

Request for Proposals (RFP)

To : Offerors
From : Institute of International Education, Inc. (IIE)
Subject : Fulbright Gateway Website Maintenance and Development

RFP Issue Date : Monday, June 30, 2025

Deadline for submission of questions:

: Friday, July 11, 2025

Responses to questions released:

: Thursday, July 17, 2025

RFP Closing Date : Friday, July 25, 2025

RFP Closing Time : 5:00 PM, Eastern Daylight Time

Semi-Finalists invited to present

: Tuesday, August 5 – Friday, August 8, 2025

Performance Period : November 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026 (1 year initial contract with option to renew for up to a total of five years)

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP). IIE invites qualified firms and organizations (“Offerors”) to submit a best-value proposal for the requested services. The Contract resulting from this award will be a **USG Contractor Agreement** Serving the below mentioned program.

Offerors are encouraged to read this RFP in its entirety (including any and all attachments), paying specific attention to the instructions and requirements included herein. Issuance of this solicitation does not, in any way, obligate the Institute of International Education (IIE) to award a contract, nor will IIE pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. The agreement resulting from this RFP will be provided to the most responsive Offeror(s) whose Offer will be the most advantageous to IIE in terms of cost, functionality, and other factors as specified in this RFP.

The required services are described in the “**Statement of Work**” in **Attachment A**. IIE encourages your organization to indicate its interest in this RFP by submitting a proposal according to the instructions in “**Proposal Preparation Instruction**”. Proposals will be evaluated based on the “**Evaluation Criteria**”.

All proposals are due by the dates and times stated above. Any proposal received after the required time and date specified for receipt shall be considered late and non-responsive. Late proposals will not be evaluated.

Questions: Any questions are to be submitted **in writing** via email to the email address listed below no later than the date listed above. No questions will be entertained if they are received by means other than the specified email address. No oral answers will be provided. Answers to questions IIE deems relevant to this RFP will be published on the date listed above on IIE’s website under Subawards and Procurement (<https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Subawards-Procurements>).

Christina Rozek,
Institute of International Education, Inc.
Email: crozek@iie.org

Proposal Submission: Proposals, including any attachments (limited to 6MB), should be sent electronically in PDF format to: crozek@iie.org. Be sure to include in the subject line: Fulbright Gateway Website RFP. IIE will not accept proposals received by fax.

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Background: Institute of International Education

The Institute of International Education (“IIE” or the “Institute”) is a New York not-for-profit corporation that is among the world’s largest and most experienced international education and training organizations. Founded in 1919, IIE promotes educational exchange around the world through a wealth of programs and services including Fellowship and Scholarship Management, Higher Education Institutional Development, Emergency Student and Scholar Assistance, and Leadership Development.

For more than 100 years, IIE has promoted educational exchange around the world. The Institute currently implements more than 200 programs benefiting 40,000 participants from 183 countries. Foremost among these programs is the world-renowned Fulbright Program, which IIE has had the honor to administer on behalf of the U.S. Department of State since the program’s inception in 1946. In addition to the U.S. Department of State, program sponsors include: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); major philanthropic foundations; private and public corporations; foreign governments; and individuals.

With IIE’s global headquarters in New York City, IIE has offices around the world, including offices in the United States (Washington D.C., Chicago, Houston and San Francisco) and staff in other countries.

Purpose of Request for Proposal

The Fulbright Program is seeking a full-service website maintenance and development company with expertise in development, design, and maintenance of the Fulbright Gateway website.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) is to invite bidders to submit a proposal for a website maintenance and development company to provide ongoing support, maintain, enhance, and improve the current Fulbright Gateway website; and enhance and improve existing functionality that adheres to the stipulations and needs as described in this request for proposal. Pending the availability of funds and the approval of the Fulbright sponsor (The U.S. Department of State), IIE may consider a website redesign and other major website projects in future years.

The information presented in this RFP is furnished solely for the purpose of assisting the bidder in making its own evaluation of the Scope of Work and does not purport to be all-inclusive or to contain all the information you may require. This RFP is not an offer by IIE to contract, but rather an attempt to establish a common framework for IIE to evaluate potential suppliers. The bidder should make its own investigations, projections and conclusions to verify independently the information contained in this RFP, and to obtain any additional information that it may require, prior to submitting a proposal.

