



## Request for Proposals (RFP) *for* The 100,000 Strong in the Americas Colombia-United States Grant Competition

**Issuance Date:**  
December 12, 2024

**Closing Date:**  
March 16, 2025

### Executive Summary

Partners of the Americas (POA), in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (WHA/DOS), the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), invites higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States and in Colombia to submit proposals for the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Colombia-U.S. Grant Competition to expand and strengthen bilateral education cooperation between the United States and Colombia.

This new, bilateral 100K Strong grant competition focuses on promoting inclusion and diversity in higher education and environmental and climate cooperation. It represents the collaboration between WHA/DOS and the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá. This 100K Strong grant competition aims to foster and support innovative and inclusive partnerships between HEIs that provide access to inclusive student and faculty exchange programs between the United States and Colombia.

This 100K Strong grant competition supports the Department of State's priorities to ensure a greener, more inclusive, democratic, prosperous, and climate-resilient Hemisphere via regional education cooperation and exchanges. 100K Strong partnerships between HEIs in the U.S. and the rest of the Western Hemisphere provide students with innovative opportunities to work in teams at both their home and host institutions, solve real-world problems, and gain technical, linguistic, and intercultural skills needed for workforce development.

The 100K Strong Climate (100K CLIMA) and Inclusive Education (100K I.E.) Initiatives announced at the ninth Summit of the Americas in (2022) will expand partnership opportunities for a diversity of HEIs to create and implement inclusive education exchange and training programs in the Americas. These new 100K Strong initiatives also build on the Department of State's collaboration with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs), and support bilateral agreements on social inclusion and racial equality with Latin American countries, including Colombia.

For this 100K Strong grant competition, teams of HEIs between the U.S. and Colombia are invited to submit proposals to show how they will use the 100K Strong grant to design and carry out innovative, student and faculty academic exchanges and training, both virtually and in-person, that promote inclusion and diversity in higher education and environmental and climate cooperation.



We invite HEIs in the U.S. and Colombia to submit proposals, as outlined in Sections III and IV of this RFP. We seek interest from a broad range of HEIs to create partnerships and submit proposals, including U.S. universities and community colleges, HBCUs, HSIs, and MSIs. Proposed HEI teams must show how they will recruit and include underrepresented students and faculty from diverse backgrounds, including socioeconomic status and ethnicity, among others, in their proposed 100K Strong program activities and exchanges.

The intent of this 100K Strong Colombia-U.S. competition is to **award up to ten (10) grants of up to \$50,000 each**. The final number of awards will depend on the results of the 100K Strong program process to review, evaluate, and select grant proposals.

NOTE: If selected, teams of HEIs must carry out their 100K Strong project from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026.

POA, in coordination with WHA/DOS, and the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá reserve the right to fund any or none of the proposals received by the deadline. Please carefully review this RFP for details on eligible institutions, thematic areas, and other details to inform the 100K Strong proposal process.



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

The signature 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K Strong) hemisphere-wide, regional, education diplomacy initiative is the dynamic collaboration between the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (WHA/DOS), U.S. Embassies, and Partners of the Americas (POA), working with regional companies, foundations, governments, and education networks throughout the United States and the western hemisphere. The 100K Strong Innovation Fund is the trusted USG-branded mechanism to catalyze these multilateral partnerships to build institutional capacity and to ensure that more students from diverse backgrounds gain access to innovative, inclusive exchange and workforce training programs.

Over eleven years (2013-2024), the 100K Strong Innovation Fund has awarded 352 grants on a competitive basis to 615 higher education institutions (HEIs) working in teams across 26 countries and 49 U.S. states, engaging over 10,000+ students and faculty. To date, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, and Costa Rica are leading 100K Strong grant recipient countries to partner with U.S. colleges/universities to implement new models of innovative, inclusive student and faculty exchanges in multiple thematic areas. The demand for 100K grants to build regional HEI partnerships continues to outpace available grants in each 100K Strong competition.

The 100K Network, managed by POA, currently includes more than 4,000 individual members – and growing – that represent more than 2,300 HEIs in the region.

With more than 100 projects funded through 100K Strong, Colombia has positioned itself as the leading country in this regional education initiative with the United States.

