host organizations, providing pre-arrival and in-country orientations, monitoring of program participants, and evaluation of program the effectiveness.

Organizational Capacity: Applicant organizations must demonstrate in their proposals their capacity for conducting international educational and cultural exchanges, supporting exchange alumni engagement activities, and providing substantive professional placements for up-and-coming leaders. Applicants should also illustrate in their proposals the breadth of their experience working in international exchange and a record of flexibility and adaptability in programming under short timelines or challenging conditions. Proposals should include concrete examples in which the organization has responded quickly to rapidly evolving circumstances, including, if possible, examples that demonstrate the ability to recruit participants from a diverse and geographically dispersed community.

In addition, applicants must demonstrate the breadth of their experience working with emerging leaders, including professional development programming, virtual engagement, and the development of action plans and alumni networks. Applicant organizations must demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate host placements for a diverse group of participants. The proposed process must also include a robust monitoring and evaluation plan that will enable the Department of State to measure program impact beyond the end of the program without additional ECA funding.

Partner Organizations: Applicants should provide examples of organizations and individuals with whom they would partner to host participants, e.g., U.S.-based designated sponsor organizations or other U.S. host organizations where program participants will be placed. Applicants should describe previous placements and program activities. Strong proposals should include partners that may assist in the selection of participants, program activities, host employers and sites of activity, for example in-country organizations that can reach diverse groups.

The responsibilities laid out in Section A.1. can also be found in 22 CFR § 62.32, the regulations governing participation in Summer Work Travel programs that are conducted by Department of State-designated sponsors. BridgeUSA programs are fee-funded, and program participants may receive stipends/ wages from their placement host organizations. Participants are not to be compensated through grant/award funds.

A.1. Recipient Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the recipient organization are as follows:

- 1) Develop and execute a communications strategy to manage recruitment, highlight the program and connect scholarship program alumni.
- 2) Coordinate with BridgeUSA and participating U.S. embassies regarding applications, documents, and visa appointments, and respond to their inquiries

- 3) ***AFSWT Participant screening and selection.*** The award recipient shall be responsible for adequately screening and making the final selection. The screening process requires that sponsors (or vetted foreign entities acting on their behalf) at a minimum must:
- Conduct and document interviews with potential participants either in-person or by video-conference;
 - Verify proficiency in conversational English and reading comprehension through either recognized language tests administered by academic institutions or English language schools or through the required documented interviews;
 - Select applicants who demonstrate their intention to participate in the cultural aspects of the Summer Work Travel Program. Confirm that at the time of application, applicants (including final year students) are enrolled full-time and pursuing studies at accredited post-secondary, classroom-based, academic institutions physically located outside of the United States and have successfully completed at least one semester, or equivalent, of post-secondary academic study.
- 4) ***AFSWT Participant orientation.*** In addition, the award recipient must provide program participants, prior to participants' departures from their home countries, the following information and/or documentation:
- A copy of the Department of State's Summer Work Travel Participant Letter;
 - A copy of the Department of State's Summer Work Travel Program Brochure;
 - The Department of State's toll-free help line telephone number;
 - The sponsor's 24/7 immediate contact telephone number;
 - Information advising participants of their obligations to notify their sponsors within ten days after they arrive in the United States and within ten days after they initially secure or change residences;
 - Information advising participants that they may not begin working at initial, replacement, or additional jobs until their sponsors have verified the terms and conditions of such employment and fully vetted their host employers as set forth at EVP regulations;
 - For participants with jobs secured prior to departing from selected home countries, documentation explaining the terms and conditions of such jobs and providing information about available housing and transportation to and from work;
 - Information explaining the cultural component of the AFSWT Scholarship Program, including guidance on how to best experience U.S. culture and/or descriptions of cultural opportunities arranged by the sponsor; and
 - Information explaining that sponsors will terminate the programs of participants who fail to comply with enumerated program regulations (e.g., reporting their arrivals, reporting changes of residence, not starting work at unverified jobs, responding to sponsor monthly outreach/monitoring efforts).
- 5) ***AFSWT Cultural exchange***
- Award recipient must ensure that all participants have opportunities to work alongside U.S. citizens and interact regularly with U.S. citizens to experience U.S.

culture during the workday portion of their Summer Work Travel scholarship programs; and

- Award recipient must ensure that all participants have opportunities to engage in cultural activities or events outside of work by planning, initializing, and carrying out events or other activities that provide participants' exposure to U.S. culture.

