

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

Youth Ambassadors Program with South America

ECA/PE/C/PY-13-42

Office of Citizen Exchanges

Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Youth Programs Division for the Youth Ambassadors Program with South America. Proposals must conform to the RFGP, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

This document provides guidance for the preparation of a proposal for the Youth Ambassadors Program and also establishes guidelines for the implementation of the cooperative agreements.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of the U.S. Embassies in 10 South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) are supporting the participation of high school youth and adult educators in intensive, substantive three-week exchanges in the United States and select partner countries.

The exchange activities will introduce the participants to a comprehensive survey of civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. Activities will focus on building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas. The students and educators will participate in workshops, community service activities, meetings with community leaders, and discussion groups and will have opportunities for substantive interaction with each other and the peers of the host country.

The award recipient's specific responsibilities for each project include:

1) Recruitment and Selection

- a) Conduct an open, merit-based competition for youth and adult exchange participants in the partner country (except Brazil) in cooperation with the Public Affairs Sections, with clearly identified criteria for the selection and a formal process that includes an application and an interview (either by phone or in-person). Collaboration with Binational Centers (BNCs) is encouraged, if possible. If an exchange from the United States to a partner country is part of the project, conduct an open, merit-based competition for youth and adult exchange participants that are citizens of the United States, in cooperation with ECA. Award recipients are encouraged to publically advertise

the call for applications and recruit diverse participants from the United States and Puerto Rico for programs in South America.

- b) Develop plans for outreach and recruitment of both students and educators that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates that represent the diversity of their country.
 - c) Develop applications forms for students and adult educators in consultation with ECA and PAS.
 - d) Administer an effective language screening process, as appropriate.
 - e) Recommend the final participants and alternates. No invitations may be issued without the Department of State clearance (ECA and PAS).
- 2) Preparation
- a) Contact participants before the program to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests.
 - b) Facilitate the passport and J-1 visa application process for the foreign participants (except Brazil), working with ECA and PAS. Facilitate passports and secure visas for the U.S. participants, as needed.
 - c) Ensure that each participant meets medical and health standards and has required immunizations to travel to the partner country.
 - d) Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan for the duration of the exchange, and assist with claims as necessary.
 - e) Conduct a pre-departure orientation for participants, including general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training.
 - f) Hire and train staff, as needed, to accompany participants during the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff.
 - g) Make housing arrangements. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer homestays (lodging and meals) to the participants for the majority of the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health and safety of participants. In South America, consult with the U.S. Embassy on host family locations (regions, neighborhoods).
 - h) Orient participating organizations, staff, and families to the program's goals and the visitors' cultures and sensitivities.
 - i) Make arrangements for interpreters, as needed.
 - j) Arrange participants' international (complying with the Fly America Act) and domestic travel, with the exception of Brazil international travel to the United States.
- 3) Exchange Activities
- a) Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive three-week exchange program on the stated themes. Exchange activities must promote program goals. Activities will be school and community-based, as appropriate to the project. Recruit peers from the host country to be engaged in activities with the exchange participants.
 - b) Provide opportunities for the adult participants to work with their peers and other professionals, volunteers, and youth advocates with whom they can discuss the support of youth development.
 - c) Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.

- d) Engage participants in at least two community service activities during the exchange. The program should provide context for the participants – identifying community needs, volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event and helps participants apply the experience at home.
 - e) Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants’ well-being and prevent and deal with any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may arise in a timely manner. Inform ECA and PAS about any significant health or safety issues affecting program participants.
 - f) Provide a welcome orientation to serve as an introduction to the program and its objectives as well as an introduction to the host country.
 - g) Provide a closing session to summarize project activities, prepare participants for their return home, and plan for the future as alumni.
- 4) Follow-on activities
- a) Conduct follow-on activities with program alumni that reinforce values and skills imparted during the exchange program and help participants apply what they have learned to serve their schools and communities.
 - b) Present creative and effective ways to address project themes, for both program participants and their peers to amplify program impact.
 - c) Support alumni in making presentations or preparing articles to share their experiences once they return home.
 - d) [Optional] Arrange visits by project staff, trainers, or educators to further the training started during the exchange.
- 5) Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the program’s impact (See section IV.3d.3 of the RFGP).
- 6) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in program implementation, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA and PAS, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
- 7) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of sub-award relationships with partner organizations.

