

Request for Innovation Fund Proposals

Supported by MetLife Foundation

Issuance Date: May 15, 2018
Question/Answer Period: May 15-July 13, 2018. Submit: 100kstrongamericas.org/questions
Closing Date/Time: July 16, 2018 by 8:00 am EDT

Subject: Request for Proposals for the 2018 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 are pleased to announce a new grant competition as part of *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund.

The *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund is the dynamic public-private sector partnership between the U.S. Department of State, Embassies, Partners of the Americas, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, corporations, and foundations working together to stimulate connectivity and collaboration between higher education networks throughout the Americas. The Innovation Fund inspires U.S. universities and colleges to team up with universities and higher education institutions in the rest of the Western Hemisphere to create new partnerships to increase student exchange and training programs and opportunities.

The 2018 MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition is supported through continued generous support from MetLife Foundation, and is open to all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the **United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico** that promote study abroad and training opportunities for students in any field of study, with emphasis on programs that address inclusion and diversity in study abroad and serve economically disadvantaged and/or underserved student populations.

The intent of this competition is to award up to nine (9) Innovation Fund grants of up to \$25,000 each to selected proposals. Partners, the Department of State, and NAFSA reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Please refer to the following sections 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

In 2011, *100,000 Strong in the Americas* was created with the goal of increasing the annual number of students studying between the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean to 100,000 in each direction by 2020. To reach this 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 (Innovation Fund)***, the dynamic public-private sector partnership between the U.S. Department of State, Embassies, Partners of the Americas, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, corporations, and foundations working together to stimulate connectivity and collaboration between higher education networks throughout the Americas through open grant competitions. Since its official launch in January 2014, the Innovation Fund has awarded 157 grants to teams of 303 higher education institutions from 25 countries in the Western Hemisphere region and 40 U.S. states that benefit from the Innovation Fund grant partnerships. Innovation Fund grants have been shown to build institutional capacity, increase student mobility, strengthen regional education cooperation, and contribute to workforce development in the Americas.

B. Background of Competition Donor

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.

C. Purpose of Grant Competition

The purpose of the **2018 MetLife Foundation Study Abroad Innovation Competition** is to provide incentive grants to higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico—these include community colleges, technical institutes, universities and other post-secondary institutions with credit-bearing programs—to increase study abroad and training opportunities in any field of study, with emphasis on programs that address inclusion and diversity in study abroad and serve economically disadvantaged and/or underserved student populations. Proposed activities, including program design and planning, should take place beginning in December 2018 through November 2019. Activities beyond these dates may be shown in order to demonstrate continuation of the program beyond the grant period. Short-term and long-term programs are eligible, as long as students receive some level of credit from their home institution.

Applicants should focus on presenting innovative ideas, practices, or models that will increase outbound opportunities for their students; expand the capacity for the partner institution(s) to host them or to reciprocate the exchange by sending students; expand their own capacity to host international students; or integrate increased flow in both directions. Applicants may propose to provide small scholarships 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 is to incorporate variations on traditional study abroad models, such as student and faculty engagement through service learning.

We envision that the proposals are likely to include innovations that address many of the topics discussed at *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund workshops and [NAFSA Latin America Fora](#), including accreditation and credit transfer; community engagement; entrepreneurship; diversity and inclusion; inter-departmental collaboration, language training; public-private sector engagement; safety and security; student recruitment; technical skills development/training; and technology development, among others.

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 and support the attainment of the goals of *100,000 Strong in the Americas*.

D. Expected Results

Higher education institutions that are successful in implementing Innovation Fund grants will demonstrate increased capacity to develop and administer international exchange programs between the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. These HEIs will:

- Demonstrate increased awareness of the barriers to study abroad at their institution;
- Possess a new model to engage students from underserved populations in the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and/or Mexico;
- Increase the number of students studying abroad in the Western Hemisphere; and
- Demonstrate an increase in the number of effective partnerships with HEIs in the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and/or Mexico above and beyond what would have taken place without the grant.

Section II: Award Information

A. Number of Awards Envisioned

The intent of this competition is to award up to nine (9) Innovation Fund 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.

B. Notification of Award Recipients

Winning institutions will be notified no later than September 28, 2018. The list of grant recipients will be published at www.100kstrongamericas.org.

C. Period of Performance

Following the announcement of Innovation Fund winners, Partners will inform grant recipients with next steps to formalize and receive the award. The anticipated period of performance will be from December 1, 2018 to November 30, 2019, with the possibility of changes to the timeline upon signing of the award agreement.

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 in the form of periodic reports on:

- Progress on program objectives and innovations, including student travel;
- Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in program implementation;
- Assessment of program activities;
- 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 progress reports;
- Approval of major budget changes and additional expenditures;
- Approval of changes in program personnel or institutional partner(s);
- Approval of program extensions; and
- Request for additional information on program and student/faculty engagement.

Section III: Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Higher education institutions located and legally registered in the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico are eligible to apply for grants from the 2018 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 representation of the broadest diversity of institutional profiles, so that successful innovations have the greatest possibility of replication across institutions, which 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 the prime applicant, it must do so in partnership with at least one in-country HEI in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and/or Mexico, in addition to a U.S. HEI. Also, if a BNC is competing as the 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 the identified in-country or U.S. HEI partner in the proposal. Proposals should focus on creating sustainable exchange 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 all parties involved. **Overall, proposals must include a partnership between at least one higher education institution in the United States and at least one higher education institution in Argentina, Brazil, 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.

Section IV: Application and Submission

A. 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, 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 Review Committee.

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

A detailed description of the application format and requirements can be found at www.100kstrongamericas.org/app-format/.

B. Online Submission Process

Proposals must be submitted online through the application form found on the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* website at www.100kstrongamericas.org/apply by the deadline indicated on the cover page of this solicitation. **Applications must be submitted in English only.**

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation of this competition must request it by completing the online Inquiry Form (www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions). Before submitting questions, it is recommended that applicants review the questions and answers submitted from past competitions at www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs. Oral explanations or instructions given before an award is disbursed will not be binding.

Applicants must comply with the instructions for submission included herein. Proposals 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 unless otherwise instructed by Partners of the Americas.

Section V: Anticipated Timeline

ACTIVITY	TIME PERIOD
Launch of Grant Competition	May 15, 2018
Application Period	May 15 – July 16, 2018
Close of Grant Competition	July 16, 2018
Proposal Evaluation Process	July 16 – September 15, 2018
Notification of Status of Proposal	September 28, 2018
Formalization & Award of Grant Funds to Recipients	October 1 – December 31, 2018
Period of Performance for Grantees	December 1, 2018 – November 30, 2019

Section VI: Agency Contacts

Questions concerning this solicitation must be sent via www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions prior to the deadline mentioned on the cover letter of this document. **No phone calls please.**



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.