



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR THE IDEAS PROGRAM

RFP Issuance Date: December 11, 2019
Webinar Date/Time: December 18, 2019, 2:00pm Eastern Time
Closing Date/Time: February 28, 2020 at 11:59pm Eastern Time

Dear prospective applicant,

World Learning is pleased to announce a grants competition for accredited U.S. colleges and universities under the IDEAS Program (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students), also known as the Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad, a program of USA Study Abroad in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The purpose of this announcement is to invite U.S. colleges and universities to submit applications for projects to create, expand, and/or diversify their outbound study abroad programs for undergraduate students (though programming may also benefit graduate students). Successful applicants must demonstrate a strong and sustainable plan for creating, expanding, and/or diversifying U.S. study abroad at their institution that leads to increasing the number of U.S. students who study abroad in the near term. The grant competition is open to all accredited U.S. institutions of higher education from associate's colleges through doctoral universities. The program seeks to engage the full diversity of U.S. higher education, including community colleges and Minority Serving Institutions.

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State's USA Study Abroad, World Learning anticipates awarding approximately 21 grants for a maximum funding level of up to \$35,000 each for a period of performance of up to 14 months starting on or about July 1, 2020. World Learning will manage the grants awarded under this RFP through the IDEAS Program.

Applications must be submitted **by February 28, 2020 at 11:59pm Eastern time** via the IDEAS Program online [application portal](#). Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered. There are no exceptions.

Questions concerning this RFP should be submitted by email to IDEASprogram@worldlearning.org. Please include "IDEAS FY19 Application" in the subject line. The list of frequently asked questions will be posted on the program [website](#) on or about January 10th, 2020. If necessary, an updated version of the list of frequently asked questions will be posted on or about February 1st, 2020. Additionally, World Learning will host a webinar to discuss the grant competition process on Wednesday, December 18th from 2:00pm to 3:00pm Eastern time. Please see [Section B](#) for information on how to join in the webinar.

Issuance of this RFP, or the submission of an application, does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Department of State and/or World Learning, nor does it commit the U.S. Department of State and/or World Learning to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The U.S. Department of State reserves the right not to fund any and/or all the applications received.

Thank you for your consideration of this initiative. We look forward to your institution's participation.

Sincerely,

The IDEAS Program Team



SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1 Introduction

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State's USA Study Abroad in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), World Learning will administer a grants competition for U.S. colleges and universities under the IDEAS Program. This document describes the grants competition under which approximately 21 grants will be issued for a maximum funding level of up to \$35,000 each for a period of performance of up to 14 months. Awards will be made on or about July 1, 2020 and go through August 30, 2021 to accredited U.S. colleges and universities to implement projects to create, expand, and/or diversify their undergraduate study abroad programs. Graduate students may be involved in the planned study abroad programs, but the primary focus should be on undergraduate students. Proposals may not include requests for funding to cover student scholarships, student travel, or travel to the United States for faculty and/or staff at higher education institutions overseas.

Grants awarded under the IDEAS Program will be subject to, and administered in accordance with, the [U.S. Department of State's Standard Terms and Conditions](#).

A.2 Background and Objectives

The IDEAS Program (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students), also known as the Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad, is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by World Learning. The IDEAS Program is a capacity building program designed to expand and diversify American student mobility in support of U.S. foreign policy goals through grants and capacity building activities. The goals of the program are to:

- Increase the number of U.S. undergraduate students studying and/or interning abroad for credit in the near term;
- Diversify American student mobility, both in terms of the students taking part and the destinations where they travel; and
- Expand U.S. study abroad capacity nationally by providing access to information and best practices through in-person and virtual events, as well as an online library of resources.

Through the IDEAS Program, selected grant recipients will implement projects to create, expand, and/or diversify study abroad at their institutions, leading to more inclusive and impactful study abroad programming.

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, World Learning manages a competitive review process to award approximately 21 grants of up to \$35,000 to selected higher education institutions in the United States. The program also offers U.S. colleges and universities with opportunities to participate in a series of workshops, both virtual and in-person, to help create, expand, and/or diversify their study abroad programs. These initiatives are open to grant recipients, as well as the larger U.S. study abroad community.