The Department of State’s responsibilities include:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 2) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- 3) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and the partner countries.
- 4) Approve the final candidate selection and alternates.
- 5) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 6) Approve applications, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.
- 7) Approve housing arrangements, including the selection of host families (in South America only).
- 8) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.
- 9) In Brazil only, the U.S. Embassy will serve as the in-country partner and manage Brazilian

participant recruitment and selection, cover their in-country expenses, arrange and purchase their international travel, oversee their follow-on activities, and administer the Brazil-based exchange activities for the U.S. participants.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Partner Organizations: Applicants must have the organizational capacity in the relevant countries to implement the in-country activities, recruit and select participants for the program, provide follow-on activities, and organize a content-rich exchange program for the U.S. participants, if specified. This capacity may take the form of a branch office of the U.S. applicant organization, a non-governmental partner organization, or other associate with demonstrated experience in educational exchange that can coordinate the program nationally. Award recipients will be responsible for their partners' activities under the cooperative agreement, both programmatically and financially. All applicants need to identify their representation in the partner countries and describe their partners' responsibilities and qualifications. The cooperative agreement requires that the administering organization be able to manage the program in the host country in its entirety, with little reliance on the embassy staff for support.

Participants: All youth and adult participants must be citizens of the country from which they are applying and be competitively selected. Preference should be given to individuals who have not previously traveled to the partner country, especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program. Once the cooperative agreements are awarded, the recipients must consult with ECA and Embassy staff in the partner countries to review their recruitment plans in detail, any specific selection criteria, and the screening and selection process. Recruitment efforts should be designed to attract quality applicants that appropriately represent the diverse groups present in the partner country. To reach beyond the elite, particular emphasis should be placed on selecting participants from underserved or disadvantaged populations, including public high schools. We seek geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic/racial diversity among participants, including indigenous and African descendent populations. It is desirable to select some participants from the same town or region so that they can support each other upon their return home. The ratio of youth to adults should be approximately 10:1.

The youth participants will:

- be high school students between the ages of 15 and 18 years old at the start of the exchange;
- demonstrate leadership aptitude, an interest in community service, and in the project theme;
- exhibit flexibility, maturity, integrity, good social skills, and open-mindedness;
- have the motivation necessary to be active and successful exchange participants;
- have sufficient proficiency in the language of the exchange, English or Spanish, to participate fully in all exchange activities; and
- attend at least one semester of high school after the exchange program.

The adult participants will:

- be teachers, trainers, or community leaders who work with youth;
- demonstrate an interest in assisting youth to become productive and responsible members of society;
- exhibit maturity and open-mindedness;

- be supportive of the teenage participants;
- have sufficient proficiency in the language of the exchange, English or Spanish, to participate fully in all exchange activities; and
- remain in teaching positions or other positions of influence on young leaders.

The adults must be carefully selected and thoroughly briefed on their roles during the project. Although they are to be full exchange participants, they will also serve as chaperones. They will have program sessions with the youth, as well as separate program activities designed specifically for them. It is important that they be prepared to allow the students to be vocal, candid, and active participants who do not feel they need to defer to the teacher. At the same time, their shared experience with the students will allow them to serve as adult advocates for the alumni once they return home.

Orientations: The award recipient will conduct pre-departure and welcome orientations for the participants to introduce them to the host community and to prepare them for the activities ahead. For Brazil, the U.S. Embassy will conduct the orientation with program-specific information provided by the award recipient. The orientations should include a general political, historical, educational, and cultural introduction to the United States or to the partner country, information related specifically to the objectives and themes of the program, and practical and administrative information. The recipient should consider including the youth participants' parents/guardians in the pre-departure orientation or providing them with separate materials. The award recipient should invite the U.S. Embassy or ECA to participate in the pre-departure orientation.

Exchange Program: The program should consist primarily of interactive activities, practical experiences, and other opportunities that provide an introduction to the host country's civic, cultural, and educational institutions. Activities should use hand-on methods to help the participants learn about the fundamentals of civil society and community activism, build their leadership skills, and develop similar activities for their peers back home. ECA urges applicants to present innovative, resourceful, and effective programming ideas. Applicants should justify their choices by explaining how their program plan will meet the stated goals.

The activities could include a mix of workshops or training sessions, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, volunteer service, leadership training, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Many of these should be planned in conjunction with participation in school and community activities in a way that is educational for the exchange participants and their hosts/peers. Exchange participants should not attend classes in a school for more than a few days. All programming should include host country participants wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule. The program will also provide opportunities for the adult educators to work with their peers and other professionals to learn about new topics and methods in education and support for youth activism.

