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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
(WHA/PPC/SRU)

Announcement Type:	New
Funding Title:	*Strengthening Sustainable Communities in Panama and Costa Rica*
Assistance Instrument Type:	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number:	SFOP0009810
Funding Type:	Discretionary
Assistance Listings Number:	19.750
Funding Amount:	$4,740,000 U.S. Dollars
Funding Authority:	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended
Source of Funding:	Economic Support Funds (ESF)
Funding Activity Category:	Grant
Cost Sharing Requirement:	Not Required
Number of Awards:	1 award

Key Dates:	1. Application must be submitted by **11:59 P.M**. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **July 5, 2023)** 2. Questions must be submitted by **11:59 P.M**. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **June 19, 2023)** 3. Notification of the recommended for funding proposal August 2023
Application Submission:	Application must be submitted through www.grants.gov.
Electronic Requirement:	Yes - e-mailed, faxed, or mailed proposal packages, or individual submission documents, will NOT be considered.
Eligibility Category:	U.S. Non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS; Overseas non-profit NGOs; U.S. small business development centers (SBDCs); U.S. and overseas, both public and private Institutions of higher education to include both colleges and universities; Public international organizations (PIOs).

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400, it is a U.S. Department of State policy not to award profit under federal assistance instruments. **For-profit and commercial firms are not eligible to apply in response to this NOFO.** No exceptions.

Type of Applicant:	Organizations only. Individuals are not eligible to apply.
Number of Applications:	One (1) per applicant organization.

Note: Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined proposal. However, only one organization may be designated as the lead applicant. The lead applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed in this NOFO**.**

Country Eligibility:	Costa Rica and Panama
Project Duration:	48 Months Est. Project Start Date: September 2023 Est. Project End Date: September 2027

This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov and may be amended. Answers to questions from eligible interested organizations will be posted as attachments to this NOFO. Applicants should regularly check the www.grants.gov for the most recent information pertaining to this funding opportunity.

WHA reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project and the availability of funds. The authority for this NOFO is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to review this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of project sought and the application submission requirements and review process as outlined in this NOFO.

Executive Summary

The United States Department of State Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) announces a Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support sustainable communities and migration management approaches in Panama and Costa Rica that promote inclusive and equitable policies and practices in coordination with Department of State and WHA. WHA has $4,740,000 in FY 2022 ESF for a 48-month project to help support communities hosting large numbers of migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations such as women, Indigenous, and Afro-descendants through a whole of community approach that will provide technical expertise training to small business development centers and support sustainable tourism development in communities and associated industries. These small business and industries include but are not limited to agriculture, textile, transportation, restaurants, and hotels. The sustainable community approach will include technical expertise training on small business and economic development, and will engage local government officials, civil society, and small business development centers. The anticipated start date for this activity is September 2023.

Section A: Funding Opportunity Description

A1. Project Description

This grant will incentivize support and help build sustainable communities in Panama and Costa Rica, to include rural areas where possible. This will be done through the development of small to medium-sized business enterprises supported by small business development centers (SBDCs). This project will include a two-track process. Track one will focus on developing sustainable tourism for economic development. Track two will focus on workforce development that supports industries/business sectors related to or handling tourism, which include textiles, agriculture, restaurants, hotels, and tourism service sectors, and trains host community small businesses and migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations to work in these industries. WHA is also open to applicants suggesting other business sectors that would fit or support their project design.

This project also seeks to improve the institutional capacity and training of business counselors at SBDCs specific to communities in Panama and Costa Rica, with a focus on migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations. This project intends to encourage collaboration management approaches in Central America that promote inclusive and equitable policies and practices in coordination with Department and WHA partners. This may include supporting communities that host migrants. The project activities should be conducted in coordination with feedback from WHA, Panama's Autoridad De La Micro Pequeña Y Mediana Empresa (AMPYME), and Costa Rica's Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje (INA) and Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio (MEIC).

The prime applicant should have experience working with SBDCs and small businesses in Latin America and have capacity and experience to develop project activities that enable small business training. This is to include the development of a training curriculum for developing small businesses in communities and working with sub-recipient organizations to support sustainable tourism and complimentary industries of textiles, agriculture, restaurants, and tourism service sectors and transportation. The applicant should have a sub-recipient with a non-profit organization with project activities providing training in Costa Rica and Panama to entrepreneurs and small businesses to help enable regional, social, and economic integration. This subrecipient project's activities should work with the local or regional based NGOs or SBDCs that have experience and knowledge of the small business operating environments in Costa Rica and Panama. Training activities must also follow Panama law that restricts certain jobs and professions to Panamanians. Migrant women could not be included in training in these restricted professions.

The prime applicant should also have a sub-recipient with a sustainable tourism nonprofit, which specializes in sustainable tourism development in Latin America. This sub-recipient should work in coordination with Central American universities that lead in sustainable tourism training curriculum development in Costa Rica, the Panamanian Foundation of Sustainable Tourism, and other organizations involved in administrative tourism to create sustainable tourism development plans. These plans should help market and bring tourism jobs to rural areas where possible in coordination with more established cities, such as Panama City and San José. The sub-recipient and prime applicant will need to work together

to develop 3-5 day bootcamps and bring in technical experts to develop a curriculum which builds the beneficiaries' workforce skills in tourism related industries. The sub-recipient will provide the logistics of implementing the bootcamps. The prime applicant and sub-recipient will also work to ensure that project activities promote a circular economy creating partnerships with larger hotel or transportation companies (i.e., Marriot, Sheraton, Barcelo, Delta Airlines, United Airlines, COPA Airlines etc.) to offset the carbon footprint of tourism and help the overall sustainability of communities in Costa Rica and Panama. Additionally, the prime applicant will also need to hire a third-party Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) firm to conduct baseline data mapping at the beginning of the project and conclude with a final project evaluation.

