



Request for Innovation Fund Proposals

Supported by MetLife Foundation

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Subject: Request for Proposals for the MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition

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* Innovation Fund.

The *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund is the public-private sector collaboration between the U.S. Department of State, Partners of the Americas, and NAFSA: Association of International Educators, corporations, foundations, U.S. Embassies, and universities. Since its inception in January 2014, a total of 118 Innovation Fund grants have been awarded to teams of 235 higher education institutions from 25 countries in the Western Hemisphere region. Innovation Fund partnerships between universities and community colleges in the United States and higher education institutions in the Western Hemisphere are increasing student exchange opportunities and strengthening regional education cooperation throughout the Americas.

The MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition is supported through a generous contribution from MetLife Foundation, and is open to all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States, **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico** that promote study abroad and training opportunities for students in any field of study, with a special emphasis on programs that reach economically disadvantaged or underserved populations and provide access to cross-cultural, linguistic, and technical skills training.

The *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund promotes leveraged innovation with institutions that demonstrate the greatest commitment toward increasing study abroad and training opportunities. In applying for the MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition, HEIs will demonstrate how they will assert leadership in implementing proposed innovations, increase student mobility, maintain student engagement, and commit to making concrete changes to expand access to study abroad as sending and/or hosting institutions.

The intent of the MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition is to award approximately eight (8) *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Grants of up to \$25,000 each to winning proposals. Partners, the Department of State, and NAFSA reserve the right to fund any or none of the Innovation Fund grant applications submitted. Please refer to Section I: "Funding Opportunity Description", for a complete statement of goals and expected results.



MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 to continue MetLife's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its founding through the end of 2016, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$744 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. Today, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, committing \$200 million to help build a secure future for individuals and communities around the world. To learn more about MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.



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Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background of the Innovation Fund

Many Latin American and Caribbean students do not have the English language skills or resources to succeed at U.S. institutions or are unaware of study abroad options. Similarly, 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. There are approximately 49,000 U.S. students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean and 86,000 Latin American and Caribbean students studying in the U.S. each year. Canada contributes an additional 27,000 students studying in the U.S. while 1,400 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.

In 2011, *100,000 Strong in the Americas* was launched with the goal of increasing the annual number of students to and from the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean to 100,000 in each direction by 2020. 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.

The central mechanism for supporting the goal of achieving 100,000 students studying abroad annually in each direction by 2020 is the *100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund*, a dynamic public-private sector collaboration between the U.S. Department of State, Partners of the Americas, and NAFSA: Association for International Educators – leveraged by commitments by the private sector, foundations, and higher education institutions in the Americas. Since its inception in January 2014, a total of 93 Innovation Fund grants have been awarded to teams of 205 higher education institutions from 20 countries in the Western Hemisphere region. Innovation Fund partnerships between universities and community colleges in the United States and higher education institutions in the Western Hemisphere are increasing student exchange opportunities and strengthening regional education cooperation throughout the Americas.

B. Purpose of Grant Competition

The purpose of the **MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition** is to provide incentive grants to higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico—these include colleges, community colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions with credit-bearing programs—that promote study abroad and training opportunities in any field of study, with a special emphasis on programs that serve economically disadvantaged youth and provide access to cross-cultural, linguistic, and technical skills training.

While the Innovation Fund does not provide direct student scholarships, applicant institutions are encouraged to use a small portion of the grant to administer their own scholarships, travel grants, or partial-funding mechanisms toward supporting students. 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* Innovation Fund.

We envision that innovations are likely to include proposed activities that address many of the topics discussed at *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Capacity Building Workshops and [NAFSA Latin America Fora](#), including smart collaboration; language barriers; diversity and inclusion; alumni engagement; communications and marketing; accreditation and credit transfer; service learning; resource development; and safety and security.

Proposals can focus on increasing outbound opportunities for students; on expanding the capacity for the partner institutions to host them and/or reciprocate the exchange by sending students; or offer models that integrate increased flow in both directions. For example, applicants may propose to provide small sub-grants to students in order to have an impact on their study abroad decisions as well as their ability to “find a way” to follow through on their study abroad plans. 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, regional development, and other themes.

C. Expected Results

Higher education institutions that are successful in implementing Innovation Fund 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 U.S., Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico; and
- Demonstrate an increase in the number of effective partnerships with institutions in the U.S. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico 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 MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition is to award approximately eight (8) *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation grants of approximately \$25,000 each to selected proposals. Partners of the Americas, the U.S. Department of State, and NAFSA 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.

B. Notification of Grantees

Winning institutions will be notified no later than October 31, 2017. The list of grant recipients will be published on www.100kstrongamericas.org.

C. Period of Performance

The period of performance will be from December 15, 2017 to December 15, 2018, with the possibility of an extension following an analysis of the program at the time of the request.

D. Award Responsibilities

1. Grant Recipients

Grant recipients will be responsible for keeping the Innovation Fund's staff updated on the achievement of proposed program activities and interventions through reports on:

- Progress on program objectives and innovations, including student mobility data;
- Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in program implementation and evaluation;
- Student/faculty testimonials; and
- Program expenditures and cost-sharing

2. Innovation Fund Staff

The Innovation Fund staff, based in Washington, D.C., will be involved in the following areas:

- Review of the recipient's reports, including quarterly and final reports;
- Approval of budget changes and additional expenditures;
- Approval of changes in program personnel;
- Approval of the recipient's Program Monitoring and 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 United States, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico are eligible to apply for grants from the MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition. This competition seeks to receive applications from a diversity of HEIs, including public and private; four-year and shorter-term degree-issuing institutions; and large, small, rural, and urban institutions. The intention of selecting from these categories is to ensure that the selected institutions represent the broadest diversity of institutional 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 the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund.

