



2024 IDEAS Grant Competition: Phase Two Proposal Guidelines

Issuance Date: February 7, 2024

Closing Date/Time: April 4, 2024, 11:59pm Eastern Time

The U.S. Department of State’s IDEAS Program is pleased to invite your institution to submit a full proposal as part of Phase Two of the 2024 IDEAS grant competition. The IDEAS (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students) Program 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.

Phase Two of the competition is the “proposal phase” and open only to semi-finalist applicants selected following Phase One of the competition. The IDEAS Program will ask semi-finalists to provide full grant proposal documents as outlined in this document. Phase Two of the competition is open now, as of February 7, 2024, and will close on April 4, 2024, at 11:59pm Eastern Time via the [IDEAS Grant Competition Application Portal](#). Should your institution be unable to access and/or submit an online application, please email IDEAS@worldlearning.org to inquire about alternative submission options. **Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered.**

Phase Two Grant Competition Timeline

February 7, 2024	Phase Two begins
February 20, 2024	Semi-finalist Training: General Proposal Writing (Register)
February 28, 2024	Semi-finalist Training: Budget Proposal Development (Register)
March 7, 2024	Semi-finalist Training: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Development (Register)
April 4, 2024	Phase Two closes
April-May 2024	Phase Two application review
June 2024	Finalists Announced
September 1, 2024- February 28, 2026	Grant period of performance (up to 18 months)

The IDEAS Program invites your questions concerning Phase Two of the grant competition; please submit them to IDEAS@worldlearning.org. A list of [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) from previous grant competitions is available on the [program website](#). Semi-finalists are also invited and highly encouraged to attend the three training sessions scheduled to assist institutions in developing a quality proposal. Recordings of these sessions will be shared with all semi-finalists following and posted on the [grant competition resources](#) section of the website following each event.

For additional information about the 2024 IDEAS grant competition including Background and Objectives, Foreign Policy Goals, and Eligibility Requirements, please refer to the [Phase One Request for Proposals](#), released on October 11, 2023. All eligibility criteria and guidelines related to project models, objectives, and foreign policy goals listed in that document are applicable and relevant to Phase Two of the competition.

Section 1: Phase Two Application and Selection Process

1a. Application Guidelines

Applicants should read these guidelines in their entirety and ensure their Phase Two application addresses all items cited in this section and meets the eligibility criteria. Prospective applicants are encouraged to review the [FAQ document](#) online and to attend the three optional training sessions listed below:



1. Semi-finalist Training: General Proposal Writing ([Register](#))

- a. Date/time: Tuesday, February 20, 2024, from 3:00-4:00pm EST
- b. Moderator: Amy Schwenkmeyer, Director: Program Development Unit, World Learning
In this session, semi-finalists will be introduced to basic proposal writing tips and techniques. The session will be moderated by World Learning and feature perspectives from current IDEAS grantees. Concepts covered will include composing a concise executive summary, writing a compelling project description, and developing appendices. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions related to proposal development of World Learning Program Development staff as well as the IDEAS team.

2. Semi-finalist Training: Budget Proposal Development ([Register](#))

- a. Date/time: Wednesday, February 28, 2023, from 2:00-3:00pm EST
- b. Moderator: Samantha McFarland, Cost and Pricing Manager, World Learning
This training session will feature a thorough overview of budget proposal development with representatives from World Learning’s Business Development and Partnerships Unit. Concepts covered will include allowable costs, understanding fringe and indirect cost rates, and budgeting for travel.

3. Semi-finalist Training: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Development ([Register](#))

- a. Date/time: Friday, March 7, 2023, from 1:00pm-2:00pm EST
- b. Moderator: Peter Weinberger, Senior Advisor, Monitoring & Evaluation, World Learning
This final session will guide semi-finalists through the process of developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for their proposed IDEAS grant projects, facilitated by World Learning’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning team. Concepts covered will include Theory of Change, Logic Models, and Indicators.

1b. Phase Two Application and Selection Process

Semi-finalists invited to Phase Two of this grant competition must submit a full grant proposal via the application portal. A complete grant proposal must not exceed 22 pages and must include a technical proposal and budget documents as explained below. No other documentation should be submitted as it will not be considered by the selection committee. All applications must be typed in a standard letter-sized document (8 ½ x 11”), single spaced, and with 1-inch margins. A legible font of size 11 or greater should be utilized.

