

(REVISED 01/14/2024 – Revisions to timeline and partnership requirements highlighted below.)

Request for Grant Proposals

for

The 100K Strong North America Grant Competition to Expand Climate-Action, Inclusive Education Exchanges (100K Strong North America CLIMA/IE)

Issuance Date:

November 16, 2023

Closing Date:

March 17, 2024

Partners of the Americas (POA) and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (WHA/DOS), along with U.S. embassies in Canada and Mexico, invite higher education institutions (HEIs) from the United States, Canada, and Mexico to submit proposals for consideration in the 100,000 Strong in the Americas North America Climate/Inclusive Education grant competition.

The 100K Strong North America CLIMA/IE is generously supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Amazon, in collaboration with WHA/DOS and POA.

This new, first 100K Strong North America Climate/IE competition supports the U.S. Department of State's policy priorities to ensure a greener, more inclusive, prosperous, and climate-resilient Hemisphere through regional education cooperation, exchanges, and workforce development. This 100K Strong North America competition also supports the North American Leaders' Summit 2023 commitments between the United States, Canada, and Mexico to expand inclusive education and workforce development programs.

The higher education partnerships developed through this 100K Strong North America grant competition will expand trilateral collaboration among faculty and increase access to innovative, education exchange opportunities for teams of students to gain technical, linguistic, and intercultural skills imperative for workforce development. This 100K Strong North America CLIMA/IE competition will support sustainable partnerships between HEIs to create and implement climate-focused, inclusive educational exchange and training programs in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

This 100K Strong North America CLIMA/IE competition is open to all HEIs in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Teams of HEIs are invited to submit grant proposals for consideration. We seek a diversity of HEIs in all three countries to create partnerships, including colleges and universities, community colleges, polytechnics, minority-serving institutions, and institutions that serve underrepresented student populations, as well as first-time applicants. Additionally, teams of HEIs must demonstrate clearly in their proposals how students and faculty from diverse socioeconomic and racial backgrounds will be recruited and included in proposed 100K Strong North America program activities and exchanges.

For this 100K Strong North America CLIMA/IE competition, teams of HEIs between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are invited to submit proposals to show how they will use the 100K Strong funds to (1) design and carry-out inclusive, climate-focused, student/faculty exchanges, both virtually and in-person; and (2) create opportunities for collaboration to support innovative, sustainable climate action projects (CAPs) that contribute solutions to regional climate challenges.

The intent of this 100K Strong North America competition is to **award up to nine (9) grants of up to \$25,000**. NOTE: The final number of awards will depend on the results of the 100K Strong process to review, evaluate, and select finalist proposals. If selected to receive a 100K Strong North America grant, HEI teams must plan to carry out their proposed exchanges and programming during **June 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025**.

POA and WHA/DOS, in coordination with GAC and Amazon, reserve the right to fund any or none of the proposals received by the deadline. Note: See Section IV: “Description of this 100K Strong CLIMA/IE Competition” for the list of eligible thematic areas and related proposal requirements.

Background of 100K CLIMA/IE: The new 100K Strong CLIMA and Inclusive Education initiatives, announced at the ninth Summit of the Americas in June 2022, will expand regional opportunities throughout the Americas that increase access to innovative, inclusive educational exchanges between HEIs throughout the Americas. These new 100K Strong initiatives build on the U.S. Department of State’s collaboration with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and other minority-serving institutions (MSI) networks, as well as support multilateral agreements on social inclusion and racial equality with various countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Overview of the 100K Strong Initiative

The signature 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K Strong) hemisphere-wide education initiative is the dynamic collaboration between WHA/DOS, U.S. embassies, and POA, working with regional companies, foundations, governments, and education networks throughout the United States and the western hemisphere. The 100K Strong Innovation Fund is the trusted USG-branded mechanism to catalyze these inter-regional partnerships to build institutional capacity and to ensure that more students from diverse backgrounds gain access to innovative, inclusive exchange and workforce training programs.

