1.	Solicitation No.	089224/AK
2.	Solicitation Name	RFP- Fulbright Student Website Maintenance and Development
3.	Issue Date	August 2, 2024
4.	Closing Date	August 26, 2024
5.	Solicitation Amendment No.	2
6.	Solicitation Amendment Date	August 14, 2024

7. The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in Item 9 below.

8. The hour and dates specified for receipt of proposals/quotations: ☒ is not extended; ☐ is extended as described in Item 9 below.

9. Description of Amendment/Modification:

The purpose of this solicitation amendment is to inform prospective offerors/bidders that the above numbered solicitation is hereby amended to provide responses to questions as follows.

The RFP outlines potential future projects, such as a complete website redesign and platform change. Can you provide more details on the anticipated timeline and budget for these projects?	Potential future projects will be determined based on the needs of the Program sponsor and budget.
How does the IIE prioritize enhancements or new features based on the availability of funds? Is there a process for proposing and approving these changes?	IIE has an internal process.
What is the budget allocated to the project?	The budget will be determined based on the proposals received and the overall program budget.
The RFP document states payment terms of net thirty (30) days after satisfactory completion of each deliverable. Are	A payment schedule can be negotiated for larger projects if necessary.

there any provisions for milestone-based payments, especially for larger projects or significant updates?	
You're requesting labor rates (in Attachment B) but also a "total cost proposed" (under §6, page 6). However, the nature of support is inherently variable, both over time as well as across support roles. Can you please clarify your expectations for how you would like us to accommodate this variability in our pricing? A "total cost" will likely yield a high cost as vendors will need to reserve time on a support team whether or not that time is used. Is this your intention?	Rates will be sufficient.
How should this project be billed? Fixed-bid deliverables based, hourly, monthly retainer, or something else?	A quarterly hourly retainer is preferred for maintenance, but this can be negotiated.
When does your organization's fiscal year start?	IIE's fiscal year starts on October 1.
What specific issues or limitations do you currently face with your existing websites on Joomla and WordPress platforms?	No major issues, but the Joomla web editor could be more user friendly as we have a number of external users who edit the awards catalog and the design of the pages could be improved visually
Regarding the proposal to improve user experience on mobile devices, are there specific issues with the current design that need	The website currently works in mobile, but the site navigation could be improved.

to be addressed or specific features that should be prioritized?	
The RFP mentions 508 compliance for accessibility. How confident are you that all sites currently follow section 508 standards? Does an accessibility scan need to be performed and should accessibility remediation be part of this SOW?	The current site is required to follow section 508 standards.
Have the website(s) experienced downtime or significant issues within the last 90 days?	No.
Can you provide us access to the CCMS site? It is password-protected and therefore we can't evaluate its structure or content.	No
How many of the scoped sites are on Joomla and is all code managed within code management system.	There are three CMS systems for https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/ , https://us.fulbrightonline.org/ and the country specific content (U.S. Student Awards Catalog - https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/award-search and the PDR section - https://us.fulbrightonline.org/pdr). All CMS systems are on Joomla and most code is managed through them but not all. https://blog.fulbrightonline.org/ is on wordpress but will be archived and does not need to be supported,
Can you provide current website traffic statistics, including average monthly visitors, page views, and user demographics?	https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/ - 200k -300k views per month and 40k-100k users per month. https://us.fulbrightonline.org/ - 500k-1.25 mill views per month and 100k-200k users per month
For the development/design of Fulbrightonline.org & U.S. Student Awards Catalog to improve user experience, does IIE have the website analytics and data on user behavior in hand or	IIE has Google Analytics data on page views and users but not user behavior data.

