



## **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

# **Effects of International Parental Child Abduction on Abducted Children and Left- Behind Parents**

Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State

**Opportunity number:** DFOP0019391

**Application deadline:** September 16, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST.

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**U.S. Department of State**  
***Bureau of Consular Affairs***

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**A. Basic Information**

**1. Funding Opportunity Overview**

|                                       |                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>      | Effects of International Parental Child Abduction on Abducted Children and Left-Behind Parents                 |
| <b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>     | DFOP0019391                                                                                                    |
| <b>Announcement Type</b>              | New                                                                                                            |
| <b>Deadline for Applications</b>      | September 16, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST                                                                          |
| <b>Assistance Listing Number</b>      | 19.043                                                                                                         |
| <b>Length of Project Period</b>       | 36-48 months                                                                                                   |
| <b>Number of Awards Anticipated</b>   | 1 award                                                                                                        |
| <b>Award Amount</b>                   | Maximum of \$1,973,000                                                                                         |
| <b>Total Available Funding</b>        | \$1,973,000 pending availability of funds                                                                      |
| <b>Type of Funding</b>                | David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014, as amended in 22 U.S.C. 9122(h) |
| <b>Anticipated Project Start Date</b> | January 2027                                                                                                   |
| <b>Funding Instrument Type</b>        | Cooperative Agreement                                                                                          |
| <b>Project Performance Period</b>     | Proposed projects should be completed in 36-48 months                                                          |
| <b>Other</b>                          | <b>This notice is subject to availability of funding.</b>                                                      |

## 2. Executive Summary

Investing in the protection and well-being of children and families is a proven strategy for ensuring American security, solidifying American strength, and increasing American prosperity for generations to come. While the negative consequences of international parental child abduction (IPCA) on abducted children and left-behind parents are generally acknowledged, the issue has only received piecemeal attention in scientific literature. The ensuing research gap affects the ability of service providers, advocacy organizations, and governmental authorities to provide needed services to adequately support affected children and their families in the United States.

As the U.S. Central Authority for the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (“Convention”), the Department of State’s Office of Children’s Issues is responsible for monitoring and implementing all aspects of the Convention in the United States as well as handling cases involving children abducted to and from countries that are not treaty partners under the Convention.

Through this cooperative agreement, the Office of Children’s Issues seeks to fund one research study whose goal is to better understand how IPCA affects abducted children and their left-behind parents in order to better support impacted individuals, their families, and their communities in the United States.

**The study objectives are:**

- a) Identify short- and long-term effects of IPCA on abducted children and left-behind parents across multiple domains (including psychological/mental health, child development, child welfare, economics/finance, social and community factors, legal, law enforcement and other governmental systems).
- b) Identify gaps in support for children and left-behind parents impacted by IPCA in the United States.
- c) Recommend solutions to the identified gaps in support in the United States.

The first year of the project will incorporate a planning period, in consultation with a Steering Committee. The project must deliver at least one public-facing product resulting from the planning period activities (e.g., literature review; available data and data gaps review; secondary analyses; etc.) as well as a comprehensive public-facing final report of study findings, identified gaps, and evidence-based recommendations.

Eligible applicants are limited to U.S.-based higher education institutions, research institutions, and nonprofit organizations. Foreign organizations and foreign components of U.S. organizations are not eligible to apply.

## B. Eligibility

### 1. Eligible Applicants

The following U.S. based organizations are eligible to apply:

- Higher Education Institutions
  - o Public/State Controlled Institutions of Higher Education
  - o Private Institutions of Higher Education
- Research Institutions
  - o Public/State Controlled Institutions of Research (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)
  - o Private Institutions of Research (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)
- Nonprofits Other Than Institutions of Higher Education or Research
  - o Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education or Research)
  - o Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education or Research)

Foreign Organizations and foreign components of U.S. Organizations **are not** eligible to apply.

## **2. Principal Investigator (PI)**

Any individual(s) with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the Principal Investigator (PI) is invited to work with their organization to develop an application for support. If the PI does not hold a doctorate/equivalent degree in their respective field and have experience with research as a professional responsibility, the application must include a co-PI with the requisite education and experience.

