GPA FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad (GPA) program?

The GPA program is a discretionary grant program designed to contribute to the development and improvement of the study of modern foreign languages and area studies in the United States by providing training opportunities for faculty, teachers, and upperclassmen and/or graduate students in foreign countries outside of Western Europe and where the United States has diplomatic representation. Awards are made under the program to conduct overseas group projects in research, training, curriculum development, and advanced foreign language study.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Institutions of higher education (IHE), state departments of education, private nonprofit educational organizations, and consortia of institutions, departments, and organizations are eligible to apply.

3. What kinds of projects can be funded under the GPA program?

There are four kinds of GPA projects. Three are short-term projects: (1) short-term seminar; (2) curriculum development; and (3) group research or study. The fourth type is long-term advanced overseas intensive language training project. Please refer to the GPA application booklet for details on the features of each project type.

4. If an IHE, department, or organization receives a GPA award, who is eligible to participate in the project?

A citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States who is:

(A) Currently employed full-time in a United States school system, institution of higher education, local education agency or state education agency (not applicable to students)

AND at least one of the following:

- A teacher in an elementary or secondary school OR
- A faculty member who teaches modern foreign languages or area studies OR
- An experienced education administrator responsible for planning, conducting, or supervising programs in modern foreign languages or area studies at the elementary, secondary, or postsecondary levels

OR

(B) A graduate student, or junior or senior in an institution of higher education, who is a prospective teacher in the areas of social sciences, humanities and foreign languages. The student should meet the provisions set by his or her local and state education agencies.

(Note: Area Studies is defined as a program of comprehensive study of the aspects of a society or societies including the study of their geography, history, culture, economy, politics, international relations, or languages.)

5. Are there restrictions on participation for individuals who have received previous Fulbright awards?

The Fulbright Scholarship Board "lifted" the restriction that limits the number of Fulbright awards that a participant can receive. However, we strongly recommend that IHEs, state departments of education, and education organizations select the most qualified participants who will share their experiences with students, colleagues, civic and professional organizations, and the public in their respective home communities.

6. Are there restrictions on who can join a GPA project group?

Yes. Spouses, other family members, and friends, who have not been selected to participate in a GPA project according to the selection criteria stated in the approved application, are not permitted to join the group at any point during the program. GPA participants must remain with the group at all required times.

7. What is the average length of an award?

For short-term GPA programs, there is a grant performance period of 18 months, meaning that the pre-departure orientation, overseas travel, and follow-up phase must happen during those 18 months. For long-term GPA programs, the grant performance period is 24 months.

8. What date should an applicant list as the proposed start date for the project?

For the Fiscal Year 2019 GPA competition, the program office suggests using June 30, 2019 as the proposed start date for the GPA projects.

9. Does the GPA program have priorities?

Yes. The program has an absolute priority which states that projects must focus on one or more of the following geographic regions of the world: Africa; East Asia; South Asia; Southeast Asia and the Pacific; the Western Hemisphere (Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean); East Central Europe and Eurasia; and the Near East.

The program also periodically has invitational and competitive preference priorities. Please check the current fiscal year's Federal Register notice and application package for details. For FY 2019 competitive preference priorities please follow this link: Federal Register

10. What kinds of expenses can be charged to a GPA grant?

The grant does not provide funds for project-related expenses within the United States. Grant funds may be used only for the following: a maintenance stipend based on fifty percent of the amount established by the U.S. Department of State; round-trip international travel; a local travel allowance for necessary project-related travel within the host country; purchase of project-related artifacts, books, and other teaching materials in the country of study; rent for instructional facilities in the

country of study; clerical and professional services performed by resident instructional personnel in the country of study; and other expenses in the country of study deemed necessary for the project's success and approved in advance by the U.S. Department of Education.

Please note that the GPA program will not provide funds for:

- U.S.-based salaries and fringe benefits; and
- U.S.-based activities such as pre-departure orientations and post-travel follow-up.

The applicant may regard the above and other unallowable costs as part of the applicant matching contribution.

For advanced overseas intensive language training projects, the GPA grant may pay for costs associated with pre- and post-foreign language assessment in the host country.

11. Is there a matching requirement?

No, there is no formal matching requirement for the GPA program. However, the United States Department of Education encourages cost sharing by the project participants and their affiliated institutions, school districts, or organizations to cover the expenses within the United States, and to make up the difference between the grant and the costs of the activities abroad. Applicants are invited to provide cost share through in-kind or cash contributions.