Applications will undergo a preliminary review by the IDEAS Program team for eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to the RFP. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria, are incomplete, are unresponsive to the RFP, and/or are submitted after the due date will be deemed technically ineligible and will NOT be considered. Eligible proposals that exceed the page limit requirements listed below will have excess pages redacted prior to review.

All Phase Two applications deemed eligible and complete will be evaluated and scored by members of a review panel against the criteria described below. The review panel will be comprised of study abroad professionals and faculty from higher education institutions and organizations across the United States. The IDEAS Program team will use the comments and scores of the review panels to recommend approximately 35 finalists for grant funding. The U.S. Department of State will have final approval of selected finalists. 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 variation within the United States, variation of locations overseas, and variation in the types of programs selected for funding, among other factors, in selecting finalists.

Section 2: Phase Two Proposal Elements Description

2a. Proposal Narrative (maximum 15 pages)

The proposal narrative 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 and how it connects to and/or incorporates one or more of the listed foreign policy goals. The technical proposal shall not exceed 15 pages. Applicants must use the format and outline described below for their grant proposal and may elect to further divide these sections into subcategories of their choosing. Any section which goes beyond the designated page limit will have excess pages redacted.

I. Cover Page (1 page)

Include the name of the institution submitting the application, institution type, **Minority Serving Institution** (MSI) status (if applicable), **rural-serving institution** status (self-identify), project title, and the contact information (name, title, physical address, phone, email) of the individual responsible for the application.

II. Table of Contents (1 page)

III. 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, a description of the project’s alignment with listed foreign policy goals, and level of funding requested.

IV. Program Description (4-6 pages)

a. Statement of Need

The statement of need should present existing, as well as absent, resources and capabilities as well as a sound analytic basis for the proposed approaches, strategies, and activities to utilize and/or address any identified areas of need.

b. Capacity Building Plan

Describe how this project will address the identified needs and increase the applicant’s capacity to administer study abroad programs. Clearly articulate a plan that builds institutional capacity to establish, expand, and broaden U.S. study abroad programs or resources leading to more inclusive and impactful programming that aligns with U.S. foreign policy goals. 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.

c. Project Activities

Explain what the proposed project will do, how it will do it, and who will participate in the activities and their implementation.

- i. 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.). In short, explain the anticipated impact of the project on your institution’s campus and/or community. Applicants may also consider how you will share that impact and lessons learned with others.
- ii. Describe the major activities necessary to achieve the anticipated project outcomes.



- iii. Briefly describe the conceptual/theoretical/technical rationale or need for selecting these activities.
- iv. Briefly describe how potential challenges and/or roadblocks to achieving the desired project outcomes will be addressed.

d. Project Management Plan

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.

V. Foreign Policy Goal Alignment (1 page)

Explain the foreign policy goal(s) that your proposed project will align with and detail how your planned project seeks to address this goal. Applicants should seek to fully incorporate the foreign policy goal(s) into their proposed activities and explain how the program will impact their students, faculty, institution, and/or community. Applicants aligning with more than one foreign policy goal should focus their response on the primary foreign policy goal identified in their application but should also include information on how any additional foreign policy goals will be substantively incorporated into their project.

VI. Sustainability Plan (1 page)

The proposal should clearly indicate the applicant’s plan for continuing the proposed activities after the funding period concludes and how the applicant will sustain its capacity to continue to operate and/or grow its study abroad programming after the conclusion of the grant. Applicants should outline a clear connection to their institution’s U.S. student mobility abroad and/or campus internationalization goals. Please also note any institutional support for the proposed program activities and/or study abroad in general at your institution.

VII. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (1 page)

The proposal must include a monitoring and evaluation plan that tracks key data points, establishes benchmarks, and has measurable objectives. The monitoring and evaluation plan narrative should be accompanied by a separate Logic Model attachment (more details below).

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. 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. Please note that institutions that receive IDEAS Grant funding will be required to adhere to World Learning and U.S. Department of State monitoring and reporting deadlines and guidelines.

