

# Meridian International Center Call for Proposals

## Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) for Undergraduate Students

**Issuance Date:** March 18, 2019

**Deadline for Proposal Submission:** April 10, 2019

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### Program Summary

Meridian International Center is seeking U.S. university partners to implement the the FY2020 Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) for Undergraduate Students, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Baghdad. IYLEP is a four-week exchange program that will engage approximately 100 Iraqi undergraduate university students aged 18-24 with at least one academic year of study remaining. IYLEP aims to cultivate the next generation of Iraqi leaders by exposing Iraqi undergraduate students to U.S. society and culture and providing them skills development in leadership, civic education and responsibility, diversity awareness and tolerance, and civic engagement. The defining program activity for the selected students is a substantive four-week, thematic academic institute, hosted by universities throughout the United States, complemented by an opening and closing conference at the beginning and end of the U.S. program. Meridian International Center will host both opening and closing conferences.

The academic institute will take place in July/August 2020, with a networking and reunion conference in Iraq in spring 2021. Selected students will be proficient in written and spoken



English and represent an appropriate gender balance and Iraq’s geographic and socio-economic diversity, including future Iraqi leaders from economically disadvantaged backgrounds  
 University program activities should include:

- Academic and leadership training on U.S. campuses;
- Homestays and activities with U.S. families;
- Significant exposure and interaction with American youth;
- Presentations and meetings with youth organizations, community organizations, and state/local government officials;
- Volunteer work with community organizations;
- Meetings with campus and/or local organizations/groups dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and tolerance.

University partners will focus on one of the following proposed themes:

- Entrepreneurship and Workforce Development
- Public Health and Community Empowerment
- Policymaking and Civic Engagement
- Journalism and Media

Qualified U.S.-based colleges and universities that would like to be considered as a partner for Meridian’s proposal should carefully review the information enclosed, detailing proposal requirements and submit the online application and required documents no later than **Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.**

Prospective applicants are encouraged to register their interest with the proposal team at [proposals@meridian.org](mailto:proposals@meridian.org) to receive updates on this competition. Questions regarding the RFP may be directed to the same email address, with the subject line, “IYLEP Proposal.” Please no phone calls. The full Department of State NOFO can be accessed [here](#).

## Program Timeline

April 10, 2019	University partners proposals due
May 3, 2019	Meridian proposal due to ECA
September 2019	Prime Agreement awarded Outreach and recruitment begins
October 2019	Subawards issued to University Partners
January 2020	Participant selection finalized
February-May 2020	Visa applications are processed
June 2020	Pre-Departure Orientation
July 2020	Opening conference
July-August 2020	Academic Institutes



August 2020	Closing conference (DC)
October-December 2020	De-briefing sessions with returned participants
Spring 2021	Alumni activities

## Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

### Meridian will be responsible for the following aspects of the program:

- Logistics: All international flights and logistics; J-1 visas; accident and health insurance; issuing M&IE and ground transportation stipend to participants;
- Opening conference (location, TBD) logistics, programming, and budget
- Closing conference (Washington, DC) logistics, programming, and budget
- Monitoring and evaluation of the program, including program participants, partner organizations, and resources;
- Follow-on and alumni activities, including creation and maintenance of an alumni database of success and impact stories (in conjunction with each institute partner);
- Quarterly narrative and financial reporting to ECA;
- Overall grant compliance and subaward management.

### Selected university partners' roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Staffing:** Identify an experienced Academic Director and Program Coordinator to implement and oversee Academic Institute development and implementation along with all program support services, including budgetary logistical and other administrative arrangements for each institute. Student mentors must also be recruited to accompany students to most program activities to assist with cultural and language barriers throughout the program.
- **Curriculum:** Design a **26-day Academic Residency** component that will constitute a specially-designed experience focused on one of the four themes. The academic residency should include interactive and experiential lectures/seminars, as well as engaging activities, such as: leadership trainings, civic engagement opportunities, community volunteer activities, meetings with local advocacy and social impact organizations, meet-and-greet/networking events with university students and local youth, and a homestay experience and other activities that contribute to achieving the learning outcomes identified collaboratively by the Embassy and Meridian International Center.
- **Cultural activities:** Arrange culturally significant activities for the Fellows
- **Congressional Meeting:** If possible, arrange for IYLEP students to meet with a local congressional office to share information about IYLEP
- **Conferences:** Designate appropriate staff members to attend the opening and closing conferences.



- **Follow-On Activities:** In partnership with Meridian International Center, identify key resources and faculty members to participate in follow-on programming for participants.

## Proposal Requirements

**1. Letter of intent on organization’s letterhead** that describes your interest in hosting participants, special resources that your city or university offers, proposed staff, and cost share commitment. [Click here for letter of intent template.](#)

**2. An (approximately) four to five-page proposal** outlining the objectives and methodology for the Academic Residency, including plans for the lectures, panel presentations, seminar discussions, debates, simulations, individual and group classroom activities, and reading assignments – as well as how you plan to involve U.S. citizens in the program, and community service activities.

