



Alumni Outreach and Engagement

*Information for ECA Institutional Grant
and Cooperative Agreements Applicants*

Grant Expectations and State Alumni

As detailed in solicitation documents in support of *ECA's Institutional Grants and Cooperative Agreements*, all proposals submitted to ECA must include a plan outlining alumni outreach/follow-on and engagement.

The Office of Alumni Affairs has created this material to guide and educate applicants on how to best approach alumni outreach and engagement in proposals.

Alumni Outreach Plan

“Proposals must include a plan **outlining alumni outreach/follow-on and engagement**. Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

Reviewers will assess ways in which proposals provide substantive plans to prepare exchange program participants for their role as active, effective alumni and how the grantee organization will continue to engage with alumni once they return home. Recipient organization (s) must outline how alumni/follow-on activities will be sustained after the grant period.”

Alumni Outreach Plan – Suggestions

“Follow on and engagement” can include a variety of activities, including those done virtually. For example, if a grant is focused on a specific topic for a short period of time, recipient organizations can engage alumni by:

- Sending someone from their organization to speak to alumni in their home country.
- Host a *Q&A Live* web chat on State Alumni.
- Participate in a DVC (Digital Video Conference).
- Continually engage alumni through a community page on State Alumni, using the discussion forums, alumni news, and alumni stories.

Alumni Outreach Plan – Suggestions

Recipient organizations that have longer or more in-depth program/projects can provide sustainable “follow-on activities” for alumni in a number of different ways.

Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events. Approaches can include:

- Conduct mini-grant competitions that support additional research or projects of alumni.
- Hold workshops (national or regional) for alumni.

Alumni Outreach Plan – Suggestions

Continued...

- Include an alumni activities line item in original budget proposal if the solicitation allows for it.
- Encourage and arrange volunteer activities.
- Support alumni association creation/formation.
- If recipient organization has a foreign presence or partner, connect with the country's U.S. embassy or consulate to coordinate efforts and information.
- Use locally-based staff to assist in alumni coordination.

Alumni Updates

“All recipients of ECA grants or cooperative agreements (here-after referred to as ‘recipient organization (s)’) will be expected to provide **regular updates on alumni/follow-on activities** throughout the period of performance.”

Alumni Updates

“After awards have been finalized, all recipient organization (s) will be expected to work directly with the respective ECA program office, ECA’s Office of Alumni Affairs and the Embassy-based alumni coordinator to **provide regular updates on alumni activities, alumni follow-up and alumni participant data.** Proposals should specifically acknowledge a commitment to this effort.”

Alumni Updates – Suggestions

Recipient organizations have a number of ways to “provide regular updates on alumni/follow-on activities throughout the period of performance,” including:

- Include alumni updates in the regular grant reporting process to ECA program office.
- Post activities and events on State Alumni.
- Post alumni news and stories on State Alumni.
- Start or manage a community on State Alumni.

Alumni Updates – Suggestions

To “provide regular updates on alumni activities, alumni follow-up and alumni participant data,” recipients can:

- Include Alumni Affairs and the respective U.S. embassy or consulate on reports, newsletters or highlights.
- Maintain regular contact with the U.S. embassy or consulate’s public affairs section.
- Share program participant information with the Office of Alumni Affairs.

Utilize Alumni in Recruiting

“Proposals should also include plans to use **alumni in recruitment and orientation** programming of future participants.”

Utilize Alumni in Recruiting – Suggestions

Recipient organizations can use “alumni in recruitment and orientation programming of future participants” in some of the following ways:

- Hold pre-departure sessions and match up new participants with alumni.
- Request that ECA alumni staff speak to groups.
- Reach out to alumni to recruit future participants in-country (i.e., give presentations).
- Involve alumni in mentoring programs with prospective and/or accepted applicants.
- Invite active alumni to give presentations at leadership or training workshops.

Sustainable Alumni Activities

“As a general rule, ECA discourages support of individual one-time alumni/follow-on events for most of its exchange activities but rather is asking Recipient organization (s) **to connect alumni with local non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce or other private sector institutions** to ensure long-term sustainability of alumni/follow-on activities.

ECA encourages follow-on/alumni activities that have a strong multiplier effect and demonstrate significant impact on organizations with which the alumni is cooperating. **Mentorships, internships, and job shadowing** experiences are encouraged. Please refer to actual solicitations (i.e. Request for Grant Proposals) for any specific additional guidance.”

Sustainable Alumni Activities – Suggestions

If a recipient organization has ties to private businesses or NGOs in particular regions of the world, it should:

- Connect alumni with contacts through events or mentorship programs.
- Post internships and jobs on State Alumni.
- Share networking opportunities on the *Calendar of Events* on State Alumni.
- Link alumni and local NGOs, or private enterprises through newsletters, announcements or events.

