U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. MISSION POLAND
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

Funding Opportunity Title: Fostering Civic Engagement, Democratic Participation, and Youth Leadership

Funding Opportunity Number: WAW-NOFO-FY24-06

Deadline for Applications: July 12, 2024

CFDA Number: 19.900 AEECA/ESF PD Programs

Number of Awards and Amounts: Up to two awards, ranging from a minimum of $50,000 to a maximum of $150,000

Total Amount Available: $150,000

Contact Email: grantspoland@state.gov

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Diplomacy Section at the U.S. Mission in Poland (PDS Poland) welcomes proposals for projects to enhance the involvement of young people in civic life and empower them to implement projects in their communities to promote democratic participation and strengthen democratic values. Awards will be made subject to the availability of appropriated funds and final selection. This NOFO is for projects beginning no earlier than September 30, 2024. The deadline for this NOFO, #WAW-NOFO-FY24-06, is July 12, 2024. Please carefully follow all intructions below.

Award amounts: Up to two (2) awards ranging from a minimum of $50,000 to a maximum of $150,000

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

PDS Poland invites proposals to equip the next generation of Polish leaders (aged 15 – 30) to implement impactful civic engagement programs focused on the promotion of human rights, democratic values, and the rule of law. Activities should equip participants with skills to successsfully navigate the complexities of their society, engage constructively, and contribute meaningfully to their community's development and Poland's future. Projects should also be designed with the intent of fostering enduring connections and collaboration among participants after the project's conclusion.

PRIORITY PROGRAMMING AREAS:

A successful proposal will include a comprehensive calendar of activities up to 36 months that include the following three elements:

1. A series of skills-building workshops and/or interactive trainings;

2. Support for implementation of participant-led community projects;

3. A minimum of 12 months of ongoing mentoring and networking opportunities for participants following the completion of elements 1 and 2 above.

All projects must address the development of youth leadership, critical thinking, project management skills, and resilience as well as at least one of below programming areas:

- **Human Rights Engagement and Problem-Solving**: Initiatives promoting human rights and tolerance, focused on active community engagement, including local analysis of challenges and identification of solutions.

- **Promoting Democratic Participation:** Programs that encourage democratic involvement, and increase youth participation in the public policy process, including collaboration with local governments, communities, NGOs, civil society organizations, and/or the private sector. Programs should focus on teaching advocacy skills and the formulation of policy reforms to develop strategies addressing local issues to affect meaningful change.

- **Inclusive Engagement**: Strategies for engaging typically civically inactive youth and ensuring that the needs and rights of minority communities are considered in building safe and tolerant environments.

Examples of types of activities that can be included in proposals:

1. Projects organized and carried out by youth (aged 15 - 30) that focus on the themes mentioned above. Initiatives aimed at empowering young people by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively plan and execute community projects.
2. Programs that train educators to equip young people (aged 15 - 30) with the necessary skills (including resilience) to carry out civic engagement projects (this type of activity must include a youth-implemented project) in their communities.
3. Mentoring and networking events.

PDS Poland welcomes proposals that incorporate the involvement of U.S. experts, trainers, models, and/or best practices, as appropriate.

Participants and Audiences: Proposals should describe both the primary and secondary audiences for the program, including anticipated numbers to be reached. Primary audiences are those who will participate directly in the program, while secondary audiences are those who will be reached by the project's primary audiences as a result of their participation (For example, a workshop for educators would have teachers as the primary audience and the students in their classrooms organizing a civic engagement project in their local communities as the secondary audience). Programs ensuring gender parity and socio-economic inclusion across all its activities are encouraged. Applicants should be as specific as possible in their proposals about their project's primary audience and how they will engage them through programming.

The principal method of engagement will be through in-person programming. Virtual engagement may be a part of the overall strategy, augmenting in-person programming.