## **3. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not required.

## **4. Other Eligibility Requirements**

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

# **C. Project Description**

## **1. Background**

The Trump Administration understands supporting children and families strengthens the foundation of American society. Investing in their protection and well-being is a proven strategy for ensuring American security, solidifying American strength, and increasing American prosperity for generations to come. Families impacted by IPCA face unique challenges that set them apart from families involved in other types of custody or family disputes, requiring nuanced understanding and tailored interventions. While the negative consequences of IPCA on abducted children and left-behind parents are generally acknowledged, the issue has only received piecemeal attention in scientific

literature. The ensuing research gap affects the ability of service providers, advocacy organizations, and governmental authorities to provide needed services to adequately support affected children and their families in the United States.

The Department of State's Office of Children's Issues, located within the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Overseas Citizens Services Directorate, serves as the U.S. Central Authority for the Convention in accordance with the International Child Abduction Remedies Act (ICARA) of 2000 and subsequent legislation. The Office of Children's Issues also handles cases of children abducted to and from countries that are not treaty partners under the Convention. As the U.S. Central Authority, the Office of Children's Issues is responsible for monitoring and implementing all aspects of the Convention in the United States. Furthermore, the Office of Children's Issues seeks to support victims of IPCA by providing referrals to and information on a range of resources and engaging with advocacy groups. See [detailed information on role and resources of the Office of Children's Issues](#).

For more information about the Convention and the requirements and responsibilities of the Office of Children's Issues as the U.S. Central Authority, please see:

- [1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction](#).
- [1988 International Child Abduction Remedies Act \(ICARA\)](#), as amended.
- [2014 Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act \(ICAPRA\)](#), as amended.

## **2. Goals, Objectives, Outputs, and Outcomes**

The intent behind this cooperative agreement is twofold: 1) to lay a research foundation to build our knowledge of IPCA's effects and 2) to increase evidence-informed support for impacted individuals, their families, and their communities in the United States. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how the activities they propose will advance the stated goal and achieve the stated objectives and outcomes of this funding announcement.

**Goal.** To better understand how IPCA affects abducted children and their left-behind parents in order to better support impacted individuals, their families, and their communities in the United States.

**Objective 1.** Identify short- and long-term effects of IPCA on abducted children and left-behind parents across multiple domains (including psychological/mental health, child development, child welfare, economics/finance, social and community factors, legal, law enforcement and other governmental systems). This objective will be achieved through a planning period (see 3. *Additional Information and Requirements: Planning Period*) followed by an implementation period.

**Objective 2.** Identify gaps in existing support for children and left-behind parents impacted by IPCA in the United States.

**Objective 3.** Recommend solutions to the identified gaps in support to children and left-behind parents impacted by IPCA in the United States.

**Required Outputs.** The project will deliver a minimum of two published, publicly available products:

- At least one public-facing product resulting from the planning period activities (e.g., literature review; available data and data gaps review; secondary analyses; etc.), in consultation with the Steering Committee, published within one year of the planning period's conclusion.
- A comprehensive public-facing final report of study findings, identified gaps, and evidence-based recommendations, published by the end of the award period.

**Required Outcome:** The American public, Congress, the Department of State, and other government entities and non-governmental organizations have a better understanding of IPCA's impacts on families, the existing gaps in services, and recommendations for addressing these gaps.



### 3. Additional Information and Requirements

#### Methodology

While literature reviews and/or other secondary analysis of existing datasets are anticipated to help inform the research questions and identify gaps in existing knowledge, the focus of this research study is to develop new knowledge. Given the largely exploratory nature of the study, rigorous qualitative or mixed methods proposals are anticipated. See the *Approach* section under 4. *Application Contents and Format* for more details.

#### Eligibility Criteria for Study Participants

- Individuals who were child victims of international parental abduction.
- [Left-behind parents](#) in the United States.

#### Human Subjects Research

The proposed project is expected to involve research activities with human subjects. For the purpose of this funding opportunity, the Department of State will follow the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (the Common Rule) and applicants must comply with [the Health and Human Services regulations at 45 CFR part 46 regarding the protection of human research subjects](#).