Over ten years (2013-2023), the 100K Strong Innovation Fund has awarded 315 grants to 578 HEIs working in teams across 25 countries and 49 U.S. states. To date, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, and Costa Rica are leading 100K Strong grant recipient countries to partner with U.S. colleges/universities to implement new models of innovative, inclusive student and faculty exchanges in multiple thematic areas. The 100K Network, managed by POA, currently includes 4,000 individual members – and growing – and including 2,300 regional HEIs. For more information, visit www.100kstrongamericas.org.

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Section I: Background of 100K Strong CLIMA/Inclusive Education

During the ninth Summit of the Americas in June 2022, the U.S. Department of State announced new 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiatives: the 100K Strong Climate and 100K Inclusive Education (100K Strong CLIMA/IE). These initiatives support the Department's priorities to ensure a greener, more prosperous, democratic, and inclusive Hemisphere through expanded regional education cooperation, exchanges, and workforce training opportunities for students and faculty in the Americas. They also support the [2023 North American Leaders' Summit \(NALS\) commitments](#) between the United States, Canada, and Mexico to expand inclusive education and workforce development programs.

The 100K Strong CLIMA/IE initiatives will catalyze regional higher education collaboration on climate action and increase access to inclusive exchange opportunities that will equip students with workforce skills to lead in a climate-positive, 21st century regional economy. The goals of the 100K Strong CLIMA/IE initiatives include the following:

- Expand access to innovative, climate-focused, inclusive exchange and training programs for students in fields such as climate resilience, renewable energy, green economy, and other related thematic areas.
- Stimulate inter-regional partnerships to expand climate-action and inclusive education opportunities.
- Support inclusive climate action projects (CAPs) led by higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Western Hemisphere.

There are significant barriers, both administrative and financial, that limit opportunities for HEIs to work together to climate action. Through the 100K Strong CLIMA/IE initiatives, regional higher education institutions can be empowered to mobilize resources to address climate action exchange and research programs. With targeted support from the 100K Strong CLIMA Initiative, HEIs can expand their efforts to combat climate change and provide more students with the regional, sustainable training to lead in the 21st century climate-resilient economy.

Section II: Funding Partners in this 100K CLIMA Grant Competition

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) manages Canada's diplomatic and consular relations, promotes Canadian international trade, and leads Canada's international development and humanitarian assistance. It is also one of the federal departments responsible for the Government of Canada's *International Education Strategy*. International education makes a key contribution to Canada's economic and innovation capacity and contributes to strengthening bilateral and people to people ties. GAC works with a range of partners, including Canada's provincial and territorial governments, institutions and education stakeholders, to promote Canada as a top destination for learning, and to support Canadian schools, students and researchers in continuing to expand their

connections abroad. For more information about Global Affairs Canada, visit <https://www.international.gc.ca/global-affairs-affaires-mondiales/home-accueil.aspx?lang=eng>

Amazon is guided by four principles: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. Amazon strives to be Earth's most customer-centric company, Earth's best employer, and Earth's safest place to work. Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfillment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Career Choice, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, Alexa, Just Walk Out technology, Amazon Studios, and The Climate Pledge are some of the things pioneered by Amazon.

Amazon is committed to and invested in sustainability because it's a win all around—it's good for the planet, for business, for our customers, and for our communities. Amazon aims to reach net-zero carbon emissions across its operations by 2040 by investing in renewable energy, scaling solutions, and collaborating with partners to broaden its impact. Amazon is proud to be a founding member of the 100K CLIMA initiative to help build on these efforts and empower more individuals throughout Latin America and the Caribbean with the skills needed to succeed in the green economy. For more information about Amazon, visit <https://www.aboutamazon.com/about-us>.

The **Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs** at the U.S. Department of State (WHA/DOS) supports and oversees the 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K Strong) Initiative with Partners of the Americas (POA) and U.S. Embassies in collaboration with regional public, private, and academic sectors. Since the inception of the 100K Strong Innovation Fund in 2013, the contributions from the U.S. Department of State to this hemispheric-wide education initiative have leveraged robust, resilient public-private sector collaboration with regional companies, foundations, governments, and higher education networks throughout the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. 100K Strong branded partnerships and exchange programs align with the Department's policy goals to support inclusive education opportunities, exchanges, democratic institutions, and economic prosperity.

