

Competition # 6 Request for Proposals

Supported by Santander Bank

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Subject: Request for Proposals Competition #6: Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration

Dear Applicants,

Partners of the Americas (Partners), the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators are pleased to announce a new grant competition as part of President Barack Obama's *100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative* (100,000 Strong Americas). The 100,000 Strong Americas initiative is the Administration's signature education initiative in the Western Hemisphere designed to foster region-wide prosperity through greater international exchange of students. This grant competition, **Competition #6: Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration** is supported through a generous contribution from Founding Circle Partner, Santander Bank.* All higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the Western Hemisphere that promote study abroad programs in any field between the United States and other countries in the hemisphere are eligible to compete. Because there are no thematic or country restrictions in this Competition as there have been in other competitions, please note that Competition 6 will be highly competitive but all are encouraged to apply.

This program will use the principle of leveraged innovation with HEIs that demonstrate the greatest commitment and innovation toward increasing study abroad opportunities between the United States and countries in the Western Hemisphere. In applying for Competition #6 grants, higher education institutions will be asked to demonstrate how they will assert leadership in implementing the innovations proposed, how they will address on-campus barriers to student mobility, how they will maintain student engagement and how they will commit to making concrete changes to expand access to study abroad as sending and/or hosting institutions.

The intent of the competition as part of Competition #6: Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration is to award up to eight (8) 100,000 Strong Americas Innovation grants of \$25,000 across the Western Hemisphere. The DOS, NAFSA and Partners of the Americas reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Please refer to Section I, the Funding Opportunity Description, for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

* Santander Bank, N.A. through its Santander Universities Global Division

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Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

1. Background

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

There are approximately 45,000 U.S. students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean and 72,000 Latin American and Caribbean students studying in the United States each year. Canada contributes an additional 28,000 students studying in the United States while 1,400 U.S. students are studying in Canada. We are seeking to nearly double the number of students studying abroad in our region in less than ten years. Many Latin American and Caribbean students do not have the English language skills or resources to succeed at U.S. institutions. Conversely, many U.S. students are unaware of the opportunities available in the hemisphere, and U.S. colleges and universities face challenges integrating study abroad into degree programs, designing programs for nontraditional students, and developing cost-effective opportunities for all students. To reach our goal, it is imperative that colleges and universities make study abroad accessible for all students, regardless of their major, socio-economic status, or the type of institution in which they are enrolled.

2. Program Summary

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

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

A. Goal

The goal of 100,000 Strong Americas is to foster region-wide cooperation, understanding and prosperity through greater international exchange of students. Increasing mutual understanding and building closer people-to-people ties helps the people of the Western Hemisphere to address common challenges including citizen security, economic opportunity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

In support of the goal of achieving 100,000 students studying abroad annually in each direction by 2020, Partners of the Americas (Partners), NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) are working together to increase opportunities for academic mobility between the United States and the countries of the Western Hemisphere. This public-private partnership seeks to leverage up to \$10 million in resources annually in a cost-effective manner to innovate and bring the initiative to the necessary scale.

B. Purpose

The purpose of the Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration competition is to provide institutional grants to higher education institutions (HEIs; these include colleges, community colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education) in order to identify innovations for increased bi-directional collaboration in the Western Hemisphere to increase study abroad

We envision that innovations are likely to include proposed activities that address many of the following topics that were discussed at the 2014 100,000 Strong in the Americas Capacity Building Workshop and the 2012, 2013 and 2014 [NAFSA Latin America Fora](#): smart collaboration; language barriers; diversity and inclusion; alumni engagement; communication and marketing; quality, accreditation, and credit transfer; service and service learning; resource development; incoming student housing plans; and safety and security. Another example of an innovative idea is to incorporate variations on traditional study abroad models toward 100,000 Strong Americas goals such as student and faculty engagement through service learning.

The main focus of the grants is to provide incentive grants to HEIs to leverage institutional commitment to increasing study abroad in the Western Hemisphere. See “Expected Results” section below for more details. While the Innovation Fund does not provide direct scholarships, applicant HEIs are encouraged to use a small portion of the grant to administer their own scholarships, travel grants, or partial-funding mechanisms to students to encourage study abroad between the eligible countries. The Review Committee understands that a small institutional grant does not, in itself, create a sustainable long-term program. However, applicants should convincingly convey how this initial grant will set in motion additional plans and resources that will extend beyond the grant period supporting attainment of the goals of 100,000 Strong in the Americas. Proposals can focus on increasing outbound opportunities from the US for students to study in the Western Hemisphere, especially where the current numbers are lowest; on expanding the capacity for institutions to send students to the United States and for partner U.S. institutions to host them; or offer models that integrate increased flow in both directions. For example, U.S. HEIs may propose to provide small sub-grants to students in order to have an impact on individual students’ study abroad decisions as well as their ability to “find a way” to follow through on their study abroad plans. The most competitive proposals will demonstrate how limited resources can effectively mobilize the greatest number of students to study abroad during the grant period and beyond. Proposals may involve new institutional partnerships or build on existing partnerships, but in all cases should demonstrate strong institutional support from the partnering institutions involved. Short-term and long-term programs are eligible, as long as students receive some level of academic credit from their home institution. Proposals

that convincingly address inclusion and diversity in study abroad to provide study abroad access to underserved/underrepresented populations will be viewed favorably.

