

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Issuance Date:	December 18, 2015
Deadline for Technical	January 15, 2016. Submit your questions here .
Submission Questions:	February 1, 2016 Answers to questions will be posted to http://www.partners.net/capacity-building-grants-us-undergraduate-study-abroad
Closing Date/Time:	March 15, 2016 / 5:00 PM EST
Expected Awards:	no later than May 31, 2016
Terms of Sub-Grant:	June 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017
Subject:	Request for Proposals: Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad

Dear Applicants,

The Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce an open competition for proposals to advance the mission of the Department in increasing the participation and diversity in study abroad through enhancing higher education institutions' capacity to send their students overseas for academic credit, internships, or other experiential learning opportunities: **Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad**. This competition is administered by Partners of the Americas (Partners) and is a component of the Department's engagement on expanding and diversifying U.S. study abroad through its new U.S. Study Abroad Branch.

Applications to the Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad should be designed to create or expand the capacity of U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to administer study abroad programs with an emphasis on diversity/diversification goals. These goals include broadening the student population who studies abroad and/or the destinations/disciplines in which they study. It is also intended to allow U.S. institutions to collaborate with overseas HEIs, or other organizations who could contribute to advancing efforts to broaden participation in study abroad for U.S. undergraduate students.

For the purposes of this grant competition, study abroad programming is broadly defined as programming that supports learning abroad for undergraduate students at U.S. HEIs.

All applications must be submitted by public or private non-profit organizations, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

The intent of the competition as part of the Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad is to provide grants of up to \$50,000 to approximately 17 accredited U.S. HEIs to create or expand their U.S. study abroad programs under outlined diversity goals. ECA and Partners of the Americas reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Please refer to Section I, the Funding Opportunity Description, for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

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Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

1. Program Summary:

It is imperative that the next generation of leaders understand and can operate within the political and economic landscape of the 21st century. Through study abroad, U.S. students gain critical experiences and perspectives and begin to establish networks that enhance their individual prospects in today's globalized workforce and their future potential as global problem-solvers. Additionally, U.S. HEIs gain value for their campuses when they develop or expand and diversify study abroad as a key component of their overall internationalization efforts.

According to Open Doors—an annual international and U.S. student mobility report that is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State—the number of U.S. undergraduate students studying abroad has grown substantially over the past several years, yet still only 10% of those who graduate will have studied abroad during their college experience. In addition, data on U.S. participants in study abroad programs, their destination countries, and their fields of study also indicate that there is a lack of diversity in these areas. ECA and Partners seek to engage a diverse array of study abroad practitioners, faculty and administrators at U.S. HEIs with the goal of expanding capacity for study abroad at a national level. All U.S. accredited HEIs are eligible to submit a proposal, including but not limited to community colleges and minority serving institutions.

Recipients of Capacity Building Grants will receive initial funding to establish or expand study abroad within or across their institutions in a strategic manner. The newly developed or expanded programming created with these grants should ensure that U.S. HEIs are able to do the following:

- Increase the overall number and diversity of student participation in study abroad;
- Provide students at the home institution with an opportunity to gain global knowledge and skills through a study abroad opportunity;
- Broaden the fields of study of participating students and/or the countries where students are traveling;
- Build and maintain strong international partnerships; and
- Ensure standards of best practice in study abroad programming are applied.

Important note: grants may not be used for the purpose of student scholarships, and any use of resources for faculty or staff travel should be well-justified toward the goals of the capacity building activities outlined in the Applicant's proposal.

2. Funding Goal:

The Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad seek to create or expand the capacity of U.S. HEIs to administer study abroad programs under diversity goals, including broadening the student population who studies abroad and/or the destinations/disciplines in which they study. It is also intended to allow U.S. institutions to collaborate with and help expand the capacity of overseas HEIs and/or other organizations to provide academic program for U.S. undergraduate students.