Section III: Eligibility Information

All higher education institutions (HEIs) located and legally registered in the **United States, Canada,** and **Mexico** are eligible to apply for this 100K Strong CLIMA/IE Competition.

The 100K Strong program seeks a diversity of HEIs to create and carry-out innovative, inclusive, sustainable exchange programs for students and faculty. This 100K Strong CLIMA/IE competition seeks proposals from all HEIs with credit-bearing programs, including two-year and four-year degree-issuing universities/colleges (public & private), with special emphasis on Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), community colleges, and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs) in the U.S., as well as institutions in Canada and Mexico

that serve diverse student populations. First-time 100K applicants and/or applicants those that have not previously received a 100K Strong grant are also encouraged to submit proposals.

Grant proposals may include a **tripartite team** of at least one HEI in the U.S., one HEI in Canada, and one HEI in Mexico **OR may propose bilateral exchanges between any of the eligible countries:**

- U.S.-Canada
- U.S.-Mexico
- Canada-Mexico

Proposals can involve new partnerships or build on existing partnerships.

In order to increase the diversity of participating HEIs, the Review Committee reserves the right to give preference to institutions that have not previously received 100K Strong grants; however, all HEIs (including previous grant winners) are encouraged to apply.

Section IV: Description of this 100K Strong CLIMA/IE Competition

A. Thematic Requirements

HEIs are invited to work together in teams to design and carry-out proposed innovative, inclusive student/faculty exchange and training programs in various thematic areas of study. Eligible thematic and academic areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Biodiversity Protection
- Bio-Economy and Sustainable Value Chains
- Climate Justice
- Climate Technology
- Community Conservation Practices
- Conservation and Reforestation
- Endangered/Threatened Species Management and Protection
- Environmental Protection
- Green/Climate Finance
- Renewable Energy
 - Renewable Energy Engineering
 - Energy Economics
 - Solar/Wind/Hydro/Thermal Power Generation and Strategies
 - Power Storage
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Sustainable Business

- Technical Skills for the Renewable Energy Workforce
- “Last Mile” Electrification with Renewables
- Other topics related to renewable energy
- Natural Resource Management
- Protection and Restoration of Oceans and Corals
- Public Health and Climate
- STEM for Climate Purposes
- Sustainable Design, Architecture, and Construction
- Sustainable Land Use
- Sustainable/Regenerative Agriculture and Food Security
- Sustainable/Electric Transportation
- Water Protection and Restoration

IMPORTANT: Please note that the thematic/academic fields of study above serve as recommendations and guidelines. Other fields of study can be proposed so long as the proposal clearly demonstrates the relationship between the proposed field(s) of study and the ongoing global effort to confront and adapt to climate change.

B. Proposal Timeframe (Grant Period)

All proposed program activities, including planning and implementation, must take place during **June 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025**. Proposals may include information on activities that have occurred prior to this period, which provide background to laying the groundwork for the proposed program activities. Proposals may also include anticipated activities beyond these dates (such as ongoing student/faculty exchanges, extension services), that will demonstrate continuation of and commitment to the proposed program activities beyond the noted grant period.

C. Program Components

The purpose of this 100K Strong North America competition is to provide funds to support innovative partnerships between HEIs that will result in (1) inclusive, climate-focused, student/faculty exchange and training programs and (2) climate action projects (CAPs) that contribute to climate-action solutions between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

1. Student/Faculty Exchanges

Proposals must describe how the participating HEIs will use the grant resources to create and implement new inclusive student/faculty exchange and training programs between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico in climate-related fields of study (*See Part A: Thematic Requirements above for a list of areas*).

2. Climate Action Projects (CAPs)

Proposals must describe how HEIs will take climate action through climate action projects (CAPs). Faculty and students must be included as participants in proposed CAPs and grant proposals must show how faculty and students will work in teams to expand their knowledge, skills and/or capacity through their participation in the CAPs. This should be demonstrated in the description of the intended results and in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.

POA developed the [Framework for Designing 100K Strong Climate Action Projects \(CAPs\)](#) in collaboration with [Second Nature](#). Please note that the framework and action categories are offered for illustrative purposes only. Other proposed models and program activities are encouraged, so long as the proposal demonstrates the relationship between the proposed CAP and the ongoing efforts to try to mitigate and/or offer solutions for climate change.