In the United States, each project will include 4 to 7 days in Washington, D.C., at any point in the exchange, for educational activities that focus on the U.S. political system and citizen involvement in public life. This time may also include a visit to the U.S. Department of State to provide exposure to U.S. foreign policy as it relates to the participants' countries of origin. This

segment and the remaining weeks in communities outside Washington, D.C. will include a variety of activities and will offer the participants exposure to the diversity of American life. In the selected partner countries, similar organizations and activities will be utilized for an equally robust educational experience for the U.S. exchange participants. For Brazil, please provide an outline of proposed activities; the award recipient will coordinate the specific plans with the U.S. Embassy.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included are:

- Community service/volunteer activities
- Peer training/education workshops
- Teambuilding exercises
- Fundraising strategies
- Project/time management workshops
- Leadership development with workshop trainers or organizations
- Meetings with government, community, and business leaders
- Computer training that emphasizes research, critical thinking and analysis, and the use of the computer and Internet as resources in education and business
- Exercises related to conflict resolution, increasing tolerance and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the project's themes and developing presentation skills
- Visits to historical sites, government and community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about principals of government, history, and society with tourism
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical and other extracurricular activities which provide opportunities for participants to work and play together

The award recipient will conduct a welcome orientation for the participants upon arrival in the United States to introduce them to the program and the community. Exchanges will end with a closing session that focuses on summarizing the experience, developing action plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. Although the ideas and action plans to be implemented at home should spring from the participants, project staff should be prepared to encourage, assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the exchange and the follow-on period.

Sites: In addition to visiting Washington, D.C. (or the capital city of the host country), the delegations should spend time in no more than one or two locations to allow participants to familiarize themselves with a community. Applicant organizations should describe the rationale for their location selections. ECA encourages applicants to consider proximity to sites of historical or cultural interest, access to organizations that can conduct appropriate workshops, and representation of the diversity of the host country.

Accommodations: In the United States, homestays with local families must be arranged for most of the exchange period. In the partner countries, homestays are strongly encouraged for a significant portion of the exchange period. A significant period will offer the participants sufficient time to become familiar with life in a local home, but may be somewhat abbreviated

given the possible language and cultural barriers. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate adult supervision is an acceptable arrangement for other segments of the program, such as the welcome orientation, the capital city program, the closing session, or special workshops.

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

ECA encourages diversity in host family recruitment and selection. Host families may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations. In South America only, families may receive a reasonable living allowance to reimburse costs associated with hosting a student, but not to serve as a financial incentive. The amounts of any stipends or allowances should be justified based on the host country's local economy.

Follow-on Activities for Alumni: The award recipient will design activities for alumni, and support and mentor the youth participants in their follow-on project implementation. This may include providing materials, serving as a resource or advisor, and working with the Embassy and adult participant alumni to help nurture on-going contact with the participants. ECA seeks creative ideas to ensure that alumni effectively carry out their follow-on projects and remain engaged in activities, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through peers. Alumni programming in the form of seminars, newsletters, and online platforms serves to maximize and extend the exchange program's benefits. Follow-on plans should take into account that Internet access may be limited in some areas. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the Department of State. Please refer to the PSI for additional guidance.

Evaluation: The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires that federal agencies measure the results of their programs in meeting performance goals. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's plan to measure the medium-term impact of the program. The follow-on activities will provide an opportunity to assess the impact of the exchanges on the participants, to determine how their attitudes have changed, and to evaluate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with program themes.

Other notes: The recipient organization is responsible for all program components outlined in

this document. In addition, the Bureau requires recipient organizations to communicate with ECA and PAS on a regular basis about program activities, including recruitment, selection and orientations, host family locations, publicity, and follow-on activities. The organization must also inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and it must also obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. ECA will retain copyright use of and can distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible. Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

TAB A - Application for Federal Assistance Cover Sheet (SF-424)

TAB B - Executive Summary

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Identification of applicant, partner countries, and participating organizations
2. Identification of the project option(s)
3. Overview of exchange participants
4. Beginning and ending dates of the exchanges
5. Proposed themes and subthemes
6. Nature of activity and venues
7. Funding level requested from the Bureau, program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources

Note: An applicant organization must clearly present the partner countries and the partner organizations in each country. It should also identify the dates, venues, and activities of each project in the Executive Summary. These distinctions should follow through in the Narrative and the Budget.

