



**Meridian International Center  
Request for Proposals  
Study of the U.S. Institutes for Global Student Leaders: Civic Engagement**

**Issuance Date: October 14, 2021**

**Proposal Deadline: November 18, 2021**

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## Program Summary

The FY2022 Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) for Global Student Leaders is an intensive academic program whose purpose is to provide student leaders the opportunity to deepen their understanding of U.S. society, culture, values, and institutions. The program includes cohort-specific four-week academic residencies and integrated educational study tours to showcase the geographic, demographic, ideological, and institutional diversity within the U.S. These core components will be complemented by community service, leadership development, research opportunities, and interaction with American peers. The program will also include a three-day event in Washington, DC that will host all Institute groups.

Meridian has implemented the SUSI for Global Student Leaders since FY2019. Meridian seeks an Institute partner to join our existing consortium to implement the Institute for Civic Engagement. Qualified U.S.-based colleges, universities, and affiliated higher education organizations based on a college or university campus that would like to be considered as a consortium partner for Meridian’s proposal should carefully review the information enclosed detailing proposal requirements and submit their proposal packages to the [linked application submission form](#) by no later than **Thursday, November 18, 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time**.

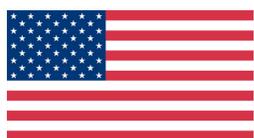
Questions regarding the RFP may be directed to [proposals@meridian.org](mailto:proposals@meridian.org) with subject line “SUSI for Global Student Leaders.” Meridian will not accept individual phone calls about the RFP. The full Department of State NOFO and POGI from FY2019 can be accessed [here](#).

## Global Student Leaders Civic Engagement Program

The Global Student Leaders program consists of six (6) Institutes that include the four-week academic residency and a one-week educational study tour, for groups of 20 undergraduate students aged 18 – 25 years old. Each Institute focuses on a theme relevant to U.S. policy priorities in the region. The Institute themes for the 2022 Global Student Leaders program are:

- Civic Engagement (Summer):** This Institute should provide participants with an overview of how citizens have shaped U.S. history, government, and society both as individuals and groups. The academic program should define civic engagement, examine its development in the United States, and explore topics such as citizenship, community building, economic development, grassroots activism, political leadership, and volunteerism. In order to define the content of the Institute and enhance the academic experience, proposals may choose to focus on a specific theme or sub-themes such as civil rights and protections, public health, education, entrepreneurship, ethics, leadership, or media. To the extent possible, academic sessions should be complemented with hands-on sessions or workshops designed to build skills in the topics mentioned above. The Institutes should encourage participants to develop innovative and practical plans to become engaged citizens in their own communities. In 2021, participants in this Institute were from the following countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.

*Note: Meridian is only seeking proposals for the Civic engagement (Summer) thematic institute. The following thematic areas are included for situational awareness.*



- **Civic Engagement (Winter):** In 2020, participants in this Institute were from the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.
- **Entrepreneurship and Economic Development:** This Institute provides participants with an overview of entrepreneurial approaches by reviewing the development, history, challenges, and successes of U.S. entrepreneurial enterprises, including social enterprises, business leadership and women’s economic empowerment, in the United States and globally. In 2021, participants in this Institute were from the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia.
- **Religious Pluralism:** This Institute explores U.S. history, society, and institutions within the context of religious freedom, pluralism, and interfaith dialogue. In 2021, participants in this Institute were from the following countries: Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, and Lebanon.
- **Rule of Law and Public Service:** This Institute provides students from military academies in selected countries with an overview of the U.S. system of government and the ways in which the rule of law and public service support effective democracies. In 2021, participants in this Institute were from the following countries: Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Kuwait, and Malaysia.
- **Youth, Education, and the Future of Work:** This Institute examines the role of U.S. educational institutions, particularly community colleges, in preparing Americans with the skills needed to succeed in multiple industries and sectors including business, technology, science, higher education, the creative arts and other fields. In 2021, participants in this Institute were from the following countries: Brazil, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Russia, and Tunisia.