D. Project Design and Requirements

1. Academic Credit

Students must receive some level of academic credit from their home institution during, or as a result of, the proposed program.

2. Recruitment of Diverse Students

Potential teams of HEIs are strongly encouraged to submit proposals that will clearly demonstrate how proposed 100K programming will include and benefit students from diverse social, racial, and non-traditional communities. Teams of HEI applicants need to show that they have identified student populations within proposed partner institution(s) that might not have access to regional exchange education opportunities and outline how the proposed 100K exchange programming will expand access and participation for underrepresented student populations. HEI-applicants must use the [Student Diversity/Recruitment Plan](#) template, (available on the 100K website [here](#)) to describe plans for including and engaging diverse groups of students.

3. Student Mobility and Activities

Proposed 100K Strong exchange programs should include student exchange between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Proposals should include **both virtual and in-person** programming activities between partnering institutions. Virtual activities should enhance or complement, not replace, in-person training and exchange components. Consider practices and strategies to using technology/virtual platforms to enhance traditional academic exchange programs and improve education equality, such as the incorporation of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).

4. Sustainability

Applicants should highlight how the 100K Strong grant would impact HEI teams' ability to secure additional in-kind and/or other resources to expand the 100K Strong proposed activities beyond the grant period. Proposals must clearly demonstrate the institutional support from all HEIs involved – as well as from any proposed local organizations – through letters of support (required) from senior leadership and/or the international office and contribution to the program in the form of cost-share (cash or in-kind).

5. Effective Practices & Strategies to Student Exchanges

100K Strong grant proposals should include the use of innovative practices and models that will increase academic exchange and training opportunities for students in selected academic areas in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

HEI-applicants should also include proposed program activities that enhance academic learning, for example, through practical training, service-learning, community-based activities, or other methods.

The 100K Strong Innovation Fund encourages grant proposals that include effective practices and strategies discussed at 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund workshops and webinars, as well as at regional higher education conferences (i.e., NAFSA, AIEA, CCID, HACU, CONAHEC, FAUBAI, CAIE, etc.). Related topics may include credit transfer, community engagement, entrepreneurship, language training, local private sector support/engagement, program assessment, student recruitment, technical skills training, and use of technology/virtual platforms to enhance traditional academic student/faculty exchange programs.

6. Carbon Offsets

It is encouraged, but not required, that HEI applicants commit to offsetting carbon¹ emissions produced by air travel involved in proposed programming and use reputable providers of carbon offset services. MyClimate² is one provider of carbon offsets which makes it very easy to determine the carbon cost of any given flight and offers a number of options to invest in carbon savings in communities in the western hemisphere. Proposals that contain a commitment to offset the carbon produced by flights during the program will be viewed favorably in the review process.

¹ How Carbon Offsets Work: <https://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/carbon-offset.htm>

² https://co2.myclimate.org/en/flight_calculators/new

E. Expected Results

HEIs that are successful in implementing grants in this 100K Strong North America competition will accomplish the following:

- Create/strengthen HEI partnerships and expand regional cooperation through bilateral and trilateral student/faculty exchange programs and collaboration on climate action;
- Implement new, inclusive, climate-focused exchange/training opportunities for students and faculty;
- Design and implement strategic, inclusive climate action projects that fall within one or more of the thematic areas described above;
- Increase number and diversity of students/faculty and gain climate-action skills;
- Involve faculty and students as key actors in CAPs and expand their knowledge, skills and/or capacity through their participation;
- Produce a final document of the CAP project with recommendations for sustainability of the 100K Strong CLIMA project;
- Evaluate and report on project outcomes as they relate to impact on students, faculty, and institutions; and
- Engage/collaborate with the 100K Strong program during and after the grant period to share lessons learned, student outcomes, and models of multilateral training programs.

Section V: Award Information

A. Awards Available

The intent of the 100K Strong North America CLIMA/IE competition is to award up to nine (9) grants of up to \$25,000 each to teams of HEIs in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (WHA/DOS), Partners of the Americas, Global Affairs Canada, and Amazon reserve the right to fund any or none of the grant proposals submitted for consideration in this competition.

