Request for Proposals (RFP)

Gilman International Scholarship Program

Gilman Global Edge: Building America's Competitive Workforce

To: Higher education institutions, organizations, companies, Fulbright Commissions
From: IIE - Institute of International Education, Inc.
Subject: Request for Proposals to Design and Host one of two Gilman Global Edge Seminars.

RFP Issue Date:	November 12, 2026
Live Webinar for RFP Walk-through and Questions: Webinar Registration	November 17, 2026, 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time
Written Questions Due Date & Time:	November 18, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
RFP Question Responses & Recorded Q&A Webinar Posted:	November 20, 2026
RFP Due Date & Time:	December 18, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Anticipated Selection Notification:	January 13, 2027
Seminar Timeframe	Between May 1, 2027-June 30, 2027

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP). At the direction of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), IIE invites foreign higher education institutions, not-for-profit organizations, for-profit companies, and Fulbright Commissions ("Offerors") to submit a best-value proposal to design and host one of two Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program's (Gilman Program) in-person "Gilman Global Edge Seminar." One seminar will focus on Maritime Leadership, a priority topic for this initiative, while the second seminar will be selected from proposals addressing one of the other topical areas identified in this RFP. The six-day, in-person overseas seminar that will take place outside of the United States, will bring together approximately 25 Gilman Alumni, who are typically early-to-mid-career professionals or enrolled in advanced academic study, in May or June 2027 to deepen their understanding of key industries and their role in global trade, economic competitiveness, workforce development, and national security. Proposals submitted for seminars to be conducted in countries designated as a U.S. Department of State Level 4 ("Do Not Travel") Travel Advisory destination, at the time of proposal review will not be considered.

Offerors should read this RFP in its entirety (including attachments), paying specific attention to the instructions and requirements included here. Issuance of this solicitation does not, in any way, obligate IIE to award a contract, nor will IIE pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. IIE anticipates selecting up to two **organizations/institutions/companies** to design and host the in-person seminar with a maximum budget of **$60,000 USD total for each award.** Budgets are designed to cover outlined costs and other aspects described in the RFP (See Section 3: Proposal Preparation Instructions). The U.S. government-funded cost-reimbursement Contractor 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 more detail in "**Section 1: Background and Purpose**" and "**Attachment A: Statement of Work**". IIE encourages your institution to indicate its interest in this RFP by submitting a proposal according to the instructions in "**Section 3: Proposal Preparation Instructions.**" Proposals will be

evaluated based on the "**Section 5: Evaluation Criteria**." All proposals are due by the date and time stated above. Late proposals will not be evaluated.

Questions: Any questions are to be submitted in writing to the email address listed below, no later than November 17, 2026 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time). IIE is unable to respond to questions if they are received by means other than the specified email address. Answers to questions IIE deems relevant to this RFP will be published on or about November 20, 2026 on IIE's website under Subawards and Procurement (https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Subawards-Procurements).

Contact for questions:
Ace Relingado, Assistant Director, Gilman International Scholarship Program, IIE
Subject: Gilman Global Edge Seminar
Email: gilmanevents@iie.org

Proposal Submission: Proposals, including any attachments (limited to 6MB) such as the institution's audited indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), if applicable and the cost proposal budget in Excel format, must be sent electronically to gilmanevents@iie.org. Please include in the subject line "Proposal – Gilman Global Edge Seminar".

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Gilman Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by the Institute of International Education (IIE). The Gilman Program invests up to $5,000 merit-based scholarships in outstanding American undergraduate students with high financial need to pursue credit-bearing academic studies and career-oriented internships abroad. The Gilman Global Edge Seminar is an opportunity made available to approximately 25 competitively selected alumni from the community of over 50,000+ U.S. alumni of the Gilman Program. The seminar is anticipated to engage early-to-mid-career professionals or enrolled in advanced academic study from across the United States.

PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The purpose of this RFP is to invite higher education institutions, not-for-profit organizations, for-profit companies, and Fulbright Commissions to submit a proposal to implement one of two Gilman Global Edge Seminars, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as part of its Gilman Program. The U.S. Department of State conceptualized and sponsored this initiative to enhance networks among Gilman alumni in key topics and industries, and elevate their role in the global economy, economic competitiveness, workforce development, and related industries. The in-person Gilman Global Edge Seminar is part of a larger effort by the U.S. Department of State to expand connections and offer professional development opportunities for American exchange alumni focused on strategic areas of importance to the United States.

SEMINAR DESIGN

The Gilman Global Edge Seminars are designed develop the American workforce for a U.S. foreign policy priority through experiential learning. Offerors will design and host a six-day, five-night seminar for approximately 25 Gilman alumni focused on one of the topical areas identified below. Seminars will take place between May 1 and June 30, 2027 and should engage alumni through site visits, discussions with

public-, private-, and nonprofit-sector leaders, networking opportunities, and applied learning experiences that connect the seminar topic to global economic competitiveness, workforce development, and related industries.

The scope and content of the proposed Seminar should be centered on one of the five topics identified below. One seminar will specifically focus on Maritime Leadership, a priority topic for this initiative, and the second seminar will be on one of the other topical areas listed below. Offerors are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal regarding Maritime Leadership, however, proposals addressing any of the other four identified topics will be considered. Offerors may bid on more than one topic but may submit no more than two proposals. If submitting proposals for two topics, each proposal must have unique seminar content related to the chosen topic:

- **Maritime Leadership:** Examples of sub-topics or areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, shipbuilding and ship repair, port development and operations, maritime security and defense, maritime policy and governance, maritime technology and innovation, maritime energy, fisheries and aquaculture, workforce development and maritime careers (including skilled shipyard trades), and the blue economy.
- **Critical Minerals, Mining, and Strategic Supply Chains**: Examples of sub-topics or areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, critical minerals extraction and processing, mining technologies and innovation, rare earth elements and their applications, battery and semiconductor supply chains, sustainable mining practices, workforce development, international trade and resource security, and the role of critical minerals in energy, technology, and national security.
- **Advanced Manufacturing and Industrial Innovation**: Examples of sub-topics or areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, advanced manufacturing technologies and processes, automation, robotics, and smart manufacturing, super intelligence and digital technologies in manufacturing, additive manufacturing (3D printing), advanced semiconductor manufacturing and fabrication, aerospace and automotive manufacturing, pharmaceutical and biotechnology manufacturing, battery tech, workforce development, and the role of manufacturing in economic growth.
- **Aerospace and Aviation Innovation**: Examples of sub-topics or areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, aerospace manufacturing and supply chains, aircraft design, production, and maintenance, air traffic management and modernization, space exploration and commercial spaceflight, satellite development and space-based technologies, super intelligence and automation in aviation, and the role of the aerospace sector in economic growth and national competitiveness.
- **Cybersecurity and Defense Infrastructure:** Examples of sub-topics or areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, cybersecurity and cyber defense, critical infrastructure protection, cyber threat intelligence and risk management, data privacy and information security, digital resilience and incident response, workforce development and cybersecurity careers, cybersecurity policy and governance and the role of cybersecurity in economic competitiveness, public safety, and national defense.

The responsibilities and expectations are outlined in Attachment A.

Benefits of hosting a Gilman seminar:

- Demonstrate the institution, company, or organization's leadership in a topical area of national and international importance;
- Provide professional development and knowledge to a group of talented, globally engaged Americans with a broad range of academic and professional perspectives;
- Engage directly with the U.S. Department of State and IIE;
- Showcase the institution, company or organization's academic expertise, facilities, and regional strengths to emerging U.S. leaders and professionals;

Background on the Institute of International Education (IIE)
IIE supports the U.S. Department of State in its implementation of the Gilman Program. IIE 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 over 100 years, IIE has promoted educational exchange around the world and touches the lives of more than 29,000 people in 180 countries each year. 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. IIE has supported the implementation of the Gilman Program since the program's inception in 2001.

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 the 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/en/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 should be concise and focus on the institution's proposed seminar concept, relevant expertise, and ability to host a successful Gilman Program seminar. Offerors may submit additional information they believe will assist IIE in evaluating their proposal.

