



Request for Proposals #1

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Subject: Request for Proposals #1 (RFP#1): Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100k Strong as part of President Obama's 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative

Dear Applicants,

Partners of the Americas (Partners), the US Department of State (DOS) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators are pleased to announce a new grant competition as part of President Barack Obama's *100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative* (100K Strong Americas). The 100K Strong Americas initiative is the Administration's signature education initiative in the Western Hemisphere designed to foster region-wide prosperity through greater international exchange of students. This grant competition, **RFP#1: Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100k Strong**, is supported through resources from the US Department of State and the Ford Foundation and is available to Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in **Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru**.

The Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100k Strong (CB Program) will use the principle of leveraged innovation to build capacity and provide technical assistance to the HEIs that demonstrate the greatest commitment and innovation toward increasing study abroad to the United States and toward receiving students from the United States. In applying for capacity-building grants, higher educational institutions will be asked to demonstrate how they will assert leadership to implement the innovations proposed, address on-campus barriers and to commit to making concrete changes to expand access to study abroad in the Americas.

The intent of the competition as part of the RFP#1: Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100k Strong is to award a total of ten (10) 100K Strong Americas Innovator CB sub-grants of \$25,000 each to HEIs across the eligible countries listed above. The DOS, NAFSA and Partners of the Americas reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted, and may or may not select 100K Strong Americas Innovators from all of the eligible countries listed above. 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. Background

The future of the people and nations of the Americas is inextricably linked. *100,000 Strong in the Americas* (100K Strong Americas) will deepen relationships across the Hemisphere that enable young people to explore the Americas, understand our shared values and various cultures, and lead the process of greater commercial and social integration that will provide for increased security and prosperity.

There are approximately 40,000 US students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean and 60,000 Latin American and Caribbean students studying in the US each year. We are seeking to more than double the number of exchange students in our region in less than ten years. Many Latin American and Caribbean students, particularly those of indigenous descent and Latinos of African descent, do not have the English language skills or resources to succeed at U.S. institutions. Conversely, many U.S. students are unaware of the opportunities available in the hemisphere, and U.S. colleges and universities face challenges integrating study abroad into degree programs, designing programs for nontraditional students, and developing cost-effective opportunities for all students. To reach our goal, it is imperative that colleges and universities make study abroad accessible for all students, regardless of their major, socio-economic status, or the type of institution in which they are enrolled.

2. Program Summary

In March 2011, President Obama launched 100K Strong Americas announcing the United States' intention to "work with partners in this region, including the private sector, to increase the number of U.S. students studying in Latin America to 100,000, and the number of Latin American (and Caribbean) students studying in the United States to 100,000." Two years later while in Mexico, the President confirmed his continued commitment to the initiative:

"We want 100,000 students from the United States studying in Latin America... And we want 100,000 Latin American students... to come study in the United States. When we study together and learn together, we work together and we prosper together. That's what I believe." – President Obama, May 3, 2013

Goal

The goal of 100K Strong Americas is to foster region-wide cooperation, understanding and prosperity through greater international exchange of students. Increasing mutual understanding and building closer people-to-people ties helps the people of the Western Hemisphere to address common challenges including citizen security, economic opportunity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

In support of the goal of achieving 100,000 exchanges annually in each direction by 2020, Partners of the Americas (Partners) – in partnership with NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the US Department of State (DOS) – will work to increase opportunities for

educational exchanges between the United States (US) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). This public-private partnership seeks to leverage up to \$10 million in resources annually in a cost-effective manner to innovate and bring the initiative to the necessary scale.

While effectively leveraging private resources to identify innovations to increase study abroad in the region, it is also necessary to build the capacity of LAC institutions of higher education to develop and administer study abroad programs that send students to the US and that receive students from the US.

Purpose

The purpose of the *Capacity-Building to Reach 100,000 Strong* Program is to provide targeted technical assistance to LAC institutions via institutional grants to higher education institutions (HEIs; these include colleges, community colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education) in order to identify innovations that result in increased bi-directional collaboration with US institutions to increase study abroad, to support and expand study abroad programs in the region. We believe that this program will provide a solid base for the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative for years to come as we continue to build private sector support to bring the initiative to scale.

We envision that Capacity Building Program innovations are likely to include proposed activities that address many of the following topics that were discussed at the recent [NAFSA Latin America Fora](#): smart collaboration; language barriers; diversity and inclusion; alumni engagement; communication and marketing; quality, accreditation, and credit transfer; service and service learning; resource collection; incoming student housing plans; and safety and security. Another example of an innovative idea is to incorporate variations on traditional study abroad models toward 100K Strong Americas goals such as student and faculty engagement through service learning.

While the Innovation Fund does not provide direct scholarships, applicant HEIs may propose to use significant portions of the grant to administer their own scholarships, travel grants, or partial-funding mechanisms to students to encourage study abroad between the eligible countries, especially in the southbound direction from the U.S. where the current numbers are lowest. For example, US HEIs may propose to provide small sub-grants to students in order to have an impact on individual students' study abroad decisions as well as their ability to "find a way" to follow through on their study abroad plans. Under this model, the most competitive proposals will demonstrate how limited resources can effectively mobilize the greatest number of students to study abroad between the eligible countries. Proposals that build on existing or propose new international partnerships will be viewed favorably. Short-term and long-term programs are eligible, as long as students receive some level of academic credit from their home institution. Proposals that convincingly address inclusion and diversity in study abroad to provide study abroad access to underserved/underrepresented populations will be viewed favorably.