B. Notification of Award Recipients

Partners of the Americas will notify HEIs of the status of their proposals by **early May 2024**. Please also note that this date is subject to change.

C. Period of Performance

Following the award notification by Partners of the Americas, grant-winning teams will receive details and documents related to formalizing and receiving the award funds.

The grant period will be from **June 1, 2024** – March 31, 2025. Extensions may be granted pending analysis of the program at the time of the request, and in coordination with POA, WHA/DOS, GAC, and Amazon.

D. Innovation Fund Award Responsibilities

1. 100K Strong Staff at Partners of the Americas

Partners of the Americas, based in Washington, D.C., will work in close coordination with 100K Strong grant award Recipients in the following areas:

- Technical support of grant activities and oversight of award contract/terms;
- Coordination of virtual 100K Strong program orientation and conclusion sessions for all participating students and faculty;
- Review of the recipient's progress reports;
- Approval of changes in award budget, key personnel, timeline, partnership, and activities;
- Request for additional information on grant activities and student/faculty engagement;
- Facilitation of communications between recipients and WHA/DOS, sponsors, and where appropriate, U.S. Embassies;
- Outreach regarding sharing of lessons learned from program implementation and participation at visibility events and conferences, among others; and
- Enrollment of student and faculty participants in the 100K Strong Alumni Network.

2. HEI Award Recipients

Award Recipients will collaborate closely with Partners of the Americas in the following areas:

- Support POA coordination with participating students and faculty to ensure participation in virtual 100K Strong program orientation and conclusion sessions;
- Share information on a regular basis with the Innovation Fund staff on program activities through report mechanisms provided by POA, which will include:
 - Progress on program goals and objectives, including the development of grant activities, student and faculty travel, and climate action projects;
 - Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in program implementation and evaluation;
 - Project outcomes and impact data;
 - Testimonials on how the grant benefits/impacts students, faculty, and HEIs; and
 - Program expenditures and cost-sharing.
- Enrollment of student and faculty participants in the 100K Strong Alumni Network.

Section VI: Proposal Format and Design

A. Proposal Format

Proposals 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 and document types for each section of the proposal as listed below. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitations will not be reviewed by the Review Committee. Proposals must be submitted in English.

1. **Proposal Narrative in PDF**
 - a. Cover Page (1 page)
 - b. Table of Contents (1 page)
 - c. Technical Narrative (15 pages max)
2. **Budget (5 pages max)**
 - a. Summary in Excel format
 - b. Narrative in Word/PDF format
3. **Supporting Documents in PDF (no page limit)**
 - a. Letters of Support
 - b. Résumé/biographies of project team (1-2 pages per person)
 - c. Additional materials

Note that Applicants will be required to upload each of the three sections above separately in the Application Portal. For a detailed description of the proposal format and requirements, including the evaluation criteria, visit www.100kstrongamericas.org/app-format/.

B. Online Submission Process

Proposals must be submitted online through the Application Portal found on the 100,000 Strong in the Americas website (www.100kstrongamericas.org/application-portal/) by the deadline indicated on the cover page of this RFP. Proposals that are received late or are incomplete will not be considered in the review process. No proposals will be accepted via email unless otherwise instructed by Partners of the Americas.

Applicants seeking information or clarification about this competition should complete the online form at www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions. For a comprehensive list of questions received from applicants of previous grant competitions, please visit www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs.

Section VII: Anticipated Timeline

ACTIVITY	TIME PERIOD*
Launch of 100K Strong North America Competition	November 16, 2023
Close of 100K Strong North America Competition	March 17, 2024
100K Grant Proposal Evaluation Process	March 18 – April 30, 2024
Notification of Status of Proposal to HEIs	Early May 2024
Onboarding and Award Funds to 100K HEI Winners	May - July 2024
Period of Performance of 100K HEI Grantees	June 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

*Dates are subject to change.

Section VIII: Innovation Fund Contact at Partners of the Americas

Questions about this RFP must be submitted by completing the online form at www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions. Questions should be received prior to the deadline stipulated on the cover page of this RFP. No phone calls please.