6) ***AFSWT Participant placement***

- Award recipient and third parties acting on their behalf may not pay or otherwise provide any incentive to employers to accept program participants for job placements with such employers.
- Award recipient must confirm initial, replacement, and additional jobs placements of all AFSWT scholarship participants before participants may start work by verifying, at a minimum, the terms and conditions of such employment and fully vetting their host employers as set forth at in EVP regulations. Once AFSWT participants have arrived in the United States and identified initial, replacement, or additional jobs, award recipient must vet such jobs within 72 hours.

7) ***AFSWT Program Planning and Participant Monitoring***

- Maintain, at a minimum, monthly personal contacts with program participants. Such contact may be in-person, by telephone, or via exchanges of electronic mail (including a response from the participant) and must be properly documented. The award recipient must promptly and appropriately address issues affecting the participants' health, safety, and welfare identified through such contacts; and provide appropriate assistance to participants on an as-needed basis and be available to participants (and host employers) to assist as facilitators, counselors, and information resources.
- Arrange housing for each participant in conjunction with host organizations and share rules and regulations for housing with participants;
- Ensure that each participant receives an orientation upon arrival in the United States;
- Enroll participants in the Bureau's ASPE health benefits plan or alternative plan that meets J-1 visa requirements and is approved by ECA, advise participants about the benefits plan, and assist with claims as necessary;
- Monitor participants' adjustment, health and well-being, and program performance. Oversee the coordination and implementation of health and safety protocols and procedures between all individual host organizations and the administrative partner.
- Always manage participant issues and emergencies in coordination with the Bureau's program office, and submit participant incident report forms, as needed, based on ECA policy guidelines;
- Assist participants in developing an individual development plan;
- Assist participants in contributing to service learning/ volunteer opportunities and developing leadership skills;
- Develop and facilitate cultural exchange enrichment activities;
- Manage and monitor the J-1 visa duration and SEVIS status of the participants;

- Manage financial aspects of the program where applicable including accident and sickness benefits, host university agreements, taxes, and other activity costs;
- Assume overall responsibility for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for participants;

8) Alumni Programming and Ongoing Engagement

- Track and maintain updated lists of alumni and facilitate follow-on activities with alumni after they return home; and
- Plan and coordinate activities that would create opportunities for BridgeUSA AFSWT-wide alumni engagement and amplify host organization alumni engagement efforts to strengthen both the program-specific brand and the BridgeUSA alumni network.

Additional Information:

All materials, publicity, 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.

Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). A description on how the Bureau's policy on Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be integrated into all aspects of the program including but not limited to program materials and training methodology. Please refer to guidance in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) under D.9. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Freedom and Democracy Guidelines.

Budget. Please refer to section D.13.a. in this document for allowable costs and the PSI for guidance on formatting your budget.

Acknowledging ECA's Financial Support. An acknowledgment to follow guidance in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) entitled "Acknowledgment of ECA's Financial Support and Use of the Department Seal." Proposals should also indicate agreement to use the "BridgeUSA" logo in all relevant program materials, applications, websites, and other related materials.

Unsolicited Documents. Attachments that do not directly address the proposed project (e.g., organization brochures, pamphlets, unsolicited reports) are strongly discouraged.

A.2. Substantial Involvement:

In a cooperative agreement, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. BridgeUSA's activities and responsibilities for the FY 2023 AFSWT Program are as follows:

1. Routine monitoring to include providing advice and assistance in the execution of all program components; seeking relevant U.S. Embassy approval of scholarship program participants; approving program timelines and agendas; assisting with SEVIS-related

issues; monitoring and evaluating the program (including site visits where necessary); conducting an annual performance review.

2. Assist with connecting scholarship program alumni with relevant U.S. Embassy and BridgeUSA Alumni Network.
3. Reviewing and approving of all final program publicity and other material;
4. Assisting with all participant emergencies;
5. Liaising with relevant U.S. embassies and country desk officers at the U.S. Department of State, specifically in terms of recruitment and selection efforts;
6. Assisting in arrangements for the debriefing session with Department of State and Public Affairs Sections (PASs) at U.S. embassies/consulates overseas;
7. Coordinating with the award recipient to publicize the program through various media outlets and social media platforms of ECA and Public Affairs Sections (PASs) at U.S. embassies/consulates overseas.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2023

Approximate Total Funding: \$465,000, pending the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One.

