



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

**Title:** Uaiakinan ao Uarokoan Toronibwaia I-Kiribati Activity (the “UUTI Activity”)

**Issuing Organization:** American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS (American Councils or AC).

**Budget Amount:** \$72,000 for cohort of 6 students

**Sponsoring Organization:** Millennium Challenge Corporation

**Request For Proposal Release Date:** October 19, 2026

**Proposal Submission Deadline:** November 20, 2026, 5:00 pm ET

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS (American Councils), a Washington-based Non-Governmental Organization, is seeking proposals from qualified non-profit educational institutions to manage host family and school placement of I-Kiribati high school students participating in an academic year exchange program to the U.S; organize enhancement activities; and provide ongoing monitoring and support to students. This academic year program runs from August 2027 to June 2028 and is part of the Uaiakinan ao Uarokoan Toronibwaia I-Kiribati Activity (the “UUTI Activity”). The selected applicant will manage placement for up to six UUTI students.

The UUTI Activity is a part of the MCC-Kiribati Threshold Program, a partnership between the US Government’s Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the Government of Kiribati. Funded by the American people, the program supports economic opportunities for the people of Kiribati while advancing U.S. strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific. American Councils for International Education implements the activity in cooperation with the Kiribati Ministry of Education.

### 2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The UUTI Activity aims to equip Kiribati youth with critical work readiness skills such as oral and written communication, cross-cultural workplace behavior, and English language skills to enhance their preparedness and competitiveness in the international labor market. The UUTI Activity seeks to provide three types of specialized study opportunities for Kiribati high school students: (1) an intensive three-week youth skills camp in Fiji, (2) an intensive four-week youth skills camp in the United States, and (3) a year-long scholarship at a high school in the United States. Through these MCC funded programs, students will gain language immersion and cultural enrichment vital in building work readiness skills.

American Councils is seeking a qualified U.S.-based non-profit organization to support the U.S. placement component of the UUTI Academic Year Program. The selected organization will place and support up to six (6) I-Kiribati high school students in U.S. host communities for the 2027-2028 academic year. Participants will attend accredited public high schools and live with volunteer host families while engaging in academic, cultural, leadership, and community-based activities designed to strengthen work-readiness, communication, and cross-cultural skills.

### UUTI program objectives

By participating in the UUTI Academic Year Program, participants are expected to develop the following skills. All participants take part in assessments prior to the program and again at the end of the program to measure learning gains.

- English language proficiency
  - Improved reading, grammar, listening, speaking, and writing skills
- Communication skills
  - Improved ability to verbally and in writing describe thoughts clearly; express opinions, provide suggestions and persuade; willingness/comfort to ask questions; skillful listening
- Cross-cultural workplace skills
  - Critical thinking skills; social skills; leadership; and teamwork
- Basic IT skills
  - Basic word processing; email; presentation skills; internet download and search, including understanding of online safety and information integrity.

### UUTI Academic Year participant profile

All participants in the UUTI Academic Year program are citizens of Kiribati and are currently enrolled in a secondary school in Kiribati. Students are between 16 and 18 years old and enrolled in the local equivalent of 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Some students may have participated in a previous UUTI Fiji or U.S. Camp program.

The expected English language levels of UUTI Academic Year participants is intermediate (A2 to B2 on the CEFR scale). The participants' English language proficiency will be assessed through the ELTiS (English Language Test for International Students) and scores are provided to the selected organization.

## **3. PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS:**

### **Millennium Challenge Corporation - Program Funder**



The Millennium Challenge Corporation is an independent U.S. government agency focused on advancing America's economic and strategic interests through results-driven foreign assistance. MCC's investments support large-scale infrastructure, strategic reforms, and economic modernization that deliver measurable returns. Countries and U.S. taxpayers mutually benefit from expanded commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses, reduced influence of competitors, and reinforced global environments aligned with the United States.