## Program Timeline

October 14, 2021:	RFP Issuance
October 19 and 21, 2021:	RFP Q&A calls with prospective partners
November 18, 2021:	University Institute proposals due
December 3, 2021:	Institute selection
December 2021:	Subawards issued to Institute partners
Summer 2022:	Institutes implemented
Fall 2022 – Winter 2023:	Follow-on alumni activities

## RFP Q&A Sessions

Meridian will host **two Q&A sessions** about the RFP process and content. Meridian will document these calls and publish an FAQ document for applicant reference. If you are interested in participating in a Q&A session, please register to receive conference call information using the links below:



- Call 1: Tuesday, October 19 at 11:00AM EDT: [please register here](#)
- Call 2: Thursday, October 21 at 3:00 pm EDT: [please register here](#)

## Proposal Requirements

Selected Institute partners will be required to provide the following, via an online submission form with additional questions, by no later than **Thursday, November 18 at 11:59 PM EST**. More details regarding the submission will be provided to those selected by **Friday, December 3**.

1. **Letter of intent on organization's letterhead** that describes your interest in hosting the institute, unique resources your university community offers, proposed staff, and cost share commitment. *Meridian will provide you with a template for this letter.*
2. **A maximum seven-page proposal** for the academic institute, including an overview of the Institute theme; plans for seminars and workshops; logistics, including housing; American community member and peer involvement with the program; and community service activities. Narratives should also include a proposed Study Tour city, topics, and themes that complement and elevate the academic residency. *Please note:* Meridian, in consultation with ECA, will determine selected study tour cities, topics, and resources. Appendices should include:
  - Calendar of proposed activities
  - Syllabus and bibliography
  - Proposed course presenters (faculty), with bios
  - **Optional:** You may propose specific resources, though identifying proposed resources *is not* required.
3. **Budget and budget narrative:** Meridian requests that Institute partners use Meridian's budget and budget narrative templates. *Meridian will provide these templates.*
4. **Resumes of key staff:** Each Institute must identify one Academic Director and one Administrative Director, as well as any additional support staff. Additional key staff participating in the program (who are known at this time) should also be included.
5. **Signed Nondisclosure Agreement:** Each Institute is required to agree to a nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with Meridian at the time of submission. The Meridian team will return a copy the fully executed NDA to all Institutes within 24 hours of the submission deadline for the Institute's files. *Meridian will provide each Institute a copy of the NDA for signature. Please note: If your organization already has an active NDA with Meridian, you are not required to submit another.*

## Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

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

- Logistics: All international and domestic flights and logistics; J-1 visas and visa travel support; accident and health insurance; issuing M&IE and ground transportation stipend to participants *only during* the study tour and program launch;



- Study Tour logistics, itinerary, and budget (in conjunction with selected academic institutions);
- Implementing all aspects of a 3-day Program Launch to prepare participants for the academic residencies, create group cohesion across the cohorts, introduce general concepts to U.S. history such as U.S. federalism, and orient participants to the program;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the program, including program participants, partner organizations, and resources;
- Follow-on/alumni activities, including creation and maintenance of an alumni database of success and impact stories (in conjunction with each Institute partner);
- Narrative and financial reporting to ECA; and
- Overall grant compliance and consortium management.

**Selected academic institutions' roles and responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:**

- Develop 29-day intensive academic residency program focused on the designated themes, providing particular attention to the U.S. experience, its history, and its contemporary challenges;
  - *Proposed dates for the academic residency are Wednesday, June 22 (arrival day) through Wednesday, July 20 (departure day) – subject to change.*
- Create a carefully integrated and rigorous academic curriculum consisting of lectures, panel presentations, seminar discussions, debates, simulations, individual and group classroom activities, and reading assignments;
- Include a wide range of speakers that represent the diversity of American culture and people. Speakers should represent gender parity, diverse viewpoints, minority/ethnically diverse groups, etc.
- Integrate a weekly leadership series that culminates in the creation of individual community action plans to be presented as a final capstone project for the Institute;
- Provide opportunities for participants to engage with American students and peers formally and informally throughout the program;
- Host welcome and departure events with campus leadership and relevant American peers;
- Implement academic and administrative orientations at the beginning of the Institute program;
- Coordinate, in collaboration with Meridian staff, all necessary on-the-ground logistics, including any necessary lodging, ground transportation needs, group meals and participant meal plans/M&IE, meeting space, etc.;
- Arrange and/or suggest opportunities for cultural exchange, volunteer activities, speaking engagements, civic participation, and networking opportunities;
- Include a weekend homestay with an American family for an opportunity for students to spend time with a typical American family;
- Develop opportunities for sharing and reflection on visitors' experiences;
- Garner local media coverage as possible and promote the project through social media, ensuring proper credit is given to the U.S. Department of State and Meridian;
- Coordinate with Meridian to develop Study Tour themes and topics, as well as suggest potential resources in the selected Study Tour city. *Please note:* Meridian will lead the