Additional proposal elements to note:

- The grantee is expected to lead recruitment efforts of program participants, ensuring DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and access) principles are promoted in the recruitment process.
- U.S. Mission Poland will amplify program opportunities on its social media platforms.
- The language of instruction can be English and/or Polish.
- The proposal must include detailed information about the project members/coordinators, including CV and other relevant professional experience.
- The trainers or facilitators of the program should be experienced professionals working in the field.
- The proposal must include a proposed activity schedule and monitoring and evaluation plan to measure program impact.
- Marketing and outreach strategies to recruit target program participants are required.

Activities that *are not* typically funded include, but are not limited to:

- Projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to individual or single party electoral campaigns;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Exchange programs; including travel to the U.S.
- Social welfare projects;
- Trade activities; fundraising campaigns; commercial projects; scientific research; construction projects; projects whose primary aim is the institutional development of the organization itself;
- Conferences, lectures, scientific research, studies, etc.;
- Book publishing or translation for the purposes of publishing a book;
- Ongoing salary costs of organization staff;
- Equipment, including but not limited to, cameras and for the office; and
- Food and drink beyond the cost of coffee breaks and working lunches (alcohol will not be funded).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

This notice is subject to the availability of funding. PDS Poland reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Length of performance period: Up to 36 months. PDS Poland will consider applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

Number of awards anticipated: Up to 2 awards

Award amounts: Awards may range from a minimum of $50,000 to a maximum of $150,000

Total available funding: Approximately $150,000

Authorizing legislation, type, and year of funding: Fiscal Year 2023 AEECA Funding

Anticipated program start date: Awards under this Funding Opportunity must be issued before the end of the United States Federal Fiscal Year 2024 on September 30, 2024. Activities funded through an award under this Funding Opportunity must be executed within 36 months after the award is signed. **Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals well in advance of the intended project start date** and flexible start dates are preferred as funding may not be available in time for the specific timeline you propose, but project work must begin before the end of the 2024 calendar year. Costs incurred in preparing the application or prior to the award date are not eligible for funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant or Cooperative Agreement. Cooperative Agreements are different from grants in that PDS Poland staff are actively involved in program activities beyond routine monitoring, i.e., "substantial involvement". The appropriate instrument may vary depending on the nature of the project proposed and will be determined during pre-award negotiations with successful applicants. Examples of substantial involvement include, but are not limited to, assistance in identifying and/or approving U.S. participants and speakers; approval of programming calendar, event dates, and themes; and joint activities to publicize an event.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 36 months. The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants**

- Appropriately registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience;
- Non-profit or governmental educational institutions including public libraries, schools, and universities;
- For-profit or commercial entities.

To be eligible for consideration, the applicant organization must be registered to operate in Poland, or if this is not the case, they are strongly encouraged to partner with a local Polish organization registered to operate in Poland.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost sharing is allowed, but not required and will not impact funding decisions.

3. **Other Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible to receive an award, **all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on**

www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for more information. Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization per funding opportunity posted by PDS Poland.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application forms required below are available at: **https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/**

Submit all forms **as PDFs** in electronic format to **grantspoland@state.gov** no later than **Friday, July 12, 2024, at midnight**. No late proposals will be considered.

The subject line of the email should list the name of the applying organization followed by the NOFO number: **WAW-NOFO-FY24-06**.

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will not be reviewed.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
- All documents are in English.
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars.
- All pages are numbered.
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required:**

a. Mandatory application forms at: https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations);
- SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs); and
- SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)- if the organization is fully registered in SAM.gov then the mandatory SF424B requirement has been completed.

b. Summary coversheet should state the following**:**

- the applicant's name and organization;
- proposal date;
- program title;
- program period;
- proposed start and end date; and
- brief purpose of the program.