C. Expected Results

HEIs that are successful in implementing innovation grants will demonstrate increased capacity to develop and administer study abroad programs that receive and/or send students between the United States and countries in the Western Hemisphere. These HEIs:

- Will demonstrate increased awareness of the barriers to study abroad at their institution;
- Will each possess a new model to engage students in the Western Hemisphere and
- Will demonstrate an increase in the number of effective partnerships between U.S. and non U.S. HEIs in the Western Hemisphere above and beyond what would have taken place without the grant.

Section II: Award Information

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Envisioned

The intent of this competition is to award approximately eight (8) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation grants of approximately \$25,000 each to HEIs across the Western Hemisphere. The DOS, NAFSA and Partners of the Americas reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted, and may or may not select 100,000 Strong Americas Innovators. Please refer to Section I, the Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance

Winning awards will be announced no later than April 15, 2015 and the period of performance will be from May 15, 2015 to May 14, 2016.

3. Type of Award

The Partners of the Americas Innovation Fund plans to award grants to successful applicants for this program. Grant awardees will be responsible for keeping the Fund's staff updated on the achievement of proposed program activities and interventions through a Washington, DC based Program Director and Program Officer, who will be substantially involved in the following areas:

- Approval of the Recipient's reports including Quarterly Reports and regular updates on student engagement, faculty and administrator outreach;
- Approval of Budgets;
- Approval of additional expenditures;

- Approval of the Recipient's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Section III: Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

HEIs located and legally registered in the Western Hemisphere are eligible to apply for grants from the competition Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration. This competition seeks to receive applications from a diversity of HEIs, including both public and private institutions, 4-year and shorter-term degree issuing institutions, large, small, and rural and urban institutions. The intention of selecting from these categories of institutions is to ensure that the selected institutions represent the broadest diversity of HEI profiles so that successful innovations have the greatest possibility of replication across the institutions that will ultimately be critical to reaching the overall goal of 100,000 Strong Americas.

Bi-national Centers (BNCs) are eligible to compete as prime applicants or in partnership with HEI primes. (Bi-national Centers are autonomous, foreign institutions dedicated to the promotion of mutual understanding between the host country and the United States.) If a BNC is competing as prime, it must compete in partnership with at least one other in-country HEI (in addition to a partner HEI or HEIs). Also, if a BNC is competing as prime and is unable to issue credit themselves, they must ensure that students who participate in the proposed study abroad program will receive some level of academic credit from an identified HEI partner in the proposal. Proposals should focus on creating sustainable study abroad programs within HEIs; those whose primary focus is support for BNC language training programs as preparation for study abroad are not eligible.

In order to increase the diversity of participating institutions, the review panel reserves the right to give preference to institutions that have not previously received Innovation Grants, but all are encouraged to apply.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Fund Requirements

In submitting a proposal, applicant HEIs should demonstrate a high-level commitment to increasing study abroad in both directions – to and from the US. One form of demonstrating this commitment is by providing matching resources – from the institution, the partner institution, an outside resource, or a combination – which contribute to the proposed activities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide cost sharing and additional funding from private sector partners in support of its proposed activities. There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, cost sharing by previous competition's winning proposals averaged more than 1.5 to 1. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. HEIs that demonstrate cost sharing that would not happen without this

grant money will be considered favorably, as an incentive to bring additional local resources to bear on increasing study abroad in the region.

Section IV: Application and Submission

3. *Online Submission Process*

Applications can only be submitted online through the application link on the 100,000 Strong in the Americas website, <http://www.100kstrongamericas.org> by the deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. The application link on the website may be accessed by clicking the “Educate” button. Applications may only be submitted in **English**.

Any prospective Applicant desiring an explanation of this Competition must request it by posting the question to <http://bit.ly/1BLqE0q> by the submission deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation.

Oral explanations or instructions given before an award is disbursed will not be binding. **No applications will be accepted via email.** If an HEI decides to submit an application, it must be received by the closing date and time indicated on the cover page. The Applicant must comply with the instructions for submission included herein. Applications that are received late or are incomplete will not be considered in the review process.

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

4. *Technical Application Format*

Applications must not exceed 10 pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, single spaced, typed in standard 8 1/2x11 paper size with one-inch margins both right and left, and each page numbered consecutively. Cover page, dividers, table of contents, annexes will not count toward the page limitation. Any additional pages that exceed the 10-page limitation will not be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee. **Submissions should be submitted as one single PDF file. The file should be saved as: “100K 6< Name of Institution>”.**

Before hitting the submit button: please save a copy of the completed application form as an Adobe PDF for your records and attach a copy at the beginning of the proposal PDF you are uploading below (preferred) or upload a separate PDF file of this application ONLY if you cannot combine them.

