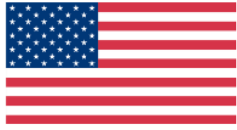# TUNISIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Summer 2021 Cohort
Request for Applications

ISSUANCE DATE: 01/21/2021
CLOSING DATE: 02/18/2021
CLOSING TIME: 11:59 PM EST
SUBJECT: Request for Applications (RFA) Number 001 FY17 Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program
REFERENCE: Issued under an International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) DOS COAG No. S-ECAGD-17-CA-1080
PERFORMANCE PERIOD: April 1, 2021 to September 15, 2021

This Request for Applications outlines the information required by 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 sub-grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles or the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be charged under the sub-grant.

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

- Annex I: TCCSP Detailed Subaward Budget Template
- Annex II: TCCSP Minimum Standards and Good Practices Framework

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program/IREX nor does it commit the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program/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 the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program/IREX activities.

Sincerely,

Kaia Benson
Senior Project Director
Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program

SCHEDULE A

Contents

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP), a leadership development program for outstanding young Tunisian leaders, is seeking approximately one (1) or two (2) U.S.-based community colleges to implement the summer 2021 TCCSP program, hosting two to five scholars, over the course of six to eight weeks. To ensure a tailored program consisted with the goals of TCCSP, IREX invites proposals to host the summer 2021 program from former TCCSP hosts who have hosted at least two cohorts of TCCSP scholars. The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program's Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by IREX.

TCCSP builds the workforce capacity of a diverse group of young technical institute students from across all regions of Tunisia. Through U.S.-based training and practical experience in leadership positions and community engagement opportunities, participants gain the skills to contribute to economic development in Tunisia. Selected participants will take part in a summer program including a U.S. based training and practical experience in academics, professional development, community engagement, and exploration of U.S. culture and society through placement at an accredited U.S. community college.

Approximately five (5) participants, who were selected through a highly competitive and merit-based process, will take part in the summer 2021 program. Upon returning home to Tunisia, participants will continue to build on the skills and experiences gained during their program through access to ongoing professional development and networking opportunities for alumni with support from the U.S. Department of State and affiliated partners. Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program alumni form a deep, diverse network of young Tunisian leaders with the skills and motivation to contribute to their country's economic development.

As a TCCSP partner and stakeholder, the subgrantee will design and host a six-to-eight week in-person program during summer 2021. The subgrantee may suggest programs that would run for six-to-eight weeks from approximately late June/mid-July through late August/early September 2021, with a preference for

programs that could begin in mid-July. The subgrantee will design a program that leverages the unique opportunities and resources of their campus and community, and that demonstrate programmatic support in keeping with the attached minimum standards and good practices framework, including in any subsequent revisions negotiated through correspondence.

The subgrantee should design an in-person program highlighting available campus resources and accommodations. In light of current and potential future public health concerns surrounding COVID-19, applicants should work within their campus, local, and state realities and abide by those guidelines, both in the content of their applications and implementation of the program (if selected). This includes, but is not limited to, preparedness to implement ordinarily in-person U.S.-based program activities virtually if needed, in consultation with IREX and the U.S. Department of State. We understand that the global health pandemic is a unique situation; applicants are asked to state their willingness to work collaboratively with IREX and the U.S. Department of State on solutions to challenges as they arise.

For more information about TCCSP, please visit: https://www.irex.org/project/thomas-jefferson-scholarship-programs-tunisia-community-college-scholarship-program-tccsp.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the U.S. Department of State, which provides funding and visionary oversight for TCCSP, has identified the following priorities and expectations for the summer 2021 program. Further information about each of these priorities can be found in the designated sections below.

- Programming incorporates personal, professional, and leadership development;
- Programming provides participants with an enhanced understanding of community engagement as practiced within their host community in the United States;
- Programming increases participants' knowledge of U.S. society, institutions, and culture;
- Programming enables participants to improve their English language proficiency; and
- Participant health and safety are prioritized

TCCSP participants:

- Have English-language proficiency in written and spoken English, documented by a minimum TOEFL score of approximately 500 or above;
- Are citizens and residents of Tunisia;
- Are at least 18 years of age

Qualified U.S.-based community colleges who would like to be considered to host the summer 2021 program should carefully review the information enclosed detailing proposal requirements and submit the online application and required documents no later than Thursday, February 18, 2021. Applications received after this date may not be considered. The institution(s) receiving a subaward from IREX for TCCSP will be subject to the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, and applicable cost principles.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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.