12. What is the minimum amount of time grantee institutions should conduct pre-departure orientation/preparation activities for participants?

For the GPA short-term and long-term projects, a minimum of 16 hours of pre-departure orientation/preparation activities should be included in the project design and discussed in detail in the "Plan of Operation" criterion. Please note that as a United States-based activity, related costs will not be paid for using GPA grant funds.

13. Are indirect costs allowed to be charged to a GPA grant?

No. Indirect costs are not allowed to be charged to a GPA grant.

14. Do the provisions of the "Fly America Act" apply to this program?

All international travel to and from the United States must comply with the Fly America Act. This Act states that federal travelers funded by the U.S. government are required to use U.S. air carrier services for air travel when available. International travel budget estimates should be based on jet economy high season rates. The Fly America Act may not be applicable for regional travel within the host country, in which the office would approve the use of foreign airlines.

15. Is there a page limitation on the application?

While there is no page limit imposed on applicants, we recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 40 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

16. Are appendices allowed?

Yes. However, an applicant must be mindful to submit only what is requested and what would be considered supporting documentation of the narrative. For GPA short-term projects, this may include: (1) a detailed preliminary pre-departure orientation and overseas program itinerary; (2) curriculum vitas of key personnel; (3) letters of support; (4) examples of evaluation materials and Performance Measure Forms (PMFs); and (5) other supporting documents, if necessary. Please consult the current application, under "Instructions for Completing the GPA Application Package" for additional information.

For GPA advanced language training projects, this may include: (1) curriculum vitas of key personnel; (2) position descriptions; (3) project timeline chart; (4) letters of support; (5) class schedule with details; (6) pre-departure schedule of activities; (7) follow-up activities; (8) examples of evaluation tools; (9) details concerning pre-and post- foreign language assessment; and (10) other supporting documents, if necessary.

17. What techniques are helpful in preparing an application narrative and other important information for the program?

- Start early.
- Contact the GPA program contact.
- Review GPA legislation, rules and regulations, and policy thoroughly.
- Review the Federal Register Notice and Application Package thoroughly.
- Review abstracts and application narratives of funded projects.
- Review promising practices for GPA projects. Review funded projects or review them on the program website.
- Form an internal task force and management team with appropriate grant, international, and project-related experience.
- Identify your institution's/department's/program's need and wants.
- Provide clear, goals, measures, and activities.
- Provide a detailed plan of operation and evaluation.
- Prepare a specific and detailed budget.
- Request letters of support, both from domestic and overseas partners.
- Identify your academic host country coordinator and establish strong linkages.
- Address each part of the selection criteria thoroughly and in the order presented.
- Present a persuasive description of how the pieces fit together and complement each other.
- Do not make readers have to search for information.
- Write in plain English and use correct grammar.

- Avoid specific professional jargon/acronyms. Remember to provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when your organization registered with the SAM (System for Award Management).
- Register with Grants.gov early.
- DO NOT wait until the last minute to submit your electronic application.
- If your application is not funded, consult the reviewer's comments and consider reapplying.

18. Am I required to submit my application electronically?

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov system, unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with application instructions. Please refer to the current Federal Register for more information concerning submission exceptions.

19. If an applicant experiences technical difficulties or has questions regarding the Grants.gov system, whom does he/she contact for assistance?

Contact the Grants.gov Support Desk at 1-800-518-4726 by phone or support@grants.gov by e-mail. For international callers, dial 606-545-5035. The Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except for federal holidays). GPA program officers are not able to answer technical questions about the Grants.gov system.

20. If an applicant has programmatic questions, whom should he/she contact?

For GPA-specific questions please e-mail GPA@ed.gov.

21. How will applicants be selected to receive grants?

For FY 2019, GPA short-term project applications will be reviewed by separate panels according to world area. GPA long-term projects will be reviewed by one panel across world areas. A three- to five-member panel of non-federal evaluators reviews each application. Each reviewer will prepare a written evaluation of the application and assign points for each selection criterion. A rank order from highest to lowest score will be developed for each of the two types of projects and will be used for funding purposes.

22. When will applicants be notified of their status?

Notifications may vary from year to year. For Fiscal Year 2019, GPA project applicants will be notified by late Spring 2019, informally via e-mail. All applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, will receive copies of evaluators' scores and comments for reference purposes.

23. What is an average size award?

The average size of an award for a GPA short-term project is $80,059, whereas the average award size for a GPA long-term project is $185,025.