does the contractor need to conduct the same before proceeding to development part?	
For hosting considerations, can we get the following information: **Anticipated Uptime Guarantee** **Average Pageviews per month** **Average Visits per month** **Data storage** **Concurrent user sessions** **Number of doc routes** **Page load time** **Peak period traffic** **Is a Content Delivery Network needed** **Is a Web Application Firewall (WAF) needed** **Do you happen to know if you need personalization?**	Hosting/storage not applicable. No content delivery system needed.
Do you have comprehensive documentation on the design/UX and the technical infrastructure (DevOps, production workflow, CMS, integrations, configuration, etc.) of all sites to be supported? Is that documentation kept current?	No.
What version of Google Analytics is implemented and do all URLS share the same account?	Currently utilize GA4 and https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/ and https://us.fulbrightonline.org/ are on different accounts
What types of reports and analytics are	Currently utilize GA4 standard reports for user analytics.

important for your operations?	
Is hosting a part of this project? If so, who is your current host and are you open to alternatives?	See page 8 of RFP.
Are there any existing custom functionalities or integrations on your current websites that need to be preserved or enhanced?	All the current functionality of the site needs to be preserved.
Are there existing third-party integrations or tools currently in use that must be maintained, and are there plans to introduce new integrations?	Okta.
Similarly, what automated tools does IIE have in place to regularly measure…? a. Content quality / relevance b. SEO performance c. Accessibility compliance (WCAG 2.x AA)	None currently.
Request to please provide an estimate of the total number of pages currently housed on the websites. It would help if the total estimated pages are provided for each site. This information will assist us in accurately assessing the resources required for ongoing updates and maintenance	https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/ - Approx 300 pages. https://us.fulbrightonline.org - Approx 900 pages
We understand that the existing website is built using Joomla and	See page 8 of RFP.

WordPress and is hosted on Azure. Is there any other technology that was used to design the existing website?	
Do we have any integration with any DAM(Digital Asset Management) system?	No.
Do issues exist between the staging site(s) and live production site(s)?	No.
Do you already have a testing environment set up for each site?	Yes.
The RFP doc mentions that The Fulbright Student program currently maintains two primary websites, and three "secondary" sites, as well as an email account. However, we see the below 4 websites listed - Can u clarify if the 5 sites mentioned include the email account Fulbrightmail OR is there any other site not mentioned? If not, then please list the 5th website.	There is one domain (fulbrightonline.org), with two subdomains - https://us.fulbrightonline.org/ and https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/. However, there are three CMS systems for https://us.fulbrightonline.org/, https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/ and for the country specific content shown in the U.S. Student Awards Catalog (https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/award-search) and the PDR pages (https://us.fulbrightonline.org/pdr). https://blog.fulbrightonline.org/ is on wordpress but will be archived and does not need to be supported,
4. Can you please clarify the URL of the "Fulbright Scholar website" you mention in §5 item 2?	https://fulbrightscholars.org/
8. Can you explain why there are separate subdomains for US and Foreign sites?	These are two different programs and we want to keep the content/resources for each program separate.
Website migration costs for new website; what URLs are assumed to be migrated?	https://us.fulbrightonline.org/ and https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/. https://blog.fulbrightonline.org/ will be archived.

https://us.fulbrightonline.org/ **https://blog.fulbrightonline.org/** **https://foreign.fulbrightonline.org/**	
Can you describe the types of user roles and permissions required for the different administrative levels, and the requests generated by users.	**Applicants** - View website **Current Grantees** - View Website via password protected section. **Fulbright Program Advisors** – View FPA password protected section and edit FPA section of Website **ECA** - Edit awards and PDR section of Website, **Commissions and Posts** - Edit awards and PDR section of Website **IIE Staff** - - Edit awards and PDR section of Website **IIE Admin** – Edit and Administer all parts of website. Content updates are made throughout the year, but a high frequency of updates are made from January through March.
The RFP mentions password-protected sections and documents. How are user accounts being maintained and authenticated? Are user accounts contained in the CMS itself or are the websites integrated with a third-party CRM or authentication system? If so, is maintenance and support of those systems part of this SOW? Please provide a detailed description of how you are maintaining and authenticating users.	Users are maintained and authenticated via Okta.
Does each website have its own site admin responsible for that particular domain?	The same IIE admin is responsible for both domains.
The Statement of Work (starting on page 8 of the RFP) states several	These are already functions of the website.