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 relevant and appropriate to your project and institution, disaggregate your data by factors such as country of study and student groups, which could including but are not limited to field(s) of study, disability status, financial aid status, gender, ethnic background, race, first generation college students, and and/or other identified underrepresented student groups.

VIII. 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 included in the proposal narrative, separate from the budget attachment detailed below. The budget narrative should be of sufficient detail so that someone unfamiliar with your institution or the proposed activity could review and adequately understand the ways in which funding will be utilized to meet the described program goals. To further clarify costs, the



applicant should note details around any assumptions made of listed costs, reasonable pricing, and the 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 [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.

2b. Proposal Attachments

Attachment documents will be uploaded as individual files to the Application portal.

- I. Calendar of Activities (1 spreadsheet, [template provided](#))**
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 the proposed budget and timeframe and reflect a grasp of necessary steps to ensure effective execution of program activities. The proposed calendar of activities should be presented in matrix format included in the template linked above.
- II. Logic Model (1 page, [template provided](#))**
For each area of need identified, indicate the proposed project activities designed to address them. 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 provided.
- III. Key Staff Resumes (2 pages, 1 document)**
Please provide no more than two one-page resumes for the key staff responsible for implementing the project. Information featured should be that which is most relevant to staff members’ work on the proposed project. A full CV should not be submitted.
- IV. Budget Spreadsheet (1 spreadsheet, 2 tabs, [optional template](#))**
The applicant should present a budget summary and detailed budget in U.S. dollars using the instructions/guidelines presented below. Applicants may utilize the linked budget template, but they are not required to do so. If you do not need funds for any particular line item, i.e. “Supplies,” you may leave this budget line item out. Budgets may not include any profit or fees. As necessary, each line item should include “sub-categories” in the detailed budget presentation as described below. Please be sure that the numbers included in the budget are not rounded and display cents if applicable.
Cost share is not required as part of an IDEAS Grant budget. However, should your institution choose to provide direct and/or in-kind cost share as part of its proposed budget, please outline the amount per line item in your budget summary and detailed budget. Cost share totals may raise the total grant budget above \$35,000 (or \$50,000 for consortium grants). Requested funds from the IDEAS Program should not exceed \$35,000 (or \$50,000 for consortium grants).
It is recommended, though not required, that the budget summary and detailed budget be prepared in Microsoft Excel or a similar 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; Tab 2: detailed budget.

a. Budget Summary (Tab 1)

1. Salaries and Wages	\$0.00
2. Fringe Benefits	\$0.00
3. Consultants/Contractual	\$0.00



4. Travel and Transportation	\$0.00
5. Supplies	\$0.00
6. Other Direct Costs	\$0.00
7. Indirect Costs	\$0.00
8. Cost Share	\$0.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$0.00
TOTAL IDEAS GRANT FUNDING	\$0.00

b. Detailed Budget (Tab 2)

You may submit your detailed budget using the above linked template or any other template that is standard at your institution. In either format, the following guidance should be followed to project costs per budget line item:

- i. Salaries and Wages – 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 (LOE) (generally either number of days or months).
 1. If faculty compensation above the Institutional Base Salary (IBS) is proposed, please ensure compliance with Uniform Guidance Requirements at [2 CFR §200.430\(h\)](#). **If selected as a grantee, you will need to certify that any faculty compensation meets requirements as outlined in this form.**
- ii. 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.
- iii. Consultants/Contractual – A consultant is an individual 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” indicating what type of service they will provide (e.g., monitoring and evaluation, program development) should be included in the sub-line items in your budget table. The proposed consultant rates (either hourly or daily) and LOE 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, partner institutions, or other third parties for services should be included in this line item.
- iv. 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>. 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, insurance, SIM cards, 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, including some group travel or program costs such as ground transportation, room rental, or cultural visit or tour fees that include both faculty and student participants. These group costs should be limited to no more than 5% of the total budget. They may be budgeted as Travel, Consultants, or Other Direct costs in accordance with your institutional policies and should be justified in terms of how those expenses



will support program goals and how the program would be sustainable in the future after the grant period ended. Travel for foreign faculty and/or staff to come to the United States is also allowable.