#### Prior to award issuance, the selected award recipient must:

- Hold or obtain a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) approved by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP), or partner with an organization that does so.
- Certify to the Department of State that the research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) designated in the FWA and will be subject to continuing review by that IRB.
- Provide documentation that all Key Personnel have completed Human Research Protection training.

For more information, see <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/index.html>.

### **Steering Committee**

The applicant funded under this NOFO will be required to establish and actively consult a steering committee throughout the lifecycle of the project. The committee should be composed of at least three members who are independent of the applicant organization with recognized expertise in some facet of international parental child abduction. One of these members must be from the Office of Children's Issues. The committee may also include representatives from relevant non-governmental or non-profit organizations, the mental health field, legal professionals with backgrounds in international family law or Hague petitions, law enforcement professionals with background in IPCA cases, individuals with lived experience in IPCA cases, and/or other identified areas of needed expertise.

#### **The Steering Committee will advise the core research team by:**

- Providing input on the knowledge gaps and research questions.
- Reviewing and providing input on the project's work plan, objectives, and milestones.
- Advising on the interim public facing product(s) that address key audiences as part of the dissemination plan.
- Providing insight and context around the identified gaps and proposed solutions to ensure that the recommendations in the final report are relevant and translatable to the policy and service provider communities.

The research team must convene the Steering Committee at least annually, with the expectation that the committee will meet more frequently during the initial planning period of the award. Meetings may be held virtually or in person. Detailed minutes of each meeting, including recommendations and action items, must be documented and submitted to the Department of State as part of regular semi-annual progress reports.

## Planning Period

The proposed project should include a planning period of up to 12 months to finalize the research plan. Expectations of the planning period are:

- Refine and adapt the research questions and project direction in consultation with the Steering Committee.
- Review available data, reports, and existing research, and identify gaps.
- Assess the possibility of accessing any potentially useful data and initiate access applications.
- Conduct secondary analyses of existing data as part of the research plan.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing literature across relevant fields, as defined in *Objective 1* in consultation with the Steering Committee.
- Hold Steering Committee and/or expert meetings to establish the framework, issues, and terminology and to review planned dissemination products.
- Identifying gaps in the core team and incorporate consultants or additional team members as needed.
- Develop and refine interview measures and, if applicable, survey measures. Data collection activities should:
  - Ensure privacy and Human Subjects protection.
  - Account for the sensitive nature of the topic.
  - Ensure the project team's ability to identify and enroll these populations into the study.
- Finalize the dissemination plan by identifying the most appropriate format and outlet for the final report and other dissemination project(s) based on the target audience.

## **Dissemination Plan**

The proposed project should include a dissemination plan that includes:

- At least one public-facing product resulting from the planning period activities (e.g., literature review, available data and data gaps review, secondary analyses. etc.), published within one year of the planning period's conclusion.
- A comprehensive, public-facing final report of study findings, identified gaps, and evidence-based recommendations.

Proposals, including robust dissemination plans beyond the minimum requirements listed above, are encouraged and will be reviewed favorably.

## **Budget**

Period of Performance: 36-48 months, divided into 12-month budget periods.

The budget proposal must include the following:

- **Steering Committee Meetings:** The award recipient will be responsible for hosting/organizing Steering Committee meetings. In addition to regular teleconferences, it may be appropriate for the entire Steering Committee to meet in person during the course of the project period.
- **Interagency Coordinating Group Meeting:** Travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in one-day interagency stakeholder meeting to present and discuss final report's research findings.

## **Applications Not Responsive to this Notice of Funding Opportunity**

The following are proposals that will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed:

- Applications seeking to exclusively study a narrow sub-set of the eligible participant population (i.e., only victims of domestic violence, only children who

were abducted to one specific country, only left-behind parents from one demographic group, etc.).

- Applications seeking to study non-eligible participants.
- Applications focused on identifying gaps in support and recommending solutions for countries other than the United States.
- Applications seeking to implement a program with this grant.

