Request for Proposals (RFP) for IDEAS Workshops

The U.S. Department of State's IDEAS Program invites accredited U.S. colleges and universities to apply to host an in-person or virtual workshop focused on *"Preparing Future U.S. Science and Technology Leaders through Study Abroad."* In honor of America250, this workshop series will showcase how U.S. study abroad can advance U.S. excellence in science and technology. The IDEAS Program anticipates funding approximately three workshops for approximately 50 participants each to take place between November 2025 and December 2026.

Each workshop will provide U.S. colleges and universities with best practices and resources to administer education abroad programs that prepare U.S. students for careers advancing U.S. excellence in science and technology. Applicants may submit proposals as individual institutions, or multiple U.S. institutions may collaborate to facilitate workshop implementation and develop resources. Only one proposal per institution will be accepted. **Proposals are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 15, 2025.** A summary of information can be found below, with full details in the Request for Proposals.

Category	In-Person Workshop	Virtual Workshop
Format	One day (8 hours)	8 hours of live sessions (single day or spread over 1-4 weeks) + 2 hours of asynchronous content
Budget	Up to $20,000*	Up to $12,000

*For workshop development and delivery. Any travel support for participants will be covered separately by the IDEAS Program.

The topic of the proposed workshop should fall into one of the following areas. Please note that this list is organized alphabetically and does not reflect a rank ordering of topics.

1. Creating U.S. study abroad programs – including academic, research, service learning, and/or internship programs abroad – aligned with local STEM industry and labor needs.
2. Designing STEM study abroad programs in less common destinations based on local industry needs and/or existing partnerships.
3. Developing re-entry programs and materials to help students apply skills gained abroad to careers in STEM.
4. Recruiting and training faculty to lead study abroad programs that prepare students for careers in STEM.

Questions or requests for additional information should be directed to IDEAS@worldlearning.org by July 8, 2025. All answers will be shared publicly via the program website by July 18, 2025. Interested applicants are also invited to join IDEAS Program office hours on June 26 from 3-4pm EST and July 8 from 2-3pm EST to ask any questions related to the application or implementation.

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should be emailed to IDEAS@worldlearning.org by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 15, 2025. Successful applicants will be notified in early September 2025.

Recent examples of past workshops can be found in the IDEAS Library of Resources.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The IDEAS 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. The program strengthens international higher education partnerships and programs that prepare U.S. undergraduate students to contribute to fields critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity. The program provides small grants, trainings, and resources to U.S. higher education institutions to increase their capacity to administer international programs for U.S. students in fields such as entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation. The IDEAS Program increases the number of U.S. students gaining international experiences and broadens the destinations overseas where U.S. students study abroad, particularly to strategic locations where American engagement matters.

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

The IDEAS Programs invites accredited U.S. higher education institutions to submit a proposal to host either an in-person or virtual workshop between November 2025 and December 2026 focused on *Preparing Future U.S. Science and Technology Leaders through Study Abroad.* In honor of America250 and our country's history of excellence in STEM fields, this workshop series aims to increase U.S. higher education institutions' capacity to design and deliver international programming that prepare U.S. students for careers advancing American excellence in science and technology. The topic of the proposed workshop should fall into one of the following areas (this list is organized alphabetically and does not reflect a rank ordering of topics):

1. Creating U.S. study abroad programs – including academic, research, service learning, and/or internship programs abroad – aligned with local STEM industry and labor needs.
2. Designing STEM study abroad programs in less common destinations based on local industry needs and/or existing partnerships.
3. Developing re-entry programs and materials to help students apply skills gained abroad to careers in STEM.
4. Recruiting and training faculty to lead study abroad programs that prepare students for careers in STEM.

Institutions may choose to apply for one of the topics above and focus broadly on STEM programming, or institutions may choose to focus on a specific STEM industry or field. Applicants may want to consider the following questions to help develop a strong topic and proposal: 1) How have you developed successful STEM study abroad programs? Have they included internships or other experiential learning activities? How do you assist those students in applying skills back home? 2) Is your institution partnering with local industry to meet labor needs? How have you leveraged that relationships to develop sustainable education abroad program models that engage STEM students?