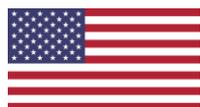
**3. Calendar or itinerary** of program activities, including a **syllabus** that outlines course subjects and suggested readings and proposes course instructors and facilitators.

**4. Budget and budget narrative:** The Meridian-provided budget template must be used for your submission. *Please keep in mind that overall participant logistics (international flights, health insurance, etc.), as well as participant expenses for the opening and closing conferences will be included in Meridian’s budget submission and are separate from the university partner budgets.* The USG has not defined a minimum level of cost share or matching funds for this program; however, Meridian requests a minimum of 10% cost share from each university partner. [Click here for budget template.](#) // [Click here for budget narrative template.](#)

**For purposes of this proposal, please submit a cost proposal for 25 participants for 26 days,** assume the cohort will be gender balanced. In addition, each university partner should budget for at least one, and maximum of two, staff member(s) to the opening and closing conferences.

In addition to your budget, we require a short **budget narrative** that explains the various line items in the budget, including cost share. If you need more guidance on the budget or the budget narrative, please contact Meridian. Please keep in mind the DOS guidelines on maximum costs on items such as honorarium (\$250/speaker/day) as noted in the budget template.

**5. Resumes of key staff (two page maximum for each):** Resumes for Academic Director and Program Coordinator should be included (please indicate who specifically at your organization will be the point person and handle each role). Additional key staff participating in the program (known at this time) should also be included. See job descriptions below.



## Proposal Narrative

Approximately four to five single-spaced pages is ideal for describing the program. Below is a suggested outline of proposal sections.

**A. Vision** – explain your interest in hosting a cohort, the proposed partnership with Meridian International Center, and how your institution will achieve the program’s goals.

### **B. Institutional capacity, expertise and special resources**

- a) Institutional capacity
  - i. Overview of Institution (university, location, notable honors, etc.)
  - ii. Proposed university departments/offices to implement the program
  - iii. Past performance in hosting international students, visitors or exchange programs and resources that can be made available to help students with cultural adjustments, home sickness or culture shock.
    - Previous awards from the Bureau since 2004 should be included as past or ongoing programmatic work. These programs should be listed by office (Citizen Exchanges, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges) and indicate project name, countries, year, and amount.
  - iv. Capacity and expertise to host delegation in relevance to proposed topic, theme and project goals
  - v. Accommodations for students with varying levels of English proficiency and economic disparity. This could include, recruiting student mentors with Arabic and/or Kurdish language skills, providing daily email recaps to students of academic lectures and program content, incorporating more small group “check-in” sessions to ensure students are absorbing the program content, incorporating more site-visits & hands-on learning to complement classroom teaching.
- b) Special resources: please list any prominent individuals or organizations in your city – politicians, journalists, trainers, academic experts, community leaders/elected officials – who might be available to meet/talk with the participants and discuss topics such as leadership, diversity, tolerance, volunteerism, ethics in government, nonprofit management, business practices, etc. If possible, please provide letters expressing interest in the program from such individuals and/or organizations.

### **C. Academic Institute**

- a) Please include your proposed itinerary, resources, syllabus, and faculty speakers. The Academic Residency should include interactive and experiential lectures/seminars, as well as engaging activities, such as: leadership trainings, civic engagement opportunities, community volunteer activities, meetings with local advocacy and social impact organizations, meet-and-greet/networking events with university students and local youth, and a homestay experience and other



interactive activities that contribute to achieving the learning outcomes identified collaboratively by the Embassy and Meridian International Center.

#### **D. Community Engagement**

- a) Leadership Development: Each institute should plan for at least one leadership development session per week that can serve to both develop and enhance participants' leadership and collective problem-solving skills and inspire participants to apply them.
- b) Community service: Each institute should plan for at least one hands-on volunteer activity per week to provide participants the opportunity to experience first-hand the U.S. tradition of grassroots approaches to solving community problems, as well as additional opportunities to meet and interact with diverse Americans outside an academic setting. Pre- and post-volunteer debriefing sessions should be offered. Volunteering alongside U.S. counterparts is a nice addition when possible.
- c) Local professional resources: Describe potential opportunities for participants to speak to professionals working in relevant fields.
- d) U.S. involvement: Describe how you plan to involve U.S. Citizens in the program.
- e) Diversity: Describe how you will ensure that the participants will meet U.S. citizens from a wide variety of backgrounds, representing socio-economic, ethnic, gender, and age diversity as much as possible.
- f) Enrichment activities (cultural, recreational), including dinner hospitality and a minimum of one weekend homestay with a family in the community. Include ideas for day trips or optional weekend excursions, designed to reinforce the academic curriculum, to various local and nearby locations, including historical sites, schools, places of worship, etc. It is also important to keep some free time in the schedule for participants to prepare business plans, exercise, and relax with their peers.