- v. All flights will need to be compliant with the [Fly America Act](#).
- vi. Supplies - This section includes regular office supplies, as well as project-specific supplies.
- vii. Other Direct Costs – 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 here or in the Consultants section mentioned above. This line item may also include costs such as communications, postage, printing, etc. The budget narrative should provide a breakdown and support for all other direct costs.
- viii. Indirect Costs – Funds should be budgeted here in accordance with the applicant institution’s currently approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). If the applicant does not have a NICRA, an institution may elect to use a de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs in accordance with [2 CFR 200.414](#). Indirect costs are not required, but applicants should seek approval from their institutions in order to waive or change indirect cost charges.
- ix. Cost Share – NOT REQUIRED. Cost-sharing refers to contributions made from grantee’s non-federal resources, whether in direct payments for project related expenditures, or in-kind. Applicants will be contractually required to provide all cost share in the amount proposed if selected as a grantee. Examples of in-kind contributions include use of equipment or space, materials, and value of volunteer services, which are not charged to the grant. In-kind contributions shall be valued using fair market value. All contributions, both cash and in-kind, shall be accepted as part of grantee’s share when such contributions are:
 - 1. Verifiable from grantee’s records;
 - 2. Necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project objectives;
 - 3. Provided for in the budget;
 - 4. Not paid by U.S. Government funds under another award. Grantee provided cost share under this grant must not be included as a contribution for any other U.S. Government assisted program.

Section 3: Selection 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. Reviewers will rank each criterion on a scale from one (1) to five (5):

- I. **Executive Summary – 5 points**
 - a. Executive Summary provides a clear, concise overview of the key features of the proposed project.
- II. **Program Description - 30 points**
 - a. Statement of Need: Proposal presents existing, as well as absent, resources and capabilities and a sound analytic basis for the proposed approaches, strategies, and activities to utilize and/or address any identified areas of need.
 - b. Capacity Building Plan: Proposal describes a well-articulated plan to build institutional capacity to administer study abroad programs.
 - c. Project Activities: Proposal includes a clear description of how, as a direct result of the award, the college or university will establish, expand, and broaden its study abroad programs and/or resources. These expanded programs and/or resources should increase and/or broaden the number and kind of



primarily undergraduate students that study or intern abroad for academic credit and/or the destinations where they study.

- d.* Project Activities: Proposal demonstrates a commitment to expanding the locations to which students travel and/or the types of students who travel abroad (particularly those who are currently underrepresented in study abroad).
- e.* Project Activities: Proposal outlines relevant and achievable project activities and a convincing Theory of Change which details how the proposed project activities will create the identified change, including an "if...then..." statement, the type of change to occur, and the target of that change.
- f.* Project Management Plan: Proposal has a sound management plan, structure, and approach to ensure project effectiveness and efficiency to achieve maximum benefits and results.

III. Foreign Policy Goal Alignment - 15 points

- a.* Proposed activities clearly align with the selected foreign policy goal(s).
- b.* Incorporation of foreign policy goal(s) into proposed activities is substantive.
- c.* Proposal explains how the program will impact their students, faculty, institution, and/or community regarding the selected foreign policy goal(s).

IV. Sustainability - 15 points

- a.* Proposal has a clearly articulated plan to sustain new study abroad programming, resources, and/or institutional study abroad capacity beyond the grant.
- b.* Proposal indicates involvement and/or support from the institution and its leadership.
- c.* Proposal is clearly linked to the applicant institution's U.S. student mobility abroad and/or campus internationalization goals.

V. Monitoring and Evaluation - 10 points

- a.* Proposal includes a Logic Model which indicates the problems or issues to be addressed by the proposed project, the activities designed to address them, outputs, outcomes, and assumptions.
- b.* Monitoring and evaluation plan tracks key data points relevant to the proposed project activities through established benchmarks.

VI. Calendar of Activities - 10 points

- a.* Proposed grant activities fall within the required grant timeframe and appear to be reasonably achievable given this timeframe.
- b.* Proposal has a detailed plan that indicates when key activities will be implemented and who will be responsible for implementation.

VII. Budget - 15 points

- a.* Proposed budget is reasonable and cost effective.
- b.* Costs are allowable under the terms of the RFP.
- c.* All costs are allocable - the budget clearly explains where all funding is allocated.