ECA and Partners encourage applications for the Capacity Building Grants that, among one or more key variables, endeavor to expand access to students underrepresented in study abroad on their respective campus or campuses, including first-generation college/university students, students of diverse race or ethnic backgrounds, students with disabilities, and students in underrepresented disciplines. They also encourage applications from a diverse range of U.S. HEIs, including but not limited to minority-serving institutions and community colleges. It is expected that the grants will also expand capacity to destination countries not already accessible to the student body at the home institution.

ECA and Partners have created a transparent and merit-based, nationwide, open competition that ensures outreach to a diverse array of accredited U.S. HEIs, especially institutions in the beginning stages of their study abroad programming.

3. Purpose

Proposals must address the Applicant's plans to establish and/or significantly expand their study abroad offerings through wholly or substantially new programs, or develop study abroad opportunities that seek to engage underrepresented student populations, and/or diversify locations/disciplines of study on their campuses for study abroad.

Proposals should outline a strategy that includes a program of study where a component of learning takes place abroad. Applicants may also choose to partner with international host institutions in order to expand the capacity in the host country to receive U.S. students. Proposals should also clearly articulate expected learning outcomes of program participants. **Grants may not be used for the purpose of student scholarships**, and any use of resources for faculty or staff travel should be well-justified toward the goals of the capacity building activities outlined in the Applicant's proposal. Grants will support projects that result in increased and broadened opportunities for U.S. undergraduate students to study abroad in quality academic programs that form an integral part of degree-granting programs at accredited U.S. educational institutions at the tertiary level. Proposals should clearly describe how the grant activities will provide for the implementation of a U.S. undergraduate study abroad experience during or shortly following the grant period as well as a plan for sustaining/growing this or similar opportunities longer term.

4. Expected Results

U.S. HEIs that are successful in implementing the grant will demonstrate increased capacity to develop and administer study abroad programs that:

- Establish and/or significantly expand their study abroad offerings through wholly or substantially new programs, and/or resources that support learning abroad.
- Provide study abroad opportunities that seek to engage an underrepresented student population on their campuses while also diversifying destinations and/or disciplines for study abroad.

Section II: Award Information

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Envisioned

The intent of the competition as part of the Request for Proposals: Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad is to award grants of up to \$50,000 to approximately 17 accredited U.S. HEIs. ECA and Partners reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance

Selected Recipients will be announced no later than May 31, 2016; the period of performance may begin as early as June 1, 2016 and end by August 31, 2017.

3. Responsibilities

Grantees will be responsible for:

- Successfully implementing the grant as outlined in the proposal and amendments, with the goal of increasing and diversifying participation by U.S. undergraduates in a study abroad experience;
- Providing recent audits and signing a contract outlining the regulations and constraints of the grant;
- Submitting quarterly and final narrative and budget reports;
- Keeping Partners staff updated on the achievement of their proposed program activities;
- Completing surveys during and 6 months after the implementation of the grant;
- Sending modifications to proposed program activities and/or budget to Partners for approval;
- Informing Partners of any changes in key personnel; and
- Responding to other inquiries and requests for information during and after implementation, as needed.

Partners will be responsible for:

- Selecting and awarding, with ECA approval, grants to successful U.S. HEIs;
- Facilitating the grant agreement negotiation process and disbursing grant funds;
- Reviewing recipient's reports including quarterly and final reports;
- Reviewing budgets and modification requests for approval;
- Reviewing recipient's activity monitoring and evaluation plans;
- Providing general support services through regular contact outside of the quarterly reporting process, (i.e. responding to inquiries from grant recipients as needed);
- Providing guidance and opportunities to grant recipients to engage with Partners and with each other, including through virtual means; and
- Highlighting relevant resources to participate in grant programs, networking, and engagement activities.