The estimated range of awards for GPA short-term projects is between $50,000 and $100,000. The estimated range of awards for GPA long-term projects ranges from $50,000 to $250,000, as stated in the Federal Register.

24. How many grant awards are provided each year?
The program is estimated to award 10 short-term projects and 15 long-term projects, as stated in the Federal Register. However, the Department is not bound by any estimates in the Federal Register.

25. Are host family stays common in the short-term group programs?
It can be common, but is not required for GPA projects to propose host family visits and/or stays. However, the program encourages this both as an experiential learning experience as well as for potential cost saving measures, where appropriate.

26. For GPA short-term projects, can the position of Project Director be shared by multiple eligible participants?
GPA funds will provide for travel costs for one Project Director from the United States in all four project types. For the GPA Short-Term Seminar Project, Short-Term Curriculum Development Project, and Long-Term Advanced Overseas Intensive Language Training Project, travel funds for one additional administrative person may also be supported with GPA funds. These individuals' roles, qualifications, and specific responsibilities should be well justified in the proposal. If any other Key Personnel are necessary, they must be paid for with cost share funds.

27. How does the U.S. staff support themselves abroad? How can the grant pay for key personnel if no U.S.-based salaries/fringe can be paid for with GPA funds?
U.S.-based project expenses, including U.S.-based salary, fringe expenses, and stipends and honoraria for U.S. key personnel, should be covered through other sources such as in kind contributions or cost share from the applicant and/or partner institutions.

28. What level of language proficiency is required by the project participants?
For the Short-Term Group Research or Study Project, participants must have completed at least one semester of intensive language training and one course in area studies relevant to the project. For the GPA Long-Term Advanced Overseas Intensive Language Training Project, participants must have successfully completed at least two academic years of training in the language to be studied in the host country.

29. Can we view samples of previously funded successful projects?

If you follow this GPA Awards link you will be able to view the abstracts of successful applications from Short-Term and Long-Term projects that were submitted to and funded by the U.S. Department of Education in fiscal years 2008 to 2018. Keep in mind that GPA project rules and requirements may have changed since then.

If you would like to request a GPA application in its entirety, you must submit a FOIA request. Please click on this link to learn about how to request an application. The GPA resources link will lead you to further resources concerning the Group Projects Abroad application preparation and process.

30. Is it possible to visit more than one country?

For GPA short-term projects, yes, it is possible for projects to visit more than one country if it is applicable to the scope of the project. Applicants should thoroughly justify in the application narrative why it is necessary and appropriate for the project to visit more than one country and address issues concerning potential higher travel costs.

31. Can long-term applicants request to visit more than one country?

No. One of the critical components of the GPA long-term grant is to take advantage as much as possible of the foreign language in the host country and traveling to different countries would limit this foreign language exposure.

32. Can some participants go for four weeks and others for six to eight weeks?

For GPA short-term projects, all project participants should be in the country(ies) of study for a minimum of four weeks. It is possible that justification may be made for some participants to stay for a longer period of time, depending upon project activities and scope. These issues should be thoroughly addressed in the application narrative.

Participants on GPA advanced overseas intensive language training projects should remain in the program for the standard period of training, whether a summer, semester, academic or full year (8 week minimum).

33. For GPA advanced overseas intensive language training projects, what are the guidelines for determining whether a language program is intensive?

The language to be studied must be indigenous to the host country and maximum use shall be made of local institutions and personnel. Language training must be given at the advanced level (equivalent to that provided to students who have successfully completed at least two academic years of language training). The project must also be designed to take advantage of advanced foreign language training opportunities present in the country of study that are not available in the United States.

34. What is the grant cycle for the GPA program?

GPA Short-Term projects compete annually for grants with performance periods of 18 months. GPA Long-Term Advanced Overseas Intensive Language Training Projects compete annually as well, with a performance period of 24 months.

35. Do the project goals and objectives in the narrative need to map to the PMF forms, or do we select only one or two for PMFs? Are those goal/objectives the same as the ones in narrative or broader?

The project narrative and Project Goal Statement on the Performance Measure Form (PMF) should connect to each other.

As an applicant, you should complete at least two (2) Project Goal Statements, with Performance Measures and Activities listed for each.

36. Should we address the GPRA measure in the application, after receiving the grant award, or both?

You may discuss how you would respond to the GPRA measure; however, reviewers will be most interested in a detailed reply to the project specific goals and measures. If you are awarded the grant, you will then be required to respond to the GPRA measure (or measures) that are appropriate for your program.

