

Competition #16 Request for Proposals

*Supported by NAFSA: Association of International Educators
and CAF: The Development Bank of Latin America*

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Subject: Request for Proposals for Competition #16: The Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge for U.S.-Cuba, Caribbean, and Central American Academic Mobility

Dear Applicants,

Partners of the Americas (Partners), the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NAFSA) are pleased to announce a new grant competition as part of the *100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative* (100,000 Strong Americas), founded by President Barack Obama. The *100,000 Strong in the 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. Built on public-private partnerships to ensure a sustainable growth model, the initiative will continue beyond President Obama's presidency to offer competitive grants to foster collaboration between higher education institutions in the Western Hemisphere. The Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge will be the first competition to be awarded in 2017.

Competition #16: The Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge for U.S.-Cuba, Caribbean, and Central American Academic Mobility is supported through generous contributions from NAFSA: Association of International Educators and CAF: the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). All higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States, Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago that promote study abroad partnerships in any field of study are eligible to compete, with special consideration for partnerships between the United States and Cuba.

The *100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative* will use the principle of leveraged innovation with HEIs that demonstrate the greatest commitment and innovation toward increasing study abroad opportunities. In applying for Competition 16 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 #16 is to award up to eight (8) *100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Grants* of \$25,000 each across the 21 eligible countries listed above and an additional six (6) grants of \$25,000 each for U.S.-Cuba partnerships funded by the CAF. 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.

The Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge for U.S.-Cuba, Caribbean, and Central American Academic Mobility is sponsored by [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) in recognition of Executive Director and CEO Marlene M. Johnson's commitment and dedication to international education. Marlene's public policy leadership resulted in NAFSA becoming a founding partner in the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* initiative and is marked by innovation and forward thinking about how to provide greater access and opportunities for international education to students around the world. This competition is a fitting tribute to her dedication to increasing and diversifying study abroad and her commitment to strengthening relations within the Americas through international education. Through her leadership, NAFSA has grown to be the world's largest membership organization dedicated to international education with over 10,000 members worldwide and is a recognized leader on policy issues that impact the field.

[CAF: the Development Bank of Latin America](#) is comprised of 17 Latin American and two European countries (Spain and Portugal), as well as 14 private banks, it promotes socially inclusive sustainable development and regional integration. It promotes sustainable development through its lending, and support in the technical and financial structuring of projects in the public and private sectors of Latin America. It is also well known for its work in equity and social inclusion, environment, workforce development and climate change among other areas. CAF's generous response to the Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge is dedicated to funding proposal that support Cuba-U.S. study abroad.

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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* 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 50,000 U.S. students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean and 85,000 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 1,500 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 in the 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 of 100,000 Strong in the Americas

The goal of *100,000 Strong in the 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

(NAFSA), 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 #16: The Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge for U.S.-Cuba, Caribbean, and Central American Academic Mobility 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 between eligible countries of Central America and the Caribbean and the United States to increase study abroad in the region.

We envision that innovations are likely to include proposed activities that address many of the following topics that were discussed at the 2014-2016 *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Capacity Building Workshops and the 2012-2016 [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 in the Americas* goals, such as student and faculty engagement through service learning. We expect proposals may include elements such as entrepreneurship, technical English, innovation, regional development and other themes.

The main focus of this competition is to provide incentive grants to HEIs to leverage institutional commitment to increasing study abroad in Central America and the Caribbean with a focus on Cuba. See Section 3: Expected Results below for more details. While the Innovation Fund does not provide direct scholarships, applicant HEIs are encouraged to use a small portion of the grant to administer their own scholarships, travel grants, or partial-funding mechanisms to students to encourage study abroad between the eligible countries. The Review Committee understands that a small institutional grant does not, in itself, create a sustainable long-term program. However, applicants should convincingly convey how this initial grant will set in motion additional plans and resources that will extend beyond the grant period supporting attainment of the goals of *100,000 Strong in the Americas*.