This sustainable communities approach will: 1) help create durable labor solutions for communities hosting migrant populations by linking long-term migrants into their host communities to help them contribute to the socio-economic development of their host countries and prevent them from needing to migrate again; and 2) foster long-term economic development and build social cohesion among host community members (particularly those from marginalized and vulnerable populations) to relieve the economic and societal stress of accepting large numbers of migrants in already economically disadvantaged areas, thus increasing local support for integration and incentivizing host communities to continue receiving immigrants.

The prime applicant should ensure programming complements existing diplomatic efforts, such as the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, programming already implemented in Panama and Costa Rica by USAID; the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM); and other State Department Bureaus.

Theory of Change: This project is based on the theory of change ***that if*** host communities and migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations receive training in workforce skills, small business development, and/or the tourism industry ***and if*** the sustainable tourism industry is developed in communities in Costa Rica and Panama ***and if*** SBDCs are implemented in Panama and expanded in Costa Rica, ***then*** Panama and Costa Rica can better link migrants and

marginalized and vulnerable populations to their host communities by providing economic opportunities and having a stronger local economy.

Relevant Department Policy Strategies: Implementer is recommended to design project activities informed by existing U.S. Department of State strategies, including the Collaborative Migration Management Strategy, the U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America, and the WHA-LAC Joint Regional Strategy. Programs may also align with the implementation of America's Partnership for Economic Prosperity and the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection.

A2. Project Goals and Objectives

Project Goal: Strengthen sustainable communities in Panama and Costa Rica, to include rural areas where possible, through small business support and sustainable tourism development, providing economic and employment opportunities for migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations, thus helping to mitigate the effect of migrant influxes on local communities.

Objectives & Activities

As applicable, proposals should specify the expected results from projects benefitting from these funds, such as the number of participants trained; improvement in local government migration policy; and other improvements in basic government services that impact migrants. All proposals should state clear objectives and show plans to measure project performance and contributions to meeting those objectives.

Proposals should include specific objectives and indicators that allow the organization to measure and demonstrate progress. As applicable, proposals should specify the expected results from projects benefitting from these funds, such as the number of participants trained; improvement in local government migration policy; and other improvements in basic government services that impact migrants. All proposals should state clear objectives and show plans to measure project performance and contributions to meeting those objectives.

Project objectives should include but are not limited to the following objectives:

For objective 2, 3, and 5 the applicant needs to develop contingency and risk management planning in case challenges arise in developing project activities that support the SBDC model training curriculum in Panama and Costa Rica, or if AMPYME or INA flag issues that the applicant needs to address. This contingency planning entails showing how the applicant could revise the training curriculum to focus on small business development and to strengthen sustainable communities and focus less on providing training based on the U.S. SBDC model. This contingency planning is to address risk management. No funding can be provided for contingency planning.

Objective 1 – Sustainable Communities to Integrate Migrants
Stabilize communities hosting large numbers of migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations. Support inclusive economic opportunity and the integration of long-term migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations into their host communities so they may contribute to the socio-economic development of their host countries.

Project Activities for Objective 1:

1.1 Provide workforce training for small and medium sized (SMEs) businesses that could include but is not limited to textile, agriculture, restaurants, and tourism sector industries which could include hotels and transportation companies.
1.2 Utilize SBDCs, sustainable tourism experts, non-profits, and universities to provide this training.
1.3 Enable the integration of migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations into the local economy by developing connections between the project implementors, migrant women, marginalized and vulnerable populations, local communities, and businesses. The project would need to conduct outreach to local businesses looking to employ persons with skills developed in the workforce training provided.
1.4 Incorporate job application skills into workforce training curriculum, networking project beneficiaries to the local businesses and connecting

participants with resources to obtain legal work documentation to participate in the formal economy.

Objective 2 – SBDC Network Expansion

Expand the SBDC network by establishing the SBDC model in Panama and assist the support and expansion of SBDCs in Costa Rica.

Project Activities for Objective 2:

2.1 Conduct a needs assessment of technical assistance and capacity building among SBDCs and small businesses.

2.2 Create a representative survey of SBDC services and small businesses in relation to the overall project goal and objectives.

2.3 After the technical needs assessment is completed, the project implementer or third-party evaluator will draft an analysis of what SBDC services are provided and the gaps in small business services that project training would address. This data can also be used in drafting the final project evaluation.

Objective 3 – Improved Institutional Capacity

Improve the institutional capacity and training of business counselors at SBDCs, with a focus on migrants and marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Project Activities for Objective 3:

3.1 Develop a small business and entrepreneurship training curriculum for Costa Rica SBDCs and AMPYME and their staff and business counselors.

3.2 Develop a detailed curriculum design and implementation strategy.

3.3 Develop training modules for SBDC counselors that could include marketing, accounting, strategic planning, and business plan development with a focus on sustainable tourism, textiles, agriculture, restaurants, transportation, and tourism to support job growth in marginalized and vulnerable communities, to include rural areas where possible.

3.4 Incorporate training related to industry certifications and work with universities in Costa Rica and Panama on sustainable tourism and industry specific certifications.

Objective 4 – Equal Access & Training Opportunities

Address gender barriers and ensure women, migrants, Afro-descendants, and Indigenous small business owners and employees receive equal access to training opportunities and services from SBDC in Costa Rica and AMYPME in Panama, which should be implemented through a subaward with a local Central American organization that has experience working with SBDCs.