#### **4. Substantial Involvement**

Under the cooperative agreement award, the Department of State anticipates the following substantial involvement:

- The Office of Children's Issues will participate in the Steering Committee to provide input, information, assistance, and feedback reflecting the proposed research goals and dissemination plan and to remain informed about project activities and progress. The Steering Committee will retain approval authority for the project.
- The Office of Children's Issues will provide input on all dissemination products developed as a project deliverable. Furthermore, the Office of Children's Issues will provide input on the identified gaps and recommended solutions proposed in the final report prior to publication to ensure that the study's recommendations are relevant and translatable to the policy and service provider communities.
- The Office of Children's Issues, in its capacity as the U.S. Central Authority, will assist with convening the Interagency Coordinating Group meeting in Washington, D.C., by providing the meeting space and appropriate agency points of contacts.

#### **D. Application Contents and Format**

**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 be ineligible.

## 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 documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

### 1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance – Organizations at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- SF-424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- SF-424B Assurances for Non-Construction Programs at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (not required if an organization is fully registered in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov))

### 2. Summary Page (1 page - Optional)

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, project title, project period proposed start and end date, and brief project summary.

### 3. Proposal (20 pages maximum)

The proposal should provide sufficient detail for reviewers unfamiliar with the project to fully understand the proposed scope, activities, and approach. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Project Summary:** Provide a summary of the application project description. It must be clear, accurate, concise, and include:
  - **Problem Statement:** Briefly introduce the problem to be addressed and the research project proposed to address it.
  - **Goal and Objectives:** State what the project intends to achieve (goal) and the specific, measurable, and achievable steps toward that goal (objectives). Clearly identify principal and subordinate objectives, explain how they relate to the overall purpose of the project, and describe how they will be achieved. Specify the key constructs and other outcomes that will be measured.
  - **Significance:** Explain how the proposed project will improve current knowledge and contribute to future research. Include a reference list for any literature cited. Describe how project results could significantly improve support for families affected by IPCA.
- **Approach:** Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Clearly identify parts of the approach that must rely on the planning period to flesh out.

This section must describe, in detail, the technical approach for addressing the issues and achieving the goals and objectives laid out in the *Project Summary* section. Include a logic model or conceptual framework that demonstrates how the proposed work will achieve the intended outcomes. Clearly describe the research design, sample, procedures, measures, and analytic strategy. Explain how they are appropriate and sufficient for addressing the goals, objectives, and research questions of the project. Explain how the project will inform and expand the knowledge base regarding the effects of IPCA on abducted children and left-behind parents. Discuss the strengths and limitations of each aspect of the design; cite relevant literature as appropriate. Identify potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be

used to address these challenges. More specifically, the *Approach* section must include the following:

- **Partnerships and Collaborations**

- Discuss the plan for the Steering Committee, to include composition, recruitment strategy, and involvement in all phases of the project.
- Describe any additional partnerships with other organizations that will be involved in the project, including their specific roles and contributions to recruitment, data collection, analysis, or dissemination activities.

- **Planning Period**

- Provide a detailed workplan for the planning period (up to 12 months) for refining the research focus and adapting the approach and research methodology, in advisement with the Steering Committee. See 3. Additional Information and Requirements: Planning Period for required elements.
- Provide a timeline with specific milestones for each planning period activity, demonstrating how these activities will be completed within the planning period and how they will inform the subsequent research phases.

- **Research Design**

- Present the conceptual framework or theoretical foundation for the proposed research. Explain how this framework guides the research approach and connects to the study's goals and objectives.
- Describe the methodological approach(es) and provide a justification for why this methodological approach is appropriate for addressing the research questions and achieving the study objectives.



- Key constructs, variables, or themes to be explored and how they relate to one another.
- **Sample**
    - Describe the proposed study sample and size and provide justification.
    - Describe the sampling strategy and provide justification.
    - Describe the recruitment procedures, including specific strategies for identifying and accessing eligible participants given the sensitive nature of IPCA and potential challenges in reaching these populations.
    - Provide evidence that existing or proposed partnerships and collaborations are sufficient to support planned recruitment and data collection.
    - Describe how the proposed project will provide for adequate protection of human subjects and describe the process by which Human Subjects Certification will be obtained.
  - **Procedures and Measures**
    - Describe all data collection activities, including methods, setting, format, timing, procedures for engaging participants given the sensitive nature of IPCA, training of data collectors, and quality assurance procedures.
    - Describe all data collection instruments and provide evidence for their quality, appropriateness, reliability, and validity. If developing new instruments, describe the development and testing process. Explain how instruments account for the sensitive nature of the topic, ensure privacy and Human Subjects protection, and enable identification and enrollment of eligible populations.

