Competition #10 Request for Proposals

Supported by Santander Bank

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Subject: Request for Proposals Competition #10: 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.

Competition #10: Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration is supported through a generous contribution from Founding Circle Partner, Santander Bank*. All higher education 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 #10 will be highly competitive, but all are encouraged to apply.

100,000 Strong in the Americas 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 #10 grants, HEIs 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 Competition #10: 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: 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

A. 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 49,000 U.S. students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean and 86,000 Latin American and Caribbean students studying in the U.S. each year. Canada contributes an additional 27,000 students studying in the U.S. while 1,300 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.

B. 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

1. 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.

2. Purpose

The purpose of Competition #10: Promoting Study Abroad Partnerships for Innovation and Collaboration 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 in all fields of study.

We envision that innovations are likely to include proposed activities that address many of the following topics that were discussed at the 2014 and 2015 100,000 Strong in the Americas Capacity Building Workshop and the 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 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 Americas Initiative.

Proposals can focus on increasing outbound opportunities from the U.S. for students to study in the Western Hemisphere, especially where the current numbers are lower; on expanding the capacity for non-U.S. institutions in the Western Hemisphere to send students to the United States and for U.S. partner institutions to host them; or offer models that integrate increased flow in both directions. For example, 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.

3. 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;
- Possess a new model to engage students in the Western Hemisphere; and
- Demonstrate an increase in the number of effective partnerships between U.S. and non-U.S. HEIs above and beyond what would have taken place without the grant.

Section II: Award Information

A. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Envisioned

The intent of Competition #10 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: Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

B. Start Date and Period of Performance

Winning awards will be announced no later than August 31, 2016 and the period of performance will be from October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017.

C. 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, D.C.-based Program Director and Program Officer, who will be substantially involved in the following areas:

- Approval of the Recipient’s reports, including quarterly and final reports;
• Approval of budget changes, additional expenditures, and program extensions;
• Approval of the grant recipient’s Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; and
• Request for updates on proposed program, student engagement, and faculty and administrator outreach.

Section III: Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Higher education institutions located and legally registered in the Western Hemisphere are eligible to apply for grants from Competition #10: 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, rural, and urban institutions. The intention of selecting from these categories 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.

As autonomous, foreign institutions dedicated to the promotion of mutual understanding between the host country and the U.S., bi-national Centers (BNCs) are eligible to compete. If a BNC is competing as prime, however, it must do so in partnership with at least one in-country HEI, in addition to a U.S. partner HEI(s). 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 in-country or U.S. partner HEI in the proposal. Proposals should focus on creating sustainable study abroad programs within the partnering 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 Committee reserves the right to give preference to institutions that have not previously received Innovation Fund grants, but all are encouraged to apply.

B. 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 U.S. One form of demonstrating this commitment is by providing matching resources—from the institution, the partner institution(s), an outside resource, or a combination—which contribute to the proposed activities. Applicants must provide cost-sharing or additional funding from partner HEIs or private sector partners in support of its proposed activities. There is no minimum or maximum amount or percentage of cost-sharing required for this Competition; however, cost-sharing by previous competitions’ 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 the grant 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

A. Online Submission Process

Applications can only be submitted online through the Online Application Form found 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 may be accessed by clicking the “Educate” button and then, “Apply for a Grant”. No applications will be accepted via email. Applications may only be submitted in English.

Submissions should be one single PDF file and saved as: “100K10 - Name of Institution in Language of Origin”.

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation of this Competition must request it by completing the Online Inquiry Form (http://bit.ly/1ptxA27) by the question submission deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. Before submitting questions, it is recommended that interested applicants review the Frequently Asked Questions, which includes questions from past grant competitions. Oral explanations or instructions given before an award is disbursed will not be binding.

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 will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit in accordance with the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format.

B. Proposal Format

Applications must utilize 12-pt Times New Roman font, single-spaced, typed in standard 8 ½” x 11” paper with one-inch margins both right and left, and each page numbered consecutively. Cover page, dividers, table of contents, and annexes will not count toward the page limitations described in Section V below. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitations will not be reviewed by the Review Committee.

Proposals shall demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of the program. It should be specific, concise, and complete. Proposals should take into account and be arranged in the order of the technical evaluation criteria described below.
Section V: Technical Narrative

A. Cover Page

The cover page should be a single page with the project title and the name of the applying HEI clearly identified. In addition, it should provide a contact person for the HEI, including the individual’s name (both typed and his/her signature), title/position with the department/unit, institution’s address, telephone, and e-mail address. Partner institution(s) should be clearly displayed. Lastly, state whether the contact person is the person with authority to contract for the applying HEI, and if not, that person should also be listed with contact information.

B. Table of Contents

Applicants must list all parts of the proposal, with page numbers and attachments. The table of contents and the cover page counts towards the 10-page limitation of the supporting documents.

C. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary counts towards the 10-page limit of the technical narrative 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

Applicants should describe the proposed study abroad program and its objectives, focusing on how they will achieve the objectives and how the program will make a significant contribution towards achieving the overall goal of 100,000 Strong in the Americas.