Approximate Average Award: \$465,000, pending the availability of funds.

Minimum "Floor" of Award: \$465,000, pending the availability of funds.

Maximum "Ceiling" of Award: \$465,000, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Award Date: January 12, 2023, pending the availability of funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: January 1, 2026.

Additional Information: The cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of performance ending January 1, 2026. This award will cover three years of activity.

The Department 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 academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons, and other not-for-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.3. and D.5. below).

C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements

The following additional eligibility requirements apply to this NOFO announcement:

a.) ECA's grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in ECA funding. ECA anticipates making one grant/cooperative agreement, in an amount of \$465,000 to support all 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.) All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI (if applicable), 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.

c.) For this program:

Eligible J-1 category and Countries: Under this NOFO, a single award will be issued in the **SWT J-1 category** for the following regions: **Africa (AF), East Asia and Pacific (EAP), Europe and Eurasia (EUR), Near East and North Africa (NEA), and Western Hemisphere (WHA) regions.** The award recipient must abide by the target recruitment goals per region as laid out in the Executive Summary.

ECA reserves the right to add or remove eligible countries and/or regions prior to the issuance of the award. The proposal must demonstrate the applicant's flexibility to work with ECA to add customized BridgeUSA AFSWT experiences. No invitations to participate in the BridgeUSA AFSWT program may be issued without U.S. Department of State approval.

d.) Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

If the award recipient is not currently designated by the U.S. Department of State as a J-1 sponsor, they will need to identify a designated J-1 sponsor as a subaward recipient. Applications that do not clearly identify a J-1 sponsor through a Letter of Commitment will be considered ineligible.

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 of cost sharing required for this competition. However, ECA 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 Guidance 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 may be reduced in like proportion.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

D.1. Solicitation Package Location

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the ECA's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

D.2. Content and Form of Submission

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3. 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.4. Required Proposal Elements

All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

D.5. 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 a current registration 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.gov 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.6. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIS)

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 FAPIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIS, 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 FAPIS, 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.7. 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.8. Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

ECA 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.

The award recipient 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

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.9. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to ECA's authorizing legislation, "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic origin, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, equity, and inclusion will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. Programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. Please refer to the "Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" review criterion of this document for more information on how this will be reviewed as a part of any application. Please also refer to the "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating DEI into the proposal.

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," ECA "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.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Distinct from grants or cooperative agreement monitoring and participant monitoring, performance monitoring is designed to assess progress against a program's goals and objectives. A performance monitoring framework is vital to tracking the direction, pace, and magnitude of change that result from ECA programs.

ECA created the Monitoring Data for ECA (MODE) Framework to measure the performance of ECA programs. **The MODE Framework provides standard indicators and corresponding survey questions to ensure consistent measures across all ECA programs.** More resources and guidance documents on the MODE Framework are available online at:

<https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-monitoring-evaluation-learning-and-innovation-meli-unit/mode-framework-eca-applicants-and>.

For this proposal, ECA requires the applicant include the MODE Framework objectives and indicators listed below (note that, because not all MODE objectives and indicators are relevant for a program, the numbering below will not be sequential). In addition to the ECA-required objectives and indicators, applicants may also select additional MODE Framework indicators (see the Indicator Book on the MODE Framework website), or design custom objectives and indicators that are specific to the proposed program and this proposal.

- Demographic Questions as outlined in the Indicator Book (page vi: <https://app.box.com/s/7ms6e5f66kji0h8sgao8uno13drvsg1z>) and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)
- Objective 1: Advance participant and beneficiary cross-cultural competence and global perspective
 - Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
 - E1.1.01: Percent of participants reporting that their exchange experience offered opportunities to engage with other cultures
 - E1.1.04: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the United States Government
 - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program

- E1.1.10: Percent of foreign participants who traveled to the United States for the first time during their program
 - E1.1.17: Percent foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the American People
 - E1.1.18: Percent of foreign participants indicating an increase in understanding of United States culture and values
 - E1.1.19: Percent of participants agreeing with statements in support of democratic values
- Objective 3: Strengthen engagement among participants, alumni, beneficiaries, and institutions
 - E3.0.02: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of Americans
 - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant
- Objective 4: Strengthen personal, professional, and technical abilities and aptitudes of participants and beneficiaries
 - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of exchange program participation
 - E4.0.09: Percent of participants reporting an increase in language skills as a result of exchange program participation
 - o Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants engage in language, academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs
 - E4.1.01: Total number of participants
 - E4.1.02: Total number of program cohorts
- Objective 8: Enhance the quality and effectiveness of ECA programs by leveraging the Bureau's resources, policy, and stakeholder relationships
 - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys

Performance Monitoring Plans (PMP)

ECA recommends the use of a PMP to serve as the primary reference document for performance monitoring for this award. If used, the PMP is an important part of any proposal, as it outlines how the applicant plans to track progress towards the proposed program's goals and objectives through indicators and corresponding data collection questions. A PMP document that includes all MODE Framework indicators is a part of this solicitation's attachments. Specific instructions on how to modify the PMP to be responsive to this solicitation are included in that document. While ECA recommends the applicant use the PMP format provided, this is not a requirement. If a PMP is not included in the proposal, applicants should provide similar information to that found in the suggested PMP format, in a presentation of your choice. A training on how to complete a PMP is available here: <https://youtu.be/RBUF9pIIBwc>. Successful PMPs (or similar documentation) should include the following:

- **Objectives.** Programmatic objectives are statements of the condition(s) that state what the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART; see the ECA Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Innovation (MELI) Unit's pages on the ECA website for more information: <https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-evaluation-division/capacity-building>). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the MODE Framework, the Functional Bureau Strategy (<https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau>), or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives.
- **Indicators.** Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives and sub-objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations (meaning, breakdowns of the data by subgroups, such as gender or country; the PMP lists the demographic questions required to obtain the information necessary to report the disaggregations). Each indicator should also include a target number to be achieved. A target is a planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe. (For more information on how to set targets, access this webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUCQbc0I7Nw>).
 - If you do not use the PMP format provided, note that any performance monitoring reference document the applicant submits should include the information in the column headers (Indicator Name, Definition, Target, Survey Question, etc.) in the PMP attachment at a minimum.
 - In addition to those indicators outlined in above, the applicant may propose additional custom, program-specific indicators in the PMP (ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each custom programmatic objective).
 - During the period of performance of the award, the ECA program office may further revise, add, or remove indicators. Therefore, the applicant's PMP and data collection instruments should be flexible enough to incorporate those once established.

Award recipients are responsible for collecting indicator data only on participant outcomes during the period of performance of the award itself (see the PMP for guidelines as to when these data collection efforts should occur). ECA will measure outcomes of ECA participants at one, three, five, and 10 years after the exchange has ended to capture the long-term impact of ECA programming unless otherwise specified in the NOFO and/or POGI. In this instance, the recipient will be responsible for coordinating with ECA on any alumni surveys to de-duplicate questions and minimize potential survey fatigue.

Award recipients will be required to submit an upload of the raw data (in CSV format) along with the State Assistance Management System Domestic (SAMS-D RPM) reporting (see below). Regardless of the survey platform used, **all** MODE Framework survey questions outlined above are **required** (i.e., should be forced response); please see the Consent Language in the MODE Framework Indicator Book for more information on how to convey this to participants/survey respondents.

Program Performance M&E Narrative

The applicant should include information within the program narrative section(s) of the proposal that outlines how the applicant intends to measure the indicators listed above. This will be separate from the PMP and should include but not be limited to:

- An overview of resources available to the applicant that outline the team structure and responsibilities surrounding performance monitoring.
- The mechanism(s) through which surveys and other data collection tools (if applicable) will be administered, including which platform will be used, and when and how surveys will be advertised to participants – detailing strategies to ensure adequate survey response rates (https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/eca_eval_division_survey_response_rates.pdf), and to reduce selection and non-response bias.
- A brief explanation of data analysis and reporting procedures.
- An overview of a proposed learning plan and feedback loops to ensure that the Grant Officer (GO)/Grant Officer Representative (GOR) are informed on performance monitoring issues at regular intervals.

SAMS-D RPM Reporting Requirements

The SAMS-D is a database solution that serves as the official system of record for all U.S. Department of State and ECA awards. The Results Performance Monitoring (RPM) module within SAMS-D is an extension module that enables users to report performance monitoring data in the same system where they currently manage federal assistance actions. As part of ECA's efforts to streamline data collection and management, the recipient(s) of this award will be required to input performance reporting data outlined in this solicitation into the SAMS-D RPM. The data stored in the SAMS-D RPM will provide ECA with a bureau-wide, uniform M&E reporting tool that is already linked with other elements of the awards familiar to existing awardees.