37. What goes under "Other" in the budget line item?

Anything that is not included in one of the primary line items can be listed under the "Other" budget descriptor. Make sure that the costs are spelled out and the purpose for the expense is clear. It should be transparent and easy to see exactly what you're proposing. The costs listed under "Other" could include, but are not limited to, host country facility rental or speaker honoraria.

38. Can staff at the overseas partner agency/institution be compensated for their work of planning and managing for the time the educators are in the host country?

Yes, staff can be compensated, but it should be kept reasonable. Think about the overall allowable costs of the project. If the compensation for staff seems high, then the reviewers may also think that as well. Also, the grant funds from this program should not pay for full salaries for any position.

39. Can we recruit participants from K-12 school districts and community colleges, or should it be one of the two? Which institution should the project director and co- or sub-director come from?

Eligible participants are K-12 educators/administrators, postsecondary faculty and pre-service teachers (eligibility requirements are also posted on the GPA program website). A participant group can include any combination of K-12 teachers and/or postsecondary educators and administrators.

The project director is typically someone who is employed at the institution (2- or 4-year) from which they are applying.

40. Do we have to submit a day by day, lecture by lecture proposal, naming each of the presenters and the reading list? Or can it be detailed, but without the complete reading list or names of lectures?

Your proposal should be as detailed and specific as possible. Daily schedules, planned lecturers, and presenters should be clearly stated in the itinerary, as soon as that information is known.

41. Can GPA projects visit travel-warning countries?

Any GPA application proposing travel in a country with a travel warning will be disqualified. For a full list of travel alerts and warnings, please view the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories website. For a listing of all countries unavailable for 2019/2020 grant funding please view the Fulbright countries and regions page https://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries/regions

42. If "unsafe" at the time of the grant operation, then what? Assuming that the organization has extensive in-country safety experience and the educators are all on-board with participating, would they be allowed to go or would they need to postpone?

Any GPA application proposing travel to a country with a travel warning will be disqualified. If events occur and a travel warning is issued for one's host country after the grant is awarded, your institution would be forced to find another region or country to send the group of educators. The safety of the GPA program participants is our biggest concern.

43. What kinds of paperwork do we need to submit to the host country?

For all GPA projects, each grantee must contact the Embassy and/or Fulbright Commission to inform them of their upcoming travel. Before grant awards are made, the program staff in IFLE seeks approval from these entities, so they should be aware of your program. You should remind the Embassy and/or Fulbright Commission that the GPA program is a Department of Education (ED) program, and that ED contacted them already and received their approval; also, send them the list of participants, your in-country itinerary, and your one-page abstract. If they request additional information, within reason, you should send them that information as well. A list of US Embassies and their contact information can be found at https://www.usembassy.gov/. A list of Fulbright Commissions and their contact information can be found at https://eca.state.gov/fulbright/about-fulbright/funding-and-administration/fulbright-commissions.

44. Can the pre-departure orientation be spaced out over a few months, and can it include distance learning reading assignments, online discussion, and forum posting? Or are only three day pre-travel trainings allowed?

It is certainly allowable to do pre-departure orientations and meetings earlier in the performance period, especially if that includes distance learning. Many Project Directors do this for nationwide participant groups.

45. In the past few years, there has been a competitive preference priority for the incorporation of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) into the GPA project. What are the parameters for this?

There is a Competitive Preference Priority for the incorporation of Less Commonly Taught Languages. This priority has been awarded to applications that propose GPA short-term or GPA long-term projects that provide substantive training and thematic focus on any modern foreign language except French, German, or Spanish.

46. Are GPA long-term grantees required to administer pre- and post-language program evaluations to all participants?

Yes. IHEs, state departments of education, and educational organizations that receive a GPA long-term grant must have the appropriate language instructor administer pre-and-post language program evaluations to all participants. The language instructors are required to submit the evaluation results into the International Resource Information System (IRIS). The GPA grant may pay for costs associated with pre-and post-foreign language assessment in the host country.

47. Is the funding up front or cost reimbursable, for example to purchase airplane tickets?

Funding is given to the institution in an account. You "draw down" on those funds as they are needed. Any expenditure made in advance of receiving the award would be at the risk of the applicant. Airplane tickets must be approved by the program office PRIOR to purchase. You can work to have them placed "on hold" but purchases should not be made until approved. Also, all travel must be Fly America Act (FAA) compliant.

48. If we request $100,000 and our budget is cut to $80,000 - what would we do? Can we cut the number of participants?

This will be discussed with each grantee on a case-by-case basis.