Project Activities for Objective 4:

4.1 Provide migrants, women, Afro-descendants, and Indigenous people access to economic development and include them in SBDC business development training and services.

4.2 Assist knowledge management and capacity building of women-owned small businesses, focusing on migrants, women, and Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

4.3 Work with local NGOs, the private sector, and local governments to support female entrepreneurship through training and workshops focused on small business development.

4.4 Create opportunities for project beneficiaries and NGOs to support businesswomen in the small-medium size enterprise (SME) policy development within their communities.

4.5 Ensure women entrepreneurs and small businesses receive equal access to opportunities and services by addressing gender barriers and incorporating business advising focused on training and mentorship.

4.6 Develop training curriculums specific to women, migrants, and marginalized and vulnerable communities that could include but are not limited to sales and marketing, accounting, strategic planning, business plan development, and access to finance and investment opportunities.

Objective 5 – Entrepreneurial Development in Communities

Work with local NGOs, private sector, and local governments to support entrepreneurship and small business development in communities, including rural areas where possible.

Project Activities for Objective 5:

5.1 Develop workshops to engage families and community leaders on employment issues and entrepreneurship.

5.2 Work with a third-party monitoring and evaluation firm to create a final project evaluation to review the sustainable community approach, assess the effectiveness of the approach, and review final project outcome and output results against the initial project goal and objectives.

5.3 Design project activities that will impart the SBDC methodology in Panama and work with AMPYME to adopt the SBDC model to support economic and workforce development through SBDC business counselors providing small business and job training.

Objective 6 – Workforce Training & Support

Support and strengthen sustainable communities by providing training and support to small business in the agriculture, textile, restaurants, hotels, transportation, and sustainable tourism services sectors. WHA is also open to other business sectors or workforce development areas that the applicant deems necessary to support and strengthen sustainable communities.

Project Activities for Objective 6:

6.1 Project activities will support the development of new SBDCs in Costa Rica and assist Panama in adopting the SBDC methodology successfully.

6.2 Carry out a series of consultations, trainings, and other activities to facilitate the establishment of new SBDCs in the identified communities.

6.3 Provide ongoing support to participant SBDCs and micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) through information technology systems and other support to ensure efficient replication and future viability of newly established SBDCs.

6.4 Provide Costa Rica and Panama stakeholders with consulting services to develop, implement, and maintain a system for the accreditation of centers which, among other things, should include standards for regular training of business counselors and regular reporting of standard performance metrics.

6.5 Develop an outreach plan to municipal and state governments on future ways for governments to adopt and fund the SBDCs beyond the period of performance in the award.

Objective 7 – Tourism Sector Development

Strengthen sustainable community-based tourism, to include rural areas where possible, in coordination with larger cities, such as Panama City and San José, through a sub-recipient, by creating and implementing a tourism development plan and by coordinating with tourism sector officials.

Project Activities for Objective 7:

7.1 Implement Bootcamps and market/advertise workshops by working with community leaders and local businesses to create sustainable tourism development plans which includes a whole of community approach and is measured by short term/long-term job creation, carbon footprint mitigation, and economic impact on host communities.

7.2 Analyze towns and other select locations, which could be along the borders of the countries, to host sustainable tourism boot-camps, mapping available sustainable tourism services and what is needed to create a sustainable tourism development plan.

7.3 Build a curriculum and tourism development plan with local universities and NGOs, based on relevant skillsets for the regional tourism industry, which sustains a green economy with a reduced carbon footprint.

7.4 Develop a mentoring project and train the trainer activities for sustainable tourism post boot camp to ensure multiplier and greatest impact.

7.5 Network with key regional actors and community leaders, such as those involved in administrative tourism, to inform on challenges, successes, and strategies to implement startup businesses in the tourism industry.

7.6 Work with bootcamp attendees, local governments, and civil society for the period of performance to help them develop and implement tourism development plans.

7.7 Create a communication strategy to help the communities market their destinations.

A3. Expected Results

Expected results should include but are not limited to the following:

1. Workforce trained in small business development and for short-term and long-term jobs in sustainable tourism and supporting industries/business sectors related to or handling tourism, which include textiles, agriculture, restaurants, and hotels.
2. Available employment and training opportunities for at-risk communities including migrants, Afro-descendants, women, and Indigenous populations.
3. Local communities supported with a stronger economy and opportunities from workforce training and available employment.
4. Sustainable tourism established with an offset carbon footprint due to a circular economy.
5. Developed small business and entrepreneurship training curriculums for Costa Rica SBDCs and Panama AMPYME.
6. Effect of migrant influxes mitigated in local communities.
7. Established SBDC in Panama and expansion of SBDCs in Costa Rica.
8. Local communities, SBDCS, civil society, and small businesses participating in trainings/workshops to bolster economy and understand migration challenges.

A4. Performance Indicators

WHA**/**PPC will work with the successful applicant to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan that measures progress via specific, clear, and quantifiable performance indicators at the output and outcome level. The selected indicators will measure the applicants progress in implementing this project and achieving project's objectives and goals, along with the effects of training and technical assistance for grantees and targeted project beneficiaries. The applicant and WHA will assess the results and impact of project activities. The project's overall performance will be monitored using indicator results against baseline data. Relevant indicators will be disaggregated by refugee status, legal work documentation, migration patterns, and employment status. This approach will provide analysis of key variables from an immigration and economic inclusion perspective.