- Describe procedures for secure data collection, processing, storage, verification, quality monitoring, documentation, and protecting confidentiality and personally identifiable information.
- **Analytic Strategy**
  - Describe the specific analytic methods, procedures, and sequence of activities. Explain the rationale for selecting these methods and how they align with the research design and data types. Identify any software or tools that will be used.
  - Describe strategies to ensure rigor, quality, and trustworthiness of the analysis, including procedures for validation, addressing potential biases, quality control, and documentation.
  - If using multiple data sources or methods, describe how they will be integrated and how integration will enhance understanding.
  - Describe strategies for managing incomplete or problematic data, testing robustness of findings, and addressing unexpected results.
  - Explain how findings will be interpreted in relation to existing literature, input from the Steering Committee, and translated into actionable recommendations relevant to policy and service provider communities.
- **Dissemination Plan**
  - Discuss the plan to develop public-facing products, including the final report, that address key audiences.
  - Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes.
  - The timeline for dissemination.

- **Proposed Project Timeline and Milestones:** Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections (for the entire project period) of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.
  
- **Organizational Capacity:** The applicant must describe their organizational capacity to complete the proposed work. This includes the applicant organization's history with research (including budget and ethical oversight). Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with *2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*. Include information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies. The Organizational Capacity section must include the following:
  - **Management and Staffing Plan**
    - Outline the roles, responsibilities, and expected contributions of the organizations and key individuals who will work on the project.
    - Provide information regarding the PI's work, research and publication history. A curriculum vitae, biographical sketch, or résumé would appropriately address this need (see Attachments).
    - Identify experience and skills of key staff, including project management experience. If staff are yet to be hired, identify expected qualifications.
    - Enumerate what proportion of their time will be used in support of this project. This may be addressed in the budget justification narrative.

- **Partnerships (if applicable)**

- List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees. Submit letters of support from each partner and/or sub-awardee describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner (see Attachments). Provide evidence of previous partnership activities, if any.
- Describe capabilities of all project partners (subcontractors, memoranda of understanding, etc.) and their roles and levels of fiscal and organizational commitment.

- **Management of Federal Funds**

- Describe the framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 2 CFR 200. The description must include: system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).
- **Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information:** Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive, consistent with applicable federal, state, local and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period. Also see *5. Protection of Human Subjects* below.

- **Project Monitoring Plan:** Describe how project implementation will be monitored to ensure it meets the goals, objectives, and expected outputs and outcomes by the end of the award timeframe.

#### 4. Budget Justification Narrative (No page limit)

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to provide a budget justification. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail for each year of the proposed project that includes detailed calculations for the categorial costs identified on the SF-424A.

- Describe each of the budget expenses in detail, including the estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative details sufficient for the SF-424A calculations to be duplicated.
- Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.
- Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate.

See sections 3. *Additional Information and Requirements: Budget* and 9. *Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Narrative* for further information.

#### 5. Protection of Human Subjects

- Provide a statement regarding the protection of human subjects that addresses the following elements:
  - Risks to the subjects,
  - Adequacy of protection against these risks,
  - Potential benefits of the research to the subjects and others, and
  - Importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained.

- Applications must include the form [Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption \(Common Rule\)](#) with their application package.
  - If the Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) cannot be identified at the time of application, the information must be submitted prior to the award issuance. The applicant also must submit with this application a clear, feasible plan and timeline to obtain an FWA and secure IRB review and approval before initiating any human subjects research.
- **Note:** The application does not require documentation that all key personnel have completed Human Research Protection training. This documentation will only be required upon selection for funding, prior to award issuance.

## 6. Attachments

- Curriculum Vitae (CV), NIH Biographical Sketch, or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program. A maximum of 5 pages will be accepted per document.
- Letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.
- Reference list for any cited literature.