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- o If an applicant is not registered, they can only receive an in-kind and or fixed amount award sub-grant
- Meet the projects objectives and principles
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the project's objectives
- Applicant is not a debarred organization

Types of Sub-Grantees Eligible:

- Accredited U.S. community colleges who are previous hosts of the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program with experience hosting at least two cohorts of TCCSP scholars.

SECTION III: SUMMARY OF HOST PARTNER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Host partner roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- In consultation with IREX and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), designing TCCSP programming that meets identified priorities. This includes ensuring a steady cadence of activities throughout the program, designing and implementing robust academic, professional, cultural, and community engagement activities, and adapting program elements as needed due to public health concerns
- Designing a plan for and securing appropriate staff to ensure successful implementation of the program at the college. This includes, but is not limited to, identifying a host advisor as the participants' primary point of contact during the program
- Creating a program agenda in coordination with IREX and ECA and briefing participants on upcoming activities on a weekly basis
- Designing and hosting an on-campus orientation for participants that is as least 1-2 days and provides them with instruction on skills for academic success and an introduction to the campus and community
- Submitting deliverables to IREX by stated deadlines and coordinating communication between IREX, the college, and participants as needed
- Identifying and arranging all logistics, including local transportation and pickup and drop-off at the nearest international or other IREX-identified airport
- Securing appropriate lodging and meals with dietary considerations
- Serving as primary contact for participants during the program
- Identifying emergency healthcare providers in the local community that accept the U.S. Department of State's Accident and Sickness Health Benefits Program (ASPE) and identifying staff to support participant health issues
- Reinforcing Program policies and expectations to participants through orientation and program communications and activities
- Collecting and returning to IREX requested participant information to be gathered upon arrival, including but not limited to phone numbers, physical addresses, and required immigration documents
- Arranging accommodations for any participants with disabilities in accordance with U.S. law, and supporting their full participation in the program
- Submitting a final program report and final financial report according to stated deadlines

SECTION IV: AWARD INFORMATION

Subject to availability of funds, IREX expects to award up to two sub-grants, to host two (2) to five (5) participants during the summer 2021 period, not to exceed $140,000 for five (5) participants. Applicant should note maximum number of participants who may be hosted during the summer within the budget and proposal narrative. The expected duration of IREX's support or the period of performance is 04/01/2021-09/15/2021. The Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program/IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Timeline Overview:

RFA Issuance Date	Jan 21, 2021
RFA Closing Date	Feb 18, 2021
Anticipated Partner Notification	Mar. 18, 2021
Anticipated Partner Subaward Start	Apr 1, 2021
Program Development & Preparation in coordination with IREX	Apr. 1 – late June/early July 2021
Summer Program	late June/mid-July – late Aug/early Sept 2021
ReEntry Workshop in D.C.	late Aug/early Sept. 2021
Anticipated Subaward End Date	Sept. 15, 2021

Pre-Participant Arrival Schedule (subject to change)
The selected host partner(s) will work closely with IREX to support the pre-arrival planning process, including but not limited to finalization of program schedule, housing arrangements and coordination of community service and professional development activities. Program design will be coordinated by IREX with the host partner and with ECA.

U.S. Program Schedule (subject to change)

The anticipated program dates are late June/mid-July – late August/early September 2021. These program dates will also depend on the host partner's proposal of appropriate capacity to host participants during this period. The finalized program schedule will be determined by the host institution partner(s) in consultation with IREX and ECA.

Following the on-campus programming, the participants will attend a two-day, in-person Re-Entry Workshop hosted by IREX in Washington, D.C. to prepare alumni for successful re-entry and reintegration in Tunisia and to use their new professional leadership skills at home. Host partner program staff will be invited and should plan to attend the Re-Entry Workshop. Expenses related to attending these events will be covered by IREX.