Applicants will develop a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) with annual and end-of-project targets and results anticipated for key performance indicators. Further guidance on this PMP is included in TAB A of the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). The recipient organization will be required to monitor these targets and indicators during and after the project's activities. All applicants should propose additional outputs, indicators, and/or targets that correspond to their project proposal.

The required output and outcome indicators for the project are provided below. The applicant should review these and provide illustrative targets for each output and outcome indicator, as appropriate. The applicant is expected to identify targets for these indicators based on what it can reasonably achieve within the performance period of the project and on the expected overall project results described above.

Required output and outcome indicators are listed below. The applicant and sub-recipients **should develop additional indicators as necessary for subawards in coordination with the prime recipient.**

Outputs Indicators are the results of what the project does. For example, the number of participants who successfully complete a job-training course or received job placement through the project activities are outputs.

Required Output Indicators	**Required Targets:**
GNDR-2 Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment.)	TBD
DR.4.2-2 Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions.	TBD
EG.5-3 Number of microenterprises (female entrepreneurs) supported by USG assistance.	250
E.G. 3-9/4.5-2 Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created with USG assistance.	TBD

EG. 5.12 Number of small and medium-sized enterprises supported by USG assistance.	500
EG. 5.2-2 Number of private sector firms that have improved management practices or technologies as a result of USG assistance.	300
Number of SBDCs that expanded or were strengthened as a result of USG assistance.	10
Number or women or migrant or underserved businesses benefiting from sustainable communities' project activities.	TBD
Number of sustainable tourism bootcamps developed and implemented in Panama and Costa Rica.	15
Number of participants in sustainable tourism boot camps.	400
Number of local groups contacted addressing migrants and project goals and objectives.	TBD
Number of sustainable tourism dialogues developed between local government agencies, local leaders, civil society and private sector small business owners.	TBD
Number of sustainable development plans created.	TBD
Person hours of training completed in workforce development supported by USG assistance.	TBD
Person hours of training completed in workforce development supported by USG assistance.	TBD

Outcomes Indicators are changes that take place because of project activities. The outcomes of the project are the differences that will have been made by delivering objectives and achieving outputs. For example, an outcome could be increased job placement as a result of the training, or reduction in local unemployment rate.

Required Outcome Indicators	Required Targets:
EG. 5-2 Full-time equivalent employment of firms receiving USG assistance.	TBD

EG. 6.12 Percent of individuals with new employment following participation in USG assisted workforce development programs.	TBD
EG. 6-15 Precent of individuals with better employment following participation in USG assisted workforce development programs.	TBD
Policies enacted to support women involvement in the workforce.	TBD
Number of women owned businesses with increased access to national, regional, or international markets.	TBD
Number of migrant women reporting better living standards.	TBD

Section B: Federal Award Information

B1. Available Funding

This notice is subject to availability of funding. Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended (Economic Support Funds) and several funding restrictions apply, to include country-applicant restrictions.

The Department of State reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted and reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the budget in accordance with the needs of the project and the availability of funds.

The Department of State may consider continuing the program funded under this award beyond the initial period of performance 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 and USG.

B2. Award Management

The successful applicant will need to routinely collaborate with WHA through regular meetings and conference calls to discuss progress, challenges, emerging

topics, etc.

The successful applicant must ensure that all funds are used in a manner consistent with any applicable restrictions on funding. See D5 below for funding restrictions.

Section C. Eligibility Information

C1. Eligible Applicants

See page 3, Eligibility Category.

The Department of State will issue an award to the Applicant whose application represents the best value to the U.S. Government based on technical merit, efficient use of U.S. Government funds, and satisfactory organizational capacity. The Department of State reserves the right to make an award based on the initial application received with or without discussion or negotiations.

Preference will be given to organizations with experience working with SBDCs and small businesses in Latin America and have capacity and experience to develop project activities that enable small business training. Experience developing a training curriculum and providing training to entrepreneurs and small businesses while enabling regional, social, and economic integration is desired. Former work with a subaward organizations is preferred, along with a knowledge of how to support sustainable tourism and complimentary industries of textiles, agriculture, restaurants, and tourism service sectors and transportation. An understanding of local economic and migration issues facing Panama and Costa Rica, or the ability to subaward to an organization that has this experience is desired.

Applicants should demonstrate a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in any sub-awards issued under this grant award.

In order 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 IV for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

C2. Cost-Sharing

The non-Federal share of costs, frequently called "cost share" or "matching costs," refers to that portion of the project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government. This may include cash and third-party in-kind contributions. These costs must reflect the realistic capacity of the applicants and any third-party contributors.

Cost-sharing is *not* required. Providing cost-sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility requirement for this funding opportunity and will not be factored in during the merit review of proposals.

Note: If cost-share is included in the budget, the applicant must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the applicant does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the applicant's budget, DOS contribution may be reduced in proportion to the Applicant's contribution.

C3. Other Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (UEI), as well as a valid registration on www.sam.gov. Please see Section D3 for information on how to obtain these registrations.

Applicants, including U.S. affiliates of international organizations must provide a valid Unique Entity Identification (UEI), and **completed** www.sam.gov registration when submitting application on www.grants.gov in response to this NOFO. **Applicants that do not have a valid UEI and completed www.sam.gov registration will NOT be eligible for consideration. Implementing partners/sub-recipient organizations are required to have a valid UEI number.**

Applicants listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) are not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices regarding beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

Organizations may only submit one application per organization. If more than one application is submitted by an organization, only the first application received will be reviewed for eligibility and funding.

Section D: Application and Submission Information

D1. Address to request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms on www.grants.gov under the announcement title and funding opportunity number provided above.