Section III: Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

All applications must be submitted by an accredited U.S. public or private non-profit HEI and must be focused on undergraduate study abroad. Multiple offices, departments, schools, or colleges from within the HEI may apply, but only one award will be conferred per HEI within a single competition cycle.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Fund Requirements

In submitting a proposal, Applicants should demonstrate a high-level commitment to increasing study abroad from their U.S. institution to other countries through in-kind contributions or institutional cost-sharing. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, written records to support all costs that are claimed as institutional cost share must be maintained and 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 the Budget's Circular 2 CRF parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Applicants are strongly encouraged although not required to provide maximum levels of cost sharing through institutional direct, indirect, or in-kind funding contributions.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

- a) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following:
 - Proposals requesting funding for infrastructure development activities, sometimes referred to as "bricks and mortar support," are NOT eligible for consideration under this competition and will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process.
 - No funding is available exclusively to send U.S. citizens to conferences or conference-type seminars overseas; however funding may be available on a limited basis should it provide study abroad capacity building opportunities for institutions.
 - Grants may not be used to fund student scholarships.
- b) You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to receive funds from the Capacity Building Grants. 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 you have entered your UEI (formerly known as DUNS) number in the appropriate box in the Online Application Form.

Section IV: Application and Submission

1. Online Submission Process

Applications must be submitted through the Online Application Form <http://www.partners.net/capacity-building-grants-us-undergraduate-study-abroad> by March 15, 2016 5:00PM Eastern Standard Time (EST). Any prospective Applicant desiring a response to technical submission inquiries for this RFP may request them [here](#) by January 15th. Answers to these written questions will be available to the public at the above link on February 1st. In addition, general inquiries will be received at (202) 637-6207 Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM (EST) while the proposal submission period is open.

Oral explanations or instructions given before an award is disbursed will not be binding. No applications will be accepted via email. If your HEI decides to submit an application, it must be received by the closing date and time indicated on the cover page. The Applicant must comply with the instructions for submission included herein. Applications that are received late, incomplete, or otherwise ineligible will not be considered in the review process.

All applications received by the closing date and time will be reviewed for technical eligibility, responsiveness and programmatic merit in accordance with the specifications outlined in these guidelines and in the application format.

2. Technical Application Format

Applications must be written in English and must not exceed 10 pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, single spaced, typed in standard 8 1/2x11 paper size with one-inch margins both right and left, and each page numbered consecutively. Cover page, dividers, table of contents, appendices will not count toward the page limitation. Any additional pages that exceed the 10 page proposal limitation and other required documents will not be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee. Submissions should be included in one file, if possible. The following must be submitted:

1. A program proposal of no more than 10 pages, which includes sub-sections A-H as outlined in Section V: Application Review;
2. Calendar of activities/timeline;
3. A budget & budget narrative in the format stipulated in Section VI of this solicitation; and
4. Appendices of no more than 10 pages must include the CV or bio of the person ultimately responsible for overall management of the proposed program.

Applications shall demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of the Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad. Therefore, it should be specific, complete and presented concisely. It should take into account and be arranged in the order of the technical evaluation criteria described below.

Section V: Application Review

A. Cover Page

A single page with the project title and the name of the Applicant institution clearly identified. In addition, the cover page should provide a primary and secondary point of contact for the proposal, including the individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the institution, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Also, list the name and contact information for authorizing personnel responsible for signing contracts.

B. Table of Contents

Applicants must list all content included in the technical application, with page numbers and attachments.

C. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary counts towards the 10 page limit and should not exceed one page. It should include the following information:

1. Name of applicant institution and participating institution(s)/organization(s)
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Description of proposed program and how it achieves institution's diversity goals
4. Program activities
5. Funding level requested, total program cost, total cost-share from applicant/other sources
6. Key personnel
7. Scope of Work and Goals of Activity
 - Number and description of participants
 - Description of the wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - Anticipated results (short and long-term)

D. Program Description

In this section, Applicants should focus on describing the program and how they propose to achieve its objective(s) and how the program will make a significant contribution towards achieving the objectives of the Capacity Building Grants. Applicants shall elaborate in their program description on the most effective way to coordinate and assist in the expansion and development of a successful program. The program description should include the following:

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits);
2. Participating institutions/organizations, their roles, and their capacity for the project; and,
3. Program activities.

E. Follow-on Plan for Implementation and Sustainability

Applicants must describe how their proposed program will be implemented and continue after the grant period has expired with the goal of increasing and diversifying participation by U.S. undergraduates in a

study abroad experience. Applicants must indicate how U.S. undergraduate students will actual have at least one study abroad experience, based on the proposal, either during the award period or at least within 6 months after the period ends.

