



and school administrators to support and monitor the quality of the exchange; and (4) coordinate enhancement opportunities for the participants to learn about American culture, community service, and leadership.

ECA intends to award 12-15 cooperative agreements (one base year plus two option years) for an estimated total amount of \$27,000,000. Please see section II. Award Information below for additional details.

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

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

United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

**Purpose:** For the 2014-15 academic year, the Bureau anticipates providing scholarships for approximately 900 students from approximately 40 countries to attend U.S. high schools and live with American host families. This solicitation refers to students from the following countries: Albania, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Egypt, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel (Arab Communities), Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank, and Yemen.

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the proposal project configurations, budgets, participant numbers, countries, and program duration at its discretion as situations warrant and as funding permits. Should you have questions about

countries on this list, please contact the Youth Programs Division Program Officer Kevin Baker (BakerKM1@state.gov). Since 2003, the YES inbound program has provided scholarships for high school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend a semester or one academic year in the United States. (Note that approximately 45 Malaysian students will participate only in the spring semester due to the school year calendar in their home country. Award recipients may expect that approximately one of every 15-20 students proposed will be a Malaysian semester student.) The program promotes mutual understanding and respect. Students live with volunteer host families, attend high school, engage in activities to learn about American society and values, acquire leadership skills, and help educate Americans about their countries and cultures.

Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) are invited to submit proposals to recruit and select U.S. host families and schools for YES students, monitor and support participants, and conduct orientations and enhancement activities during the 2014-15 academic year. Each applicant must propose to place a minimum of 30 YES inbound students; there is

no maximum number. It is anticipated that 12-15 awards will be made to place and support the total cohort of students. An organization wishing to place fewer than 30 students may do so as a sub-awardee to an organization applying for a cooperative agreement and that will itself place a minimum of 30 students. In such a case, the lead awardee must explain in its proposal how it will provide mentoring, training, oversight, and additional monitoring of students placed by its sub-awardees.

**Program Scope and Timeline:** This announcement requests proposals for the YES Placement Components (or "Placement Components"), which involves activities related to the placement, monitoring, and support of international YES students coming to the United States.

A second announcement solicits proposals for the YES Overseas Components (or "Overseas Components"). Your role, responsibilities, and required interaction with the Overseas Components awardee are defined in the Program Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) for this solicitation.

In general, the Placement Components awardee will be expected to:

- Recruit, screen, and select U.S. host families for YES participants;
- Select schools and secure school enrollments for YES participants;
- Conduct in-person host family and student community-based orientations;
- Monitor and support students throughout the school year; and
- Organize enhancement activities for students.

Placements may be in any region of the United States. Strong preference will be given to organizations that choose to place participants in clusters of at least three ECA-sponsored program students under the supervision of the same Local Coordinator as explained in the POGI. Please refer to the POGI for details on essential program elements, permissible costs, and criteria used to select and place students.

**Approximate Timeline:**

- September 30, 2013: Cooperative Agreements awarded, pending

the availability of funds

- Fall 2013: Marketing of program begins
- February 2014: Distribution of student applications by Overseas Components awardee
- Spring 2014: Recruitment of host schools and families
- June-July 2014: Pre-Departure orientations conducted by Overseas Components awardee overseas
- July 2014: Students begin to arrive in groups
- Late August 2014: All final placement information (host family names and addresses, confirmed school enrollments) must be submitted to Department of State
- July-September 2014: Post-Arrival orientations for students
- September 2014: First Option Year exercised, pending successful performance and the availability of funds
- January-February 2015: Mid-Year orientations for students
- Spring 2015: Civic Education Workshop for 100 selected YES students; Social Media Workshop for 26 ECA-sponsored students; and English Teaching Workshop for 28 ECA-sponsored students (For your information only. Do not offer a plan or budget in your proposal for these events.)
- May-June 2015: Re-Entry orientations and departure of AY 2014-2015 students

- September 2015: Second Option Year exercised, pending successful performance and the availability of funds
- May-June 2016: Re-Entry orientations and departure of AY 2015-2016 students
- May-June 2017: Re-Entry orientations and departure of AY 2016-2017 students
- June 30, 2017: Cooperative Agreement end date

**ECA Activities and Responsibilities:** In a cooperative agreement, ECA/PE/C/PY is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA/PE/C/PY activities and responsibilities for the YES program include:

- Providing advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- Serving as liaison between the award recipients and personnel within the Department of State, including ECA/PE/C/PY, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- Monitoring and evaluating the program and its participants through email and phone communication, and site visits.
- Issuing DS-2019 forms for participants. All participants will travel on a U.S. government designation for the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program.