functions that the websites "should" do. It's unclear to us if the websites already perform these functions or if the chosen vendor should create this new functionality. For example "The PDR content also needs to be transmitted to the Fulbright Scholar website…via an API" and "It should also allow multiple levels of administrative access". Do the websites already do these things or is it part of the scope to add these new functions?	
As an offshore development company, we would like to confirm our eligibility to bid for this requirement. Ahex Technologies, an ISO 9001 & 27001 certified company, was established in 2009. We have offices in Delaware (US) and Hyderabad (India), serving clients across North America, Europe, and the Asia Pacific. We specialize in MEAN Stack, MERN Stack, WordPress, .Net, Python, Next.js, Tailwind CSS, Material UI, AWS, Azure, and more.	Vendors registered in the U.S. are eligible.
Are there any specific new technologies or innovative solutions you are particularly interested in exploring	Refer to page 10 of RFP.

for future enhancements?	
The scope includes improving the "user experience of U.S. Student Awards Catalog." Can you clarify specific areas where enhancements are needed, such as navigation, search functionality, or content display?	Improve search functionality.
In Attachment A, §B, you reference "refreshing design and navigation" of fulbrightonline.org. When making changes to the design and navigation, you're in effect redesigning the site (with all that entails). Are you prepared for that level of effort for this contract?	Yes.
The proposal mentions potential upgrades and redesigns, including AI-enhanced search and a potential AI-powered chat function. Are there any preferred technologies or existing integrations that these features should align with?	There are no existing technologies.
Do you want the vendor to handle the discovery and strategy phases?	Yes.
Can we assume a formal CAB approval process will be involved in this project?	An IIE CAB approval process will be involved in the project.
We prefer to conduct our discovery program	No, but IIE will not cover assosciated travel costs for in-person meetings.

in-person with our clients. Do you have a preference for in-person versus remote discovery?	
What project management process will work best for this project: waterfall, agile, a hybrid of those, or something different?	This can be determined by the vendor.
There are two routes to be taken, Templated Design or Custom Design. Custom design takes much longer, and can add a lot of expense to the project, whereas (assuming we stick with WordPress) there are thousands of great templates to start from. With a template in hand, we can then do changes and edits to personalize it for your company. Is that an option for this project, or are you committed to a full custom graphic design process?	Templates can be used if they meet the Fulbright branding guidelines.
How many hours of support are you expecting per week or month for the new website?	This will be negotiated based on the proposals.
What level of training will you require after the website project is complete? Will you just need content contributor training on the CMS or will you need a deeper, more technical developer training?	If a new CMS is proposed, content contributor training may be required.

Can you expand on the motivation for the project?	As required by our procurement policy, we conduct an RFP every five years.
Have you ever worked with any Canadian vendors? If not, are you opposed to the idea? Are there any potential funding issues that may make this impossible?	We are able to work with Canadian vendors.
The RFP states "The Fulbright Program is seeking a full service website maintenance and development company with expertise in development, design, and maintenance of the websites of the Fulbright student programs." Are you looking for a company that already has experience with Fulbright student programs or is one that has experience in development, design, and maintenance of websites (without specific Fullbright experience) acceptable?	Vendors do not need prior experience of the Fulbright Program.
The RFP specifies that proposals should not exceed a 6MB limit in PDF format. Can supplementary materials, such as portfolio samples or testimonials, be submitted in separate files or through different formats?	Yes, but this is not required.
Can you clarify the expectations for ensuring compliance with sponsors'	Fulbright Branding and Communications Guidelines can be found here - https://www.fulbrightsource.net/portals/source/#asset/28268 and https://eca.state.gov/files/BoxFiles/ECA/Communications_Guidance_for_ECA_Recipient_Organizations.pdf

communications guidance, particularly in terms of content presentation and branding?	
Will new content need to be written for the websites? If so, how much help are you expecting from your chosen partner? Do you need content strategy, copywriting, or copy editing services?	No.
Will content need to be presented in languages other than English? If so, which ones?	No.
If multiple languages are needed, who will provide the translated content and should the translated content be human-translated or will a machine translation (such as Google Translate) suffice?	N/A
It looks like this is mainly a maintenance RFP for these sites, is that correct?	This a maintenance RFP, but website development will be needed as detailed in the RFP.
Is submitting the ISO 27001 Certification or (SOC) 2 Type 2 Attestation with our proposal mandatory or can it be submitted after being awarded?	The selected vendor will have to complete IIE's Third-Party IT Risk Management assessment.
Vendors who can not furnish ISO 27001 and SOC 2 Type 2 can they submit the NIST CSF assessment to fulfill the Third-Party IT Risk Management Process (TPRM)?	Same as above.