Once the NOFO deadline has passed, DOS may not discuss this competition with any applicant until the proposal review process has been completed.

D2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow both, the PSI and the NOFO, to ensure that the proposal package submission is in full compliance with the requirements. Please follow the guidelines in the attached Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional application submission instructions, including information on required documents and format. Proposal submissions that do not meet all the requirements outlined in this NOFO and the associated PSI will **not** be considered.

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should submit them **by email** to the contacts listed in Section G. Please refer to the funding opportunity number and title.

Any updates about this NOFO will also be posted on www.grants.gov.

D3. Unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management

Required Registrations:

The Unique Entity Identifier (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. www.sam.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated www.sam.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in www.sam.gov.

UEI is assigned by www.sam.gov assigned to organizations that have to register/or renew their www.sam.gov registration.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (www.sam.gov) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989

Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in www.SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

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 they do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov. This guidance and instructions are to the best of our knowledge available at the time of posting this solicitation. Where guidance in this NOFO differs from the www.sam.gov website, SAM.gov prevails, and the applicant is encouraged to seek and document clarity provided by the SAM.gov helpdesk.

www.sam.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in www.sam.gov.

If an organization plans to sub-contract or sub-award any of the funds under an award, those sub-recipient organizations must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). www.sam.gov registration is not required.

If an organization does not have an active registration in www.sam.gov prior to submitting an application in response to this NOFO, the application will be deemed **ineligible.** All organizations applying for USG federal assistance awards (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. Please note that registration is free of charge.

Note: The process of obtaining a www.sam.gov registration may take from 2-8 weeks or longer. Please begin your registration as early as possible. Numerous errors require correction, such as an address mismatch, and can delay final registration. If the application is not corrected within 90 calendar days of original registration/or renewal submission, it will be automatically deleted and the organization will need to re-start the process.

An exemption from this requirement may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if the applicant's identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their

mission. Organizations requesting an exemption should email the point of contact listed in Section G of this NOFO.

D4. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants are urged to begin the application process well before the submission deadline as stated on page 3. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps. Grants.gov automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. **Applications received after the deadline will not be considered**.

D5. Funding Restrictions

The following activities and costs are <u>not</u> covered under this announcement (this list is NOT exhaustive):

- Construction or renovations is not an allowable activity under this award;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the applicant organization;
- Projects seeking funds for personal use;
- Administration of a project that will make a profit;
- Expenses incurred before or after the specified dates of award period of performance (unless prior written approval is received);
- Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities, and any associated costs, are unallowable, except where specific costs that might otherwise be considered entertainment have a programmatic purpose and are authorized either in the approved budget for the federal award or with prior written approval of the Grants Officer.

Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction: In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds

made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

(1) Was "convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government"; or

(2) Has any "unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government."

For the purposes of Section 7073, it is the Department of State's policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the U.S. Government.

D6. Other Submission Requirements

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in Grants.gov and that an application has been received by the system in its entirety. DOS bears no responsibility for disqualification that results from applicants not being registered before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Section E: Application Review Information

E1. Criteria

The Department of State will issue an award to the applicant whose proposal represents the best value to the U.S. Government based on technical merit, efficient use of U.S. Government funds, and satisfactory organizational

capacity. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability to be measured by a responsibility determination.

Applications should contain the applicant's best terms from both cost and technical standpoints. The implementing partners (sub-recipients) of the primary Recipient will be subject to Department of State approval.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent review panel consisting of subject matter experts from other DOS bureaus/or offices, U.S. Embassies, and/or other U.S. Government agencies. Final approval resides with the DOS Grants Officer. The decision for the final eligibility and award determination rests with the Grants Officer.

The following criteria will serve as a standard, which all **eligible** applications will be evaluated against. Each eligible application will be evaluated and scored on the review criteria using a 100-point scale.

The review panel will apply the following criteria when rating proposals:

1. **Quality and Feasibility of Project Idea (20 points)**
    - Responsive to the solicitation (4 points)
    - Appropriate in the country/regional context (4)
    - Exhibits substance, and precision (4)
    - Prioritizes innovation, but is feasible (4)
    - In countries where similar activities are already taking place, provides an explanation as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities (4)

2. **Organizational Capacity and Record of Performance (10 points):**
    - The proposal demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the proposed country, the content area (e.g., media, access to justice), or other (describe) (4)
    - Personnel and institutional resources are adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives (2)
    - Demonstrates relevant professional experience (2)
        - OR

- Demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management (2)
- Illustrates success in similar sized projects (2)

3. **Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives (25 points)**
   - Includes a clear articulation of the proposed program activities' expected contributions to the overall program objectives (5)
   - Each activity is clearly developed and detailed (4)
   - Objectives are clear, specific, attainable, measurable, results-focused, and placed in a reasonable time frame (4)
   - Addresses how the program will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners where appropriate (4)
   - Describes the division of labor among the direct applicant, any partners and any potential sub-grantees (4)
   - Proposal clearly articulates understanding of the security situation/operating environment and plans for ensuring safety of participants (4)

4. **Financial Capacity and Cost Effectiveness (15 points):**
   - All costs, including salaries and honoraria, are explained and justified for the work involved (5)
   - All budget items are necessary, and linked to project objectives (5)
   - Personnel costs are reasonable for the work involved (5)

     NOTE: Cost share is not required. Applicants may offer cost share, however, cost share will not be considered or factored in when proposals are reviewed.