SECTION 2: RFP CONDITIONS

IIE reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential Offeror or other party.
- Accept other than the lowest price offered.
- Award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers.
- Award more than one contract.

Nothing in this RFP is or should be relied on by Offeror as a promise or representation by IIE. IIE does not make any representation or warranty as to the completeness of this RFP or have any liability for any representations (express or implied) contained in, or omissions from, this RFP. This RFP and any replies to any written notifications are transmitted to the Offeror solely for the purposes of the Offeror preparing and submitting a Proposal. Each Offeror shall keep the RFP and its contents confidential and shall return the RFP (without keeping copies) to IIE if the Offeror elects not to submit a proposal, or upon being requested to do so by IIE.

Any information or materials submitted in response to this RFP and/or as a proposal (whether successful or unsuccessful) shall become the property of IIE and will not be returned.

In submitting a proposal, you must agree that your offer shall remain firm for a period of no less than **120** days from the RFP closing date.

Failure to follow the specifications and requirements provided in this RFP may result in disqualification.

The successful Offeror will be obligated to enter into an agreement containing the same or substantially similar terms and conditions found at: <https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Subawards-Procurements/Solicitations-for-Goods-and-Services>. The terms and conditions may be changed, added to, deleted or modified by IIE prior to awarding the agreement. Other terms and conditions may be negotiated between IIE and the successful Offeror, at IIE's discretion. State Universities and Agencies should not expect or ask IIE to modify its Terms and Conditions to incorporate any State Regulations or Statutes.

SECTION 3: PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals are expected to be comprehensive and include the information set forth below. Offerors are also invited to send any additional information or supplemental material they believe will aid IIE in properly evaluating their service offerings. Please be sure to respond to each of the elements requested and frame your answers in direct response to the information being sought.

Include only your own work and no text copied from sources outside of your organization, unless those sources are adequately cited and credited. In order to be qualified for this RFP, all Offerors are requested to provide the following information, and format their proposal as follows:

1. Letter of transmittal, one page

2. Basic information, one page

- Legal name, registered address, and "Remit to" mailing address, if different from registered address
- Name of authorized representative for this RFP, with telephone number(s), and e-mail address
- General information about your organization and the services it offers

3. Qualifications and Capabilities, two pages

- Brief description of the organization/entity and experience in the field that illustrates overall services and capabilities to meet the terms of the RFP
- Years of relevant experience
- Any plans to outsource/subcontract the services or any part thereof

4. Past Performance and Experience

Document and summarize your proven track record of successfully implementing similar activities.

- Using the table format provided below, please list only the relevant projects you implemented within the past 3 years, a brief description of how each is relevant to the scope of the RFP, and the contact details for each previous client or donor.
- You may also include recommendation/appreciation letters and certificates.
- You must include a list of at least 3 but no more than 5 websites that you currently manage. Include the URL for each website.
- Make sure to include any lessons learned

#	(a) Name of Organization	(b) Activity Title	(c) Locations of activity	(d) Synopsis of the activity and	(e) Performance period (date and duration)	(f) Cost for the activity	(g) Name & Contact Info (E-mail <u>and</u> phone)

				relevance to this RFP			
1							
2							
3							

5. Implementation of the Statement of Work, ten pages

- Detailed description of the services being offered and any information relevant to meeting the technical specifications stated in **Attachment A. Make sure to describe any innovative approaches or technology you plan to use.**
- Describe your ideas for potential upgrades, renovations or other projects not specifically mentioned in the scope of work. IIE strongly encourages offerors to be creative and to bring new ideas. (limit 2 pages)
- Implementation plan, and reasoning behind the plan chosen
- Quality control plan including:
 - A description of internal review procedures that facilitate high-quality standards
 - How quality control will be managed when completing multiple projects for multiple clients
- Exceptions to the RFP, additional or different ideas, in the statement of work and other requirements should be expressly noted
- Describe your process and timeline when collaborating with another solution provider should there be a transition period between IIE's current solution and your proposed solution.