c. Proposal (5 pages maximum): The proposal should contain sufficient information so that anyone not familiar with it will understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. **We highly recommend that applicants use the proposal template provided here.** If you choose not to use the template provided, you may use your own proposal format, but must provide all the items listed below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Provide a short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization:** Provide a description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy, U.S. Consulate General, and/or U.S. government agencies. Experience managing grants from other organizations should also be included to demonstrate the capacity of the organization to manage grants.
- **Problem Statement:** Provide a clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and how the proposed program will address the problem. A strong problem statement clearly explains the outcomes of the project and their long-term impact on the relationship between the United States and Poland.
- **Program Goals and Objectives:** Outline the project goals and objectives describing what you intended to achieve. Objectives refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to achieving goals. Please propose SMART objectives for your project: Specific, Measurable, realistically Achievable within the period of the grant, Relevant to an actual problem or challenge, and Time-based, meaning that you will be able to finish the project and measure the impact by a set date. Please also explain how you will measure or evaluate the progress achieved or the impact you have made on the participants or audiences through your project activities.
- **Target Audience:** Carefully considering the challenge or problem you are addressing, together with your goals and objectives, will help you clearly define who the participants or primary audiences for your project will be and shape the activity outlined in your proposal. You might have secondary audiences or beneficiaries, too. For example, if you are training teachers, the teachers are your primary audience and their students who benefit from better instruction would be the secondary audience or final beneficiary. Please be specific with your primary audience and avoid the use of "general public." Participants and primary and secondary audiences for the proposed activity should be citizens or legal residents of Poland, which may include those with temporary protected status. A clear methodology of participant recruitment and selection should be detailed in the proposal, including efforts to ensure gender parity and promote geographic and socio-economic inclusion.
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives. If the activities incorporate the involvement of U.S. experts, trainers, models, and/or best practices, please describe that involvement.
- **Program Methods and Design:** Describe how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
- **Proposed Program Schedule**: Outline the timeline for the program activities. Include the proposed dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events. Please note: Funding may not be available in time for the specific timeline you propose. Please indicate whether you have the flexibility to shift the program schedule to later dates if funding becomes available at a later date.
- **Key Personnel**: Provide the names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?

- **Program Partners**: List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**: This is an important part of successful grants. Describe activities you will conduct to determine whether the project has achieved its goals and objectives. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- **Future Funding or Sustainability**: Describe your plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

d. Budget Justification Narrative: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

e. Attachments:

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities
- Documentation of non-profit or non-commercial status

3. <u>Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)</u>

Required Registrations:

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, **must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the SAM.gov**, which are free of charge. The assignment of a Unique Identity ID does not equate to SAM.gov registration. Once you receive your Unique Identity ID, you must complete your SAM.gov registration. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible.</u>

- Organizations based in the United States, or that pay employees within the United States, will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based *outside* of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain a CAGE or NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:
Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:
Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:
NCAGE Homepage: https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx
NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT): https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/home

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant's identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant that the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances prohibiting the applicant from receiving a UEI number and completing a SAMs registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a UEI number and complete a SAMs registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw and U.S. Consulate General in Krakow and all applicants will be informed of the outcome. Please note that the decisions of the committee are final. There is no right of appeal and PDS Poland is unable to provide feedback on unsuccessful proposals.

Each application package will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea:** The program idea is well developed, with details about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.
- **Organizational Capacity and Track Record with Similar Projects:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account. If the applicant has an existing grant from the U.S. government, the grant should be compliant, and all reporting requirements should have been met.
- **Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives:** SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals and objectives are clearly stated, and the program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.
- **PDS Poland Priorities:** The applicant has clearly described how stated goals support PDS Poland priorities articulated above and will strengthen the U.S.-Polish relationship.
- **Budget:** The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.
- **Monitoring and evaluation plan:** Applicant demonstrates that they can measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.
- **Sustainability:** Program activities will continue to have a positive impact after the end of the program.
- **Support of Equity:** PDS Poland will look favorably on proposals that clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity, and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications. Please note that you may be asked to submit additional information and/or a revised budget in response to Committee deliberations.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. **The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email.** The recipient may only start

incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method

Payments will be made in at least two installments, as needed to conduct the program activities.

Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: Before applying, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at: https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/. Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

3. Reporting Requirements

Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports as specified in the award agreement and its supporting documents.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact the Public Diplomacy Section at: grantspoland@state.gov. Note that once the NOFO deadline has passed, Department of State staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least $5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, which are needed for the program. If an item costs more than $5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help conduct the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

"Cost Sharing": Refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Government. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.