Proposals can focus on increasing outbound opportunities from the U.S. for students to study in eligible countries; on expanding the capacity for institutions in these countries to send students to the United States and for the 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*

Higher education institutions 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 eligible countries. These HEIs will:

- Increase the number of students studying abroad in the Western Hemisphere;
- Demonstrate increased awareness of the barriers to study abroad at their institution;
- Possess a new model to engage students in the 21 eligible countries; and
- Demonstrate an increase in the number of effective partnerships between HEIs in the eligible countries and the United States 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 the Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge for U.S.-Cuba, Caribbean, and Central American Academic Mobility is to award up to fourteen (14) *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation grants of approximately \$25,000 each to partnerships between the United States and the eligible countries listed. At least six (6) awards will be reserved for U.S.-Cuba partnerships. Partners of the Americas, NAFSA, and the U.S. Department of State reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted, and may or may not select *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovators. Please refer to Section I: Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

B. Announcement of Grantees and Period of Performance

Winning institutions will be notified no later than June 2, 2017. The period of performance will be from September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018.

C. Award Responsibilities

The Innovation Fund plans to award grants to successful applicants for this program. Grant recipients will be responsible for keeping the Fund's staff updated on the achievement of proposed program activities and interventions. The Fund's staff is based in Washington, D.C. and consists of a Program Director and his team, who will be substantially involved in the following areas:

- Review of recipient reports, including progress and final reports;
- Approval of budget changes and additional expenditures;
- Approval of changes in program personnel;
- Approval of the recipient Program Monitoring & Evaluation Plan;
- Approval of program extensions; and
- Request for regular updates on proposed program, student engagement, faculty and administrator outreach.

Section III: Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Higher education institutions located and legally registered in eligible countries are eligible to apply for grants from Competition #16: The Marlene M. Johnson Innovation Challenge. 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; and large, small, rural and urban institutions. The intention of selecting from these categories of institutions is to ensure that the selected institutions represent the broadest diversity of 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 in the Americas*.

Overall, proposals must include a partnership between at least one higher education institution in the United States and one eligible country in Central America and the Caribbean.

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, applicants should demonstrate a high-level commitment to increasing study abroad in both directions: to and from the United States. 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 community and/or private sector partners in support of its proposed activities. Cost sharing by previous competition's winning proposals averaged more than 1.5 to 1. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. HEIs that demonstrate cost sharing that would not happen without this grant money will be considered favorably, as an incentive to bring additional local resources to bear on increasing study abroad in the region.

Section IV: Application and Submission

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 “Apply for a Grant” button. No applications will be accepted via email. **Applications may only be submitted in English.**

Submissions should be one single PDF file and saved as: **“100KMMJ – [Insert Name of HEI].”**
(*Note: For non-U.S. applicants, do not translate the name of the institution.*)

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation of this Competition must request it by completing the Online Inquiry Form (http://bit.ly/100K_Questions) by the submission deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. Before submitting questions, it is recommended that interested applicants review the questions and answers submitted in past competitions at http://bit.ly/100K_RFPFAQs. 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. 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. Applications that are received late or are incomplete will not be considered in the review process.

B. Proposal Application Format

Applications must not exceed a total of 25 pages and 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. Keep in mind the page limitations for each section of the proposal application as listed below. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitations will not be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

- Cover Page (1 page)
- Table of Contents (1 page)
- Technical Narrative (10 pages max)
- Cost Proposal (3 pages max)
- Annexes (10 pages max)

Section V: Technical Narrative

Proposals shall demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of the program. Proposals should be specific, concise, and complete. They should take into account and be arranged in the order described below.

A. Cover Page

The cover page should be a single page with the title of the proposed program and the name of the applying HEI, partner HEI(s) and other organizations/entities involved in the program clearly identified. In addition, it should provide a contact person for the Applicant, including the individual's name [both typed and his/her signature], title/position with the department/unit, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. 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

In a single page, applicants must list all parts of the proposal, with page numbers and attachments.

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, including proposed number of students traveling northbound and/or southbound; and c) managerial resources of the applicant, including the name of the person(s) responsible for program implementation. This section should also summarize how the overall project will be coordinated.

D. Program Description

Applicants should describe the proposed study abroad program, its objectives and must clearly describe the type of credit that students will be receiving from their home institution. Proposals should focus 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. 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 between countries of eligibility. The number of students moving North and/or South should be clearly stated. Please note that on the Online Application Form, you will be asked to indicate the number of students that will travel north and/or south through the program in its first year of implementation (i.e. grant period) and second year (i.e. beyond grant period).