WORKSHOP FORMATS

In the table below, please review the key differences between in-person and virtual workshops. Whichever format you choose, keep in mind these format-specific requirements for training length and budget.

Category	In-Person Workshop	Virtual Workshop
Format	One-day (8 hour) in-person workshop to take place on a mutually agreed upon Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm OR a single day immediately preceding or following a domestic regional or national industry conference. *Eligible conferences include, but are not limited to, annual national or regional conferences hosted by NAFSA, the Forum on Education Abroad, AIEA, CCID, and others.*	Eight hours of live content, which can take place in one session on a mutually agreed upon Friday or over multiple shorter sessions within one week or multiple weeks (not to exceed four weeks). Virtual proposals must also include two additional hours of participant engagement/content, for example asynchronous pre- or post-workshop activities such as additional digital or print resources or recorded trainings for participants.
Budget	Up to $20,000	Up to $12,000

Institutions applying to host in-person workshops should indicate in their proposal if they would be willing to host a virtual workshop instead, based on availability of funds and upon submission of an updated budget and proposal to the IDEAS Program for approval.

Workshop activities may include, but are not limited to, keynote sessions, concurrent sessions, large and small group seminars, and/or networking events for approximately 50 study abroad administrators and/or faculty from a variety of U.S. colleges and universities. Applicants should detail the resources and materials that will be developed for the workshop and how they will be adapted for public sharing with the broader U.S. study abroad community via the IDEAS Program website.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

1. **Cover Page**
Please include a single cover page with the following information:
- Name of institution
- Location of institution (city/state; rural/urban/suburban)
- Institution type (public or private; 2-year or 4-year; Minority Serving Institute type, if applicable)
  - Please note that institutional type data is collected by the IDEAS Program for informational purposes only, and it is not used to inform final funding decisions.
- Applicant's contact information including: name, title, office, email, and phone number
- Proposed dates when the institution is available to host the workshop between November 2025 and December 2026. If there are specific months or dates the institution is unable to host, these should be clearly noted.
- Proposed workshop format and topic area, selected from the eligible list of topics above.

2. **Program Overview/Executive Summary: One page**
Please provide an overview of the proposed activities. This should include:
- **Topic Selection**: Identify the topic area selected for your proposal (see above for eligible topics).
- **Alignment with Program Goals**: Describe how your proposed activities will support and align with the IDEAS Program's goal of strengthening international higher education partnerships and programs that prepare

U.S. undergraduate students to contribute to fields critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity.

- **Institutional Capacity**: Explain why your institution is a good fit to host a workshop on the selected topic, highlighting its expertise, logistical capabilities, and capacity to implement the workshop in close collaboration with the IDEAS Program.
- **Workshop Resources and Public Sharing**: Provide a brief outline of the resources and materials that will be developed for the workshop and how they will be adapted for public sharing with the broader U.S. study abroad community via the IDEAS Program website after the workshop.

3. **Technical Proposal: Up to four pages**

This narrative should describe how the workshop will advance participants' knowledge in the selected topic and detail the sessions and activities you propose to include during the workshop. A full list of host institution responsibilities can be found in Attachment A.

Please include the following information in the technical proposal:

- **Host Experience**: A brief description of the host institution(s) strengths, experiences, best practices, and/or resources for building study abroad capacity in the selected topic area.
- **Facilitator Experience:** A brief description of the strengths, experiences, best practices, and/or resources that the facilitator(s) will bring to the proposed workshop. Indicate each individual's name, current role, relevant past roles, and explanation of their qualifications as they relate to the selected workshop topic.
- **Training Format**: A description of the proposed format of the training, either virtual (10 hours) or in-person (8 hours).
  - The workshop should be highly participatory, involving interactive activities, discussion, and sharing of experiences among participants.
  - Time for processing and application of learning should be incorporated. Only lecture-style sessions are strongly discouraged.
  - Breaks in the morning and afternoon, as well as for lunch, should be included in the schedule.
- **Logistics**: An outline of the logistical arrangements relevant to the proposed workshop format.
- **Resources Developed**: A description of resources that will be developed for the workshop and ultimately made publicly available to the wider U.S. study abroad community.
  - Include information on how best practices shared during the workshop will be captured and included as part of the developed resources.
  - Include information on the expertise of the staff members that will be involved in the resource development, if different from – or in addition to – the proposed facilitator(s).
  - See Attachment A for more information on resource development.

