



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

For Regional Events Partner for the FY24 Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative Fellowship Program

Issuance Date: 07/24/2025

Closing Date: 08/21/2025

Closing Time: 11:59PM ET

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number FY24 YLAI Fellowship Program

Reference: Issued under International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) project and DOS Cooperative Agreement/Grant No. SECAGD22CA0073

This Request for Applications outlines the information required from the applicant for the development and submission of a proposal for consideration. The potential applicant is expected to review, understand, and conform with specifications contained in this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's own risk.

All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the subaward program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (usually [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) Cost Principles), may be charged under the subaward.

For non-US organizations the [Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and [2 CFR 200](#) Subpart A through E apply.

This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter, Schedule A, and Annexes.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of nor does it commit IREX to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The application is submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in FY24 YLAI Fellowship Program activities.

Sincerely,

Tony Green

Deputy Project Director, Young Leaders of Americas Initiative

IREX

SCHEDULE A

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION:

[The Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative](#) (YLA) is the U.S. Department of State's flagship program to advance economic prosperity in the Western Hemisphere. This premier fellowship supports emerging business leaders and entrepreneurs from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. The YLA Fellowship is funded by U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and implemented by IREX.

IREX is requesting applications to serve as a regional events design partner for the YLA Fellowship. Selected partners will be responsible for planning and executing regional multiday skill-development workshops for YLA Fellowship Alumni. These events will bring together approximately 35 alumni per region, featuring themes such as financial readiness, fintech, market expansion, simulations, pitch competitions, and design challenges. Events must involve U.S. and regional stakeholders including mentors, speakers, and investors. Each event will be regionally contextualized and aligned with YLA program goals to further the alumni engagement strategy. These events will aim to bring together alumni from different cohort years and geographies for high-impact, regionally relevant workshops and networking experiences.

Background

Since 2015, over 1,800 entrepreneurs across the Western Hemisphere have participated in the YLA Fellowship, which combines a leadership curriculum, a four-week U.S.-based professional placement, and an active alumni network. Fellows collaborate with U.S.-based Fellowship Placement Organizations (FPOs) to work on strategic projects while engaging in mentorship and network-building. Their experience is further enriched by City Cohort Ambassadors (CAs), who connect Fellows to local business landscape, culture, and entrepreneurship resources.

Fellows represent diverse sectors, including technology, agriculture, education, artisan goods, food services, health, and business services. Upon program completion, Fellows join the growing YLA Alumni Network, gaining access to continued professional development, grant opportunities, and mentorship support to expand their business ventures and regional impact.

To support ongoing engagement, IREX has developed a flexible approach to alumni programming that offers activities for alumni at different stages in their leadership journey. This includes three general pathways:

- **Energized Leaders**, who are building foundational skills and connections;
- **Community Catalysts**, who are deepening their leadership and regional influence; and
- **System Influencers**, who are ready to drive broader organizational or sector-level change.

Opportunities are designed to be regionally relevant, and responsive to alumni needs, while also encouraging collaboration with U.S. entrepreneurs. Regional events supported under this RFA fall primarily within the **Community Catalyst** pathway, providing alumni with the chance to reconnect across cohort years, build skills, and expand their professional networks. This ensures that alumni from all years of the Fellowship remain active contributors to economic development and innovation in their communities.

Program Objectives

The YLAI Regional Events Partner aims to:

- Strengthen the YLAI alumni community – alumni, U.S. partners, and embassies – through quality programming.
- Integrate alumni into their national and regional entrepreneurial landscape.
- Facilitate professional development through skill-based sessions and design challenges.
- Strengthen alumni ties to the U.S. and regional entrepreneurial communities.
- Promote YLAI program and alumni visibility in the region.

Key Responsibilities and Activities

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis to ensure alignment on the project's vision and strategy across all events.
- Design and implement up to three regional events across the Caribbean, Canada, Central America, the Southern Cone, and the Andes. Each event, lasting two to three days, will provide advanced professional development and networking opportunities.
- In close coordination with IREX and the relevant U.S. Embassy, facilitate co-creation sessions with alumni in each host country to identify needs, propel participation, and ensure the event provides value to their professional and entrepreneurial development.
- Recruit approximately 35 alumni per event, drawing participants from the host country and neighboring regions. IREX can provide contact information for YLAI alumni. Networking sessions can integrate additional local program alumni.
- Recommend and procure relevant thematic expert panelists speakers for events.
- Engage U.S. entrepreneurs and businesses in key roles as session leaders. Travel costs should be budgeted out of the subaward ceiling.
- Coordinate all event logistics (venue, accessibility, speaker & alumni support, communications, accommodations, AV, Food and Beverage, and domestic and international travel, etc.)
- Ensure the objectives of the event are met through the content and activities.
- Collect post-event data and feedback.