- Creating and updating SEVIS status and maintaining all SEVIS records.
- Hosting an annual meeting for all award recipients to provide program guidance and gather feedback.
- Approving program materials and website information.
- Representing the U.S. government as the program sponsor at exchange events, program events, and orientations.
- Publicizing program highlights and responding to Congressional and Department requests for information.
- Performing an annual performance evaluation/review. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of option years.

Proposal narratives should include a brief statement of commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds. The narrative should focus on the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration, and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two option years are exercised.

Applicants are encouraged to view the program's websites at <http://www.yesprograms.org/> and <http://exchanges.state.gov/youth/programs/yes.html>, and to contact the Youth Division Program Officer listed in this solicitation with any questions.

**II. Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** New Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under I. above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2013 - base year; FY 2014 - option year one (pending successful performance and availability of funds), FY 2015 - option year two (pending successful performance and availability of funds).

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$27,000,000 - This figure represents base year plus two option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** 12-15 cooperative agreements

**Approximate Average Award:** Funding level is dependent on the number of proposed students.

**Anticipated Award Date:** Pending the availability of funds, September 30, 2013.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** June 30 2017; this date reflects the anticipated duration of the award - one base year plus two option years.

**Additional Information:** Cooperative agreements will be awarded for a period of 12 months (base year) with options for one additional 12-month period (option year one) and one additional 20-month period (option year two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise an option year at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise option years will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

**III. Eligibility Information:**

**III.1. Eligible Applicants:** Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

**III.2. 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 OMB Circular A-110 (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. 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.

**III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

- a. Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with fewer than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. Since an award to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange

program for a minimum of 30 students will exceed \$130,000, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. Your organization may however, seek another qualified applicant and serve as a sub-awardee under a proposal submitted by that organization if you would like to place fewer than 30 students and your total budget is less than \$130,000.

- b. Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the following or they will be declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process:
- Proposed programs may not involve multiple academic year exchanges or exchanges to take place other than between the dates of July 2014 and June 2015;
  - Proposals that identify partners critical to the implementation of the program must include letters of commitment from those partners.

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

**IV.1. Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

Please contact the Youth Programs Division by telephone (202) 632-6065, fax (202) 632-9355, or email Matt O'Rourke at [ORourkeMM@state.gov](mailto:ORourkeMM@state.gov) to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-13-21-OY-OB located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from [grants.gov](http://grants.gov). Please see section IV.3f for further information.

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

Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please contact Kevin Baker by telephone (202) 632-6073 or e-mail: [BakerKM1@state.gov](mailto:BakerKM1@state.gov) and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-13-21-OY-OB located at the top of this announcement for all other inquiries.

**IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package via the Internet:**

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>. Please read all information before downloading.

**IV.3. Content and Form of Submission:** Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

**IV.3a.** You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number that uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF-424 that is part of the formal application package.

**IV.3b.** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget. Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) for additional formatting and technical requirements.

**IV.3c.** All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (SAM) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. 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. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways: 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form. 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their cooperative agreement activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers,

trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of cooperative agreement activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

**IV.3d.** Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

**IV.3d.1 Adherence to all regulations governing the J1 Visa:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and

Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving cooperative agreements under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set

forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq., including the oversight of their 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 Office of Citizen Exchanges of 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://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Department of State  
Office of Private Sector Exchange  
ECA/EC/D/PS  
SA-44, Suite 668  
301 4th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20547

**IV.3d.2. Diversity, Freedom, and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your 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," 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.

Funds provided through this award may not be used to promote participation in, or to purchase equipment or supplies intended for, activities related to religious worship or proselytization. Host families, school officials, and recipient organizations shall not require program participants to attend religious services. However, as part of their exchange experience, participants may be offered the opportunity to take part voluntarily in this facet of their host culture at their own discretion. Host families are encouraged to enable participants living with them to attend services of the participant's religion, if the participant so desires and the services are available within a reasonable distance of the host family's residence.

#### **IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the program'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 timeframe), 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 RFGP.

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 RFGP (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.

**IV.3e.** Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

**IV.3e.1.** 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.

**For competitions that will be renewed through the option year, applicants must submit:**

1. the SF-424A, which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
2. a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
3. an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two option years).

**To exercise the option year mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:**

1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year. This request should be incorporated/highlighted in the third quarterly program report;

3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested option year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

**The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:**

1. Closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional option years. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)
2. Review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports.
3. Review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent option years.

All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional option years.

Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.

**IV.3e.2.** Any/all sub-awards/agreements including accompanying budgets required to accomplish overall program objectives described herein, shall be submitted with the proposal package and must be approved by the Grants Officer, prior to commencement.