### **American Councils for International Education - Program Implementor**



American Councils for International Education is a premier, international nonprofit organization that strengthens international ties through excellence in academic, professional and cultural exchange, language acquisition, educational development, and research. American Councils' organizational philosophy is built upon the belief that international education should be accessible for all. That is why American Councils' focus is to advance scholarly research and cross-border learning through the design and implementation of educational programs grounded in key world languages, cultures, and regions. Through international training, cultural exchange, immersion learning, and public diplomacy, American Councils broadens individual perspectives and fosters personal and intellectual growth. On a grand scale, these efforts strengthen international and national security, build prosperity, and promote peace.

#### **4. MANDATORY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be considered eligible, applicants must meet all the following minimum requirements:

- Be a U.S.-based nonprofit organization recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Be eligible to receive and administer U.S. federal subawards and maintain all required registrations, including a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).
- Demonstrate at least five years of experience placing international secondary school students in U.S. host family and school settings, with at least 25-30 students annually within the last three years.
- Demonstrate at least three years of experience working on U.S. Government funded secondary school exchange programs.
- Maintain an established network of local coordinators and host family recruitment resources sufficient to support student placements nationwide.
- Be able to comply with all applicable federal regulations, safeguarding requirements, reporting requirements, and program monitoring requirements associated with this award.

Failure to meet any of the above requirements may result in the proposal being determined non-eligible and removed from further consideration.

#### **5. PARTNER ORGANIZATION SCOPE OF WORK**

**Period of Performance:** December 2026 through June 2028

**Number of Subaward recipients:** American Councils anticipates making one (1) subaward.

The selected subaward recipient(s) will be responsible for providing complete programmatic and administrative support for each of the components including the following broad components:

1. Host family recruitment, screening, placement, and support
2. School placement and enrollment
3. Local Coordinator Recruitment and Management
4. Participant Monitoring, Welfare, and Support
5. Incident Management and Emergency Response
6. Participant Orientations
7. Enhancement Programming
8. Reporting and Data Management
9. Coordination with American Councils

Please see below additional details of the UUTI Academic Year program for each of the components:

##### **1. Host Family Recruitment, Screening, Placement, and Support**

The selected organization shall:

- Recruit, screen, select, and support volunteer host families for all UUTI participants.
- Ensure all host family activities comply with J-1 Secondary School Student Program regulations.
- Conduct all required background checks, home inspections, interviews, reference checks, and host family approval processes in accordance with J-1 regulations.
- Conduct host family orientation and prepare host families to support participants throughout the program year.
- Maintain regular communication with host families and provide ongoing guidance and support.
- Assist host families and participants in addressing cultural adjustment issues, communication challenges, and other concerns.
- Develop contingency plans and identify alternative host family placements when necessary.

- Ensure that approved host family placements are finalized prior to participant arrival in the United States.

## **2. School Placement and Enrollment**

The selected organization shall:

- Secure enrollment for all participants in accredited public high schools where tuition is not charged or has been formally waived.
- Ensure school placements meet J-1 visa regulations for the secondary school student category (22 CFR 62.25)
- Coordinate enrollment and school registration activities prior to participant departure for the U.S.
- Maintain communication with school administrators, counselors, and teachers regarding participant progress, attendance, and well-being.
- Notify American Councils of any changes to school placements, enrollment status, or academic standing.

## **3. Local Coordinator Recruitment and Management**

The selected organization shall:

- Recruit, train, supervise, and support qualified local coordinators in accordance with J-1 visa regulations. Each student must have an assigned local coordinator within 120 miles of their host family home.
- Maintain local coordinator coverage consistent with all applicable Exchange Visitor Program requirements.
- Provide local coordinators with training, resources, and oversight necessary to support participant success and welfare.

## **4. Participant Monitoring, Welfare, and Support**

The selected organization shall:

- Monitor participant academic performance, attendance, social adjustment, extracurricular involvement, leadership development, and overall well-being throughout the academic year.
- Conduct monitoring activities consistent with all J-1 visa regulations.
- Maintain regular contact (at least once per month) with participants and document participant progress.
- Identify concerns affecting participant success and provide timely intervention and support.
- Collaborate with host families, schools, local coordinators, and American Councils to address participant needs.
- Ensure participant health, safety, and welfare remain the highest priority throughout the program year.
- Provide individualized support when academic, behavioral, health, or adjustment concerns arise.
- Coordinate with schools and host families to identify and facilitate appropriate accommodations when needed.

