



The Power  
of International  
Education

## [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#)

**To** : Offerors  
**From** : [Institute of International Education, Inc. \(IIE\)](#)  
**Subject** : Fulbright Scholar Program Website Development and Maintenance

**RFP No.** : 05062026/AK  
**RFP Issue Date** : Wednesday, May 6, 2026  
**Deadline for Submission of Questions:**  
: Monday, May 18, 2026

**Responses to Questions Released:**  
: Friday, May 22, 2026

**RFP Closing Date** : Friday, June 5, 2026  
**RFP Closing Time** : 5 PM EDT

**Semi-Finalist Demonstrations**  
: Week of June 22 - 26, 2026

**Offerors Notified of Decision** : On or about June 29, 2026

**Anticipated Start of Work** : On or about October 1, 2026

**Performance Period** : October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2031 (one year with up to 4 option 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-Funded 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 Instructions”**. 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 or about May 1 on IIE’s website under Subawards and Procurement (<https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Subawards-Procurements>).

Alexa Rowland, Regional Program Officer  
Institute of International Education, Inc.  
One World Trade Center, 36<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007  
Email: arowland@iie.org

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

**Table of Contents**

Section 1: Background and Purpose..... 3  
Section 2: RFP Conditions..... 4  
Section 3: Proposal Preparation instructions ..... 5  
Section 4: Terms of Payment..... 6  
Section 5: Evaluation of Proposals ..... 7  
Section 6: Annual Renewal:..... 7  
Attachment A Statement of Work..... 8  
Attachment B Cost Proposal Template ..... 13  
Attachment C Additional Requirements ..... 14

## **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: 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 in other countries (China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Thailand, and Ukraine).

### **The Fulbright Program**

The Fulbright Program, the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government, is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The U.S. Congress established the Fulbright Program in 1946, following legislation introduced by the late Senator J. William Fulbright to fund the “promotion of international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, cultural and science.” The program actively seeks out individuals of achievement and potential and selects nominees through open, merit-based competitions. IIE administers the Fulbright Program under the guidance of and in consultation with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

### **Purpose of Request for Proposal**

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

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) is to invite bidders to submit a proposal for a website development company to provide ongoing support, maintain, enhance, and improve the current Fulbright Scholar program 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 must also include three (3) recommendation/appreciation letters and/or 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. At least 3 websites must not be IIE owned or managed websites.
- Make sure to include any lessons learned.

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

1							
2							
3							

**5. Implementation of the Statement of Work**

- Detailed description of the services being offered and any information relevant to meeting the technical specifications stated in **Attachment A** (limit of 5 pages). **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 1 page)
- Implementation plan, and reasoning behind the plan chosen
  - Include proposed response times that should be at least as fast as the response times mentioned in the Scope of Work
- Methodology, and reasoning behind the methodology 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**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Points Available</b>
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 Scholar website. Higher points will be awarded to proposals that demonstrate a creative approach to the Fulbright Scholar website.	15 points
3) References/Letters of Recommendation/Past Projects	IIE is seeking proposals that demonstrate strong performance in similar past projects.	10 points
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
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

**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 maintenance and enhancement service provider for the Fulbright Scholar website. The Fulbright Scholar program currently maintains one primary website, <https://fulbrightscholars.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, and support the Fulbright Scholar website in collaboration with IIE and ECA. The selected provider would be expected to begin work on October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027. After that, IIE may renew the agreement with the selected contractor for 4 years up to a maximum total of 5 years.

In addition, IIE is seeking to enhance navigation and user experience on the website, redesigning the homepage, as well as the award pages, for ease of access to.

The primary purpose of the Fulbright Scholar Program website is to recruit potential applicants to the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program and the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program, providing the numerous external stakeholders and audiences with a user-friendly resource and repository of documents, program information, and other relevant material.

Within the website there is the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program [Awards Search](#) which exists to present detailed information on a range of opportunities to interested individuals. As it serves as the primary recruitment tool for the program, it should be both attractive and easy to use for prospective applicants. The awards should also allow for various levels of administrative access for various stakeholders in over 130 countries to create, edit, and approve content in the system.