## Section II: Funding Partners in this 100K Strong Grant Competition

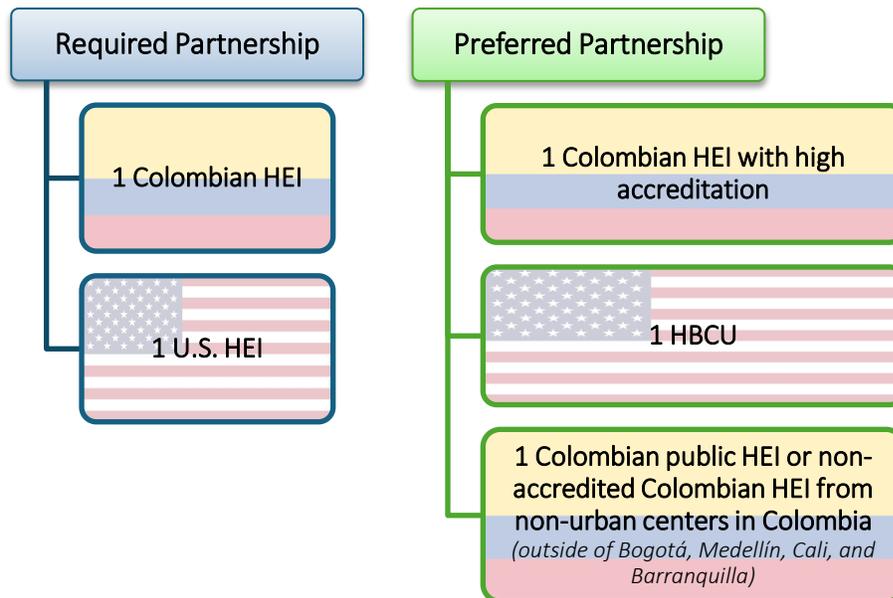
The **Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State** (WHA/DOS) supports and oversees the 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K Strong) Initiative with Partners of the Americas (POA) and U.S. Embassies in collaboration with regional public, private, and academic sectors. Since the inception of the 100K Strong Innovation Fund in 2013, the contributions from the U.S. Department of State to this hemispheric-wide education initiative have leveraged robust, resilient public-private sector collaboration with regional companies, foundations, governments, and higher education networks throughout the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. 100K Strong branded partnerships and exchange programs align with the Department’s policy goals to support inclusive education opportunities, exchanges, democratic institutions, and economic prosperity.

### Section III: Eligibility Information

100K Strong seeks a diversity of institutions to compete for grants and to create and carry-out innovative, inclusive, sustainable exchange programs for students and faculty that will have the greatest possibility of replication throughout the United States and rest of the Western Hemisphere. This 100K Strong competition seeks proposals from all HEIs with credit-bearing programs, including two-year and four-year degree-issuing universities/colleges (public & private), with special emphasis on Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), community colleges, and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs) in the United States.

Proposals must include a team of at least one higher education institution in the U.S. and one higher education institution in Colombia.

**Priority will be given to** project models with one HBCU, one Colombian HEI with high accreditation and one Colombian public HEI or HEI without high accreditation from non-urban centers in Colombia (outside of Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, and Barranquilla)



Proposals that include one or more institutions on the following list will be given preferred consideration during the evaluation process.

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the U.S.
- Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in the U.S.
- Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in the U.S.
- Community Colleges in the U.S.



- Public HEIs in Colombia
- Non-accredited HEIs from non-urban centers of Colombia (outside of Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, y Barranquilla)

Proposals can include new institutional partnerships or be based on existing partnerships. HEIs submitting proposals for the first time or those that have not previously received a grant from 100K Strong are encouraged to apply.

To increase the diversity of participating HEIs, the Review Committee reserves the right to give preference to institutions that have not previously received 100K Strong grants; however, all HEIs (including previous grant winners) are encouraged to apply.

## Section IV: Description of Grant Competition

### A. Thematic Requirements

The purpose of the 100K Strong Colombia-United States Grant Competition is to expand partnerships between HEIs to develop academic exchange programs that promote diversity and inclusion, and environmental and climate collaboration in higher education that provide students, faculty, and researchers from underrepresented populations with access to international education exchange experiences.

Eligible thematic and academic areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

ELIGIBLE THEMATIC AREAS FOR PROPOSED PROGRAMS	
<i>General Themes</i>	<i>Sample Focus Areas of Study</i>
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	<p><b><u>Racial and Social Justice</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ant-iracist education</li> <li>• Gender Intersectionality</li> <li>• Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Peace and Conflict Resolution</li> <li>• Political Science and Public Policy Analysis related to thematic areas</li> <li>• Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Economic Development</li> <li>• Education for Inclusion</li> <li>• Cultural Diversity</li> <li>• Environmental and/or climate solutions that reduce inequality of opportunities</li> <li>• Research on Gender and Gender-Based Violence</li> <li>• Fostering The Development of Equitable Communities</li> <li>• Public Health</li> </ul>

### Environment and Climate Collaboration

- Climate Justice
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security
- Natural Resource Management
- Conservation, Protection, and Restoration
- Community Conservation Practices
- Decarbonization and Electrification
- Climate-Resilient Infrastructure
- Renewable Energy
- Climate Technology
- Public Health

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that the thematic/academic fields of study above serve as recommendations and guidelines. Other fields of study can be proposed so long as the proposal clearly demonstrates the relationship between the proposed field(s) of study and the thematic areas of the grant competition: Inclusive education with an emphasis on social/racial justice and environmental and climate collaboration.