## **5. Incident Management and Emergency Response**

The selected organization shall:

- Maintain a 24-hour emergency response system for participants, host families, schools, and local coordinators.
- Designate staff responsible for participant welfare, incident response, and crisis management.
- Respond promptly to participant emergencies and coordinate appropriate follow-up actions.

- Notify American Councils within 24 hours of any major incident affecting a participant's health, safety, welfare, legal status, or program participation.
- Notify American Councils within three (3) business days of non-emergency incidents requiring documented intervention.
- Maintain written records of incidents, corrective actions, and case resolutions.
- Coordinate with American Councils regarding participant disciplinary matters, transfers, withdrawals, or early returns.

## **6. Participant Orientations**

The selected organization shall:

- Conduct an in-person arrival orientation shortly after participants arrive in their host communities. Ensure orientation content includes:
  - Program expectations and participant responsibilities;
  - Health, safety, and wellness guidance;
  - Cultural adjustment and conflict resolution strategies;
  - Available support resources;
  - Leadership and personal development opportunities; and
  - Expectations regarding academic participation and community engagement.
- Coordinate with American Councils in preparing participants for re-entry activities at the conclusion of the exchange program. All UUTI Academic Year participants will participate in a joint re-entry orientation organized by American Councils, but the selected organization is expected to work with American Councils on re-entry programming and travel to Washington, DC to support the re-entry orientation.
- Coordinate with American Councils regarding participant completion requirements and end-of-program activities.

## **7. Enhancement Programming**

The selected organization shall:

- Provide a minimum of one structured enhancement activity per semester focused on leadership development, career readiness, cultural exchange, entrepreneurship, innovation, or American society and institutions.
- Design activities that complement participants' academic experiences and promote meaningful engagement with their local communities.
- Encourage participation in community service projects, school activities, civic engagement opportunities, and leadership initiatives.
- Facilitate opportunities for UUTI participants to interact with other exchange students and internationally minded youth throughout the program year.
- Promote intercultural learning experiences that strengthen participants' leadership, communication, and professional skills.

## **8. Reporting and Data Management**

The selected organization shall:

- Submit quarterly program reports describing participant placements, program implementation activities, participant progress, and significant accomplishments or challenges.
- Submit financial reports in accordance with award requirements and timelines established by American Councils.
- Submit a final narrative report summarizing program activities, outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned.
- Maintain complete, accurate, and secure participant, host family, school, and local coordinator records

- Submit all required placement information through American Councils' online participant information system according to American Councils-established deadlines.
- Ensure placement records are complete and sufficient to support American Councils' reporting responsibilities to the U.S. Department of State.
- Promptly update participant records when placement information changes.
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## 9. Coordination with American Councils

The selected organization shall work closely with American Councils throughout the period of performance. American Councils will:

- Recruit and select participants and assign them to the selected organization
- Prepare students for their UUTI Academic Year program via meetings in Kiribati, pre-program document collection, J-1 visa application support, and medical reviews.
- Conduct a multi-day pre-departure orientation in Fiji, during which participants will attend visa interviews at the U.S. Embassy.
- Conduct pre-program and post-program assessments to test students' knowledge of programmatic learning goals.
- Arrange round trip travel for UUTI participants from home of record to host community in U.S.
- Arrange for health insurance that meets J-1 visa requirements.
- Provide each participant with a laptop and a mobile phone to use during their time on program in the U.S., including a prepaid phone plan.
- Conduct re-entry programming in Washington, DC to prepare participants for their return home to Kiribati. American Councils will organize all travel, hotels, meals, and local transportation, as well as programming related expenses. The selected organization is expected to travel to Washington, DC to support the re-entry orientation program.
- Maintain communication with participants' natural parents throughout the program.
- Oversee overall program coordination and monitor participant health, safety, and welfare.

