



## **Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 100,000 Strong in the Americas STEM Alliance Grant Competition**

**Opening Date:**  
August 11, 2026

**Closing Date:**  
October 18, 2026

### **Executive Summary**

Partners of the Americas (POA), in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (WHA/DOS), invites higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States and eligible countries in Central America and the Caribbean to work in teams to submit proposals for consideration for an award in the 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K Strong) STEM Alliance Grant Competition.

**This 100K Strong STEM Alliance Grant Competition champions American educational excellence, spurs innovation, and creates long-term partnerships that ensure a stronger, safer, and more prosperous Hemisphere.**

HEIs in the United States are invited to partner with regional HEIs in eligible countries in Central America and/or the Caribbean to design innovative exchange and training programs that develop critical technical, linguistic, and leadership skills; expand domestic and regional partnerships; and, position the United States as the premier destination for educational exchange and workforce training opportunities.

This regional 100K Strong competition will provide approximately ten (10) awards of up to \$32,000 each to teams of HEIs in the United States with regional HEIs in Central America or the Caribbean.

Teams of HEIs are encouraged to create partnerships and design targeted exchange programs in eligible thematic areas and according to the requirements outlined in this RFP. HEIs are strongly encouraged to join the informational webinars focused on best practices for 100K Strong grant proposals that POA will conduct in late August and early September.

Please note: If selected, HEIs need to carry out proposed 100K Strong programming from December 2026 through December 2027. Awards are subject to the proposal evaluation, recommendations, and final selection processes.



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## Section I: Overview of the 100K Strong Initiative

Educational exchanges advance priorities throughout the United States and Latin America by expanding education opportunities and workforce development, building institutional capacity, strengthening economic ties, and building trusted alliances.

The 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K Strong) regional education initiative is coordinated by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA/DOS) and Partners of the Americas (POA), with support and engagement from U.S. embassies and regional public, private, and academic partners. 100K Strong champions American excellence, spurs innovation, and ensures a more safe, secure, and prosperous Hemisphere. 100K Strong's cross-sector partnerships advance priorities in the Western Hemisphere by:

- **Strengthening Security:** Fosters regional cooperation and builds networks of trusted cross-sector partners with shared values.
- **Increasing Prosperity:** Develops technical skills and creates innovative partnerships that drive opportunity and economic growth.
- **Positioning America as Preferred Partner:** Establishes long-term, multi-sector alliances that deepen connections between the United States and regional leaders.
- **Leveraging America's Leadership in Higher Education:** Advances U.S. excellence and innovation in science, technology, and business, to prepare future leaders.

**Proven Track Record:** Over thirteen years (2013-2026), the 100K Strong Initiative has:

- Awarded 352 grants on competitive basis to 618 higher education institutions (HEIs) in 26 countries and 48 U.S. states
- Engaged and benefitted 13,800+ students and faculty – and counting
- Created education and business networks in the United States and Latin America
- Showcased American excellence, innovation, technology leadership

The digital 100K Strong Network of 4,200+ members, including 2,300 HEIs, provides a trusted online platform that provides opportunities to build partnerships that expand U.S. and regional education cooperation.

## Section II: Eligibility Information

This RFP provides comprehensive details for HEIs to design proposed 100K Strong grant proposals focused on the design and implementation on innovative exchange and training programs for students and faculty.



The 100K Strong STEM Alliance Grant competition is open to all higher education institutions (HEIs) located and legally registered in the eligible countries noted below.

**Proposals must include at least one (1) HEI in the U.S. and at least one (1) HEI in an eligible country in Central America and/or the Caribbean.**

**United States:** All U.S. States/Territories

**Central America**

1. Belize
2. Costa Rica
3. El Salvador
4. Guatemala
5. Honduras
6. Panama

**Caribbean**

1. Antigua & Barbuda
2. Bahamas
3. Barbados
4. Dominican Republic
5. Grenada
6. Jamaica
7. Saint Kitts & Nevis
8. Suriname
9. Trinidad & Tobago
10. Saint Lucia
11. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Teams of HEIs can build on current or create new partnerships for this regional 100K grant competition. HEIs with credit-bearing programs, including two-year and four-year degree-issuing universities/colleges (public and private), U.S. community colleges, and post-secondary institutions in the eligible countries listed above are invited to submit proposals.