### B. Proposal Timeframe (Grant Period)

All proposed program activities, including planning and implementation and project closing, must take place during September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026.

Proposals may include information on activities that have occurred prior to this period, which provide background to laying the groundwork for the proposed program activities. Proposals may also include anticipated activities beyond these dates (such as ongoing participant exchanges, extension services, etc.), that will demonstrate continuation of and commitment to the proposed program activities beyond the grant period.

### C. Project Design and Requirements

#### 1. Academic Credit

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

#### 2. Recruitment of Diverse Students

Potential teams of HEIs are strongly encouraged to submit proposals that will clearly demonstrate how proposed 100K programming will include and benefit students from diverse social, racial, and non-traditional communities. Teams of HEI applicants need to show that they have identified student populations within proposed partner institution(s) that might not have access to regional exchange education opportunities and outline how the proposed 100K exchange programming will expand access and participation for underrepresented student populations. Applicants must use the [100K Diversity Recruitment Plan](#) template, ([available on the 100K website here](#)) to describe plans for including and engaging diverse groups of students.

### 3. *Participant Mobility and Activities*

Proposed programs must include **bilateral student mobility** between the U.S. and Colombia. Proposals should include both virtual and in-person programming activities between partnering institutions. Virtual activities can support the planning of in-person mobility and the travel and/or accommodation of students and faculty between partnering institutions during the grant period. Virtual activities should enhance or complement, not replace, in-person training and exchange components. Consider practices and strategies to using technology/virtual platforms to enhance traditional academic exchange programs and improve education equality.

### 4. *Sustainability*

Applicants should highlight how the 100K Strong grant would impact HEI teams' ability to secure additional in-kind and/or other resources to expand the 100K Strong proposed activities beyond the grant period. Proposals must clearly demonstrate the institutional support from all partnering institutions involved – as well as from any proposed local organizations – through letters of support (required) from senior leadership and/or the international office and contribution to the program in the form of cost-share (cash or in-kind).

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

100K Strong grant proposals should include the use of innovative practices and models that will increase exchange and training opportunities for students and researchers in selected academic areas in the United States and Colombia. Applicants should also include proposed program activities that enhance academic learning, for example, through practical training, service-learning, community-based activities, or other methods.

The 100K Strong Innovation Fund encourages grant proposals that include effective practices and strategies discussed at 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund workshops and webinars, as well as at regional higher education conferences (i.e., NAFSA, AIEA, CCID, HACU, CONAHEC, FAUBAI, CAIE, etc.). Related topics may include credit transfer, community engagement, entrepreneurship, language training, local private sector support/engagement,

program assessment, student recruitment, technical skills training, and use of technology/virtual platforms to enhance traditional academic student/faculty exchange programs.

#### 6. Carbon Offsets

It is encouraged, but not required, that applicants commit to offsetting carbon<sup>1</sup> emissions produced by air travel involved in proposed programming and use reputable providers of carbon offset services. MyClimate<sup>2</sup> is one provider of carbon offsets which makes it very easy to determine the carbon cost of any given flight and offers a number of options to invest in carbon savings in communities in the western hemisphere. Proposals that contain a commitment to offset the carbon produced by flights during the program will be viewed favorably in the review process.

### D. Expected Results

Applicants that are successful in implementing grants in this 100K Strong U.S.-Colombia grant competition will accomplish the following:

- Create/strengthen institutional partnerships and expand regional cooperation through bilateral exchange programs and collaboration on inclusive education and environmental and climate collaboration;
- Implement new, inclusive education exchange/training opportunities for students and faculty;
- Design and implement strategic, inclusive exchange and training projects related to one or more of the thematic areas described above;
- Increase number and diversity of students and faculty that gain technical skills;
- Involve faculty, students, and researchers as key actors and expand their knowledge, skills and/or capacity through their participation;
- Evaluate and report on project outcomes as they relate to impact on students, researchers, faculty, and institutions; and
- Engage/collaborate with the 100K Strong program during and after the grant period to share lessons learned, participant outcomes, and models of multilateral training programs.

## Section V: Award Information

### A. Awards Available

The intent of the 100K Strong U.S.-Colombia grant competition is to award **up to ten (10) grants of up to \$50,000 each** to teams of HEIs in the U.S. and Colombia. Partners of the Americas, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State and

the U.S. Embassy Bogotá, reserve the right to fund any or none of the grant proposals submitted for consideration in this competition.

## B. Notification of Award Recipients

The proposal evaluation and selection process will take place between March and May 2025. Partners of the Americas will notify HEIs of the status of their proposals beginning of June 2025. Please also note that this date is subject to change. Should a change occur, Partners of the Americas will inform applicants.