5. **Performance Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning (MEL) (20 points):**
   - The Project Monitoring Plan includes:
     - Narrative explaining how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities (7)
     - Table listing by project objectives the output- and outcome-based performance indicators with baselines and (yearly and cumulative) targets; data collection tools; data sources; types of

data disaggregation, if applicable; and frequency of monitoring and evaluation (9)
    - Logic model that includes outcomes, outputs, and activities that specify measurable numerical targets (4)

6. **Sustainability of Impact/Multiplier Effect (10 points)**
    - Clearly delineates how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect that could include train the trainer or other activities increase the impact (5)
    - Clearly delineates how impact will be sustainable beyond the life of the grant (5)

Cost Review: Costs will be reviewed for reasonableness, allowability, allocability, and cost-effectiveness of the use of USG funds. The review of cost-effectiveness will include an examination of the application's budget detail to ensure it is a realistic financial expression of the proposed project and does not contain estimated costs that are not **allocable, reasonable**, or **allowable**.

Applications that maximize direct activity costs and minimize administrative costs are encouraged. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail, and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability to be measured by a responsibility determination. **Final approval of the budget resides with the Grants Officer.**

Additional Budget Guidance

An allowable project must include the following budget items:

- Of the total $4,740,000.00, WHA suggests the applicant budgets for two subawards. The first subaward should be with an SBDC center or a local NGO focused on small business development in the Central America region at approximately $1,200,000; and the second subaward should be with a sustainable tourism development organization at approximately $800,000 to ensure that both subaward's project activities are implemented for the entire 48-month period of performance of the cooperative agreement. The applicant needs to include sub award budgets in their application

submission. The applicant can modify these suggested amounts according to their project design submitted in their application.

- Between $200,000 to $400,000 of funding should be budgeted for a third-party Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) firm to provide results-based framework training to small grantees.

E2. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be reviewed to determine technical eligibility.

All technically eligible applications will move forward to the merit review panel. Applications will be reviewed against the same criteria as listed above. Applications will be scored based on the strengths and weaknesses of the afore-mentioned categories and for consistency with the program goals and objectives outlined in this NOFO.

The Merit Review Panel may provide conditions and recommendations to enhance the recommended proposal, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of US Government funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

E3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly FAPIIS)

The Department of State, prior to making a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

The applicant, at its option, may review information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through www.sam.gov. Currently, federal agencies create integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

The Department of State will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with or support to individuals or organizations associated with terrorism.

- Proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative or a designate to terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker, including elected members of government, will NOT be considered. This provision must be included in any sub-awards/sub-contracts issued under this award.
- U.S. Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.
- Applicants under DOS-funded projects are responsible for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for project participants.

Section F: Federal Award Administration Information

F1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicant will be notified via email. This email may include a request for the applicant respond to panel conditions and recommendations. This notification

is **not** an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Additional information that successful applicants may be required to submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel and awarding bureau;
- Completion of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving funding for the first time or requested by the Grants Officer;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System (PMS) managed by the Department of Health and Human Services if receiving funding for the first time. PMS registration is bureau-specific;
- Other requested information or documents included in this funding opportunity or subsequent communications with the recommended applicant prior to issuance of a Federal award.

Final approval is also contingent on Congressional Notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the Department's Grants Officer.

The Grants Officer is the U.S. Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State, Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The Award Agreement is the sole authorizing document and will be provided to winning organization electronically through DOS SAMS Domestic. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified in writing.

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

Award cannot be issued until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal DOS procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements. All preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), it is U.S. Department of State policy **not** to award profit under assistance instruments.

2 CFR §200.501 requires domestic/US non-federal entities that expend $750,000, or more, in federal assistance during organization's fiscal year to have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year. In addition, the entity must report the collected audit data elements on the form SF-SAC and submit it to the FAC. Any findings such as material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or material noncompliance are reported on the SF-SAC.

F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, 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 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT
- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION
- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)
- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY
- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
  - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
  - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
  - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
  - Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

Applicants should plan to coordinate with ENR throughout the course of the agreement to ensure assistance is provided only to eligible participants.

F3. Reporting

The Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR)

FADR is an initiative at the Department of State to improve the overall quality, reliability, and availability of foreign assistance data to provide Congress, Department leadership and the public with an accurate picture of the Department's foreign assistance portfolios. FADR affects how foreign assistance is tracked and accounted for. Geographical and program area information is now coded within the subaccount/award number and now it is possible to assign more than one Benefitting Country/Program Area to a single award if applicable. Where there is more than one line of accounting, your award will indicate specific fiscal information corresponding to FADR. Recipients will be required to work with the awarding Bureau to clearly identify the PMS account; corresponding FADR country/program area (if applicable); amounts of federal share and cost-share as well as instructions on reporting and requesting payment.

Financial Reports

The Recipient will be required to submit quarterly financial reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) throughout the project period, using form SF-425, the Federal Financial Report form. If payment is made through the Payment Management System, all financial reports must be submitted electronically through the Payment Management System. The Recipient will also be required to upload to SAMS Domestic a pdf version of all financial reports (Federal Financial report) they have submitted in the Payment Management System. Form (SF-425) can be found here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1

Progress Reporting

The Recipient will be required to upload quarterly progress reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) to the award file in SAMS Domestic. Progress reports must be submitted quarterly unless otherwise stipulated in the Agreement; the frequency will be determined by DOS prior to award.

Progress reports should also reflect the Recipient's continued focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching goals or problems the project set out to

address. An assessment of the overall project impact, as appropriate, should be included in each quarterly project report.