scheduling and development of the final itinerary. Selected Institutes will provide the Study Tour themes, topics, and potential resources that will complement and elevate the Institute curriculum.

- Submit in a timely fashion course syllabi and program calendars;
- Narrative and financial reporting to Meridian;
- Maintain financial records; and
- Maintain regular communication with SUSI program staff

## Proposal Narrative

We request that proposals do not exceed 7-pages to describe the proposed Institute. Here is a suggested outline of proposal sections.

- **Vision** – detail your interest in hosting the Civic Engagement Institute and the expected outcomes.
- **Institutional capacity, expertise, and special resources**
  - Institutional capacity
    - Prior experience implementing SUSI or working with international professionals and programs. Experience with students or youth delegations should be highlighted.
    - Chart outlining the following information about your organization: mission, date of establishment, relevant expertise, past programmatic work, ongoing programmatic work.
      - Previous awards from the Bureau since 2010 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. Previous programming or expertise with European delegations and programs should be highlighted.
      - Include metrics whenever possible, such as number of years implementing ECA programs, number of academic residency programs, number of participants per program/year, and number of programs and/or participants focused on student education. Previous experience with European students should be highlighted.
  - Institutional profile
    - Past student leadership programs/courses and unique resources that will be tapped for this program.
      - Include metrics on engagement and partnership with these programs, courses, and resources, including the number of programs, number of seminars and/or workshops, number of speakers and/or experts, and number of alumni engaged with these resources post-program.



- Indicate programming strengths based on the selected Institute theme, which could include, but is not limited to:
  - Community profile: please describe your community and resources that complement the academic residency, including resources for cultural activities or community leaders, organizations, and companies that might participate in the program.
  - Program enhancements: please list any prominent individuals in your city or university – journalists, academic experts, community leaders/elected officials, cultural influencers – who might be available to meet with the participants and discuss topics related to the SUSI Institute theme of Civic Engagement. If possible, please provide letters expressing interest in the program from such individuals and/or organizations.
  - COVID-19 Contingency Planning: Applicants should include a commitment to remaining flexible in the event of COVID-19 contingency planning, as well as an overview of campus resources available to ensure participants’ health and safety as it specifically relates to COVID-19. Applicants should speak to past experience pivoting to virtual programming or implementing in-person program with COVID-19 restrictions in place.
- **Academic Residency**
  - Program design: The academic residency should be a specially designed and well-integrated seminar, focused on the theme of Civic Engagement, that imaginatively combines lectures, discussions, readings, debates, site visits, regional travel, and leadership development into a coherent program. It should be creative, thematically coherent, and draw upon institutional strengths. It should not replicate an existing lecture course, survey, or seminar designed for U.S. students.
  - Diversity: Participants should have the opportunity to hear from balanced and diverse perspectives on topics including U.S. history, government, civic institutions, culture, and society. All programs should contribute to a deeper understanding of the U.S., while at the same time provide useful skills and concepts related to the Institute theme.
  - Customized curriculum: Program design should be tailored to the Institute theme and maintain flexibility to match participants’ individual interests. Efforts should be made to arrange for participants to present their country’s history and culture to diverse groups of Americans.
  - Provide a calendar or itinerary of all program activities, including a syllabus that includes the subject of each class session, representative bibliography of suggested readings, and Course Instructors.
  - Monitoring and evaluation: Please share your plans for evaluating participant’s residency experience and how feedback will be shared with Meridian and incorporated promptly into the residency.