Sustainable Alumni Activities – Suggestions

Recipient organizations play a key role in assisting with mentor programs by:

- Assist with the matching of mentors in coordination with regional/local alumni associations and U.S. embassies or consulates.
- Work with the U.S. embassy or consulate to organize pre-departure mentoring.
- Inform participants of opportunity to become mentees.

Promoting ECA Websites

“The Bureau expects that all recipient organization (s) will encourage and assist participants in registering and using the State Alumni website (alumni.state.gov) and the ExchangesConnect website (connect.state.gov) at multiple points during their exchange experience, at a minimum during program orientations and pre-departure briefings as well as at the end of programs to encourage participants to create groups and/or forums on exchangesconnect.

Proposals should detail how the websites will be promoted to exchange participants and how the recipient organization (s) will facilitate participant registration. The Bureau expects that all recipient organization (s) will place a link to both State Alumni and ExchangesConnect on their own websites.”

Promoting ECA Websites - Suggestions

Grant Recipients may “encourage and assist participants in registering,” as well as “promoting” the websites both virtually and in person through some of the following suggestions below.

- Introduce State Alumni & ExchangesConnect several times during the program – providing computer access if recipient organization is interacting with participants in person.
- Reserve time during orientations, mid-year gatherings or pre-departure sessions for participants to sign up.
- Distribute ECA marketing collateral (i.e., brochures, fliers or bookmarks). Contact the respective Program Office and/or Alumni Coordinator for more information.
- Demonstrate how the website works (or give a PowerPoint presentation if internet is not available) at re-entry workshops.

Promoting ECA Websites - Suggestions

Continued...

- Send follow-up communiqué to participants explaining what State Alumni is, the resources it provides and how they can join.
- Invite ECA alumni staff to give a presentation at a virtual conference or offer a *Q&A session* on being an alumnus/alumna through a DVC.
- Invite ECA alumni staff to address participants when they are in the D.C. portion of their program.
- Add links to alumni.state.gov and connect.state.gov to your website.

State Alumni Website

“State Alumni, an interactive, dynamic and password-protected on-line global community, offers alumni a place to network; discover grants and funding opportunities; and research through over 20,000 international journals and newspapers.

The web site is exclusively for alumni and features communities to discuss ideas and topics, as well as participate in *Q&A Live* sessions with experts.”

State Alumni Website – Suggestions

- State Alumni was developed to be a secure and exclusive community for all ECA-program participants. Please direct alumni-related activities to this website.
- For more information on State Alumni and the resources it offers to alumni, please see the “*What is State Alumni*” presentation on the Grants page of ECA’s site at:
<http://exchanges.state.gov/pro-admin.html>
- More information can also be found at:
<http://exchanges.state.gov/alumni/index.html>

ExchangesConnect Website

“ExchangesConnect is designed as a digital resource for the alumni of our exchange programs, youth audiences, and other groups around the world interested in international dialogue of mutual interest that furthers our goal of international understanding.”

ExchangesConnect Website – Suggestions

- For more information on ExchangesConnect, ECA's social networking site, please review the ExchangesConnect presentation on the Grants Page.
- To read more on ExchangesConnect, visit:
<http://connect.state.gov>

ECA Grant Data

“All statistical information collected on ECA funded program participant (s) should be transferable to databases maintained by ECA.”

ECA Grant Data – Definitions

Who are ECA Alumni?

- An ECA alumnus(a) is any person who was selected for **and** has participated in a program fully or partially funded by the State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Once the person has participated in the program he or she becomes an alumnus(a).
- Recipient organization will be given specific instructions on how to transfer data once the institutional grant or cooperative agreement has been awarded.

Website Restrictions

“While applicant organizations may propose the use of websites for recruitment and selection, pre-departure and re-entry efforts/activities, the Bureau will not fund or support websites and/or website activities that are duplicative or run parallel to alumni/follow-on opportunities on ECA’s State Alumni website.”

Access to State Alumni

“Recipient organizations will be granted access to the password-protected State Alumni website to interact with program participants and alumni. ECA funds can be used to support the recipient organization’s interaction with alumni and the management of the particular alumni community via the State Alumni website.”

Access to State Alumni – Suggestions

Recipient organizations can gain access to State Alumni by emailing the following details below to: webmaster@alumni.state.gov

- 1) Full name of staff member
- 2) Title or role within organization
- 3) Work e-mail address

** Please note, individuals will be verified before given access.*