The Recipient should produce performance monitoring plans, including quantity and quality of the curriculum, participants' progress reports, and pre- and post-training communications. The quarterly reports should be in narrative form which highlights the project's progress (such as the number and type of students, events, ongoing engagements, etc.), achievements, lessons learned, adaptive management changes, and any regulatory reporting required. Further, the project, data collection, and report should also include information on post-class contact between students and staff.

Final Reports

The final summary financial and progress reports will be due no later than 120 calendar days after the end date of the award or termination of all project activities. The Final Progress Report shall include the following elements: executive summary, successes, outcomes, best practices, how the project addresses gender issues and marginalized and vulnerable communities, how the project will be sustained. Additional guidance may be provided prior to the award end date.

NOTE: delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipients' ability to receive future U.S. government funds.

WHA reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period of performance.

NOTE: It is the Department of State policy that English is the official language of all award documents. If reports or any other supporting documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, it must be stated in each version that the English language version is the controlling version. U.S. dollar is the controlling currency. Financial reports must be submitted in U.S. dollars.

Section G: Federal Awarding Agency Contact

G1. Contacts

Thomas Jeffrey, Grants Officer Representative JeffreyTB@state.gov;
Blake White Program Officer, WhiteBJ2@state.gov

G2. Questions

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO **must email** them to the contacts listed above with the subject "[Applicant Name] [NOFO title]." To maintain fairness and transparency in competition, ENR will not answer substantive NOFO questions except when posting questions and answers to the announcement page as described below.

All questions must be submitted via email to contacts listed above by the deadline stated on page. Awarding bureau will periodically create a document of submitted questions with answers and upload it and post them in grants.gov. Questions and answers will be posted within 24-48 hours from the date of submission. Prospective applicants are advised to regularly review the announcement page in grants.gov for any updates. Note that once the NOFO deadline has passed, DOS staff in Washington, D.C. may not discuss this completion with applicants until the review process has been completed.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period U.S. Department of State staff shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and an award has been made.

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any awarding bureau representative.

Explanatory information provided by any awarding bureau that contradicts this language will not be binding.

Section H: Other information

H1. Conflict of Interest

In accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy, applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.

H2. Applicant Vetting

N/A

H3. Marking Policy

Applicants are advised that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal assistance awards are subject to the State Department's Marking Policy. More information on this policy can be found in Section N of the Department of State's Standard Terms and Conditions: https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020-508.pdf

H4. Evaluation Policy

Applicants are advised that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal assistance awards are subject to the Department of State Evaluation Policy. More information on this policy can be found here: https://www.state.gov/guidance-for-the-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-policy-at-the-department-of-state/

H5. Monitoring Site Visits

A monitoring site visit, at least once during the lifetime of an award, may be conducted by Department of State personnel. The site visit is conducted to gather additional information on the recipient's ability to properly implement the project, manage DOS funds and share substantiating document for programmatic and financial reporting. Specifically, the site visit may involve the review of the programmatic progress (progress on activities, sub-

recipient/consultant work, etc.) as well as administrative and financial management controls. This may include observing classroom modules virtually or in person and visit applicant's headquarters and regional offices to observe operations.

H6. Privacy Disclosure

DOS understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that DOS cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

Mandatory disclosures (2 CFR 200.113)

Non-federal entity, applicant or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. Non-federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in Appendix XII of the 2 CFR 200—Award Terms and Conditions for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters -- are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to www.sam.gov .

Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in §200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

The Department of State will issue an award to the Applicant whose application represents the best value to the U.S. Government based on technical merit, efficient use of U.S. Government funds, and satisfactory organizational capacity.

The Department of State reserves the right to make an award based on the initial application received with or without discussion or negotiations. Therefore, applications should contain the Applicants' best terms from both cost and technical standpoints.

It is Department of State policy that English is the official language and U.S. dollar is the controlling currency. Applications and related supporting documents must be written in English and the accompanying budget must be presented in U.S. dollars.

Disclaimer: The Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Issuance of this solicitation letter and negotiation of applications received does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the USG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the USG reserves the right to reject the proposal. Renewal of an award to increase or decrease funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State and availability of funding.

Privacy Disclosure: DOS understands that some information contained in the application may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, DOS cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative should be organized into the following components:

1) *Introduction*

2) *Narrative:* Problem Statement and Rationale: The applicant's proposal should describe an approach based on a problem statement and rationale analysis. This must incorporate findings from the required gender analysis provided in the PSI document **Tab 1**.

3) *Theory of Change:* Provide a theory of change in the proposal that describes the connections between the project's activities, key short-term outputs, key intermediate outcomes, objectives, and the long-term goal.

4) *Planned Activities/Implementation Plan:* Applicant should address the following points:

a. *Project Goal and Objectives:* Fully explain the project's goal and objectives. The overarching goal should outline what the activities and objectives should be building towards. The objectives of the project should describe the applicant's expectations for the end of the project. The objectives should be measurable, results-focused, and achievable within the timeframe of the project.
b. *Activities:* All activities should be clearly developed and sufficiently detailed to understand the resource and time requirements, and the expected contribution to the project's objectives and goals. Please identify target areas for activities; target participant groups or selection criteria for participants; the plan to engage relevant stakeholders and local partners as appropriate.
c. *Target Population:* Determine project participants and project beneficiaries that could include but not to limited to the following: migrants, representatives from local businesses, CSOs, educational institutions, small business development centers, and municipal governments.
d. *Resources and Timeline for Activities:* Demonstrate the process of implementing the proposed activities to build upon one another and the logical sequence to achieve the desired outcomes. The applicant must submit a plan that sets out a realistic outline of tasks and deliverables, anticipated time frames, challenges, opportunities and due dates, and persons responsible for achieving each task. This should be a narrative description in the proposal narrative and Gantt chart as a tab or attachment breaking down project activities by month.
e. *Do No Harm:* List any significant risks of harm to implementers, participants, beneficiaries or their communities, or of exacerbating conflict or creating new conflicts, which may result from this project. Include specific risks to women and girls. Consider how resources or skills provided might be misused, create grievances among non-recipients, or cause key actors to react in harmful ways. Explain the plan to minimize these risks and for ensuring the security of beneficiaries. In addition, programmatic data, personally identifiable information (PII), and implementing partners' information should be protected and encrypted, if possible, to maintain the safety of those involved in the project. Additionally, projects are strongly