Applicants should also describe a clear plan for engaging students, faculty and administrators in ongoing outreach on campus to support study abroad. This section should describe how the proposed program will help to achieve diversity (i.e. rural/urban institutions, underserved student populations, academic study, geography, etc.) in study abroad, as well within the applicant institution and/or the partner institution(s).

Proposals 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. Proposals must include convincing letters of support from both the applying HEI and the partner institution(s). It is also encouraged that applicants include letters from civil society, government or private organizations joining or supporting the applicant on the proposed program. No formal agreement is required between partnering HEIs, but the intent to collaborate must be demonstrated.

E. Sustainability Plan

Innovation Grants are 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. Applicants must demonstrate the need for the proposed program at their institution and describe how the program will help meet that need. Proposals must describe what kind of impact the proposed program will have at all partnering institutions, how it will continue after the grant period has expired, as well as how the program will increase study abroad beyond students who may receive financial assistance from the grant. 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.

Overall, the Sustainability Plan should demonstrate commitment from the applying HEI, present steps and/or activities to continuing the proposed program, and show any additional support and resources from the institution, partner institution(s), or other outside partners, including the private sector. Applicants are encouraged to include any future partnerships or activities they may initiate with civil society, government institutions, or private organizations as innovative strategies to program sustainability.

F. Institutional Capacity, Challenges, and Opportunities for Growth

Proposals must include a brief summary of their current institutional capacity for academic mobility within the Western Hemisphere and around the world, without including a general history of the institution. Applicants must name the person(s) who will be ultimately responsible for program implementation and reporting. The CV, résumé, or bio of the person(s) identified must be included as part of the 10-page maximum annex.

HEIs with minimal experience in study abroad programming 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 must demonstrate awareness of the challenges at their institution for increasing study abroad in the Americas and provide an assessment of the specific barriers at their institution. Applicants should also describe the opportunities for growth and how the proposal will overcome such barriers by clearly identifying areas for action or innovative approaches to doing so, and articulate how the Innovation Grant will help the institution unlock available opportunities or resources.

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. Proposals should provide 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. Reference to specific learning objectives and measurement is encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to create their own indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation Plans, however, Partners reserves the right to modify indicators in consultation with winners at the award stage.

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 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. Proposals that do not include this information have been found to be less competitive.

Section VI: Cost Proposal

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

Proposals must use the [Budget Summary Template](#) shown below, adding activities as needed, with [detailed breakdowns](#) as described in this section. Upon awarding of the grant, recipients may be asked to provide the budget summary as an unprotected Excel file.

Budget Summary Template

(Name of Institution)				
Proposed Program Budget				
<i>*Add items and label as needed</i>				
Description of Expenses	Value	Quantity	Requested Funds	Cost Share
Personnel				
Total Personnel				
Program Costs				
Total Program Costs				
Other				
Total Other Costs				
Additional Resources/Support (from outside sources)				
			Total Additional Resources	
Indirect Costs				
		Total Costs		
		Total Combined (100K Grant + Cost-Share)		

The budget summary must be followed by the budget narrative, which should 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 and budget narrative in the requested format may render your application ineligible.

In order to ensure that the grant money is used to benefit the maximum number of students, applicants are strongly encouraged not to charge administrative or indirect costs to the grant. To date, winning institutions have proposed a combination of high matching funds and low indirect costs. Proposals must provide cost-sharing and are strongly encouraged to include additional funding from the applying institution, its partner HEI(s), and/or private sector partner(s). Cost-share by previous winning proposals averaged more than 1.5 to 1.

Section VII: Evaluation Criteria

The criteria outlined below will be used to evaluate applications submitted in response to this solicitation. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitations described below will not be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

- **Technical Narrative (80%)**

The Technical Narrative must not exceed 10 pages and include the following components:

1. Executive Summary
2. Program Description 40%
3. Sustainability Plan 15%
4. Institutional Capacity and Opportunities for Growth 15%
5. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 10%

- **Cost Proposal (20%)**

The Cost Proposal, not exceeding 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. Outputs-based budget summary
2. Detailed accompanying budget narrative
3. Low indirect rate
4. Cost-sharing information

- **Annexes and Supporting Documents**

Applicants may attach no more than 10 pages of additional supporting documents, which 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. These letters are considered to be highly important for successful proposals.

The cover page and table of contents do not count under the 10-page limit of the annex section; however, each must only be a single page.

Section VIII: 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.**



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