Proposals should be in English and include the following components:

1. Organizational Information
Provide:

- Name of institution, company, or organization

- Primary Contact (name, title, email address, and phone number)
- Host country and city
- Name of local partner organization(s), if applicable
- Previous relevant experience
    - Mention any past involvement hosting a similar event, organizing a seminar for U.S. citizens or any experience hosting U.S. government funded programs. Include any relevant expertise, resources, and partnerships that will contribute to the seminar's success, totaling no more than 2 pages.

2. Proposed Dates

- Preferred dates
- Alternate dates

3. Technical Proposal (up to 5 pages)

Please address the following:

- The proposed topic or subtheme
- Why the proposed location is well suited for the seminar topic
- Key learning objectives and intended outcomes
- Draft agenda outline identifying major sessions, potential site visits, and networking opportunities. A detailed seminar agenda is not required at this stage of the competition but will be required, if selected. A sample seminar agenda is provided in Attachment A for reference.
- Logistical approach - Briefly describe the proposed venue(s), lodging approach, transportation considerations, and accessibility accommodations. (IIE will arrange air travel for participants, but offerors can include any relevant considerations for getting to the seminar location).

4. Budget Information

Offerors must submit the attached budget template and may add a budget narrative of up to two pages. The budget should indicate:

- Total amount of funding requested
- Major anticipated cost categories. These may include but is not limited to: personnel, hotel, meals, venue, transportation, site visits, materials, honoraria, indirect costs and other expenses.
- Offeror has the option to submit a budget narrative describing the anticipated cost categories.
- The resulting contract will be a cost reimbursement contract subject to the applicable cost principles. For universities, not-for-profit organizations and Fulbright Commissions the Cost Principles in 2 CFR Part 200 apply. For-profit companies are subject to FAR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.
- Cost share/in-kind contributions (optional)
- An organization, company or institution, if applicable, with an audited indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) negotiated with a cognizant U.S. federal government agency must include a copy of the cost-rate agreement with the proposal. Offerors must also indicate in the budget how the rate is applied. An organization that is subject to the Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200 and that does not have a NICRA may elect to charge a de minimis rate of up to 15% for indirect costs.
- IIE's review of the cost proposal will determine if the overall costs proposed are appropriate, reasonable, and allowable for the work to be performed, reflect a correct understanding of the project requirements, and are consistent with the Offeror's proposal.

5. (Optional) Additional supporting materials, such as staff bios, letters of support, sample programming materials, or other relevant documentation may be submitted with the proposal, but no more than 5 pages.

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 CRITERIA

Item	Requirement	Points Available
Program Concept & Content	Assessment of the quality, relevance, and creativity of the proposed seminar concept, agenda, industry engagement, site visits, experiential learning activities, and anticipated participant outcomes.	40
Institutional/Organizational Experience & Capacity	Assessment of the Offeror's demonstrated ability to design and implement similar programs and to leverage partnerships, industry connections, and subject matter experts relevant to the seminar topic.	25
Logistics & Feasibility	Assessment of logical program development, as evidenced in the proposed agenda, with realistic pace and varied session format and use of available resources.	20
Cost Effectiveness	Assessment of the overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including cost-share and/or in-kind contributions. IIE's review of the cost proposal shall determine if the overall costs proposed are appropriate, reasonable, and allowable for the work to be performed, reflect a correct understanding of the project requirements, and are consistent with the Offeror's proposal.	15
	Total	100

An Evaluation Committee will evaluate each proposal in accordance with the evaluation criteria listed above. The Evaluation Committee may request some or all applicants to provide additional information to clarify aspects of their proposal, either in writing or during post-tender interviews. Final selection of the recipient host institution will be determined in consultation with the U.S. Department of State.

ATTACHMENT A: STATEMENT OF WORK

Statement of Work

Conceptualize, design and host a six-day, five-night Gilman Global Edge Seminar for approximately 25 alumni of the Gilman Program, to take place between May 2027 and June 2027. The host will create the seminar agenda, seminar materials, and session content that aligns with the seminar topic. The host institution will also provide the seminar venue, catering, ground transportation, hotel accommodation, logistical support, any necessary participant instructions, and implementation of the seminar overall and of specific sessions and activities as the host. The host institution will participate in biweekly Teams meetings with the Gilman Program staff leading up to the seminar to discuss logistics, questions, and deliverables.