Program schedule includes:

- Late June/mid-July – late August/early September 2021: Six-to-eight week program
- August/September 2021: TCCSP participants and host partner representatives travel to Washington, D.C. for Re-Entry Workshop (specific dates to be set in coordination with on campus schedule of host partner)

- August/September 2021: TCCSP participants complete their program at the host partner institution and return to Tunisia immediately following the end of the program

Participant Costs Covered by IREX

Please note that the following participant program costs will be covered directly by IREX:
- Participants' international travel and domestic travel to and from the TCCSP host community;
- Participant stipends for personal and incidental costs;
- Accident and sickness health benefit plan; and
- J-1 visa support for program participants

The selected host institution(s) will be responsible for the following components of the summer 2021 program:

1. **Orientation**

   A 1-2 day host campus orientation, to include the following components:
   - **Academic Success Skills**
     - Skills for academic success, including study skills, time management, and research skills
     - Appropriate written and verbal communication with professors, program support staff, and classmates
     - The use of technology in U.S. academic settings
     - Online course management tools and training in Microsoft Office, as well as guidance in utilizing public computer labs and contacting professors online
   - **Campus and Community Introduction**
     - Campus libraries and tutoring services;
     - Public transportation in U.S. communities;
     - Campus and community resources;
     - Available healthcare services on campus and in the community;
     - Campus resources for cultural and academic adjustment and religious accommodations;
     - Basic budgeting of program funds

2. **Participant Support**

   The applicant should identify a host advisor to work directly with TCCSP participants throughout the program. The host advisor should conduct weekly check-in meetings with participants to ensure their success. Overall support for program design, implementation, and reporting by the partner institution will include but is not limited to the host advisor.

3. **Academic Program**

   The academic component of the summer 2021 program should include elements of both classroom instruction and independent engagement (e.g. homework), for a total of approximately 30 hours per week over the course of the program. It is preferable that some instruction time be devoted to the participants' desired fields of study in the United States; three participants are interested in studying Information Technology, and two are interested in studying Applied Engineering.

Applicants should describe if students will be enrolled in regular summer courses or how the institution will design and support a curated academic program. Learning series topics could include a combination of Information Technology and Applied Engineering, American studies, academic skills for success, and/or leadership training. English language instruction may be part of the academic program but should not be the primary focus of the academic component. The exact model of activities may differ among host institution applicants based on the unique opportunities on their campus and academic activities may include credit or non-credit opportunities. The applicant should be able to provide academic and ESL support services throughout the program.

Given the condensed program structure and the potential for proposal with credit and/or non-credit opportunities, participants in the summer 2021 program are not required to be enrolled in coursework that enables them to earn a certificate in their U.S. field of study. Additionally, participants are not required to be enrolled in a full-time course load.

4. **Leadership, Community Engagement, and Cultural Programming**
    The summer 2021 program will utilize a variety of strategies and resources to develop participants' leadership skills, engage with U.S. culture, and foster community engagement. The precise model of activities may vary among host institution applicants given the unique opportunities on their campus and in their local community, and as appropriate to the health context.

    Cultural Engagement: The applicant should organize a well-rounded cultural engagement program, which should consist of a minimum of one cultural activity per week under themes such as Arts and Music, Sports and Leisure, Holiday and Diversity Celebrations, Local Pride, Community Leadership for Social Justice, and Youth Concerns. Additionally, the applicant should ensure that each participant completes a country presentation on Tunisia during their in-country experience. Prior to participants' arrival, the host partner will identify organizations/venues in the local community as potential locations for country presentations.

    Service Learning: Service Learning involves three steps: learning, service, and reflection. It aims to increase participants' understanding of American culture, provide an opportunity to explore American values and beliefs, give participants hands-on volunteer experience, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, teach them more about social issues and their root causes, and develop or enhance their skills in communication, collaboration, and leadership. The applicant should develop a service-learning component for the summer program that includes at least three service learning activities, providing a window into U.S. diversity, developing participants as leaders, and promoting habits of community engagement.