F. Institutional Capacity and Project Management Plan

The Applicant must include a brief description of their institutional experience with study abroad programs. Institutions that have minimal experience with exchange programs, should describe a desire and path to expanding their student exchange capacity. Institutions with more robust student exchange experiences should describe a desire and a path to building on their successes and enhancing their student exchange programs.

In describing their management approach, Applicants must name key personnel, including one person who will be ultimately responsible for implementation and reporting. The CV or bio of the person identified must be included as part of the 10 page maximum of appendices. Applicants should also provide letter(s) of support from relevant department/school/college/university administrative staff. This should also be included as an appendix.

G. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan must explain how the Applicant proposes to monitor the program and assess program impact with respect to the goal of increasing and diversifying participation by U.S. undergraduates in a study abroad experience. The M&E Plan shall address the following: realistic plan for data collection methods and frequency of collection, sources of data, data verification, and responsible parties of data collection, including how baseline information will be compiled, and benchmarks, and the ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project.

Applicants are encouraged to create their own indicators for their Monitoring and Evaluation Plans; however, ECA and Partners reserve the right to modify indicators in consultation with selected recipients at the award stage.

H. Calendar of Activities/Timeline

Applicants must also include a calendar of activities/timeline that are presented in their Program Description section, to include a timeline for implementing an initial study abroad experience as well as future sustained study abroad programming.

Section VI: Budget Application Format

The proposed budget should provide cost estimates for the management of the program, including program monitoring. Applicants must provide a breakdown by elements of cost (i.e. personnel, coordination activities, fringe, equipment, other) proposed. Applicants must use the following budget template, adding activities as needed, and submitting as an unprotected Excel file.

**INSTITUTION
NAME**
Program Budget

Budget Category	Requested Funds	Cost Share	Total
Personnel			
Program Costs			
Other Costs			
Indirect Costs			
Total			

Budget Narrative

Applicants must provide detailed budget explanations and supporting justification of each proposed budget line item. The budget narrative must briefly describe programmatic relevance and clearly identify the basis of estimate (i.e. how the budget number was determined fair and reasonable) for each cost element.

Allowable Costs for the project include the following:

1. Travel

International and domestic airfare; visas; transit costs; and ground transportation costs are allowable on a limited basis should it provide study abroad capacity building opportunities for institutions. Any use of resources for faculty or staff travel should be well-justified toward the goals of the capacity building activities



outlined in the Applicant's proposal. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act and funding may not be used for the purpose of student scholarships.

2. Per Diem

Institutions should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual international locations. International per diem rates may be accessed at: https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.

3. Administrative Costs

Administrative costs can include:

- Staff salaries and benefits (each staff member and his/her position must be listed separately). Please also note the percentage of his/her total time spent on this program. A full-time director is required.
- Staff travel/per diem;
- Communication costs (e.g. fax, telephone, postage, communication equipment, etc.);
- Office supplies;
- Printing and duplication costs;
- Costs associated with audits
- Other direct costs; and
- Indirect costs.

Section VII: Evaluation Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. Review criteria weighting is indicated in parentheses:

Technical Proposal (80%)

Program Description and Quality of Program Idea (40%)

Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to this RFP. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity as well as a clearly articulated implementation plan. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described in Section V. Proposals should show substantive support of broadening the student population who studies abroad and/or the destinations/disciplines in which they study. Proposals should demonstrate how these diversity goals will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity. Please ensure that the proposal addresses these questions:

- Does the proposal create additional capability for eligible institutions to increase study abroad from the U.S. to another country/(ies)?
- Do proposed activities demonstrate an innovative approach to increasing study abroad from the U.S. and addressing challenges and barriers identified by the applicant?
- Will the program increase study abroad for students that are currently underrepresented in U.S. outbound study abroad programs on your campus and/or in the general undergraduate student population?
- Does the proposal help achieve diversity (i.e., large/small HEIs, economically disadvantaged students, geography of study abroad destinations, diversity of fields of study for study abroad participants, ethnic diversity)?
- Does the proposal clearly articulate expected learning outcomes for students?