## E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

### 1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at MyGrants or grants.gov.

## **2. Department of State Contacts**

### **Application Submission Contact**

Grants.gov Customer Support

Telephone: +1-800-518-4726

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

### **Program Officer**

Rebecca Tehan, MPH

Department of State

Email: [OCSGrants@state.gov](mailto:OCSGrants@state.gov)

### **Financial/Grants Management Contact**

Mauna Dosso

Department of State

Email: [DossoM@state.gov](mailto:DossoM@state.gov)

## **3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)**

### **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 in SAM.gov. 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. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

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

- 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 prior to registering in SAM.gov.

### **Exemptions**

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110-Exceptions to this part](#) for a full list of exemptions.

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.

## **4. Submission Dates and Times**

Applications are due no later than *September 16, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EST.*

## **5. Department of State Funding Restrictions**

- Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

- Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border:

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States



southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

- Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be **within the United States**, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and

1. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

- Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements.

Applicants are advised that Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

1. Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is

material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

- Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan

Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds \$500,000:

1. To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)-Statutory requirement](#);
2. The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)-AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).
3. That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)-Statutory requirement](#) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

- Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities

1. **Definitions:** *American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity* means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the

Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>

*FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system* means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.

*Unmanned aircraft* means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

*Unmanned aircraft system* means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.

**2. Prohibition:** Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

- Delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;
- Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and
- Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system.

**3. Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers:** The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 ([41 U.S.C. 3901-Contracts awarded using procedures other than sealed-bid procedures note prec.](#)) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers].

- Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA)

Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR Part 602, 603, and 604.

These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.

1. [2 CFR Part 602-Protecting Life in Foreign Assistance](#): The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.
2. [2 CFR Part 603 - Combating Gender Ideology in Foreign Assistance](#): The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.
3. [2 CFR Part 604-Combating Discriminatory Equity Ideology in Foreign Assistance Rules](#): The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

## 6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted electronically through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) or MyGrants.

## F. Application Review Information

### 1. Review Criteria

With the exception of the funding opportunity announcement and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers must not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers must not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and must not refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. The corresponding point values indicate the relative importance placed on each review criterion. Points will be allocated based on the extent to which the application proposal addresses each of the criteria listed. Applicants should address these criteria in their application materials.

#### Scored Review Criteria

- **Approach - Rigor (Maximum Points: 25)**

The rigor of the research approach will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed project employs technically sound, appropriate, and, where relevant, innovative approaches, design elements, procedures, methods, and analyses, including a clearly articulated conceptual framework and research questions (and hypotheses, if applicable) that align with the project goals and objectives.

- The adequacy of the description of the study sample, including recruitment strategy and selection procedures.
- The extent to which the applicant provides a clear and well-justified rationale for the proposed sample size in relation to the research methods design, demonstrating that the sample will be sufficient to achieve the research objectives using the proposed analytic techniques.
- The adequacy of the description of procedures and measures, including a clear account of all project activities; data collection procedures; and evidence for the quality and appropriateness of data collection tools, including reliability, validity, and/or trustworthiness strategies as appropriate.
- The appropriateness and sufficiency of the analytic strategy, including the proposed analytic approaches, methods of inference, and – as appropriate – the plan for integrating qualitative and quantitative strands.
- The adequacy of procedures for data management and quality control, including plans for secure data collection, transcription, coding, storage, documentation, monitoring, and verification to ensure data integrity and trustworthiness.
- The extent to which the proposal anticipates and addresses potential technical, methodological, and logistical challenges that might influence successful execution, and describes realistic and appropriate strategies for managing these challenges, including contingency plans and alternative approaches.

- **Approach - Relevance (Maximum Points: 15)**

The approach's relevance and contribution to the field will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the applicant clearly articulates the current state of knowledge relevant to IPCA and the issues being addressed, and clearly links

identified gaps and limitations in the literature with the project's goals, objectives, and research questions.