- **Additional Programming**

- Local resources and networks: Describe potential opportunities for participants to engage and network with a diverse group of American professionals, peers, and students working in relevant fields and living on campus/in the local community.
- Community service: Each residency should plan for hands-on volunteer activities 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.
- Leadership development: Outline weekly leadership series that culminates in the development of individual community action plans. Students should have an opportunity to work with university faculty and staff to develop their action plans. The leadership series should end with an opportunity for students to present their community action plans via a poster showcase to relevant university faculty and staff, community members, and students.
- U.S. involvement: Describe how you plan to involve American community members in the program.
- 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. Describe how diversity, equity, and inclusion will achieve the goals and objectives of the Institute.
- Enrichment activities (cultural, recreational), including at minimum a 2-night weekend stay with an American family. A description of vetting American homestay hosts is required. 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 exercise and relax with their American and international peers.
- Study Tours: Suggest a city for the educational study tour that complements your proposed curriculum. Please include in suggestions potential topics and themes. You may also include resources that reinforce the academic portion of the program. Meridian will be ultimately responsible for arranging study tour itineraries in consultation with Institutes and ECA.

- **Logistical Considerations**

- Administrative orientation: Please include a description of how the participants will be met at the airport and provided orientation at the host university. Administrative orientations should include an overview of administrative and logistical items specific to the Institute, such as campus tours and a meal plan overview.
- 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.



- Housing arrangements: Participants should be housed on campus in 1-bedroom or 2-bedroom university dorms or similar designated university housing. Walking distance to daily classes should be taken into account. Additionally, participants should have access to kitchen facilities, either in their own rooms or in a common room.
  - Meal arrangements: A cafeteria meal plan combined with a cash allowance for food that will permit participants to cook or eat at local restaurants is strongly recommended. 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.
  - 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.
  - Please budget for an opening or closing event at the host university.
  - Cultural Events: Please describe some of the university community's unique opportunities for cultural events.
- **Staffing** – please describe your institute staff pattern.
    - **Academic Director:** Present throughout the academic program in its entirety to ensure continuity, coherence, and integration of all aspects of the academic program, including the study tour. The Academic Director will plan and implement programs at their respective host institutions, oversee day-to-day management, and monitor program participants. This individual should have experience designing course curriculum as well as managing international study tours and demonstrable experience working with international visitors.
    - **Administrative Director/Coordinator:** Oversees all program 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.
  - **Resumes**– Please attach 1-page 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 Institute. We are aiming to have cost share represent 25% of the overall budget.
- Each Institute will be required to host 20 international undergraduate students.
- 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 SUSI Proposal Team at [proposals@meridian.org](mailto:proposals@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

#### Program Travel:

- **Staff travel:** Please include cost for per diem, baggage expenses, and one-way return travel for one staff member to attend the Study Tour and Program Launch in Washington, DC at the conclusion of the program. **Please note:** Meridian will pay directly for Institute staff's travel to the Study Tour and Washington, DC, and lodging.

#### Other Direct Costs:

- **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.
- **Meals and incidentals per diem for guest speaker:** as needed, per diem costs for guest speakers should comply with U.S. government rates. Please see <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>
- **Guest speaker travel:** Please indicate the cost of mileage and/or parking estimated for guest speakers.
- **Educational materials:** Film and video rentals, educational materials, access to campus libraries and academic material, and other curricular needs for the program. **NOTE:** This section is for costs that do not vary by number of participants.



### Participant Costs:

- **Lodging:** *Please estimate the per person costs for 20 participants to stay in 1-bedroom or 2-bedroom university dorms or similar designated university housing with access to a kitchen, bathroom, and living area for 29 nights.*
- **Ground transportation:** *This includes airport transfers, bus or van rentals, taxis, etc. for the duration of the academic residency.*

### Participant Other Direct Costs:

- **Participant cultural allowance:** *Use this line item for cultural activities planned for the group as part of the academic residency. Please limit this expense to \$200 per participant.*
- **Welcome/Farewell events:** *Please include costs associated with a welcome event and a farewell event at the Institute.*
- **Background Checks for Homestay Hosts:** *Please include costs associated with conducting a criminal background check for American homestay hosts.*

## Review Criteria

Through an open competition, Meridian seeks to recruit a Civic Engagement Institute partner for its implementation of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs Study of the U.S. Institutes for Global Student Leaders program.