A.3 Projects that may be Funded

The IDEAS Program is looking for creative and innovative project ideas to increase and diversify study abroad programming. Examples of the types of projects that applicants may propose include, but are not limited to:

- Create a faculty-led study abroad program,
- Create a new study abroad position or office at the college or university,
- Support minority student participation in study abroad,



- Provide resources for students with disabilities to study abroad,
- Create programming for students in underrepresented majors,
- Form or further develop relationships with universities in a wide variety of international locations, and/or
- Create or enhance study abroad programs around theme areas such as cybersecurity, entrepreneurship, human rights, food security, STEAM, and public health.

For institutions applying to expand or diversify already existing study abroad programming, preference may be given to applications that also address one or more of the following U.S. foreign policy goals:

- Cyber issues (including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, technology);
- Entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Energy and natural resources;
- Closing the skills gap (including manufacturing, high-tech sectors, human resources, business, management, education);
- Democracy and human rights (including refugees and trafficking of persons);
- Economic development and trade policy;
- Food security/sustainable agriculture/natural resource management;
- Infrastructure (including engineering and urban planning);
- Public health; and/or
- Women's empowerment.

NOTE: In the Grant Proposal, applicants will be asked to indicate which U.S. foreign policy goal(s) their proposed projects seek to address and how they will seek to address it.

A.4 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for consideration, proposals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. The grants competition is open to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education (public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities) that have a broad range of capacity to administer study abroad programs. Institutions that currently have no or limited experience administering study abroad programs as well as those with established programs are encouraged to apply;
2. Proposals must support primarily U.S. undergraduate student mobility abroad, although graduate student participation in programs is allowed;
3. Funding may not be used to support student scholarships, including but not limited to, tuition, international travel, and meals. Funds may be used to support U.S. faculty and/or staff travel overseas but not travel for foreign faculty and/or staff to come to the United States;
4. Proposals to locations with a State Department Travel Advisory Level 3 must outline safety and security procedures for the proposed study abroad programs. Proposals to locations with a State Department Travel Advisory Level 4 will not be considered. Please consult the Travel Advisory list here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

END OF SECTION A



SECTION B: APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

B1. Application Guidelines

Applicants are encouraged to read this RFP in its entirety and ensure that the application addresses all the items cited in this section and meets the eligibility criteria. All applications must be submitted **by February 28, 2020 at 11:59pm Eastern time** via the IDEAS Program online [application portal](#)¹. Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered. There are no exceptions. Applicants are encouraged to review the “Application Instructions” (see Attachment A).

Prospective applicants are encouraged to join a webinar hosted by World Learning on **Wednesday, December 18, 2019 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm Eastern time**. The purpose of the webinar will be to provide an overview of the grant competition for the IDEAS Program. Information for joining the webinar is listed below. A recording of the webinar and related materials will be posted on the IDEAS Program’s [website](#)².

IDEAS Program - Grant Competition Webinar

Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at 2:00 PM EST | 1 hour
Meeting number: 641 107 833
Password: StudyAbroad

You can join the webinar by:

Option 1: Click on the following link to join via your computer or tablet:

<https://worldlearning.webex.com/worldlearning/j.php?MTID=e9ed7e80607a68f933b769a3934bf14aa>

or

Option 2: Dial the following number to join by phone:

+1-415-655-0001

Access code: 641 107 833

B2. Grant Proposal

Applicants responding to this RFP should submit a full grant proposal via the application portal. A complete grant proposal must not exceed 18 pages and should include a technical proposal and budget documents as explained below. No other documentation should be submitted.

Technical Proposal (maximum of 12 of pages)

The technical proposal describes how the applicant intends to implement their project. It should be concise, specific, complete, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of all parties involved. The technical proposal must demonstrate how the project will enhance the applicant’s capacity to administer study abroad programs. The technical proposal shall not exceed 12 pages, excluding CVs for key project staff. Applicants must use the following format and outline for their grant proposal and may elect to further divide these sections into subcategories of their choosing.