6. Cost Proposal

- Submit a detailed cost proposal, in U.S. dollars, in the recommended format shown in **Attachment B**
- Include any additional cost items that the Offeror wishes to propose
- Include any proposed discounts, including any discounts for working with not-for-profit organizations
- Total cost proposed

SECTION 4: TERMS OF PAYMENT

Payment terms for the award shall be approximately net thirty (30) days after satisfactory completion of each deliverable or milestone agreed upon and established in the resulting agreement. Payment shall be made by the Institute of International Education ("IIE") via check or electronic funds transfer/bank wire. The final payment terms in the contract will control, not this RFP. No advance payments will be provided.

SECTION 5: EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Item	Requirement	Points Available
1) Technical Approach to Required Elements of Scope of Work	IIE is seeking proposals that demonstrate strong capabilities managing website maintenance and development	50 points
2) Technical Approach to Proposed Creative Elements	IIE is seeking innovative new ideas regarding how to approach the Fulbright Gateway website.	15 points
3)References/	IIE is seeking proposals that demonstrated strong performance in similar past projects.	10 points

Letters of Recommendation /Past Projects		
4. Cost Proposal	IIE's review of the cost proposal shall determine if the overall costs proposed are realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a correct understanding of the project requirements, and are consistent with the Offeror's technical proposal.	25 points
Total		100 points

SECTION 6: ANNUAL RENEWAL:

Annual Renewal: Selection(s) may be renewed annually, at IIE's sole discretion, for up to five years before re-competition. IIE reserves the right to exercise any one of the following options:

- Accept the updated proposal if changes are reasonable and within the scope of the original selection;
- Negotiate any updates/changes; or,
- Decide not to renew.

ATTACHMENT A STATEMENT OF WORK

IIE is seeking a full-service website contractor for the Fulbright Gateway website – <https://www.fulbrightprogram.org/>. The Fulbright programs are sponsored by the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The selected contractor will maintain, develop, host, and support the Fulbright Gateway website in collaboration with IIE and ECA. The selected provider would be expected to take maintenance, development and hosting of website by October 31, 2025, with ongoing development and content updates through September 2026. After that, IIE may renew the agreement with the selected contractor for 4 years up to a maximum total of 5 years. <https://www.fulbrightprogram.org/>

The major purposes of the website are to:

- Highlight the mission and key themes of the Fulbright Program in an interactive and visually compelling manner.
- Share information about the program history and key milestones.
- Showcase the impact of the program on individuals, communities, and nations through stories, presented through text, photographs, and videos.
- Navigate potential applicants to most applicable part of the program.

Responsibilities of the contractor will include:

A. Content Updates, Support, Hosting, and Maintenance

- In consultation with IIE, ECA, implement complex content updates to the site and provide access and training for designated IIE staff members to make content edits.
- Ongoing maintenance of alumni directory and MySQL database (200,000+ records) – currently still in development but will be launched in coming months. Requires user friendly upload system to allow IIE staff members to upload new records with CSV or Excel files.
- Provide for hosting for site on WordPress Engine (for WordPress site) for duration of agreement.
- Manage and maintain site domains, including technical support with webhost and website security company.
- Daily website backups and restore points that will be archived and accessible.
- Complete regular software and plugin updates. Plugins include:
 - Advanced Custom Fields Pro, Advanced Custom Fields: Extended, Advanced Custom Fields: Font Awesome, and Advanced Custom Fields
 - Custom Post Type UI
 - FacetWP
 - Font Awesome
 - Genesis Blocks and Genesis Custom Blocks:
 - Redirection
 - SearchWP
 - SearchWP Exclude UI
 - Sucuri
 - SVG Support
 - Wordpress Importer
 - WP All Import and WP All Import-ACF Add-On
 - WP Engine Smart Plugin Manager
 - WP Code Lite
 - Yoast SEO Premium
 - Advanced Database Cleaner
 - Bulk Term Generator
 - Delete Duplicate Posts and Delete Duplicate Posts Pro
 - FacetWP Cache
 - Index WP MySQL for Speed
 - TaxoPres
 - wpDataTables
- Incorporate Google Analytics tracking code for proper website analytics, and provide monthly usage reports.