Eligible colleges and universities that would like to be considered as an Institute partner should submit the online application and required documents no later than **Thursday, November 18, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time**. Applications received after this time will not be considered. All applicants will be notified of their proposal status by **Friday, December 3**. Meridian staff will be able to submit written feedback on unsuccessful submissions **after Monday, December 6**. Please email the Meridian team at [proposals@meridian.org](mailto:proposals@meridian.org) to request written feedback.

Proposals will be considered based on the following criteria. The criteria are not rank-ordered and each category carries equal weight in the evaluation:

### Academic Residency

- Applicant details robust Institute curriculum focusing on the Civic Engagement theme relevant to U.S. history, experiences, and contemporary issues. Applicant clearly demonstrates capacity to incorporate American scholars, peers, experts, students, and community leaders to teach curriculum and meet with participants during the academic residency;
- Applicant includes a comprehensive and effective leadership development series that includes weekly sessions and the development of a community action plan. Applicant includes an opportunity for students to present their community action plans during a poster session at the end of the Institute;



- Applicant incorporates experiential learning opportunities, including a diverse set of organized networking events, site visits, seminars, workshops, weekend homestay, cultural activities, and receptions throughout the residency;
- Opportunities for participant feedback and individual research are incorporated throughout the residency. Applicant commits to report relevant feedback to Meridian.

### **Mutual Understanding**

- Application demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of SUSI's benefits to the local community;
- Facilitated cultural activities offer fellows opportunities to experience the diversity of the U.S. and interact with a diverse group of Americans;
- Opportunities are provided for participants to share experiences of their individual professional interests and home communities;
- Professional activities are designed to provide participants with the opportunity to have substantive engagement with Americans students and peers;
- Organized weekly community service activities represent a diverse set of thematic opportunities relevant to the overall Institute.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**

- Application clearly demonstrates a commitment to incorporating a variety of speakers, perspectives, and resources to showcase American diversity;
- Academic residency provides opportunity for participants to understand the importance of EDI in the U.S. and methods to incorporate EDI discussion in U.S. history and culture curricula in their home countries;
- Applicant explains how the Institute incorporates EDI to enhance the Institute's goals and objectives and the overall participant experience;
- A comprehensive diversity plan is included to demonstrate how the Institute will achieve diversity throughout the academic residency.

### **Past Performance**

- Key personnel have knowledge and experience implementing programs for international students and a strong knowledge of Institute themes and resources;
- Organization has past experience designing and successfully executing course curricula for international students and participants at their institution;

### **Logistics**

- Orientation provides a strong introduction to the campus and surrounding community and covers key topics such as safety and sexual harassment prevention, program expectations and norms, and introduction to campus and community resources;
- Housing facility is appropriate for undergraduate students;
- A clear plan for providing meals, M&IE, and transportation is provided;
- Medical facilities and a staffing plan have been identified to support participant care needs that may arise, and a brief COVID-19 contingency plan has been included;



- Organization has the capacity and willingness to provide accommodations for fellows with disabilities.

**Budget**

- Overall budget costs are reasonable, allowable, cost-effective, and realistic for the programming proposed;
- Adequate staff time are budgeted to successfully implement the program;
- Reasonable lodging and other program costs are included for twenty participants for 29 nights;
- The budget narrative clearly details how the costs for each line item are derived.

## Application Submission Link & Proposal Templates

Please use the link below to submit your application for consideration as an Institute partner for Meridian's SUSI for Student Leaders from Europe proposal. All proposals are due **Thursday, November 18 at 11:59 pm EST**. Proposals **will not** be accepted after this time. Also included below is a link to access required templates for use in your submission. If you are experiencing difficulty accessing the application or proposal templates links, please email [proposals@meridian.org](mailto:proposals@meridian.org). Thank you for your interest in Meridian's consortium for the SUSI Student Leaders from Europe program.

**Application Link:** <https://fs3.formsite.com/Meridian1630/qltqyl4n0/index.html>

**Required Proposal Templates:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vyju9w154upp4r8/AAA6y0mOL3KG5nABl0RymqXAa?dl=0>