¹ https://webportalapp.com/sp/home/ideas_applications

² <http://www.studyabroadcapacitybuilding.org/>



I. Cover Page

Include the name of the institution submitting the application, Institution Type, MSI status, project title, and the contact information (name, title, physical address, phone, email) of the individual responsible for the application.

II. Executive Summary (1 page)

The executive summary should be a one-page overview of key features of the proposed project. The summary should include a brief description of the overall project, project objectives, major activities and intended results, and level of funding requested.

III. Program Description (4-7 pages)

The program description shall be no more than 7 pages. Readers will disregard content beyond seven pages. This page limit excludes the following items: table of contents and key staff CVs. All applications must be typed on standard letter-sized paper (8 ½ x 11”) with 1” margins and single-spaced. The program description consists of a statement of need, sustainability plan, and project management plan. Include only information necessary to provide a clear understanding of the proposed activity and the justification for it.

1. Statement of Need

The statement of need should present a sound analytic basis for the proposed approaches, strategies, and activities, including existing, as well as absent, resources and capabilities.

A. Capacity Building Plan

Describe how this project will increase the applicant’s capacity to administer study abroad programs. Clearly articulate a plan that builds institutional capacity to create, expand, and/or diversify U.S. students who study abroad leading to more inclusive and impactful programming. The applicant must articulate a plan whereby undergraduate students are highly likely to begin study abroad activities in the near term as a result of the proposed activities.

B. Project Activities

Explain what the proposed project will do, how, and by whom.

- Outline your theory of change formulated in an “if...then...” statement detailing *how* that change will happen. Be specific about the *type of change* (e.g. institutional capacity, knowledge, skills, partnership development, etc.) as well as the *target of change* (e.g. key individuals, groups, organizations, etc.)
- Describe the major activities necessary to achieve the anticipated project outcomes;
- Briefly describe the conceptual/theoretical/technical rationale or need for selecting these activities;
- Briefly describe how potential challenges and/or roadblocks to achieving the desired project outcomes will be addressed.

C. Logic Model

For each *problem or issue* to be addressed, indicate the proposed project *activities*. For each activity or set of interrelated activities, specify the anticipated project *outputs* and *outcomes*. The outcomes to be achieved should be clearly described and quantified. Describe the assumptions that underlie the project design and logic model and any constraints that may affect project operations or outcomes. Applicants should use the logic model template included as Attachment B of this RFP.

2. Sustainability Plan

The proposal should clearly indicate the applicant’s plan for after the funding period concludes and how the applicant will sustain its capacity to continue to operate and/or grow its new study abroad programming. Applicants should outline a clear connection to the applicant institution’s U.S. student mobility abroad and/or campus internationalization goals. A plan to expand the capacity of the foreign partner should also be included, particularly



in locations in eligible foreign countries³ that have not participated extensively in traditional U.S. study abroad programs.

3. Project Management Plan and Key Staff CVs

Provide an overview of how the proposed project will be managed. Briefly summarize the staffing structure and roles, responsibilities and qualifications of key staff responsible for implementing the project. Do not include more than two CVs; each CV must only be one page in length. The CVs should be submitted as attachments separate from the program description.

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2 pages max)

The proposal must include a monitoring and evaluation plan that tracks key data points regarding student participation in study abroad programming, establishes benchmarks, and has measurable objectives. Effective internal monitoring and evaluation of activities, outputs, and outcomes are essential aspects of project management. This section of the application should contain a detailed description of the monitoring systems and mechanisms to be used. For each project *outcome* included in the logic framework, identify an objectively verifiable prospective *indicator* for measuring it and the means of verification. Please also note how the indicators relate to the “if” and “then” components of your theory of change. Where appropriate, use the following categories to disaggregate data: under-represented student populations, ethnic background, race, disability status, income, gender, first generation college students, major (e.g. STEM, liberal arts, etc.).

Describe your institution’s current capacity to monitor and evaluate project performance. Describe what data collection methods will be used; the source of your data; who will collect the data; the frequency of collection; how data will be analyzed and by whom; how data will be used to monitor implementation and outcomes; and what your indicator’s baseline measure and target values will be for the project.