**IV.3e.3.** Any/all sub-award budgets must be submitted in similar detail and format as the overall budget to allow complete and consistent review and justification. A single line total within an overall budget representing a complex activity, for example, is insufficient; sub-awards representing activity similar to that done by the lead award recipient or other sub-recipient must be presented with comparable budget formats, representing similar cost fields.

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

**IV.3f. Submission Dates and Times:**

**Application Deadline Date:** March 5, 2013

**Reference Number:** ECA/PE/C/PY-13-21-OY-OB

**Methods 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 "Find" portion of the system. Along with the Project Title, all applicants must enter the solicitation reference number in Box 11 on the SF-424 contained in the mandatory PSI document.

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.

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately

after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

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

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 "For Applicants" 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.

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

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800-518-4726

Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. EST

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.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 midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission

process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**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.**

**IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications:** Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **V.1. Review Process**

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. In addition, ECA will review the record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq. of applicant organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors by ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange. If it is determined that an applicant organization submitting a proposal has a record of not being in compliance,

its proposal will be deemed technically ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process. If in compliance, the applicant organization's record of compliance will be used as one factor in evaluating the record/ability of organizations to carry out successful exchange programs.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office. 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. 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.

## **V.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. Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:** Your proposal narrative should exhibit originality, substance, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Reviewers will assess the degree to which proposals engage participants in community activities that involve skills development and leadership training. A detailed agenda and work plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described in the solicitation package. Reviewers will also assess the degree to which the proposed outcomes of the project are realistic and measurable. Strategies should creatively utilize resources at the local level to ensure an efficient use of program funds.

**2. Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. It is a goal of the Department to ensure that all funded programs reflect the diversity of American society. Describe your plans to promote this goal in the selection of host families and in the local enhancement programming. Where appropriate, comment on any role your organization plays in encouraging diversity in participant selection. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of host families, schools, program venue, and program evaluation) and

program content (orientations, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

**3. Organization's Record/Institutional Capacity:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Reviewers will assess the applicant and its partners to determine if they offer adequate resources, expertise, and experience to fulfill program objectives. Partner activities should be clearly defined. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting and J-1 Visa regulatory requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grant Staff. In addition, organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors must include a discussion of their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq., including the oversight of their 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. Proposals that fail to include the above

information in their narrative will be deemed less or not competitive under this review criterion.

**4. Multiplier Effect:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages. Reviewers will assess ways in which proposals include innovative ideas to expose U.S. communities to YES-related goals and activities that involve students, host families, and schools. These includes media outreach, visits to local and national government representatives, Internet-based applications, and other interactions. Reviewers will also evaluate substantive plans to prepare YES students for their role as active, effective YES alumni.

**5. Participant Monitoring:** Proposals must include a detailed monitoring plan, which addresses student, local coordinator, and host family monitoring. Given the importance the Department places on this criterion, you should dedicate a significant percentage of the narrative to explaining how you will achieve the Department's goals in regard to monitoring the health, safety, and welfare of program participants. You may use the

appendices to house additional details and supporting documentation.

**6. Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to monitor and evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. Reviewers will assess your plans to monitor student progress and program activities, particularly in regard to intended outcomes indicated in your proposal. Award recipients will be expected to submit quarterly reports, which should be included as an inherent component of the work plan.

**7. Cost-effectiveness/Cost sharing:** Reviewers will analyze the budget for clarity and cost-effectiveness. They will also assess the rationale of the proposed budget and whether the allocation of funds is appropriate to complete the tasks outlined in the project narrative. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. Preference

will be given to organizations whose proposals demonstrate a quality, cost-effective program.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, 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 mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

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

**VI.1b. The following additional requirements apply to this project:**

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 Kevin Baker, Program Officer, telephone (202) 632-6073 or email [BakerKM1@state.gov](mailto:BakerKM1@state.gov) for additional information.

**VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

**VI.3. Reporting Requirements:** You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

*Mandatory:*

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant 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 performance reports (PPR) must be submitted electronically to the Grants Office at [reportseca@state.gov](mailto:reportseca@state.gov) with a copy sent to the Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/> . Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.
- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the

expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

- 5.) If the Competition will allow for the exercise of Option Years, applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for 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.

**All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Office and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.**

### **VII. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact Program Officer Kevin Baker by telephone: 202-632-6073 or email [BakerKM1@state.gov](mailto:BakerKM1@state.gov). All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and solicitation number ECA/PE/C/PY-13-21-OY-OB. Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**VIII. Other Information:****Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP 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 RFGP 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 made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Ann Stock

January 8, 2013

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State