This work will include website maintenance and development services to ensure that the website continues to meet the changing needs of its sponsor (ECA) and its users (prospective grantees, Commissions/U.S. Embassies, Fulbright Scholar Liaisons) on U.S. campuses. The major purposes of the website are to:

- Provide clear and easily understandable information to prospective applicants
- Provide password-protected sections and documents for different usergroups based on permissions
- Allow for the ability for Fulbright Commissions/Posts around the world, ECA, and Program Managers to add/edit specific country content

Responsibilities of the contractor will include:

### **A. Content, Support, and Maintenance Responsibilities:**

- Manage and maintain all domains, including technical support with our webhost and website security company.
- Offerors will ensure that all website related software components—including plugins, themes, libraries, modules, frameworks, and third party integrations (“Components”)—

are maintained at current, stable, and supported versions during the development period and throughout the term of the contract. The selected contractor will apply necessary updates, patches, or replacements to maintain security, performance, and compatibility. Consultant shall notify Client of any Component requiring a paid license or replacement due to end of life or end of support.

- Complete regular repairs as needed to scripting languages, basic HTML, cascading style sheets, broken images, broken links and all other malfunctioning code or components.
- Daily website backups and restore points that will be archived and accessible.
- Complete regular software and plugin updates for all frameworks.
- Routine CMS and module updates will be scheduled monthly. In addition to patching and security updates, the selected contractor will collaborate with IIE to implement site enhancements, such as new features, UI improvements, navigation updates, or accessibility upgrades.
- Quarterly check-up: at the end of each quarter the contractor will check for any broken links, broken images, template distortion, test all contact forms and other interactive elements and provide a report upon request at the end of each quarter. This report should also include site traffic statistics and search engine analysis reports. Monthly reports will be emailed when complete.
- Contractor will respond to all maintenance requests from [fulbrightscholars.org](http://fulbrightscholars.org) within 3 hours on weekdays and 18 hours on weekends, via email, with a confirmation that the request was received and an estimated completion date for each action item in the request.
- Maintain the databases which requires basic administration throughout the year including security maintenance and upgrades, troubleshooting, and data repair.
- The selected contractor will ensure that all website related software components—including plugins, themes, libraries, modules, frameworks, and third party integrations are maintained at current, stable, and supported versions. The selected contractor will apply necessary updates, patches, or replacements to maintain security, performance, and compatibility and will notify IIE component requiring a paid license or replacement due to end of life or end of support.
- The selected contractor will establish, maintain, and manage appropriate testing, development, and/or staging environments as needed. These environments must be separate from the live production website and configured to allow for proper testing of updates, new components, patches, integrations, and changes prior to deployment. The selected contractor will ensure that:
  - all updates or changes are tested in a non production environment before release,
  - environments are kept reasonably current and secure,
  - any required test data or credentials are handled in accordance with Client's security requirements, and
  - no changes are deployed to production without appropriate validation.
- The selected contractor will be provided access, credentials, or hosting space for such environments only if required; otherwise, selected contractor will supply and manage them.
- Maintain Custom-built Site Search Engine by ensuring any content updates and new pages are searchable and respect the multi-level permission access that are in place. A

quarterly check-up is required to ensure security and privacy of protected content from public search.