## C. Period of Performance

Following the award notification by Partners of the Americas, grant-winning teams will receive details and documents related to formalizing and receiving the award funds. The grant period will be from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026. Extensions may be granted pending analysis of the program at the time of the request, and in coordination with POA, WHA/DOS, and the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá.

## D. Innovation Fund Award Responsibilities

### 1. 100K Strong Staff at Partners of the Americas (POA)

Partners of the Americas, based in Washington, D.C., will work in close coordination with 100K Strong grant recipients in the following areas:

- Technical support of grant activities and oversight of award contract/terms;
- Inform all stakeholders of activities related to the grant period;
- Coordination of virtual 100K Strong program orientation and conclusion sessions for all participants;
- Review of the recipient's progress reports;
- Approval of changes in award budget, key personnel, timeline, partnership, and activities;
- Request for additional information on grant activities and participant engagement;
- Facilitation of communications between recipients and WHA/DOS, sponsors, and where appropriate, U.S. Embassies;
- Outreach regarding sharing of lessons learned from program implementation and participation at visibility events and conferences, among others; and
- Enrollment of participants in the 100K Strong Alumni Network.

### 2. HEI Award Recipients

Award Recipients will collaborate closely with Partners of the Americas in the following areas:

- Support POA coordination with participants to ensure participation in virtual 100K Strong program orientation and conclusion sessions;

- Share information on a regular basis with 100K Strong staff on program activities through report mechanisms provided by POA, which will include:
  - Progress on program goals and objectives, including the development of grant activities and participant travel;
  - Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in program implementation and evaluation;
  - Project outcomes and impact data;
  - Testimonials on how the grant benefits/impacts participants, faculty, and HEIs; and
  - Program expenditures and cost-sharing.
- Enrollment of participants in the [100K Strong Exchange Network](#).
- The project reporting deadlines are listed below:

Type of Report	Deadline
<b>Progress Report</b>	
September – December 2025	January 31, 2026
January – April 2026	May 31, 2026
May – August 2026	September 30, 2026
<b>Cumulative, Final Report</b>	
September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026	October 31, 2026

### 3. Grant Disbursement Requirements

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

Deliverables	Percentage of Award Disbursed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award Agreement</li> <li>• Financial Forms</li> <li>• Approved Proposal</li> <li>• Travel itineraries and planned activities (proposed agenda)</li> </ul>	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Progress Report Completed</li> <li>• Updated/Confirmed List of Students and/or Faculty who will Travel, Dates and Planned Activities</li> <li>• Pre-Departure Survey Completed by Students</li> </ul>	60%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumulative Final Report</li> <li>• Post-program Survey completed by students and institutions</li> </ul>	15%

## Section VI: Proposal Format and Design

### A. Proposal Format



Proposals must utilize 12-pt Times New Roman font, single-spaced, typed in standard 8 ½” x 11” paper with one-inch margins, and each page numbered consecutively. Keep in mind the page limitations and document types for each section of the proposal as listed below. Any additional pages that exceed the page limitations will not be reviewed by the Review Committee.

**Proposals must be submitted in English.**

**Proposal Narrative in PDF**

- Cover Page (1 page)
- Table of Contents (1 page)
- Technical Narrative (15 pages max)

**Budget (5 pages max)**

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

**Supporting Documents in PDF (no page limit)**

- Letters of Support
- Résumé/biographies of project team (1-2 pages per person)
- Additional materials

Note that Applicants will be required to upload each of the three sections above separately in the Application Portal. For a detailed description of the proposal format and requirements, including the evaluation criteria, visit [www.100kstrongamericas.org/app-format/](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/app-format/).

**B. Online Submission Process**

Proposals must be submitted online through the Application Portal found on the 100,000 Strong in the Americas website ([www.100kstrongamericas.org/application-portal/](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/application-portal/)) by March 16, 2025 at 11:59PM EST. Proposals that are received late or are incomplete will not be considered in the review process. No proposals will be accepted via email unless otherwise instructed by Partners of the Americas.

Applicants seeking information or clarification about this competition should complete the online form at [www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions). For a comprehensive list of questions received from applicants of previous grant competitions, please visit [www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/100k-competition-faqs).

**Section VII: Grant Competition Timeline**

ACTIVITY	TIME PERIOD*
Launch of 100K Strong Grant Competition	December 12, 2024
Close of 100K Strong Grant Competition	March 16, 2025



Proposal Evaluation Process	March 17 – May 31, 2025
Notification of Status of Proposal	Early June 2025
Onboarding and Award Disbursement Grant Winners	June – August 2025
Period of Performance of 100K HEI Grantees	September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026
Cumulative, Final Report Due	October 31, 2026

*\*Dates are subject to change.*

### Section VIII: Questions about Grant Competition

Questions about this RFP must be submitted by completing the online form at [www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions](http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/questions). Questions should be received prior to the deadline stipulated in this RFP. No phone calls please.