Sustainability Plan (15%)

The Capacity Building Grants are intended to finance the beginning of long-term programs/partnerships of mutual benefit to partnering institutions. Therefore proposals must provide a plan to increase capacity for U.S. students studying abroad and ensure that projects are sustainable and students have at least one study abroad experience either during the award period or within 6 months afterwards. Applicants must describe what kind of impact the proposed grant will have on the institution and how it will continue after the grant period has expired. Please ensure that the proposal addresses these questions:

- Does the proposal change the culture on campus to make outbound study abroad the norm, not the exception?
- Does the proposal provide a clear plan that will increase study abroad opportunities for U.S. undergraduate students either within the grant duration or shortly thereafter?
- Are the proposed capacity building activities and their impact likely to be sustained beyond the terms of the award?

Institutional Capacity and Management Approach (15%)

Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements. Please ensure that the proposal addresses these questions:

- Does the institution have the capacity to carry out the proposal?
- Does this proposal provide an appropriate assessment of the institution's specific challenges and opportunities?
- Will the grant help the institution address these challenges and opportunities?
- Did you include letters of support from administrators and partners?

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (10%)

Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives.

- Does the proposal include sufficient oversight and an appropriate evaluation plan to determine if the proposal is implemented successfully?

Cost Proposal (20%)

The Cost Proposal will be evaluated as to how effective and realistic the proposed costs are and how the proposed budget is linked to the activities, objectives, sustainability, and outputs reflected in the Technical Narrative. The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of grant funds. 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 are strongly encouraged although not required to provide cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct and in-kind funding contributions. A strong cost proposal will include:

- A detailed outputs-based budget and accompanying budget narrative.
 - Is the budget detailed and outputs-based?
 - Does the narrative reflect the activities in the budget?
 - Is the proposal appropriate and cost-efficient for the scope of impact envisioned?
 - Are all proposed uses of grant funding eligible?
 - Is the proposed indirect cost rate reasonable?
 - Does the proposal include cost-sharing?
- Cost-sharing information, if applicable.

Section VIII: Additional Information

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

1. Diversity Guidelines

Programs established or strengthened by Capacity Building Grants must maintain a non-political character and should be non-discriminatory of students from diverse backgrounds. These include but are not limited to race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Diversity should also be interpreted on an individual basis for institutions seeking to diversify study abroad opportunities for: underrepresented student populations, underrepresented fields of study, and underrepresented host countries. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how diversity will enhance the activity's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience.

2. Virtual Exchange

We welcome innovative ideas on how institutions can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among U.S. students studying abroad with international institutions, encourage project collaboration, and widen participation in the overall project. Partners encourages institutions submitting proposals for the Capacity Building Grants to include a virtual exchange component. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after a physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s) is to increase the impact of in-person exchanges.

3. Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients must provide an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Quarterly performance progress report following each 90 days of project implementation;
- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after expiration or termination of award;
- 3.) Project reports per Program Monitoring and Evaluation information above; and
- 4.) Other reports that may be requested on an as-needed basis.

Additional performance reports may be required more frequently. For grant recipients, please include the names of any changes to key personnel (directors and/or senior executives, current officers, trustees, or other key employees). 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. The performance reports must be submitted electronically to Partners. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, grant recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities.

Grant recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings in their regular project reports. Please refer to 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 ECA and/or Partners upon request. Please note that information from reports may be used for promotional materials as well as included on online platforms.

All reports must be sent to the Partners Program Officer, Janira Romero Reyes at studyabroad@partners.net

Section IX: Contacts

Please submit your technical questions using the online form http://partnersoftheamericas.formstack.com/forms/cbg_us_studyabroad_questions by January 15th. Any questions after January 15th concerning this solicitation can be emailed to Janira Romero Reyes at studyabroad@partners.net. Potential applicants may also call the Capacity Building Grants for U.S. Undergraduate Study Abroad Support Desk [202-637-6207] Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time before March 15, 2016.