TAB C - Narrative

Within 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, with one-inch margins in 11 or 12-point font, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

1. Vision: Describe the project objectives and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire.
2. Participating Organizations: Identify any partner organizations for the program, their roles,

and the applicant's reasons for including them.

3. **Recruitment, Screening, and Selection:** Describe how the applicant will coordinate with the appropriate U.S. Embassy in a recruitment and selection plan. Present a plan for advertising the program. Outline both the process and the criteria by which finalists will be selected. Identify who is responsible for selection.
4. **Project Activities:** Describe the components of the exchanges and how they related to project themes, including project planning, orientations, educational activities, cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, and the closing session. A detailed outline of the three-week exchanges should be included as an appendix in Tab E. Also, describe support for follow-on activities.
5. **Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics:** Detail how the applicant will arrange international travel (in compliance with the Fly America Act); domestic travel; homestays and other housing arrangements; ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and relevant administrative matters.
6. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation:** The progress of the cooperative agreement should be monitored closely and ECA and PAS must be kept informed of activities. Proposals should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported. ECA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other evaluation tool.
7. **Diversity:** Explain how the program managers will pro-actively support diversity in participant selection and program content, demonstrating how diversity can contribute to a vibrant civil society. Diversity should be defined broadly to include geographic, urban/rural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, and religious diversity.
8. **Institutional Capacity and Project Management:** Outline the applicant organization's capacity to conduct projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: provision of educational and thematic programs, age-appropriate programming for youth, and previous work in the region. Describe the program staffing (individuals and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. If applicable, include this information for primary partner organizations as well.
9. **Work Plan/Schedule:** Outline the phases of the project planning and implementation for the entire cooperative agreement period. Provide a draft schedule of daily activities of the exchanges in an appendix.

TAB D - Budget Submission

- 1.) Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- 2.) Detailed Budget

The level of funding available for this program is approximately \$1,500,000, which will support between one and five cooperative agreements for exchanges between the United States and up to 10 South American countries. 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.

The available funding may be used to support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included. For clarification, any applicant applying to implement more than one project should provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity.

Suggested program costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff travel
- Application and educational materials
- Participant travel (international, domestic, ground transportation, passport and visa fees)
- Orientations
- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Lodging, when not in homestay
- Living allowance for host families (in South America only)
- Food (primarily group meals)
- Interpreters, if necessary
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Significant cost-sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. Stipends for homestays or for host families in the United States are not allowed as a grant-funded or cost-share item. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau urges applicants to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost-sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner, and other sources.

Maximum limits on funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant; Conference room rental costs-\$250 per day per room; Consultant fees and honoraria-\$250/day; Cultural allowance-\$150 per participant; Per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs- 3% of the cooperative agreement. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share any rates that exceed these amounts.

Please note that there are no fees for the J-1 visas that foreign participants will use to enter the United States. Applicants should budget for program participants to travel to the U.S. Embassy for visa interviews. Applicants should contact the embassy or a consulate of the host country to find out their visa requirements for U.S. citizens, and should budget for participants' visas, if needed. Exchange participants will be enrolled in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) to provide them with health benefits during the exchange. This cost does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at <http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com>.

Please refer to the PSI for allowable costs and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

TAB E

- *Letters of commitment.* Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations, including those in the partner country and any receiving a sub-award.
- *Resumes* of all program staff should be included in the submission. No one resume should exceed two pages.
- *Attachments/appendices* (please limit to those materials essential for understanding the proposed program such as a draft schedule, application forms, or evaluation questionnaires).

TAB F

- 1.) SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs."
- 2.) First time applicant organizations and organizations which have not received an assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) from the Bureau during the past three (3) years, must submit as an attachment to this form the following: (a) one copy of their Charter OR Articles of Incorporation; (b) a list of the current Board of Directors; and (c) current financial statements. Note: The Bureau retains the right to ask for additional documentation of those items included on this form.
- 3.) **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, 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:
 - 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.
 - Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

As part of 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 grant 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 grant 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.

- 4.) Include other attachments, if applicable, i.e. the SF-LLL form, etc.

IV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The RFGP indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the competition, call Program Officer Jennifer Phillips, Telephone: (202) 632-9352; Fax: (202) 632-9355; e-mail address: PhillipsJA@state.gov.