## 6. UUTI ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAM MAJOR TIMELINE

- **November 20, 2026, by 5 PM Eastern Time: U.S. organization proposal deadline**
- December 4, 2026: Selection of placement organization sub-awardee
- December 2026: Performance period begins
- Mid-December 2026: UUTI Academic Year student file distribution
- August 2027: Placement deadline; students participate in pre-departure orientation in Fiji
- August 27, 2027 (tentative): UUTI students arrive in host communities in the U.S.
- April 2028: Re-entry orientation in Washington, DC
- Early June 2028: Students travel home to Kiribati
- Early July 2028: Final reporting

## 7. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

- Interested U.S. non-profit organizations are invited to submit their proposals and required attachments via email to [uuti@americancouncils.org](mailto:uuti@americancouncils.org) either as attachments or by sharing a link to a Dropbox with the requested files.
- Proposal submission deadline: **November 20, 2026, 5:00 PM ET**

Please include the following in the proposal:

1. **Cover Sheet** (*Appendix A*)

2. **Proposal Narrative:** A proposal narrative not to exceed 10 single-spaced pages addressing the scope of work and each of the selection criteria. Narrative should include the following sections:
  - Organizational Overview
  - Relevant Experience
  - Host Family Recruitment Plan
  - School Placement Plan
  - Participant Monitoring Plan
  - Staffing Plan
  - Risk Management Approach
  - Enhancement Programming
3. **Budget Details:** A detailed budget and budget narrative for the development and delivery of the program not exceeding the ceiling amount of \$72,000 for up to six (6) students
4. **Required Attachments:**
  - a) Host Family Recruitment and Support Plan
  - b) Participant Monitoring and Support Plan
  - c) School Placement Strategy
  - d) Chart of staff who will work on the project. Please include their project roles, responsibilities, and relevant experience.
  - e) Two-page (maximum) resumes of staff that will work on the project
  - f) Organizational experience with J-1 secondary school student programs
  - g) Organizational experience working with secondary school students from the Pacific region
  - h) Evidence of 501(c)(3) status
  - i) Most recent NICRA if applicable (please include links if available).
  - j) Most recent Single-Audit report (please include links if available).

## 8. RECIPIENT SELECTION CRITERIA:

American Councils will select an organization for the placement subaward based on the following criteria (not listed in order of importance):

- Professional experience of the staff who will be involved in the project. The proposal should demonstrate the staff's ability to:
  - Oversee project execution
  - Adhere to agreement requirements
  - Administer a J-1 visa secondary school program
- Quality of participant placement, monitoring, and support plans
- Host family recruitment strategy
- Demonstrated experience working on U.S. Government funded secondary school exchange programs
- Demonstrated experience working with secondary school students from the Pacific region
- Staffing plan and local coordinator network
- Cost effectiveness and budget justification

## 9. PROJECT BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

**Award Ceiling:** The total ceiling amount is \$72,000 for placement and support of up to six participants, not to exceed \$12,000 per participant. Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the program.

American Councils through its UUTI grant will arrange and pay for the following:

- Pre-program participant preparations and support, including medical reviews, passport fees, and domestic travel
- A multi-day Pre-Departure Orientation conducted in Fiji,

- U.S. J-1 visa support and fees
- Round-trip airfare from Kiribati to/from the host community in the United States along with travel related expenses
- For any mid-year participant moves that require airfare, American Councils will provide flights.
- Medical insurance,
- Computers and phones for student use during the academic year; a phone plan covering domestic calls
- Re-entry workshop travel and orientation costs
- Reimbursement of accommodations as required for students with disabilities
- Travel costs for one staff person from placement organization to attend three-day re-entry orientation in Washington, DC

#### Subaward recipient budget

Applicants must provide a summary budget and breakdowns reflecting administrative and program expenses by line item and costs per student. Please submit a comprehensive line-item budget including an explanatory budget narrative. The budget should distinguish between participant costs and non-participant costs.