First-time applicants, or HEIs that have not previously received a grant, are encouraged to apply. The 100K Strong Review Committee, coordinated by POA, in collaboration with WHA/DOS, reserves the right to give preference to HEIs that have not previously received grants; however, all HEIs (including previous winners) are eligible to submit proposals for consideration.

## **Section III: Description of Grant Competition**

### **A. Thematic Requirements**

This 100K Strong STEM Alliance Grant Competition is designed to increase partnerships and exchange/training programs between HEIs that develop participants' technical, linguistic, and leadership skills; showcase American educational excellence; and expand access to innovative, long-term HEI partnerships and exchanges.



Teams of HEIs are invited to design their 100K Strong grant proposal in **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), critical minerals, semi-conductors, artificial intelligence (AI), entrepreneurship, and agricultural & food science**, among other targeted thematic areas.

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that these thematic areas are strongly recommended. Other related fields of study can be considered if the proposal clearly demonstrates the relationship between proposed fields of study and overall goals of the 100K Strong STEM Alliance Grant Competition.

## **B. Proposal Timeframe (Grant Period)**

All proposed 100K Strong programming activities, including award acceptance, planning, implementation, and closing phases, must take place during December 2026 - December 31, 2027. Grant proposals may include details on planning/coordination activities for proposed activities that have occurred prior to the anticipated grant period. Proposals may also include planned activities beyond the noted award dates that will demonstrate continuation of and HEIs' commitment to the successful completion of proposed program activities beyond the grant.

## **C. Project Design and Requirements**

### *1. Academic Credit*

Students that participate in the proposed program must receive some level of academic credit from their **home** institution that counts toward their studies as a result of their participation.

### *2. Participant Mobility and Activities*

Proposed programs should include both virtual and in-person models of educational exchanges between partnering U.S. and regional institutions in eligible countries in Central America and the Caribbean. Proposals should include virtual activities between the partnering HEIs; however, virtual programming should enhance, but not replace, the in-person exchange and training activities. HEIs should consider integrating the use of virtual technology and platforms, for example, the incorporation of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), that support traditional exchange programs.

### *3. Sustainability*

Applicants should highlight how they could leverage the 100K Strong grant with additional in-kind or/other resources to expand the proposed activities, including beyond the grant period. Proposals must clearly demonstrate the institutional support from all partner institutions involved, including any local organizations, through letters



of support from senior leadership and/or the HEIs' international office. Letters of support are required. It is important to clearly show anticipated contributions to the proposed program in cost-share (cash or in-kind).

#### *4. Effective Practices & Strategies to Exchanges*

Proposals should demonstrate innovative practices and exchange models to engage teams of students and faculty in the listed thematic areas. Consider opportunities for practical training, service-learning, community-based activities, or other relevant models to enhance virtual and in-person exchanges. Other areas for consideration include credit transfer, entrepreneurship, language training, local NGO or private sector engagement, community connections, student recruitment, skills training, and use of technology/virtual platforms to enhance proposed exchange and training.

## **Section IV: Award Information**

### **A. 100K Strong Awards Available**

The intent of the 100K Strong STEM Alliance Grant Competition is to award **up to ten (10) grants of up to \$32,000** each to teams of HEIs in the United States in partnership with regional HEIs in eligible countries in Central America and the Caribbean.

NOTE: POA, in coordination with WHA/DOS, reserves the right to fund any or none of 100K Strong grant proposals submitted.

### **B. Notification of Award Recipients**

The application review, evaluation, and selection process will take place following the closing date indicated in this RFP, during which applicants will be notified by POA of the status of their 100K Strong grant proposals.

NOTE: Dates in the timeline are subject to change.

### **C. Period of Performance**

POA will notify selected HEI teams about the 100K Strong award documents and process to accept and receive award funds. The grant implementation period will be from January 1 to December 31, 2027. NOTE: Extensions may be granted by POA and WHA/DOS pending analysis of 100K Strong programming at the time of the request.