5. **Professional Engagement**
    The host partner is expected to provide professional development opportunities for TCCSP participants. This requirement may be fulfilled through site visits to workplaces in the local community facilitated by the host partner, panel discussions, field of study-specific mentoring meetings with professionals in the local community, etc. The professional engagement component should provide participants with an understanding of the U.S. workplace as well as increased understanding of key workplace soft skills.

The precise model of activities may differ among host institution applicants based on the unique opportunities available on their campus and in their local community, and as appropriate due to campus, local, and state guidelines on public health.

Applications should include an illustrative weekly schedule of participants' weekly academic activities, as well as leadership, community engagement, cultural programming, and professional engagement.

SECTION V: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than 10 days prior to the closing date shown above to Colleen Cook, Program Officer, tccsp@irex.org. An informational Q&A will be held on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 2:00pm ET for applicants interested in discussion questions; for a registration link please write to tccsp@irex.org. Response to questions via email or in the informational Q&A will be published as an addendum to this RFA on www.irex.org by Monday, February 8, 2021. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be submitted via the online application form 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 via the online application form.

Applications must be submitted via the online form. A complete application will include the documents listed below. Failure to follow the specifications, requirements, and templates provided may result in disqualification. Proposals will be reviewed based on the "Evaluation Criteria" included below in Section VIII.

Information and documents that should be submitted as part of the application include:

- DUNS number
- Resumes or Curricula Vitae of proposed host advisor and other key personnel
- Host Partner Narrative (see guidance for this narrative in Section VI)
- Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative (see Annex I for budget template and guidance in Section VII)
- Work plan, including the applicant's proposed program dates (participants must return to Tunisia no later than early September)
- Copy of the applicant's Summer 2021 academic schedule, if proposing that students will direct enroll in courses
- Sample weekly participant schedule
- Completed statement of liability
- Due Diligence Questionnaire
- Other material

Restrictions:

- Sub-grant 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 subcontractors at http://www.epls.gov/
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any sub-grantee headquarters' expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project

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- Previous obligations and/or bad debts
- Fines and/or penalties
- Other costs unallowable as referenced 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles and FAR 31.2 Cost Principles for Commercial Organizations

<u>Late Applications</u>

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 VI: HOST PARTNER NARRATIVE GUIDANCE

The Host Partner Narrative, inclusive of all responses, should be no more than 10 pages, double-spaced, 11pt. font. Any attachments (sample agenda, program schedule, resumes) in addition to the narrative and budget should total no more than 12 total pages. The narrative should provide IREX and the U.S. Department of State with a clear vision of how the structure and content of the applicant's plan to implement the program will meet the identified priorities for the summer 2021 program (see Section I). The Host Partner Narrative should walk readers through a participant's experience in the program and clearly outline the proposed approach for key program components and learning objectives.

The following must be included in the Host Partner Narrative:

- Program Overview, including:
    - The applicant's accreditation and a short description of its experience implementing TCCSP;
    - The applicant's relevant experience, on- and off-campus resources to enhance programming, and demonstrated capacity to manage similar programs of this size and scope;
        - Please note IREX anticipates some TCCSP participants will be practicing Muslims. This proposal should address on- and off-campus resources as well as arrangements for participants to practice their religion
    - Arrangements for housing, meal options, and day-to-day transportation for the cohort. Accommodations should ensure accessibility to program activities, campus resources, and reasonable dining options. Please address if housing is on- or off-campus, the type of housing (dorms, apartments, suites, extended stay hotel, etc.), rooming arrangements, and availability and type of transportation. IREX recommends that single-room accommodations be provided for public health purposes.
    - Approach for effectively managing the arrival of up to five participants to your institution and their departure for Tunisia at the conclusion of the program; and
    - Plan for monitoring participants' adjustment and success throughout the program. This includes a plan and process for resolving and responding to participant cross-cultural and academic issues. Please also address what staffing support would be available specifically to support the summer 2021 program
- Summaries of activities, approach, and expected impact on participants of the following program components. For each component, include a description of any virtual adaptations the college could make to program activities in light of public health concerns