Allowable costs may include but are not limited to:

- Salaries and benefits, supplies, and communications
- Placement related expenses including host family recruitment and screening
- Local Coordinator support, including support of home/community visits
- Honoraria and stipends for non-salaried staff and volunteers
- Orientations for participants and host families
- Participant monitoring and welfare activities
- Enhancement programming
- Participant monthly allowances (**Required:** \$200 per month per participant for 10 months)
- Participant incidentals allowance for reimbursement of host family for school-related and other allowable expenses (**Required:** \$500 per participant)
- Emergency funds (**Required:** \$100 per participant)

Participant monthly allowances, incidentals allowances, and emergency funds must be included and budgeted for at the rate listed above.

*Please note that following costs are not allowed by the program:*

Entertainment expenses for activities that are substantially of a recreational character and do not include language learning or skills development components, including but not limited to:

- Entrance fees at sporting events,
- Theatrical and musical productions,
- Amusement parks.

There is no cost share requirement for this subaward.

## **10. COMPLIANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

The selected organization will be required to comply with all applicable federal regulations, award terms and conditions, and policies associated with the UUTI Activity and any underlying funding agreements. At a minimum, the selected organization must:

- Maintain an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) throughout the period of performance.

- Comply with applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.
- Certify that the organization is not suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded from participation in federal assistance programs.
- Maintain records related to program implementation, participant services, and financial management for the period required by applicable federal regulations and make such records available for monitoring, audit, or inspection upon request.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws and regulations.
- Maintain and implement policies and procedures designed to safeguard minors and protect program participants from abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, and other forms of misconduct.
- Comply with applicable Trafficking in Persons requirements and take appropriate measures to prevent, detect, and report any violations.
- Participate in monitoring activities conducted by UUTI, MCC, or their authorized representatives and provide requested documentation in a timely manner.

#### **11. AMERICAN COUNCILS CONTACT INFORMATION:**

For any inquiries or clarifications regarding this Request for Proposal, we kindly request that you submit your questions in writing via email to [uuti@americancouncils.org](mailto:uuti@americancouncils.org). To ensure fairness to all applicants, all responses will also be provided in writing. The deadline for submitting inquiries is November 16, 2026, 5:00 PM ET. Inquiries sent after November 16 are not guaranteed to be resolved before the November 20 proposal submission deadline. Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to cancel this RFP at any time. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in this RFP.

## Appendix A

Top of Form

### UAIKINAN AO UAROKOAN TORONIBWAIA I-KIRIBATI ACTIVITY: ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAM

#### U.S. NON-PROFIT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

##### I. Application Contact Information

###### 1. Name of Organization:

###### 2. Principal Contact for processing the proposal

Title: ☐ Dr. ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ Miss

Contact Name: \_

Job Title:

Office:

City:

State:

Zip:

Work Phone: ( \_ ) \_ \_

Fax: ( \_ ) \_ \_

Email:

###### II. Requested Sub-award Amount (Maximum \$72,000):

###### III. Number of Students Proposed for Placement (Up to 6)

###### IV. UEI Number:

##### Certification

By signing this document I certify that:

- All of the information contained herein is true and accurate
- The document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant
- The submission of this proposal does not entail a formal obligation to work with American Councils on the UUTI Academic Year program

U.S. Non-profit Organization Representative  
(Applicant) Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Non-profit Organization Representative  
(Applicant) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### UUTI ACTIVITY

#### BUDGET SUMMARY TEMPLATE

| Item Description                      | Amount Requested |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Personnel                             |                  |
| Fringe Benefits                       |                  |
| Host Family Recruitment and Screening |                  |
| Local Coordinator Costs               |                  |
| Student Monthly Allowances            |                  |
| Student Incidental Allowances         |                  |
| Enhancements                          |                  |
| Staff Travel                          |                  |
| Supplies                              |                  |
| Indirect Charges                      |                  |
| TOTAL                                 |                  |