Applications shall demonstrate the Applicant’s capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this project. Therefore, it should be specific, complete and presented concisely. It should take into account and be arranged in the order of the technical evaluation

criteria described below. Important note: Only the pages of submitted documents that are within established page limits will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

Section V: Application Review

A. Cover Page

A single page with the project title and the name of the Applicant clearly identified. In addition, the Cover Page should provide a contact person for the Applicant, including this individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address. Partner institution(s) if applicable should clearly be displayed. State whether the contact person is the person with authority to contract for the Applicant, and if not, that person should also be listed with contact information.

B. Table of Contents

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

C. Executive Summary

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

D. Program Description

In this section, Applicants should describe the proposed program, focusing on how they will achieve their program's objectives, how the program will make a significant contribution towards achieving the overall 100,000 Strong Americas objectives, and the areas for action identified by the higher education institution. The number of students moving North and/or South should also be clearly stated. Applicants shall elaborate in the program description the most effective way to coordinate and assist in the expansion and development of a successful program.

Applicants must propose innovations that they believe should be prioritized and explain why. Applicants must describe how the proposed innovation will enhance the flow of inbound and/or outbound students.

Applicants should describe a clear plan for engaging students, faculty and administrators in ongoing outreach on campus to support study abroad. The plan should include student participation in the reporting of the educational and cultural experiences that take place before, during and after the program. Creativity is encouraged.

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

E. Sustainability Plan

Applicants must describe what kind of impact the proposed program will have at all partnering institutions and how the proposed program will continue after the grant period has expired.

F. Institutional Capacity and Opportunities for Growth

The Applicant must include a brief description of their current institutional capacity for academic mobility within the Western Hemisphere and around the world and an assessment of the specific challenges and opportunities at their institution for increasing study abroad in the Americas. Institutions with minimal experience should describe a desire to increase their capacity and steps needed to achieve their goals. Institutions with more robust international programs should describe how they will build on their current success and explain any barriers to increasing study abroad opportunities at their campus. All applicants should explain how the Innovation Grant will help them address any barriers and take advantage of the available opportunities.

In describing their management approach, Applicants must name the one person who will be ultimately responsible for implementation and reporting. **The CV or bio of the person identified must be included as part of the 5 page maximum of this annex.** You may also include a separate annex with up to 5 pages of letters of support from your institution, your HEI and other partner(s) joining you on this grant request if known and your international studies office. This is strongly encouraged.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan must explain how the Applicant proposes to monitor the program and assess program impact. The performance monitoring and evaluation plan shall address the following: Realistic plan for data collection methods and frequency of collection, sources of data, data verification, and responsible parties of data collection, including how baseline information will be compiled, and benchmarks, and the ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project.

Applicants are encouraged to create their own indicators for their Monitoring and Evaluation Plans, however Partners reserves the right to modify indicators in consultation with winning applicants at the award stage in collaboration with awardees.

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

Section VI: Budget Application Format

The proposed budget should provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). Applicants must provide a breakdown by elements of cost (i.e. cost figures for personnel, coordination activities, fringe, equipment, other) proposed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to keep the amount of indirect rate charged to the grant as low as possible. To date, winning applicants have proposed a combination of high matching funds and lower indirect costs. Please note: On the application form you will be asked to provide a U.S. dollar amount for the indirect costs charged to this grant.

Applicants must use the following budget summary template, naming activities and adding them

as needed, with detailed breakdowns as described in this section, and submitting as an unprotected Excel file:

INSTITUTION NAME

Program Budget

Budget Category	Requested Funds	Cost Share	Total
Personnel			
Program Costs			
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
Other Costs			
Additional resources (cost share) brought in from outside sources			
Indirect Costs			
Total			

Budget Narrative

Applicants must provide detailed budget explanations and supporting justification of each proposed budget line item. The budget narrative must briefly describe programmatic relevance and clearly identify the basis of estimate (i.e., how the budget number was determined fair and reasonable) for each cost element.

Section VII: Evaluation Criteria

The criteria outlined below will be used to evaluate applications submitted in response to this solicitation.

- 1. Technical Proposal (80%)**
 - a) Program Description- 40%
 - b) Sustainability Plan- 15%

- c) Institutional Capacity and Management Approach- 15%
- d) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan- 10%

2. Cost Proposal (20%)

The Cost Proposal will be evaluated as to how effective and realistic the proposed costs are and how the proposed budget is linked to the activities, objectives, sustainability, and outputs reflected in the Technical Narrative. A strong cost proposal will include:

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

Section VIII: Agency Contacts

Questions concerning this solicitation must be posted [here](#) prior to the deadline mentioned on the cover letter of this document. **No phone calls.**



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