V. Calendar of Activities (Work Plan, 2 pages max)

Describe the main activities to be implemented by month and the staff person responsible for implementing the activity. Inputs and outputs should be realistic and achievable within proposed budget and timeframe and reflect a grasp of necessary steps to ensure effective execution of program activities. The proposed calendar of activities should also be presented in matrix format included as Attachment C of this RFP.

VI. Budget Documents (6 pages max)

The applicant should present a budget summary, detailed budget in U.S. dollars, and budget narrative using the instructions/guidelines presented below. If you do not need funds for any particular line item, for example “Supplies,” you may leave this budget line item out. No profit or fees may be included. As necessary, each line item should include “sub-categories” in the detailed budget presentation as described below. The budget documents should not exceed 6 pages.

It is recommended that the budget summary and detailed budget be prepared in *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet software so that rates, quantities, row totals, and column totals can be reviewed and updated with ease. The budget summary and detailed budget should be included in the same *Microsoft Excel* workbook, i.e. Tab 1: budget summary;

³ Refers to proposals to locations with a State Department Travel Advisory Level 3 must outline safety and security procedures for the proposed study abroad programs. Proposals to locations with a State Department Travel Advisory Level 4 will not be considered. Please consult the Travel Advisory list here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>



Tab 2: detailed budget. The budget summary should also be included on the first page of budget narrative as a reference.

Budget Summary (1 page)

1. Personnel	\$
2. Fringe Benefits	\$
3. Consultants/Contractual	\$
4. Travel and Transportation	\$
5. Supplies	\$
6. Other Direct Costs	\$
7. Program Activities	\$
8. Indirect Costs	\$
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$

Detailed Budget (1-2 pages)

The following guidance should be followed to project costs per budget line item:

1. Personnel –This category should include salaries and benefits for full or part-time employees. The individual’s name for each position, if already identified, should be mentioned, as well as the salary rate and level of effort (generally either number of days or months). The budget presentation format and associated detail should match normal practices in the applicant’s institution.
2. Fringe Benefits – Fringe Benefits or other compensation are calculated separately from the base salary, and the budget details should present the amounts in a similar manner. If fringe benefits are paid, the types of fringe benefits should be explained in the budget narrative and their individual costs disclosed in the detailed budget.
3. Consultants/Contractual – A consultant is an individual with a particular profession who possesses a special skill that is hired by the institution for a specific task. However, this individual is not an employee or officer of the institution, and in general no fringe benefits are to be included in the consultant’s rate. The consultant’s “title” (i.e. what service) should be included in the sub-line items in your budget table. The proposed consultant rates (either hourly or daily) and LOE (level of effort) should be mentioned, justified, and addressed in the budget narrative and should form the basis of the calculation in your budget. The budget notes should describe the specific services the consultant will perform. Contractual costs to pay firms or other third parties for services should be included in this line item.
4. Travel and Transportation – The Application should indicate the number of trips and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>. International per diem rates may be accessed at https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp. The following cost categories should be covered and budgeted for under this line item: airfare, lodging, meals and incidentals, taxi/other ground transport, etc. If “standard” rates are used, the source of the standard should be mentioned. **NOTE:** Funding may not be used to support student scholarships, including but not limited to, tuition, international travel, and meals. Funds may be used to support U.S. faculty and/or staff travel overseas but not travel for foreign faculty and/or staff to come to the United States. All flights will need to be compliant with the Fly America Act.
5. Supplies - This section includes regular office supplies, as well as project specific supplies.



6. Other Direct Costs – This line item includes costs such as communications, postage, printing, office rent, etc. Also, costs of any non-programmatic professional services, if any, being procured through a contract mechanism should be included here (such as audit costs). The budget narrative should provide a breakdown and support for all other direct costs.
7. Program Activities (if any) – This category should be used if the project includes program related activities including but not limited to training, workshops, etc. Relatively small program related services may be included in either the Consultant’s section mentioned above or Other Direct Costs.
8. Indirect Cost – Funds should be budgeted here in accordance with the applicant’s institution currently approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). If the applicant does not have a NICRA, an institution may elect to use a di minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs in accordance with 2 [CFR 200.414](#).