D.11. Virtual Exchange Component

When changing political, health, environmental, or other similar circumstances require a suspension or halt of in-person activities and where ECA determines that a virtual alternative is appropriate and viable, award recipients should demonstrate the ability and capacity to transition from in-person to virtual exchanges. Proposals should demonstrate the organization's capacity to provide innovative options for virtual activities to substitute for in-person engagement for program participants. Organizations should consider how they will implement virtual exchange activities, given the potential limits to internet access from participants in some locations and while continuing to advance foreign policy objectives and achieve lasting benefits for U.S. citizens and international participants.

In addition to planning for virtual exchange activities if in-person programming is prohibited, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage virtual programming technologies during or in addition to in-person programming. ECA 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) 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. 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.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients

All ECA Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.13. 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, a detailed budget, and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Sub-budgets should be easy to reference back to line-items in the main budget.

The provided budget format is provided as an aid in organizing the budget, it is suggested but not required as a submission format for your proposal budget.

D.13.a. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) Travel: International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs for American participants. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.
- 2) Overhead. 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 should show strong overhead 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.
- 3) SEVIS/I-901 Fees. This is a one-time fee for persons applying for J-1 visas. The fee covers the costs of administering the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System ([SEVIS](#)) and related enforcement efforts. Only principal J-1 applicants must pay the [SEVIS I-901](#) fee.
- 4) J-1 Visa Fees. All program participants/applicants must pay the machine-readable visa (MRV) fee to obtain a visa interview appointment.
- 5) Healthcare Benefits Coverage. Enroll participants in the Bureau's ASPE health benefits plan or alternative plan that meets J-1 visa requirements and is approved by ECA.

D.14. 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.15. Application Deadline and Method of Submission

Application Deadline Date: Monday, October 31, 2022.

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

D.16. 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>).

D.16.a. 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>

D.16.b. 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>

D.16.c. 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

D.16.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, DC 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 found 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.17. Intergovernmental Review of Applications

Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Review Process

ECA 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 ECA 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 U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the ECA's Grants Officer.

E.2. 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. Quality of the program idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to ECA's mission.
- 2. Program planning and Ability to achieve program objectives:** A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
- 3. Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** Proposals should show substantive support of ECA's policy on Diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how DEI will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEI plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEI. Proposals should demonstrate how DEI will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities.

4. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by ECA's Grants Division. ECA will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

5. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages. Proposals should include a fully developed performance M&E narrative and a PMP (or similar document) that includes the goals, objectives, and indicators used. Proposals will be evaluated for feasibility and alignment with the M&E section of this solicitation, including if: 1) M&E resources, monitoring mechanisms, and data analysis and reporting procedures are sufficiently detailed and realistic; 2) a realistic learning plan provides a strategy to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices in conjunction with the Grant Officer/GOR; and 3) a PMP (or other document that includes similar information) is complete, clear, and well-organized. All submitted PMPs and M&E narrative sections will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided information on the minimum data required as per the solicitation.

6. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing: The overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals 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, allocated and committed through internal ECA procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the ECA's Grants Division. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer 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 applicable to all ECA agreements include:

- 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.
- U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

For a copy of the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, or to review other Department of State assistance information, please download from: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>

F.3. Region and Topic Specific requirements

The following additional requirements apply to this project:

F.3.a. 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 (David Benze, benzedk@state.gov and Elizabeth Ongao, ongaoe@state.gov or by telephone at 202-676-7895 for additional information.

F.3.b. Special Provision For Performance In A Designated Combat Area And Future Contingency Operations (Currently Iraq And Afghanistan)

Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over \$150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment. The DOS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer

and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number." The following information shall be provided:

1. Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:
 - a. Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
 - b. Total Number Host Country Personnel:
 - c. Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, Recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

F.4. Reporting Requirements

All reports must be submitted in a timely manner. 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**; 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 ECA in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to ECA 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 ECA as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

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.

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about this announcement, contact: Elizabeth Ongao, ongaoe@state.gov and David Benze, benzedk@state.gov, U.S. Department of State, BridgeUSA, ECA/EC, 2200 C St, NW, Washington, DC 20037, or by telephone, 202-676-7895.

All correspondence with ECA 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, ECA 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 ECA representative. Explanatory information provided by ECA that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. ECA 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.

Scott Weinhold
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

September 1, 2022