- o **Orientation:** An orientation to academic success skills and an introduction to the campus and community, as well as an overview of important logistical information such as details of room and board. Describe the plan for design and implementation of the orientation, as well as for orienting participants at the start of each week on both administrative topics and programmatic activities (see bullet points below).
- o **Academic Program:** The academic program will provide participants with valuable learning experiences that enhance their knowledge in one or more key areas (see Section IV for examples). Discuss whether students will be enrolled in regular summer coursework, or how the college will design and support a curated academic program. Additionally, describe how the college would approach providing ongoing academic monitoring and support, including the resources available to participants on campus.
- o **Professional Engagement:** Professional engagement – whether through site visits, panel discussions, field of study-specific mentoring meetings with local professionals, etc. – provides participants with insight into U.S. workplace culture and increased understanding of key workplace soft skills. Outline the college's plan to provide participants with professional development opportunities, which should include connecting them with U.S. professionals.
- o **Service Learning:** Enables participants to learn about the U.S. culture of community service and understand how Americans address challenges in their communities. Provide an overview of the college's plan to develop a service learning program that includes at least three service learning activities, along with pre-activity learning and post-activity reflection components.
- o **Cultural Engagement:** Provides participants with structured opportunities to increase their knowledge of U.S. culture and promote mutual understanding between the United States and Tunisia. Describe the college's plan for a well-rounded cultural engagement program, to include at least one cultural activity per week under themes such as those outlined in Section IV. Additionally, detail the college's plan to identify organizations/venues in the local community as potential locations for participants' country presentations, and ensure each participant completes a country presentation on Tunisia during their U.S. experience.

SECTION VII: BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE GUIDANCE

For the budget, please outlined how each line item is calculated with a comprehensive, detailed budget and budget narrative demonstrating how costs were derived. Please clearly indicate individual participant costs and the maximum number of participants you are able to host (two to five participants) for summer 2021. For each staff person, please include level of effort/percentage of time dedicated to the program. If indirect costs are included in the budget, please attach a current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a cognizant agency. Please include a budget narrative with the budget explaining the budget and clearly detailing requirements, parameters, or other information that illuminates the figures used in the budget.

SECTION VIII: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Within 10 working days of the deadline for submitting applications, a technical review committee will convene. Throughout the evaluation process, the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program shall take steps to ensure that members of the committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regard to the organizations whose applicants are under review. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest "if that person, or that person's spouse, partner, child, close friend or relative works for or is negotiating to work for, or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently

under the panel's review." Members of the committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

Note: Under unusual circumstances the technical review committee may be delayed.

Verification of the application submission requirements will be conducted by the grants manager. Awards are anticipated to be made within 15 working days after the technical evaluation committee completes its review.

The application will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set below. To the extent necessary (if an award is not made based on initial applications), negotiations may be conducted with each applicant whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for award.

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Technical Merit – 10 points**
  - Relevance to program goals;
    - Preference will be given to applicants whose academic program offers instruction in information technology and applied engineering
  - Robustness of beneficiary programming and consistent distribution of program activities across the program timeline;
  - Sustainability of project results; and
  - Anticipated impact on the beneficiaries
- **Past Performance / Organizational Capacity – 5 points**
  - Past performance in similar projects;
  - Relevant staff skills to the proposed project;
  - Capacity to facilitate virtual program activities, as needed, due to public health concerns;
  - Experience in geographical region;
  - Written accounting and procurement procedures; and
  - Capacity to adhere to DOS financial guidelines
- **Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness - 5 points**
  - Appropriateness of proposed housing, meals, and transportation;
  - Are costs reasonable, allowable, and allocable; and
  - Is the proposal cost-effective

SECTION IX: 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 sub-grant agreement.

Reporting Procedures:

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Sub-Grant Agreement. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the sub-grant type and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to sub-grant recipients. Types of reporting will include the following:

- Program report to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule described in the sub-grant 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.
- Financial reports will be submitted according to a schedule described in the sub-grant agreements. Types of financial reports, as well as the schedule of reporting, will depend on the type of sub-grant, length of the project, and amount of funding. In addition, the sub-grantee is required to submit a detailed Final Financial Report.

Issuance of the final installment of sub-grant funds is contingent upon the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program's receipt and acceptance of Final Financial and Final Program Reports.

SECTION X – OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of IREX, nor does it commit the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program/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.