Regarding Attachment B: Cost Proposal Template, under the heading "Proposed rates for site build if required" do we need to quote the rates considering all the 5 sites mentioned in the RFP or is it related to a particular site? Please clarify.	Please provide rates for the whole project proposal.
Do we need to include proposed enhancement (E) as part of the proposal estimate? or it's just a roadmap to plan for future?	Yes.
How many references, letters of recommendation, or past projects do you require (see §5)?	Please see page 5 of the RFP.
The Cost Proposal Template (Attachment B) seems oriented toward a full website redesign which it seems from the RFP is not necessarily under consideration at this point. Do you require us to complete that grid, or is this just boilerplate (and therefore, we would skip the first table and just provide you labor rates (and escalated rates for future contract years) in the second table)?	Please provide labor rates.
Do you require SOC2 Type 2 attestation for a vendor to bid on this, or only if the vendor is selected must they	The selected vendor will complete the Third Party IT Risk Management assessment.

complete this prior to contracting?	
Under the Additional Requirements, should we provide those certifications etc. as part of our response or will those be required if we are awarded this contract?	The selected vendor will have to provide certifications.
Please confirm the due date, time, and preferred submission method of the proposal.	See page 2 of RFP.
Can you please extend the due date to allow vendors a minimum of 3 weeks to respond after questions have been answered?	No.
Will proposals be evaluated digitally, or will they be printed for evaluation?	Digitally.
Is it acceptable to share proposal documents and attachments using Google?	No.
As the contract is funded by the USG, are you expecting/requiring GSA rates or commercial rates?	GSA rates.
Is the work required to be performed on-site or can it be performed remotely from the US, offshore (India), or in a hybrid model?	Only remotely.
Do all properties have a mandate to persist? Can they be combined into one property as part of the project plan?	They must remain separate.
What new functionality will the websites need	This will be determined during the negotiations with the selected vendor.

to include? Besides those described in the RFP, are there any features or functions on the current sites that need to be made available?	
The RFP mentions the integration of an AI-powered chat function. Do you already have chat software selected? It's unclear if integrating the chat function should be part of this SOW. Please clarify.	No, AI powered chat function has not been selected.
For the potential addition of an AI-powered chat function, what specific functionalities are expected, such as handling multi-language support or integrating with existing support systems?	This is still to be determined.
Are you staffed to provide the "Fallback Mechanism" for the AI-powered chat function, or are you expecting the vendor to provide that service?	Most of the modern AI-powered chatbots have this capability already.
What are the specific requirements for maintaining API functionality with external sites, particularly regarding data exchange, security, and compliance?	Content from PDR section of website is transmitted via API to https://fulbrightscholars.org/pdr
As mentioned in the RFP – "The PDR content needs to be transmitted to the Fulbright Scholar website via an API". We understand that the	Correct

APIs must be created from scratch to fulfill this requirement. Is our understanding correct?	
Should the content be available via API for other channels or services to consume?	Some content will need to be available.
Do you have a preference for a specific Content Management System (CMS) for the new website? If so, which CMS do you prefer, and are there any specific functionalities or features you require from the CMS?	Joomla is preferred but open to others.
What are your main criteria for selecting a CMS?	It needs to effectively fulfill all the functions of the website and provide a good user experience for frontend and backend users.
Are there any specific editorial processes that the CMS should support?	It will need to support the editing of the US Student Award catalog and PDR pages which involves a multi-stage editing and review process with over 100 external users.
What are your future growth plans, and how should the CMS accommodate these?	See page 10 of RFP.
What systems will the CMS need to integrate with? Are there any third-party services or APIs that must be integrated with the CMS?	Okta.
The RFP mentions databases to be maintained. Is this referring to only the CMS databases or are there other databases that need to be maintained? Please describe in detail.	Each site has its own instance of Joomla and their own DBs.