Seminar Topic:

The scope and content of the proposed Gilman Global Edge Seminar should focus on one of the following topics:

- **Maritime Leadership *(Priority)***
- **Critical Minerals, Mining, and Strategic Supply Chains**
- **Advanced Manufacturing and Industrial Innovation**

- **Aerospace and Aviation Innovation**
- **Cybersecurity and Defense Infrastructure**

Offerors are encouraged to detail the creative and innovative ways in which they will demonstrate and integrate the selected theme throughout the seminar's content and experiential learning activities. The Gilman Global Edge Seminar is designed to increase awareness and action on one of these topics by offering on-the-ground, experiential learning for approximately 25 Gilman alumni currently working in or aspiring to work in fields related to the selected topic.

Seminar Objectives:

- Deepen Gilman alumni understanding of the seminar topic and its significance to U.S. economic competitiveness, national security, and foreign policy priorities;
- Provide alumni with hands-on, experiential learning that shows how the sector operates and what skills its workforce needs;
- Empower alumni to strengthen America's competitive edge by developing the expertise, leadership capabilities and career readiness needed to address critical strategic priorities
- Strengthen the identity of the alumni community as emerging leaders in the topical area by connecting Gilman alumni to current public- and private-sector professionals in substantive ways; and
- Increase alumni exposure to educational and career opportunities available to them.

Participants

Participants will be approximately 25 Gilman alumni whose career interests align with the identified topic for the seminar. They will represent a variety of ages, backgrounds, and career experience levels, but the seminar is intended for alumni who have already gained employment in an industry related to the seminar topic or are looking to develop the skills and expertise needed to become future leaders in the field. Participants come from a variety of locations, primarily across the United States. IIE will manage the participant application and selection process. Approximately two Gilman Program staff members (from ECA and IIE) will be joining the seminar in-person.

Design and Facilitation

- The Gilman Global Edge Seminar should be participatory, with energetic and interactive activities to encourage participation and engagement.
- The Seminar will present interdisciplinary approaches to the topic addressing the objectives outlined above. Content should be non-political.
- All seminar content must be delivered in English, and speakers, facilitators, panelists, and presenters must be able to communicate effectively in English.
- The Seminar will host approximately 25 Gilman alumni and two Gilman Program staff members (from ECA and IIE)
- The Seminar will be six days, (either Sunday to Friday or Monday to Saturday). The host can select dates between May and June 2027.
    - **Note that if travel time to the Seminar from the U.S. requires an overnight flight, hosts should plan for the option for attendees to elect to arrive on the day prior. This would require an additional night of hotel for some participants and should be budgeted accordingly. Typically, around 50-60% of attendees have opted to arrive on the day prior to help with the jetlag.
- The Seminar should include at least three industry site visits designed to provide an in-depth and practical understanding of the Seminar topic and potential related careers. The variety of speakers at the industry site visits is also important to participants' experiences. Offerors are highly encouraged to integrate local experts and industry leaders into the wider agenda and Seminar sessions beyond the industry site visits.
- Offer a space for participants to meet each other informally on arrival night. Recommend holding an

icebreaker activity for the group.
- Book and arrange a group cultural activity for participants.
- Note: Icebreaker and cultural activity must be educational in nature and directly support program objectives. Entertainment costs are unallowable.
- Provide logistical information (i.e., venue information and map, to IIE at least two weeks in advance of seminar). IIE will share applicable logistical information with participants.
- After the Seminar, hold a debrief meeting with IIE and ECA staff to discuss lessons learned in the development and execution of the seminar, positive outcomes, and suggestions (i.e., the planning process, communication with IIE and ECA, content) for future seminars.
- Prepare and submit an invoice and a certified final financial report (with actual costs) to IIE after completion of the Gilman Global Edge Seminar in accordance with the budget in the signed Agreement for payment within 60 calendar days after all activities have concluded. Any honoraria paid to facilitators or speakers shall be done by the recipient host institution/organization directly in accordance with the cost proposal.