Timeline

The following chart provides an overview of tentative dates:

Dates	Activity
July 24, 2025	RFA Launched
August 21, 2025	Applications due
By September 8, 2025	Selected partner notified
October 6, 2025	Subaward signed with IREX
October 2025	Project needs assessment and partner collaborates with IREX on program design
February-March 2026	Regional Event 1 (anticipated)
June-July 2026	Regional Event 2 (anticipated)
January-February 2027	Regional Event 3 (if applicable)
March 30, 2027	Final Report and Presentation to IREX

USG Regulations:

[Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and [2 CFR 200](#) Unified Administrative Requirements Subpart A through E apply.

SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION:

IREX anticipates awarding up to three subawards to support the planning and implementation of regional, in-person alumni events in Latin America, Canada, and the Caribbean. Each subaward will fund one regional event and may be awarded to the same or different implementing partners. The total available funding for this opportunity is \$150,000. Individual subawards will not exceed \$75,000 per event. Applicants may propose to implement one or more events for the responsibilities of the award. The expected period of performance is 09/06/2025 - 04/30/2027. IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:

The applicant/application must meet the following requirements:

- Be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to pertinent local laws and status.
- Be officially registered as a legal entity and working in compliance with all applicable local laws. An applicant can show proof of effort to secure registration.
- Meet the project's objectives and principles
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the project's objectives
- Applicant is not a debarred organization
- Received a U.S. government Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov

Types of Eligible Subawardees:

- U.S Non-Governmental Organizations (U.S. NGOs)
- Non-US Nongovernment Organizations (Non-US NGOs)
- International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)
- Community Based Organization (CBOs)
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Private Enterprises
- Professional Associations
- Universities

SECTION IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Questions may be submitted to alumni.ylai@irex.org no later than August 4, 2025. Responses will be shared with all interested applicants by August 7, 2025. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be received at the YLAI Fellowship Program's email indicated below no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFA. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. An application and modifications thereof shall be submitted in electronic format and/or hard copy to the following address:

YLAI Fellowship Program Juan Pablo Vivanco, Program Officer, IREX 1350 I St NW, Suite #1100, Washington, DC 20005 alumni.ylai@irex.org; 202-372-0912

Application must be submitted in PDF format and include all required attachments.

Application Narrative:

- 1. UEI number**
- 2. Organizational background** (no more than 2 pages, single-spaced): Please introduce your organization and detail your background as it relates to the YLAI Regional Events Partner role. Include your organization's capacity, including geographic and sector expertise. Please include examples of your entrepreneurial networks, including country/region and industry, and communication channels and mediums you use with those networks. Please detail any past events and workshops you developed to support skills-building and knowledge-sharing among entrepreneurs. Include any experience with DOS-sponsored programs.
- 3. Program description** (no more than 3 pages, single-spaced): Provide a description of the proposed approach, and vision of working alongside IREX to achieve the above objectives.
 - Describe your proposed events structure and illustrative technical themes. Strong proposals should include creative ideas, dynamic activities, and best practices designed for skill enhancement and collaboration
 - Describe approach for guest speaker selection and incorporating U.S. entrepreneurs into events.
 - Capacity to provide a high level of customer service with IREX and to customize each event to best meet YLAI Fellowship Alumni needs.

- Include beneficiaries, outcomes, and expected impact. List at least 3 entrepreneurial networks you plan to engage and explain how you have previously collaborated with each.
- Provide previous examples of successful 30+ person in-person trainings, workshops, and entrepreneurial networking events.
- Proposals should demonstrate any country or subregional expertise.