4. **Attachments**

- **Resumes/CVs of the proposed facilitator(s).** CVs should be no more than five pages each.
- **Workshop Schedule.** View a sample template for outlining a workshop schedule. The schedule should be no more than two pages and must:
  - Include a balance of speakers, collaborative sessions, and knowledge sharing
  - Highlight key goals of each session
  - Summarize workshop content for each session
  - Note personnel responsible for leading sessions

- o Reserve time in the opening for the U.S. Department of State and the host institution to give an official welcome to participants, followed by attendee introductions or an icebreaker activity
  - o Include breaks throughout the event's schedule, whether the format of the event is virtual or in-person
- **Budget:** A budget template is included, but you may use your institution's template if you prefer. Keep in mind:
  - o Total proposed budget should not exceed $12,000 for a virtual workshop or $20,000 for an in-person workshop.
  - o Budget should include all program and administrative costs, as well as costs for developing training resources related to the proposed topic. Note that these resources (slide decks, handouts, recordings, etc.) will be made publicly available on the IDEAS Program website following the workshop.
  - o Cost sharing is not required but is encouraged. Funding cannot be used for the purchase of alcohol or gifts. Please see 2 CFR 200, which host institutions must comply with, for additional guidance on cost sharing and other unallowable costs.
  - o Institutions with an established NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement) with the U.S. Government can apply the appropriate indirect cost rate without specific guidelines or limitations. If your institution does not have an established NICRA with the U.S. Government and you plan to include indirect costs, you may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). As described in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The IDEAS Program will evaluate all proposals based on their responsiveness to the elements outlined in the RFP. Final funding decisions will be made in concurrence with the U.S. Department of State.

Please see the chart below for more information on the weighting of evaluation criteria. Proposals will be judged on both the institution's topical knowledge and logistical abilities. The IDEAS Program may also consider the variety of topics and hosting locations represented among the workshops when making final funding decisions.

Topic	Description	Points available
Host Institution's Capacity and Expertise	Assessment of the host institution's demonstrated capacity for hosting the training. Assessment of the host institution's staffing plan for this activity and the expertise of the individuals included.	25
Program Design	Assessment of proposed approach to completing the IDEAS workshop objectives. Assessment of proposed agenda and any resulting materials (slide decks, recordings, handouts, etc), that will be shared with workshop participants and the wider higher education community.	35

Logistical Design	Assessment of proposed delivery format (virtual or in-person) and related logistics.	20
Cost Efficiency	Assessment of the overall cost of the proposal and the clarity and completeness of the budget. Higher scores will be awarded to the most cost-effective budgets.	20
Total Points Available		100

The IDEAS Program may enter into negotiations with, or request additional information from, one or more potential workshop hosts prior to making a selection and may cancel this RFP at any time or choose to make no awards.
This RFP does not obligate World Learning or the U.S. Department of State to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services, nor does it obligate the vendor to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services.
World Learning and the U.S. Department of State reserve the right to reject any or all proposals, to select multiple providers, or to select no providers.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should be emailed to IDEAS@worldlearning.org by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 15, 2025.** Successful applicants will be notified by early September, 2025. Proposals should be submitted in electronic format with the following subject line: **IDEAS Workshop Proposal – [Your Institution's Name].** Please include all required documentation (cover page, executive summary, technical proposal, workshop schedule, and budget). If all required documentation is not received by the deadline, the proposal will be deemed ineligible.