#### **E. Logistical Considerations**

- a) Administrative orientation: Please include a description of how the participants will be met at the airport and provided orientation at the host university.
- b) Academic orientation: Please include a description of how you will provide participants with a concise overview of the program, including principal objectives and major themes, as well as a discussion of expectations for participation.
- c) Housing arrangements: Participants should be housed on campus in university dorms or similar designated university housing. When feasible, participants should be housed with American roommates. Walking distance to daily classes should be taken into account. Participants should have access to kitchen facilities, either in their own rooms or in a common room. University partners should plan to include a weekend home-stay with a local American family.
- d) Meal arrangements: A cafeteria meal plan should be arranged for students. Applicants should plan to provide some group meals for the cohort. Meridian will



notify the university partners of any dietary restrictions, and every effort should be made to accommodate them.

- e) Access to resources: Participants should have access to local resources, including campus libraries, computer and internet facilities, local and national newspapers and periodicals, as well as radio and television. A formal orientation to library services should be conducted during the first week of the program, and computer training and technical support should be provided for those participants with disabilities and up to \$2,000 per Institute should be budgeted toward this expense.
- f) Please budget for an opening or closing event at the host university.
- g) Cultural events: Please describe some of the university community's unique opportunities for cultural events.

#### **F. Monitoring and Evaluation & Follow-On Programming**

- a) Overview of monitoring and evaluation plan, including survey examples, check-in meetings and the role of student mentors.
- b) Proposed faculty resources and content for institute cohorts
- c) If applicable, please detail any current or future in-country resources, events and/or activities that could be offered to IYELP 2020 alumni and complement IYELP program goals (civic engagement, leadership development, and networking).
  - Note: Meridian International Center is proposing a reunion conference in Iraq for IYLEP alumni in March 2021. All student travel, lodging and expenses will be covered through grant funding.

#### **G. Staffing** – please describe your institute staff pattern.

- a) **Academic Director:** Present throughout the academic program in its entirety to ensure continuity, coherence, and integration of all aspects of the academic program. The Academic Director will plan and implement programs at their respective host institutions, oversee the day-to-day management, and monitor program participants. This individual should have experience designing undergraduate course curriculum and a demonstrable experience working with international visitors.
- b) **Project Coordinator:** Oversees all student support services, including supervision of the program participants, budgetary, logistical and other administrative arrangements. This individual should have at least 2 years of experience managing these types of programs, including familiarity working with the host institution's budget and finance office, as well as demonstrable experience working with international visitors.
  - Please outline additional staffing as needed, including volunteer drivers, intern support (which can be cost-shared), honorary “cultural ambassadors,” or graduate mentors, etc. All support staff and volunteers should exhibit cultural sensitivity, and understanding of the program’s objectives, and a willingness to accompany the participants as needed.

#### **H. Resumes** – Please attach 2-page (maximum) resumes of key staff.



## Budget Guidelines

We ask that each line item in the budget be accompanied by a short description in the narrative template below.

Please note the following:

- *Meridian requests a minimum of 10% cost share from each university partner. We are aiming to have cost share represent 30% of the overall budget.*
- *For purposes of comparison, please budget for 25 participants for 26 days, assuming even gender distribution.*
- *Please indicate dollar amount of each line item (if any) to be cost shared in the cost share column. The template will automatically calculate total costs.*

If you have any questions, please contact the IYLEP Proposal Team at [Proposal@meridian.org](mailto:Proposal@meridian.org).

### Administrative Costs

#### **Direct Expenses:**

- **Staff Costs:** *Please outline the projected salary and benefit costs.*
- **Other Direct Expenses:** *Please include costs such as telephone, fax, postage, copying, printing, office supplies, etc. not accounted for in Indirect Costs.*

**Indirect Costs:** *Please outline any indirect costs.*

### Program Costs

**General Program Costs** may include:

- **Honoraria:** *The honoraria for speakers who are not being compensated on a salaried basis should not exceed \$250 per day per speaker. Any additional costs for speakers should be cost shared.*
- **Educational materials:** *Film and video rentals, educational materials, and other curricular needs for the program. NOTE: This section is for costs that do not vary by number of participants.*
- **Ground transportation:** *This includes airport transfers, bus or van rentals, taxis, etc.*
- **Welcome/farewell events:** *Please include costs associated with a welcome event OR a farewell networking event.*
- **Opening and closing conferences:** *for staff - Please include cost for domestic travel and per diem for one-two staff members. The locations for the conferences have not been determined.*

#### **Lodging, M&IE, and Cultural Costs:**

- **Lodging per diem:** *Please estimate the per person costs for 25 participants, in double rooms in university housing for 26 days.*
- **Meal Plan:** *Please estimate the daily per person costs for 25 participants eating the majority of meals at the student cafeterias.*



- **Participant cultural allowance:** *Use this line item for cultural activities planned for the group as part of the institute program during the academic residency. Please limit this expense to \$100 per participant.*

## Subaward Renewal

Participation as a University Partner may be renewed annually, based on prior performance, the availability of funding, and at the U.S. Department of State and Meridian’s sole discretion, for up to two years. Meridian reserves the right to request updated budget or program documents, negotiate changes to programming or scope of work, and decide not to renew for future years.