Attachments & Annexes

1. **Budget and budget narrative:** Using the template provided by IREX, submit a detailed budget estimating all costs associated with the subaward. The Budget Template can be found [here](#) and the Budget Notes can be found [here](#). If you are applying to implement more than one event, please note that each event should not exceed a ceiling of \$75,000,
2. **Cost-share** [if applicable] Include detail of anticipated in-kind or sponsored cost-share.
3. **Initial Work Plan** (no more than 2 pages, single-spaced):
 - a. Events design and implementation. Consider initial stakeholder analysis of YLAI partners to understand strategic goals and needs. The needs assessment can include interviews, desk research, and surveys to deepen understanding of context and gaps.
 - b. Estimated dates and timelines for events preparation and execution.
 - c. Provide sample calendar of events
 - d. Provide sample event agenda(s) for in-person event(s)
4. **Monitoring Plan:** (no more than 2 pages, single-spaced) Applicants must describe how they will monitor and evaluate the success of their proposed activities under this subaward. The plan should outline how progress will be tracked, results measured, and risks managed. Clear, realistic plans that show how data will be used to guide activity implementation and assess outcomes will be prioritized. Please include:
 - Results Framework: Provide a simple results framework showing the link between proposed activities, outputs, outcomes, and the overall goal.
 - Key Indicator(s): Identify at least one indicator per outcome, with definitions, units, and (if available) baseline and target values.
 - Monitoring Approach: Briefly explain what data will be collected, how and when it will be gathered, and by whom. Mention tools or platforms used, and how data will inform learning or adjustments.
 - Documentation and Reporting: Outline how progress will be reported (e.g., monitoring reports, photos, videos, checklists) and shared with program staff.
 - Risk Monitoring: Describe how potential risks to implementation will be tracked and addressed.
5. **Staff List:** A list of all staff members and/or other organizations who will be contributing to the partnership, with a CV for each staff member.
6. **Past Performance References and Contacts:** A list of names and contact information for at least three past performance references.

The selected Regional Partner subawardee(s) will be asked to submit a Due Diligence questionnaire. For applicants' awareness, the recently updated template can be found [here](#). Note that as a part of the questionnaire, applicants will be asked to attach a financial statement audit or 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F Audit (if applicable.)

Restrictions:

- Subaward funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to procure goods or services from suppliers that may be identified on the USG consolidated list of debarred, suspended or ineligible contractors at <http://www.sam.gov/>.
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any subawardee headquarters' expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
- Fines and /or penalties.
- Other costs unallowable as referenced [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) Cost Principles.

Late Application

Late applications are marked as "late" and are ineligible for review or award; however, IREX reserves the right to accept and include late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of IREX to do so and if applications that were received on time have not been opened and reviewed. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of **not** being considered for review.

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION:

The application will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set out below. Interviews may also be conducted with selected semifinalists as part of the selection process.

Evaluation Criteria:

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE (0-4)

The applicant demonstrates relevant experience in event planning, entrepreneurship, international exchanges, or alumni engagement. The team's skills, past performance, and logistical readiness support successful delivery of the proposed event(s).

EVENT DESIGN AND CREATIVITY (0-4)

The proposal includes a thoughtful and innovative event design. Applicants are encouraged to integrate dynamic activities such as pitch competitions, mentorship sessions, or networking with U.S. counterparts. The overall approach should be engaging and tailored to the proposed region.

BUDGET (0-4)

The proposed budget is realistic, cost-effective, and appropriate for the scope of work. Applicants demonstrate a clear understanding of how to deliver a high-quality event within a budget of up to \$75,000 per event. Budgets align with proposed activities, staffing, and logistical needs.

ACTIONABLE (0-4)

The applicant presents a clear and actionable plan for executing the proposed event(s). The team demonstrates the organizational infrastructure, staffing, and timeline awareness needed to meet program expectations.

Section VI: AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The recommendation or selection of an application in accordance with established procedures does not guarantee an award. All applicants must demonstrate that they possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided.

A successful applicant can expect to receive an Award Letter, signed by the program. The award letter will be addressed to the organization's point of contact as stated in the application. Applicants that were not successful can expect a letter explaining the reason for their unsuccessful application.

Following the Award Letter, final negotiations will take place before the signing of a subaward agreement.

Reporting Procedures:

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Subaward Agreement. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the subaward agreement and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to subaward recipients. Types of reporting will include the following:

- Program report to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule described in the subaward agreement. This report will include a description of progress made during the period, problems in project implementation; actions taken to overcome them; and activities planned for the next period.
- Final program report will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation.

SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of IREX, nor does it commit IREX to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, IREX reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this RFA.

Annex 1: Standard Terms and Conditions

- U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-for-Federal-Awards-10.1.24-15.pdf>)
- 2 CFR 200 Uniformed Administrative Requirements Subpart A-through E ([eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E -- Cost Principles](#)).
- 2 CFR 600 The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600>)
- 2 CFR 601 Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-601>)