Any incidence of fraud, inappropriate conduct, or irregularity in the solicitation process, including but not limited to, the solicitation of gratuities, kickbacks, or bribes in connection with this RFP, or the existence of organizational or individual conflicts of interest, may be reported to World Learning's ethics and compliance hotline. You may reach the hotline by calling 1-800-461-9330 or make a report online at www.MySafeWorkplace.com. All allegations of improper or illegal behavior will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

QUESTIONS

Questions or requests for additional information should be directed to Rachel Rice at IDEAS@worldlearning.org by July 8, 2025. All answers will be shared publicly via the IDEAS Program website by July 18, 2025.

Interested applicants are invited to join IDEAS Program office hours on June 26 from 3-4pm EST and July 8 from 2-3pm EST and ask any questions related to the application or implementation.

ATTACHMENTS:

     A. Summary of Responsibilities (see below)
     B. IDEAS Workshop Budget Template
     C. IDEAS Workshop Schedule Template

ATTACHMENT A: SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Responsibilities of Recipient Institution: *For all workshops (virtual or in-person)*

- Design a workshop agenda in a format appropriate for the event type (printed for in-person, digital for virtual).
- Ensure all branding guidelines are followed, as provided by IDEAS Program staff. In addition to the host institution's logo, required U.S. Department of State branding must be included on all digital and print materials developed for the workshop. Host institutions do not need to add U.S. Department of State branding to preexisting resources that are not developed under this contract.
- Publicize the event through any consortia or contact lists the host institution has with study abroad stakeholders at U.S. higher education institutions that may benefit from attending.
- Share an event press release with campus and local media and invite media to attend the workshop.
- Submit an after-action report in a provided template noting challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future workshops.
- Record workshop sessions as appropriate and feasible. Edit any recorded video footage and/or photos from the event as needed and submit them to the IDEAS Program in the form of a public- ready product. The IDEAS Program will review products before they are posted to ensure that they meet U.S. Department of State branding guidelines. All recordings should include closed captioning.
- Participate in a debrief call with IDEAS staff to discuss challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future workshops.

For virtual workshops

- Secure virtual workshop, activity, and virtual hosting platform.
  - Must be ADA-compliant with captioning capabilities.
  - Must utilize a widely accessible and user-friendly virtual platform (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or equivalent).
  - Must include dedicated staff member(s) responsible for all technical aspects of the program, including day-of troubleshooting.
  - Must provide interactive engagement tools such as breakout rooms, live polling, collaborative documents, and similar participation features.
- Send agenda and all handouts and materials needed by participants to World Learning two weeks prior to event via email for dissemination to attendees.
- Conduct day-of management of event, including participant login and access, troubleshooting, and any interactive components such as breakout rooms and Q&A moderation.
- Develop two additional hours of participant engagement. Examples may include a follow-on training, additional digital or print resources, or recorded videos.

For in-person workshops

- Secure workshop space(s) on campus, including:
  - An ADA-compliant and accessible event space(s) which accommodates up to 55 participants at round tables to facilitate discussion and interaction. The workshop space should be made available for participant arrivals, starting at approximately 8:30 AM with sessions ending at approximately 4:30 PM. Time for set-up and clean-up should also be planned accordingly.
  - A designated registration table outside the workshop space.

- Space to set up food and tea/coffee breaks within the event space(s) or nearby.
- A/V options, including a projector, speakers, microphones, and any other items needed. It is encouraged for several key workshop sessions to be recorded for posting on the IDEAS website. Please advise if the host institution has this capability within the proposal.
- Quiet rooms nearby the workshop space for religious observation or other needs that may be requested by participants.