Budget Narrative (2-3 pages)

A detailed budget narrative that justifies the costs as appropriate and necessary for the successful completion of proposed activities should be attached to the budget. It is recommended that the budget narrative be prepared in *Microsoft Word* and should be separate from the summary budget and detailed budget. The budget narrative should be of sufficient detail so that someone unfamiliar with your institution or the activity could review and adequately understand the assumptions/reasonableness and calculation method used. The budget narrative should clearly describe the project and cost assumptions for the U.S. Department of State funded costs. All proposed costs and estimates must be reasonable and allowable in accordance with the U.S. Government’s [Office of Management and Budget’s Guidance 2 CFR 200](#).

In summary, all proposed costs must be directly applicable to performing the work under the award, and budgeted amounts should not exceed the market cost/value of an item or service. The level of detail should be at a level whereby specific rates and quantities are disclosed.

END OF SECTION B



SECTION C: SELECTION CRITERIA

C1. Introduction

Applicants should note that the selection criteria presented serve to: (1) identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications; and (2) as the standard against which all applications will be evaluated. The application will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set forth below.

Applications will undergo a preliminary review by the IDEAS Program team for eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria, are incompletes, are unresponsive to the RFP, and/or are submitted after the due date will NOT be considered.

C2. Selection Process

All applications deemed complete by the IDEAS Program team will be reviewed and evaluated by the selection committee against the selection criteria described below. The U.S. Department of State will have final approval of funding decisions.

The IDEAS Program team will use the conclusions and recommendations of the selection committee together with an evaluation of costs to determine if negotiations with an applicant will be required. As noted in the cover letter to this RFP, the costs involved in preparing the application shall not be directly reimbursed by World Learning regardless of the outcome of the negotiations. In addition to the evaluation criteria described herein, the U.S. Department of State reserves the right to consider factors such as institutional and regional diversity, and diversity in the types of programs selected for funding, in approving the final pool of successful applicants.

C3. Evaluation Criteria

Awards will be made to applicants whose applications offer the greatest value based on the ranking of proposals according to the technical and budget selection criteria identified below:

1. Program Description:

a. Statement of Need:

- i. A clearly articulated plan that builds institutional capacity to create, expand, and/or diversify the population of U.S. students who study abroad and/or the destinations where they study;
- ii. A clear description of how, as a direct result of the award, the college or university will in the near term increase the number of primarily undergraduate students (though not necessarily exclusively undergraduates) that study and/or intern abroad for academic credit and/or the destinations where they study;
- iii. A demonstrated commitment to participating in capacity building activities and active engagement in community networks;
- iv. A commitment to diversity and increasing the representation of underrepresented student populations in study abroad programming; and
- v. For institutions with established study abroad programming who are applying to expand or diversify their programming, preference may be given to those who effectively integrate the U.S. foreign policy goals listed in [Section A](#) into their programming.

- b. Sustainability Plan: A clearly articulated plan to sustain new study abroad programming beyond the grant.



- c. Project Management Plan: A sound management structure and approach to ensure project effectiveness and efficiency in order to achieve maximum benefits and results.
2. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: A detailed monitoring and evaluation plan that tracks key data points regarding student and destination diversity, establishes benchmarks, and has measurable objectives.
3. Calendar of Activities (Work Plan): A detailed plan that indicates when key activities will be implemented and who will be responsible for their implementation. All activities funded by the grant must occur within the estimated grant period, July 1, 2020- August 31, 2021.
4. Budget: A realistic budget that demonstrates cost effectiveness. All costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

C.4 Weighting of Evaluation Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated by the Selection Committee and scored on a scale of 0-100 based on the following criteria.

1. Program Description — 40 points
2. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan — 25 points
3. Calendar of Activities (Work Plan) – 15 points
4. Budget – 20 points

END OF SECTION C