### **D. Award Responsibilities**

#### *1. 100K Strong Staff at POA*

Partners of the Americas, based in Washington, D.C., will work in close coordination with



100K Strong grant recipients in the following areas:

- Coordination of virtual 100K Strong program orientation
- Technical support of grant activities and oversight of award agreement/terms
- Review of the recipients' progress reports, and request for additional information on grant activities and participant engagement
- Approval of changes in budget, key personnel, timeline, partnership, and activities
- 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
- Enrollment of participants in the [DOS Exchange Alumni Network](#)

## 2. Award Recipients

HEI award recipient teams will collaborate closely with POA in the following areas:

- Ensure participation in virtual 100K Strong program orientation session
- Inform POA of upcoming student/faculty travel
- Provide participant information for enrollment in the DOS Exchange Alumni Network
- Share information on award activities through report mechanisms, provided by POA, which will include:
  - Progress on project goals & objectives, including development and implementation of activities, and details on participant travel and learning outcomes
  - Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in project implementation and evaluation
  - Project outcomes and impact data
  - Testimonials on how the grant benefits/impacts students, faculty, and HEIs
  - Project expenditures and cost-sharing

**Important:** The report deadlines for the projects are as noted:

| Type of Report                  | Deadline           |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Progress Report</b>          |                    |
| January – April 2027            | May 31, 2027       |
| May – August 2027               | September 30, 2027 |
| October – December 2026         | January 31, 2028   |
| <b>Cumulative, Final Report</b> |                    |
| January – December 2027         | February 29, 2028  |



### 3. Award Disbursement Requirements

Award recipients must submit specific documents before receiving award funds. The following is a general list. *Keep in mind that requirements and amounts are subject to change.*

| Deliverables                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Percentage of Award Disbursed |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Award Agreement</li><li>• Financial Forms</li><li>• Proposed Travel Information (list of students, planned activities, etc.)</li></ul>                                                  | 30%                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Progress Report</li><li>• Confirmed Travel Details (final list of students/faculty, program agenda, etc.)</li><li>• Pre-Departure Survey completed by student travelers</li></ul> | 50%                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cumulative Final Report</li><li>• Post-program Survey completed by students</li><li>• Post-grant Evaluation completed by project directors</li></ul>                                    | 20%                           |

## E. Expected Results

Through implementation of their proposals, teams of HEIs will:

- Create/strengthen institutional ties through regional educational exchanges,
- Expand opportunities for students and faculty to gain technical/linguistic skills for further education and workforce development,
- Demonstrate how proposed educational exchanges will champion American excellence and innovation via thematic areas in this RFP,
- Develop participants' capacity and deepen their understanding of the United States,
- Share highlights of program activities connected to WHA/DOS policy priorities, and
- Evaluate, document, and share lessons learned, participant outcomes, and benefits/impact on students, faculty, and HEIs during and after the grant period

## Section V: 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.**

**Proposal Narrative in PDF (12 pages max)**

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

**Budget (5 pages max)**

- Summary in Excel format
- Narrative in Word/PDF format

**Supporting Documents in PDF (10 pages max)**

- Letters of Support (at least 1 from each HEI involved in the project)
- Résumés/biographies of project team (at least 1 person from each HEI)
- 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/](http://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/](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/application-portal/)) by the closing date indicated in this RFP. Proposals that are received late or are incomplete will not advance to the evaluation process. No proposals will be accepted via email unless otherwise instructed by POA.

Applicants seeking information or clarification about this competition should complete the online form at [www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions](http://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](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs).

**Section VI: Grant Competition Timeline**

| ACTIVITY                                              | DATE*                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Launch of 100K Strong STEM Alliance Grant Competition | August 11, 2026                |
| Close of 100K Strong STEM Alliance Competition        | October 18, 2026               |
| Proposal Evaluation & Selection Process               | October 19 – November 30, 2026 |



|                                                                                                |                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Notification to Applicants on Status of Proposals                                              | November 30, 2026             |
| Award Acceptance, Agreements, Funds Disbursements, and Period of Performance of Grant Projects | December 2026 – December 2027 |
| 100K Strong Winners Event (Date/location TBD)                                                  | Late January 2027             |

*\*These dates are subject to change.*

## **Section VII: Questions about Grant Competition**

Questions about this RFP must be submitted by completing the online form at [www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions). Questions should be received prior to the closing date stipulated in this RFP.