Does TCC have a technical preference that needs to be considered during the design and development of the site?	No.
Please clarify if you are looking for a new host for the website or would you like to stay with the current host / Microsoft Azure environment.	See page 8 of RFP.
Are there other third-party systems or services that need to be integrated with the website?	Okta.
Do we need any payment integration for donation or subscription fee features in scope?	No.
Is there any integration between the website & payment gateway in scope for the future?	No.
How frequently should the contractor perform software and plugin updates? Is there a specific schedule or criteria for these updates?	Quarterly and/or as needed.
What specific security measures are expected for managing the website and its databases, especially concerning personal data protection and compliance with GDPR?	The site needs to comply with GDPR and more information about data privacy can be found here - https://www.iie.org/privacy/.
Can you detail the expected frequency and types of reports required for the quarterly check-ups, particularly concerning	They are expected quarterly.

site traffic statistics and search engine analysis?	
Can you clarify your expectations for after-hours support? Are you looking for 24/7/365 on-call support (with the response times as noted on page 9), or are your needs for after-hours (both after business hours on weekdays as well as weekend and holiday) support episodic and plannable?	Currently, our vendor is available 7 days a week, approximately 15 hours a day.
Approximately how often do you expect you will need web support services? Several times per week? Monthly?	This varies seasonally, support can be required daily during busy periods but then go down to bi-weekly or monthly.
We are assuming that the static content will be provided by TCC for the website. Is our assumption correct?	Yes, IIE/ECA will create the content.
What are your expectations for website performance, including load times, uptime, and scalability?	2-3 second average load time, uptime 99% or higher and should be able to handle high volumes of traffic during peak season.
Will the system store any personally identifiable information? If so, will this data be stored locally or with another provider?	No.
Regarding the ability to maintain custom-built site search engines, what specific functionalities or capabilities should be prioritized?	It is a permission-based search engine in which certain sections of the site are viewable and accessible to certain user groups.
Are you open to the integration of a new	Yes, we are open to other options.

search engine to accomplish the requests in Section E of the SOW?	
What specific security measures are expected to be implemented for maintaining website integrity, particularly concerning the prevention of unauthorized access and data breaches?	To be negotiated with the selected vendor.
Do you want to manage all 5 sites in a single admin platform with extended user permissions?	Yes, this can be considered if the site maintains all the current user permissions and editing workflows.
How many content editors and administrators will be using the CMS?	Approx 5-10 administrators and over 1000 content editors.
What kind of content approval workflows do you need?	Content updates on some of the sites require an approval process before going live.
Is there any existing user research feedback that we can access? Do you want the vendor to conduct additional user research? If so, how many focus groups are you planning to conduct?	No.
Are there any existing websites that you admire or would like to use as inspiration for this project?	https://fulbrightscholars.org/, https://www.fulbrightprogram.org/, https://www.peacecorps.gov/
Who are the people that will be actively involved in the project and the decision making process? Is this being overseen by a particular department or a particular person?	Overseen by Fulbright and shared IT team at IIE.

Is there a shared internal IT team managing all these properties, or are there separate teams for each property?	Yes.
Can you provide more details about the project timeline, including any specific milestones or deadlines for deliverables?	The goal for work to start is in October 2024 and to launch in March/April 2025.
If a proposed resource becomes unavailable or is allocated to any other project at the time of the award/ project start date can we deploy another resource with the same/ similar experience and skillset?	Yes, that is fine.
Do you need any personalization features scoped for this project?	Customization will likely be needed.
Do you capture any user information on the website currently? or has any membership service been implemented?	No, this not needed other than what is gathered through Google Analytics.
Website forms are sent to email directly or do you need any dashboard to view and respond from the website?	To email directly, dashboards are not needed.
Are you open to a content strategy phase to inform the final architecture?	Yes, this can be considered.

END OF AMENDMENT