3. Expected Results

HEIs that are successful in implementing capacity building grants will demonstrate increased capacity to develop and administer study abroad programs that receive and send students to the United States. These HEIs:

- Will demonstrate increased awareness of the barriers to study abroad;
- Will each possess a new model to engage students in LAC and the US;
- Will have shared successful models with other LAC and US institutions; and
- Will demonstrate an increase in the number of effective partnerships with US HEIs.

Section II: Award Information

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Envisioned

The intent of the competition as part of the RFP#1: Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100k Strong is to award a total of ten (10) 100K Strong Americas Innovator CB sub-grants of \$25,000 each to HEIs across the eligible countries listed above, for a total of \$250,000 in funds awarded in this competition. The DOS, NAFSA and Partners of the Americas reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted, and may or may not select 100K Strong Americas Innovators from all of the eligible countries listed above.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance

Winning awards will be disbursed no later than December 31, 2013 and the period of performance will be from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014.

3. Type of Award

Partners plans to award sub-grants to successful applicants for this program. Sub-grant awardees will be responsible for keeping Partners staff updated on the achievement of proposed program activities and interventions through a Washington, DC based Program Director.

The Partners Program Director will be substantially involved in the following areas:

- Approval of the Recipient's reports including Quarterly Reports;
- Approval of Budgets;
- Approval of additional expenditures;
- Approval of the Recipient's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Section III: Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

HEIs located and legally registered in the countries of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru are eligible to apply for this RFP#1: Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100k Strong competition. This competition seeks to receive applications from a diversity of HEIs, including both public and private institutions, 4-year and shorter-term degree issuing institutions, large and small institutions, and rural and urban. The intention of selecting from these categories of institutions is to ensure that the selected institutions represent the broadest diversity of HEI profiles so that successful capacity building programs developed have the greatest possibility of replication across the institutions that will ultimately be critical to reaching the overall goal of 100K Strong Americas.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Fund Requirements

In submitting a proposal, applicant HEIs should demonstrate a high-level commitment to increasing study abroad in both directions – to and from the US. One form of demonstrating this commitment is by committing matching resources to demonstrate leverage of institutional or other resources that contribute to the proposed capacity building innovations and activities. Cost Share is defined as resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement. It is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the awarded grant. There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition and cost share may be cash or in-kind. However, applicants are encouraged to provide cost sharing and funding in support of its proposed activities. 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.

Section IV: Application and Submission

1. Online Submission Process

Applications can only be submitted online through the application link on the 100,000 Strong in the Americas website, www.100kstrongamericas.org by the deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. Applications may only be submitted in **English**. Any prospective Applicant desiring an explanation of this RFP must request it in writing to 100kstrongamericas@partners.net by the question submission deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation.

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 or are incomplete will not be considered in the review process.

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

2. Technical Application Format

Applications 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, annexes will not count toward the page limitation. Any additional pages that exceed the 10 page limitation will not be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee. **Submissions should include four separate files.**

1. An up-to 10 page program proposal, which includes sub-sections A-G as outlined in Section V: Application Review;
2. A budget in the format stipulated in Section VI of this solicitation;
3. Budget narrative as stipulated in Section VI of this solicitation;
4. And up to 5 pages of annexes that 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 this project. 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 clearly identified. In addition, the Cover Page should provide a contact person for the Applicant, including this individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address. State whether the contact person is the person with authority to contract for the Applicant, and if not, that person should also be listed with contact information.

B. Table of Contents

Applicants must list all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments.

C. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary counts towards the page limit and should not exceed two pages. The Executive Summary should briefly describe a) the proposed goals, b) the key activities and anticipated results, and c) managerial resources of the Applicant. This section should also describe how the overall project will be coordinated.

D. Program Description

In this section, Applicants should focus on describing how they propose to achieve the program

objective(s) and how the program will make a significant contribution towards achieving the objectives and areas for action identified in the program description. Applicants shall elaborate in their program description the most effective way to coordinate and assist in the expansion and development of a successful program.

Applicants must propose innovations that they believe should be prioritized and explain why. Applicants must describe how the proposed innovation will enhance the flow of students going North and South.

Applicants should also describe any coordination activities they may initiate with support from Civil Society, Government Institutions, or Private Organizations as innovative strategies.

E. Sustainability Plan

Applicants must describe how their proposed program will continue after the grant period has expired.

F. Institutional Capacity and Management Approach

The Applicant must include a brief description of their institutional experience with exchange programs in the Western Hemisphere. Institutions that have minimal experience with exchange programs should describe a desire and path to expanding their student exchange capacity throughout the Western Hemisphere. 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 with a Hemisphere wide focus.

In describing their management approach, Applicants must name the 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 5 page maximum of annexes.**

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan must explain how the Applicant proposes to monitor the program and assess program impact. The performance monitoring and evaluation 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 Partners reserves the right to modify indicators in consultation with winning applicants at the award stage in collaboration with awardees.

Applicants must also include a time line for implementation of activities that are presented in their Program Description section.

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			
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
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.

Section VII: Evaluation Criteria

The criteria outlined below will be used to evaluate applications submitted in response to this solicitation on the basis of 100 points.

1. Technical Proposal (80 points)

- a) Program Description- 40 points
- b) Sustainability Plan-15 points
- c) Institutional Capacity and Management Approach- 15 points
- d) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan- 10 points

2. Cost Proposal (20 points)

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, and outputs reflected in the Technical Proposal. A strong cost proposal will include:

- a) A detailed outputs-based budget and accompanying budget narrative.
- b) Cost-sharing information, if applicable.

Section VIII: Agency Contacts

Questions concerning this solicitation can be emailed to 100kstrongamericas@partners.net prior to the deadline mentioned on the cover letter of this document. **No phone calls.**

100,000 Strong in the Americas is supported by the [U.S. Department of State](#) in partnership with [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) and [Partners of the Americas](#).