Note: Seminar content must not include controlled technical information, proprietary technical data, or other information whose disclosure, transfer, release, or access would require government authorization under applicable export control, national security, technology transfer, or similar laws and regulations.

Logistical Requirements
- Provide reasonable, disability-related accommodations for participants, as needed. IIE will notify the host of any requested accommodations when received from participants.
- Produce and print a seminar workbook using a template and branding guidance provided by IIE. The workbook must be submitted to IIE for review and approval prior to production.

Meals
- Order an appropriate menu selection for approximately 25 participants, Gilman and ECA staff and host staff.
- Meals should provide a range of options, accommodating dietary restrictions (to be provided by IIE). Food options should be identified for dietary needs and potential allergens.
- Recommended to have 2-3 evenings free for participants to get dinner on their own. Meals during the day should be included.
- Alcohol must not be included in the group meals and individuals wanting alcohol must purchase on their own.

Hotel Accommodations
- Participants will have single rooms.
- The nightly rate per hotel room (excluding taxes) cannot exceed the FY2027 Foreign Per Diem Rate for the country where the seminar will be held.
- The host institution will book rooms for participants and program staff, but only the rooms for approximately 25 participants should be included in the budget. IIE and ECA staff will pay for their rooms upon arrival.

Ground Transportation
- Secure ground transportation for all program related events and activities.

Seminar Event Space
- Secure a meeting space that accommodates 25 individuals at round tables (to facilitate discussion and interaction throughout the seminar).

  - Ensure the space is accessible to allow sufficient time for set up and tear down.
  - Ensure the space has access to Wi-Fi.
- Ensure A/V capabilities, as needed.

Name Tags

- Provided for seminar attendees, including participants, Gilman program staff and host staff. IIE will provide a template.

Sample Seminar Agenda

Below is a sample agenda schedule for the six-day seminar that incorporates sessions with expert speakers and at least 3 site visits. The proposed agenda does not need to follow this outline, but can provide information Offerors may wish to draw from.

Day 0 (Optional Arrival Day)

Early participant arrivals and hotel check-in

Day 1

Participant arrivals and hotel check-in
Program orientation, goals, logistics, and expectations
Icebreaker and participant introductions
Welcome Group Dinner
Overview of upcoming week

Day 2

Group Breakfast
Opening Keynote Lecture: Topic Overview and Local Context
Break
Expert Panel Discussion
Group Lunch
Site Visit #1 with Guided Discussion
Break
Small Group Reflection and Processing Session
Free Evening and Dinner on Own

Day 3

Group Breakfast
Academic Discussion or Faculty-Led Seminar
Break
Interactive Workshop
Group Lunch
Site Visit #2 and Stakeholder Engagement Session
Break
Small Group Reflection and Processing Session
Group Dinner

Day 4

Group Breakfast

Lecture or Case Study Discussion
Break
Facilitated Group Discussion
Group Lunch
Site Visit #3 and Stakeholder Engagement Session
Reflection and Debrief Session
Free Evening and Dinner on Own

Day 5

Group Breakfast
Lecture or Case Study Discussion
Break
Final Reflections, Key Takeaways, and Next Steps
Seminar Evaluations
Group Lunch
Cultural Activity (Museum, Historical Site, Cultural Institution, Community Experience, etc.)
Free Time
Closing Dinner and Program Celebration
Certificate Distribution and Closing Remarks

Day 6

Breakfast and hotel check-out
Participant departures

Thank you for your interest in designing and hosting this seminar. We value our partnerships with higher education institutions and organizations throughout the world. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. Questions should be directed to the email address provided, using the guidelines provided within this document.

Note: To facilitate seminar planning and implementation, IIE will provide the selected host organization with limited personally identifiable information (PII) regarding participants, which may include participant names, email addresses, telephone numbers, and other logistical information reasonably necessary for seminar administration. The selected host organization must protect all PII from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure; use such information solely for purposes of performing the seminar services; and handle the information in accordance with applicable privacy and data protection laws and regulations. The selected host organization will be required to enter into IIE's Data Processing Addendum (DPA) as part of the resulting agreement.