- Order and ensure proper setup of A/V equipment. Have staff available during workshop to troubleshoot technical issues.
- Conduct on-site management, including event set-up, registration, catering, tear-down, and overall event management.
- Secure parking near the workshop location for participants and program staff, providing parking vouchers if there is a cost associated with parking.
- Identify a local hotel able to accommodate up to 50 participants in single occupancy rooms and two program staff in single occupancy rooms. The recipient institution will need to reserve a block of rooms at a local hotel or make suggestions for participants, though participants and staff will pay for their own rooms directly. The award will not fund the travel or accommodation costs for participants or staff.
- Order catering for all participants, considering common dietary needs such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, and nut-free diets. Coffee/tea should be made available in the morning and afternoon.
- Plan opening networking event to include higher education institution host staff, a U.S. Department of State representative, and World Learning staff. Any participants who are available are invited to join, although this event is optional for participants.
- Print all handouts and materials needed by workshop session presenters and participants.
- Produce name tags for all participants, including U.S. Department of State and World Learning staff, and event signage. U.S. Department of State guidelines will be provided in a host packet upon acceptance of proposal.
- Secure an on-site photographer to be present at various points throughout the workshop to capture images to share with program staff after the event. A photographer does not need to attend the whole workshop but should be present at major activities.
- Applicants proposing in-person workshops should indicate a willingness and ability to convert to virtual programming should their institution or the U.S. Department of State determine that hosting an in-person event is no longer safe or viable.
- Institutions selected to host in-person workshops will be asked to share their campus policies on events and outside visitors. This information is not required as part of the application and will not be part of the review process.

B. **Responsibilities of Workshop Facilitator(s) and Presenters**:
- Develop interactive workshop   according to the required components (keynote speakers, large and small group workshops, and/or concurrent sessions).
- Lead and facilitate workshop sessions and components.
- Coordinate with guest speakers, and other invited experts on logistics and content, ensuring different sessions build upon each other to address the workshop goals comprehensively and cohesively.
- Develop workshop materials (handouts, worksheets, etc.) that complement session content for participant use. After the workshop, the host institution will compile: (1) all workshop resources, (2) documented best

practices, lessons learned, and challenges within the topic area identified during the workshop, and (3) additional resources requested by the IDEAS Program. These materials should be adapted, as needed, for public sharing on the IDEAS Program and U.S. Department of State websites as capacity-building resources for the broader U.S. study abroad community. Please reference previous workshop resources in the IDEAS Library of Resources.

- Participate in regular check-in calls with IDEAS Program staff before the workshop to discuss logistics and content development.
- The facilitators, via the IDEAS Program, may send the workshop participants assignments and/or requests for information and/or workshop materials in advance of the workshop.
- Send the IDEAS Program the workshop session content three weeks prior to the workshop.
- Participate in a debrief call with IDEAS Program staff to discuss any challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future workshops.

C. Responsibilities of IDEAS Program Staff:

- Work closely with facilitator(s) to finalize all aspects of the workshop including roles, responsibilities, and timelines, providing support wherever necessary.
- Work closely with facilitator(s) to ensure workshop sessions meet U.S. Department of State expectations.
- Promote workshops to the U.S. study abroad community, receive registration requests from interested participants, and confirm workshop participants in consultation with the U.S. Department of State.
- Provide final list of participants to workshop host institution.
- Manage pre-arrival registration of workshop participants.
- Communicate with selected participants before arrival, providing campus information, virtual access details, and all essential logistical information (to be provided by the workshop host institution).
- Ensure that any participants who have requested accommodations for disabilities are accommodated, including but not limited to, physical, audio, and visual accommodations. The IDEAS Program will cover additional costs associated with these services if they are requested.
- Provide a limited number of travel stipends to support participant travel for in-person workshops.
- Attend all event sessions and provide hands-on support wherever necessary, including on-site registration for in-person workshops.
- Conduct online survey of attendees following the event, the results of which will be shared with the host institution.
- Post and disseminate the materials developed by the workshop host institutions before and/or after the IDEAS workshop. The materials may also be made publicly available on both the IDEAS Program website and/or U.S. Department of State websites. The hosting institution is also welcomed to distribute the materials to their own networks but is not required to do so.
- Compose evaluation report on findings from the online survey to be shared with the host institution and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs on best practices, lessons learned, and suggested changes for future workshops.