Applicants shall elaborate the most effective way to coordinate and assist in the expansion and development of a successful program. The number of students moving North and/or South should be clearly stated. Proposals must describe how the proposed innovation will enhance the flow of inbound and/or outbound students, and how the proposed program will create additional capability for HEIs to increase study abroad across the Western Hemisphere. Proposals should also describe a clear plan for engaging students, faculty and administrators in ongoing outreach on campus to support study abroad.

Applicants shall also demonstrate awareness of the challenges and barriers to study abroad as well as identify areas for action or innovative approaches to addressing such challenges. This section should describe how the proposed program will help to achieve diversity (i.e. rural/urban institutions, underserved populations, geography, etc.), as well as how the program will increase study abroad beyond those students who may receive financial assistance from the grant.

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

Creativity in this section is highly encouraged.
E. Sustainability Plan

The Innovation Grant is intended to finance the beginning of long-term partnerships of mutual benefit to partnering institutions; therefore, proposals must provide a plan to assure sustainability and the capability of generating new projects and increasing capacity for student/institutional exchange over time. Proposals must describe what kind of impact the proposed program will have at all partnering institutions and how it will continue after the grant period has expired. Description on sustainability of the proposed program should also include how it will change the culture on campus to make study abroad the norm, not the exception.

F. Institutional Capacity and Opportunities for Growth

Proposals must provide a brief description of their current institutional capacity for academic mobility within the Western Hemisphere and around the world. Institutions with minimal experience should describe a desire to increase their capacity and steps needed to achieve their goals. HEIs 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 provide an assessment of the specific challenges and opportunities at their institution for increasing study abroad in the Americas, and how the Innovation Grant will help the institution address such barriers and unlock available opportunities or resources.

In describing their management approach, Applicants must name the person(s) who will be ultimately responsible for implementation and reporting. The CV/résumé or bio of the person(s) identified must be included as part of the 10-page maximum annex. Proposals must also include at least one letter of support from the applying institution, the partner institution(s) and/or other institutions joining or supporting the applicant on the proposed program. No formal agreement is required between partnering institutions, but the intent to collaborate must be demonstrated.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan must explain how the Applicant proposes to monitor the program and assess program impact. It should address the following: realistic plan for data collection; sources of data and information (i.e. methods and tools for collection); frequency of collection; and responsible parties of data collection. This section should identify the baseline information as well as the project benchmarks that will be measured. Applicants are encouraged to create their own indicators for their Monitoring and Evaluation Plans, however, Partners reserves the right to modify indicators at the award stage in collaboration with selected Applicants.

The M&E Plan should include student participation in the reporting of the educational and cultural experiences that take place before, during, and after the proposed program. Proposals must also include a timeline for program implementation, reflecting the activities presented in the Program Description. Overall, this section should describe the specific tools for the collection, analysis, and reporting of performance data, information, and feedback, and how the data will be managed or utilized under the project.
Section VI: Cost Proposal

The cost proposal does not count toward the 10-page limitation of the technical narrative but it should fall within a range of 2-3 pages. This section will have two components: the budget summary and the budget narrative. The proposed budget summary should provide cost estimates for the management of the program, including program monitoring (i.e. personnel, coordination activities, fringe, equipment, other), as well as program costs (i.e. travel, stipends/scholarships, communications and other resources, etc.).

Proposals must use the Budget Summary Template below, naming activities and adding them as needed, with detailed breakdowns as described in this section.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category</th>
<th>Requested Funds</th>
<th>Cost Share</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex. Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personnel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Program Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The summary template above will be followed by the narrative, in which Applicants must provide detailed explanations and supporting justification of each proposed line item in the budget. It must also 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. The descriptions in the narrative must match the items in the budget. Failure to present the budget summary and narrative in the requested format may render your application ineligible.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to keep the amount of indirect rate charged to the grant as low as possible. To date, winning institutions have proposed a combination of high matching funds and lower indirect costs. Please note that on the Online Application Form, you will be asked to provide a U.S. dollar amount for the indirect costs charged to this grant, if applicable.

Proposals must provide cost-sharing and/or additional funding from the prime institution, its partner HEI(s), or private sector partner(s). There is no minimum or maximum percentage required; however, cost-share by previous winning proposals averaged more than 1.5 to 1.
Section VI: Evaluation Criteria

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

- **Technical Narrative (80%)**
  The Technical Narrative must not exceed 10 pages and include the following components:
  1. Program Description 40%
  2. Sustainability Plan 15%
  3. Institutional Capacity and Opportunities for Growth 15%
  4. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 10%

- **Cost Proposal (20%)**
  The Cost Proposal (2-3 pages) 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:
  1. A detailed outputs-based budget summary and accompanying budget narrative
  2. Low indirect rate
  3. Cost-sharing information

- **Annex and Supporting Documents**
  Applicants may attach no more than 10 pages of additional supporting documents, which must include the CV/résumé or bio of the person(s) ultimately responsible for overall management of the proposed program and letter(s) of support from the institutions involved. The cover page, dividers, table of contents, and the annex count toward the 10-page limitation. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitation will not be reviewed by the Review Committee.

Section VII: Agency Contacts

Questions concerning this solicitation must be sent via the Online Inquiry Form prior to the deadline mentioned on the cover letter of this document. No phone calls.