- Maintain API functionality with external site and ability to develop API functionality with other systems such as Okta, if needed in the future.
- Ensure adherence to ADA web accessibility standards, at a minimum to level AA.
- Ensure that site is 508 Compliant.
- Support WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Offerors will not be responsible for any accessibility issues based on content entry from IIE.
- Design and conduct accessibility audits and testing for measuring a wide range of accessibility standards directly within the site admin, with a clear and simple set of checkmarks while editing a page so editors can quickly validate and/or correct pages to ensure they meet standards.
- All websites must utilize mobile-responsive design, please note that accessibility requirements also apply to mobile applications.
- Continue with Google Analytics tracking code for proper website analytics. The code can be adjusted using the configuration in the Google Analytics module.
- Ensure that the site is compliant with sponsors communications guidance - [https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/communications\\_guidance\\_for\\_eca\\_recipient\\_organizations.pdf](https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/communications_guidance_for_eca_recipient_organizations.pdf)
- Drupal upgrades as needed.
- Ensure website is developed for the following major browsers and versions:
  - Chrome (current)
  - Firefox (current)
  - Internet Explorer (11, 12, and Edge)
  - Safari (current) Excludes Windows-based Safari
  - Opera (current) Current version of iPhone and Samsung Galaxy, iPad, Surface and Samsung Tabs
- Ensure website has a Secure Socket Layer (SSL) certificate applied so all traffic uses https.
- Maintain OKTA integration so admin users could use shared login to access the award editing platform.
- Provide support services, upgrades, bug fixes, security and software updates and site optimization as needed.
- Provide test environment for minor changes, updates and bug fixes.

## **B. Hosting:**

IIE will be responsible for procurement and maintaining a hosting services agreement with an independent third-party hosting provider. The selected provider will be responsible for coordinating directly with the hosting provider to diagnose, troubleshoot, and work toward the resolution of any issues affecting the website's performance, availability, security, functionality, or operation, including issues that originate from or are caused by the hosting provider's systems, infrastructure, or services

### C. Future Development/Design

IIE will determine whether and when future development or design elements are implemented, contingent on cost and available budget.

Design and all related components will be in accordance with WCAG 2.1 AA best practices and vetted by the Offeror through an In-House Accessibility Specialist.

Potential future projects may include:

- Refresh FulbrightScholars.org website
  - Update homepage layout, surfacing key audience pathways (U.S. Scholars, Non-U.S. Scholars, Institutions, Alumni) more clearly, possibly with brief explanatory blurbs directly on the homepage.
  - Propose any updates to individual award pages to better present dense requirements and eligibility information.
- Navigation & User Experience
  - Conduct formal UX research/user testing to redesign site navigation based on actual user behavior (applicants, alumni, liaisons, institutions).
  - Simplify pathways to core parts of the website (e.g., U.S. Scholar Program, Award Search/Catalog).
  - Improve mobile and responsive design, ensuring layouts adapt cleanly across devices and screen sizes.
  - Eliminate excessive scrolling by restructuring pages into tiles, accordions, or clearer visual hierarchy.
- Support Content Organization & Information Architecture
  - Reorganize long, text-heavy pages to emphasize key actions like finding awards.
  - Reduce duplicative content across multiple pages (e.g., resources, directories, “connect with Fulbright” links).
- Improve Editing and Linking in Pages
  - Enable anchor links and deep linking to specific sections or accordions within long pages.
  - Allow staff to link directly to precise information instead of instructing users to scroll manually.
  - Address the inability to hyperlink across sections as a platform-level limitation.
- Platform Flexibility and Customization
  - Increase flexibility to customize page layouts rather than relying on rigid templates.
  - Enable staff to reorganize sections, adjust hierarchy, and update layouts without major developer involvement.
- 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.
- Liaison Directory Integration

- Improve ability to manage data and information related to liaison directory.
- Integrate liaison directory with the new alumni directory, which will be hosted on [fulbrightprogram.org](http://fulbrightprogram.org).
- Search, Answer, and Generative Engine Optimization (SEO, AEO, GEO)
  - Develop and recommend SEO, AEO, and GEO strategies, including technical, content, and structural considerations, to enhance website visibility, discoverability, and traffic across traditional search engines, AI search tools, and AI answer engines (e.g. ChatGPT).

**D. 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.

**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 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, breaking down all “lump sum” items as much as reasonably possible.

---

Rate Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Monthly Maintenance– including 15 hours of support (fixed)					
Website Design (specify whether blended, hourly or daily)					
Website Development (specify whether blended, hourly or daily)					
Other Proposed Rates					

IIE anticipates 15 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.

Include any cost differentials based on proposed service response times.

---

## 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.