encouraged to target the needs of vulnerable and underserved groups among the beneficiary population (such groups may include women; children; adolescents; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals; older persons; the sick; persons with disabilities; and members of minority communities) and can demonstrate what steps have been taken to meet the specific and unique protection and assistance needs of these vulnerable groups effectively.

f. *Contingency Plan*: Applicants should consider the implications that COVID-19 may have on the project and any possible restricted activities. The risk assessment should include a contingency plan for the various restrictions that may occur due to COVID-19 and/or any other issues that might arise during project implementation that could delay or impact project activities.

5) *Sustainability and Multiplier Effect Plan:* Outline the possibilities for the institutionalization of capacity-building functions as well as any other donors that may be able to lend support after the project is completed.

6) *Communication Plan:* Develop a communication plan for promotion of project activities to include social media, press releases, brochures, and videos.

7) *Past Performance:* Provide a description of the applicant organization, including a proven record of successful projects and past performance in Latin America and the Caribbean. Describe past performance and experience in working with host governments, local organizations, communities, and marginalized and vulnerable populations.

8) *Roles and Responsibilities:* The roles and responsibilities of primary staff under this project should be defined, with listing of key personal and experience and level of effort, and the proposal should demonstrate the plan to engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders.

9) *Gender Analysis:* Per the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 and subsequent U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security, it is a U.S. government-wide priority to expand and apply gender analysis, as appropriate, to improve the design and implementation of U.S. government-funded projects. A gender analysis helps consider the different ways in which projects might impact and be

impacted by the community, country, and region where activities take place. As such, WHA recommends reviewing and completing the Project Gender Analysis document (one-two page mandatory attachment) listed as TAB C in the PSI document. Once an applicant analyzes challenges, gaps, and opportunities related to gender, this information should be used to tailor and strengthen the application project design and implementation.

10) *Security Plan:* Create a security plan addressing any issues involving in-person events and recruitment for said events, and safety for any online programs or communications. Organization's security plan should demonstrate consideration of the risks identified in the submitted risk assessment. Applicants are also encouraged to include contingency plans for in-person or online activities.

11) *Protection Mainstreaming:* Proposals need to demonstrate protection mainstreaming, including by identifying potential protection risks associated with the program and how they will be mitigated. Assistance activities should mainstream protection by analyzing the protection risks in relation to each specific programming sector. WHA requests the implementing organization to develop a protection plan for at-risk project beneficiaries that includes measures to safeguard the rights of at risk populations of concern by seeking to prevent or end patterns of violence or abuse; alleviate the trauma and related effects of violence or abuse; identify and promote durable solutions; foster respect for refugee, humanitarian, and human rights law; and ensure that humanitarian actions uphold dignity, benefit the most vulnerable, and do not harm affected populations. Applicants may introduce gender-specific risks in this section but should provide a full analysis in the gender analysis.

12) *Gender-based Violence:* Gender-based violence (GBV) is a key barrier to addressing gender equality in humanitarian settings. We encourage partners to submit proposals that are targeted or multi-sectoral, and fund both types of approaches and interventions. All programs should be designed and informed by the specific context, situation, and operating environment of the target population, supporting and partnering with local women's organizations, wherever possible. WHA encourages partners to target and provide services to those most at-risk, particularly women and girls, as well as consider addressing

the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities (e.g. disabled women and girls, women who are the single head of household, etc.) when designing the project.

13) *PSEA Requirements:* The recipient will take all practical steps in accordance with their internal controls and existing policies and procedures to address the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). In accordance with the internal control requirements, which require the Recipient to establish standards of conduct for its employees, the Recipient must ensure that all its employees adhere to these standards of conduct in a manner that incorporates safeguarding against the sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries, including but not limited to updating internal policies and procedures, as applicable and appropriate, and conducting appropriate monitoring of beneficiaries, and that the non-Federal entity must monitor its activities under Federal awards to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements. If the Recipient determines that the conduct of any recipient employee is not in accordance with this requirement, the Recipient must address the situation in accordance with the recipient's internal policies and procedures.

14) *Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP):* The PMP should include a narrative explaining the plan to conduct Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and the expected roles of key staff in M&E this should include a written M&E narrative as well as logical framework table breaking down outcome and output indicators and how they will be measured with targets included for all indicators.

Additional Information: The information contained in this solicitation is binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. WHA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budget in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements. Should you have any questions regarding this solicitation, please contact WHA/PPC at WHAGrants@state.gov. Once the deadline has passed, U.S. government officials may not discuss this application until the entire proposal review process is completed. Issuance of this solicitation letter does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government. A final award cannot be made until the proposal for funding has passed through the required Bureau review and approval process and funds have been appropriated and allocated by Congress, committed through internal Bureau procedures, and appropriately approved by the Department's AQM Grants

Division. WHA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements.

Attachments:

1. Tab A - Budget Template for New Awards
2. Tab B - Budget Guidelines
3. Tab C - Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)