- Provide support services, upgrades, bug fixes, security and software updates and site optimization as needed.
- Maintain the databases which requires basic administration throughout the year including security maintenance and upgrades, troubleshooting, and data repair.
- Ability to maintain and develop API functionality with external sites, if needed in the future.
- Ensure adherence to ADA web accessibility standards, at a minimum to level AA.
- Ensure that site is 508 Compliant, follows the guidelines of WCAG 2.1 or above, and utilizes mobile-responsive design.
- Ensure that the site is compliant with sponsors communications guidance - https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/communications_guidance_for_eca_recipient_organizations.pdf

B. Future Development/Design needs

To ensure the website remains user-friendly, and aligns with evolving website standards, the service provider should be prepared to implement the following enhancements in the future:

- **AI integration** - Implement AI-powered features to enhance both user experience and backend efficiency, such as:
 - Frontend: Site navigation assistance (e.g., chatbots or guided search).
 - Backend: Automated content tagging, alt text generation, and content discovery tools.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** – Develop SEO strategy to increase website traffic and site visibility in search engines.
- **Navigation enhancements** – Navigation may need to require further refinement to ensure intuitive access to key content areas as new sections are rolled out.
- **Customizable page templates** –
 - Improve the CMS's ability to support the creation of new page layouts and templates.
 - Allow for easy customization by IIE staff users while maintaining design consistency across the site.
- **Website redesign** – Although not required immediately, a full or partial redesign maybe required in the future to improve accessibility and performance and align with new website standards.
- **New content types** – Develop a standardized templates for country-specific program pages which includes a consistent design template, integrates into the main site navigation and ensures scalability as more countries are added (up to 50 country pages).

C. Service level/Response times

- Include a proposed list of service levels and response times; if you would like to propose more than one set of service levels and response times, please be sure that the cost differential between the options is clearly shown.

Timeline and Key Milestone: TBD

Website contractor needs to be able to take website support, hosting and maintenance by October 31, 2025. Future website development has not been scheduled at this time, it will be done in consultation with the selected website contractor.

ATTACHMENT B COST PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Submit a detailed budget for the services described in the technical proposal. IIE's review of the cost proposal shall determine if the overall costs proposed are: realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a correct understanding of the project requirements, and are consistent with the Offeror's Technical Proposal.

The following is a format that may be used as a guide to assist you in the preparation of the cost proposal. You may submit the cost proposal using this form or in the format of your choice (plain sheets, your own form, or a variation of this form). The Offeror may list any cost line items, but it is recommended that the Offeror follow the major categories listed below, breaking down all "lump sum" items as much as reasonably possible.

Proposed Rates

Rate Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Monthly Hosting (fixed)					
Monthly Maintenance—including 10hrs of support (fixed)					
Website Design (specify whether blended, hourly or daily)					
Website Development (specify whether blended, hourly or daily)					
Other Proposed Rates					

IIE anticipates 25(10) hours per month of monthly maintenance but offerors may suggest different service levels. Offerors should clearly indicate if they allow for the rollover of unused hours and, if so, the terms of how the rollover hours may be utilized.

ATTACHMENT C - ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Third-Party IT Risk Management Process (TPRM)

An **IT Security Questionnaire** is required prior to signing a contract if the vendor will process IIE proprietary data or Personal Data according to GDPR's definition on behalf of IIE or connect to IIE's network.

- Vendors who can furnish evidence of an **ISO 27001 Certification** are asked to attach such documentation and to provide their up-to-date **System and Organization Controls (SOC) 2 Type 2 Attestation**.
- Vendors who cannot furnish IIE with ISO 27001 Certification evidence will be asked to provide a **SOC 2 Type 2 attestation** and complete a **security assessment that is mapped to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework (CSF)**. NIST is a guidance, based on existing standards, guidelines, and practices for organizations to better manage and reduce cybersecurity risk. The NIST CSF consists of five concurrent and continuous Functions—Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover. When considered together, these Functions provide a high-level, strategic view of the lifecycle of an organization's cybersecurity risk management.
- If your organization does not wish to complete this request using the automated OneTrust platform, please visit the "Welcome" screen of the IT Security Questionnaire (using the emailed link from OneTrust) and click "*Complete Offline Using Excel*" to download the **Excel** version of the NIST CSF assessment. Please make sure to upload the completed file to OneTrust using the same path and **Submit**.

Prohibition on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment

IIE cannot enter into a contract to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. As described in Public Law 115-232, section 889, covered telecommunications equipment is telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

Covered equipment and services must not be part of your offer to IIE.