As autonomous, foreign institutions dedicated to the promotion of mutual understanding between the host country and the United States, bi-national centers (BNCs) are eligible to compete; however, if a BNC is applying as prime, it must do so in partnership with at least one in-country HEI, in addition to a U.S. HEI. Also, if a BNC is competing as prime and is unable to issue credit themselves, they must ensure that students who participate in the proposed study abroad program will receive some level of academic credit from an identified in-country or U.S. HEI partner in the proposal. Proposals should focus on creating sustainable study abroad programs within the partnering institutions. Those whose primary focus is support for BNC language training programs as preparation for study abroad are not eligible.

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 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.

Overall, proposals must include a partnership between at least one higher education institution in the United States and one higher education institution in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, or Mexico.

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 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 which contribute to the proposed activities.

Applicants must provide cost sharing or additional funding—from the partnering institutions, an outside resource like community and/or private sector partners, or a combination—in support of its proposed activities. There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition; however, cost sharing by previous 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. Proposals 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 must be submitted online through the Online Application Form found on the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* website (100kstrongamericas.org/grants/) by the deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. **Applications may only be submitted in English.**

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation of this competition must request it by completing the online Inquiry Form (100kstrongamericas.org/questions) by the submission deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. Before submitting questions, it is recommended that interested applicants review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page. Oral explanations or instructions given before an award is disbursed will not be binding.

Applicants 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. No applications will be accepted via email.**

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. It should provide a primary contact for the applicant, including the individual's name, his/her signature, title/position with the department/unit, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. State whether the primary contact is the person with authority to contract for the applicant, and if not, that person should also be listed with his/her contact information and signature.

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. It should briefly describe: a) the proposed goals; b) 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

In this section, applicants shall elaborate the most effective way to coordinate and assist in the development and expansion of their proposed program. They should describe the proposed study abroad program, its objectives, and how the proposed innovations will make a significant contribution towards achieving the overall goal of *100,000 Strong in the Americas*. Proposals must describe how the program will enhance the flow of inbound and/or outbound students and create additional capability for HEIs to increase study abroad between the U.S. and Argentina, Chile, Colombia, or Mexico.

Proposals must clearly state the type of credit that students will be receiving from their home institution, and more importantly, the number of students moving North and/or South. Please note that on the online application form, you will also 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). This section should also 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).

Applicants should include any coordination activities or support from civil society, government institutions, or private organizations. Creativity in this section is highly encouraged. Proposals must include convincing letters of support from both the applying HEI and the partner HEI(s). No formal agreement is required between partnering institutions, but the intent to collaborate must be demonstrated in the proposal. It is also encouraged that proposals include additional letters from civil society, government, or private organizations joining or supporting the applicant on the proposed program.

E. Sustainability Plan

Innovation Fund grants are intended to finance the beginning of long-term partnerships of mutual benefit to partnering institutions; therefore, proposals must provide a concrete 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/or community, 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, and how it will increase study abroad beyond students who may receive financial assistance from the grant. The description of 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), and/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. They must also 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 international education programming should demonstrate a desire to increase their capacity and describe how the proposed program will address current

institutional challenges to study abroad. 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 that the proposed program will address.

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. Proposals should describe the opportunities for growth that may arise from the proposed program and how such opportunities will overcome institutional barriers. Applicants should identify areas for action or innovative approaches to addressing their study abroad barriers, and articulate how the Innovation Fund grant will help the institution unlock available opportunities or resources.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan must show how the applicant proposes to monitor the program and assess its impact on the institution and program beneficiaries. This section should list the program's learning objectives and identify the baseline information as well as the project benchmarks that will be measured, quantifying each target goal. Applicants are encouraged to create their own indicators for measurement; however, Partners reserves the right to modify indicators in consultation with winners at the final evaluation stage.

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 (i.e. timeline for program implementation and assessment); and specify the parties responsible for data collection. Program assessment should include student participation in the reporting of the educational and cultural experiences that take place before, during, and after the program.

Overall, this section should describe the target goals, 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 budget 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 summary table and narrative. The summary should provide cost estimates for the management of the program (i.e. personnel, coordination activities, fringe, equipment, etc.), as well as program costs (i.e. travel, stipends/scholarships, communications, monitoring, etc.).

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 a narrative, which provides detailed explanations and supporting justification of each proposed budget line item in the budget. The narrative must also describe programmatic relevance and clearly identify the basis of estimate (i.e., how the costs were determined fair and reasonable) for each line item. The descriptions in the narrative must match the items in the budget. Failure to present the budget summary and narrative in the requested format may render your application ineligible.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to keep the amount of indirect rate charged to the grant as low as possible. Proposals must also provide cost-sharing, including the source of the funds, and are strongly encouraged to include additional funding from the applying institution, its partner HEI(s), and/or private sector partner(s). There is no minimum or maximum percentage required; however, cost-share by previous winning proposals averaged more than 1.5 to 1. To date, winning institutions have proposed a combination of high matching funds and lower indirect costs.

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. Challenges, 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. Detailed budget summary with cost breakdown
2. Accompanying budget narrative justifying cost items
3. Low indirect rate
4. Cost-sharing from partnering HEIs and outside sources

- **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.**



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