- The extent to which the project is well developed, with clearly stated and logically aligned goals, objectives, activities, and timelines, and a logic model or equivalent that demonstrates how the proposed work will achieve the intended outcomes.
- The degree to which the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses are well reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project and to expand the knowledge base regarding the effects of IPCA on abducted children and left-behind parents.
- The extent to which the applicant includes plans to identify and address gaps in prior research and to ensure a robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed (e.g., attention to sources of bias, missing data, and sensitivity analyses).
- The extent to which the applicant presents a clear and feasible dissemination plan, including the required planning period project and final report, tailored to key audiences.
- The extent to which proposed activities are consistent with applicable U.S. law and policy. The proposal must not include any activities contrary to any standing Executive Orders (for reference, see the Federal Register at <https://www.federalregister.gov/>).

- **Human Subjects Research (Maximum Points: 10)**

Human Subjects Research will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed plan demonstrates a comprehensive, compliant, and ethically sound approach to human subjects research, including clear and adequate plans to protect the rights, welfare, privacy, and confidentiality of study participants.

- The extent to which the application clearly describes the research activities, including the roles and responsibilities of collaborating partners and investigators, and data to be collected, including how these data will be accessed, stored, shared, retained, protected, and disposed, particularly with respect to personally identifiable information.
- The extent to which adequate safeguards are in place to ensure confidentiality, privacy, data security, and overall management and protection of all materials and information related to human subjects, including the strength and feasibility of data management and quality control procedures; the application addresses incident response and breach notification procedures, including how the applicant will detect, respond to, and report unauthorized access or disclosure of sensitive information.
- The extent to which the application provides a clear description of all potential risks to subjects, the anticipated level of risk and populations affected, and a justification that these risks are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits to participants and/or the importance of the knowledge expected to result from the research.
- The extent to which the application describes appropriate procedures for obtaining and documenting informed consent, and assent where applicable, in language understandable to the target population(s); includes measures to minimize risk (e.g., monitoring procedures and plans to address adverse events or unanticipated problems); and, where applicable, describes additional protections for vulnerable populations.
- Evidence that the applicant or a partner organization holds an active Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and has access to a properly constituted Institutional Review Board (IRB). If the applicant does not currently meet these requirements, the applicant presents a clear, feasible plan and timeline to obtain an FWA and secure IRB review and approval before initiating any human subjects research.



- **Staffing Plan (Maximum Points: 15)**

The staffing plan will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the PI is fully experienced and capable to lead the proposed project, including holding a doctorate or equivalent degree in their respective field, and experience with research as a professional responsibility.
- The extent to which the PI, key staff, collaborators, consultants, and other necessary personnel demonstrate competence in areas addressed by the proposed research, including relevant background, experience, training and work on related research or similar projects, and demonstrate experience in design, implementation and analyses of proposed research methods.
- To extent to which the proposed team includes the management experience necessary to effectively operate the project.
- The extent to which staffing and hours of commitment (level and composition) are adequate to carry out all project activities with a high level of professional input and attention.

- **Organizational Capacity (Maximum Points: 10)**

The organizational capacity will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the applicant can effectively and efficiently administer a project of the proposed size, complexity, and scope; the extent to which the applicant's organization demonstrates an ability to carry out all functions, roles, and tasks of the proposed project, including research and budget oversight.
- The extent to which proposed project partners are appropriate additions; have experience in their stated fields; understand their role in the proposed project; have the ability to carry out their functions, roles, and tasks; and have appropriate and sufficient fiscal commitment and organizational support.

- The applicant provided letters of support from each partner and/or sub-awardee describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- The extent to which there is evidence of prior successful partnerships with the partners and/or sub-awardees.
- The organization has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds; the organization has experience successfully managing federal funds.
- If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.

- **Budget and Budget Justification (Maximum Points: 10)**

The budget and narrative budget justification will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The budget clearly details the itemized expenses for the project, and the narrative budget justification clearly explains all calculations.
- The costs and budget allocations are appropriate for the scale of the project proposed; the budget accounts for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.
- Proposed project costs are reasonable, realistic, and clearly linked with the types and range of activities to be conducted and the expected goals and objectives of the project.
- Personnel funds are described in detail, and they are consistent and reasonable for the responsibilities and time dedicated to the project activities.
- Funds are distributed appropriately throughout the performance period in alignment with proposed activities.

- The budget includes travel to Washington, D.C. for the Interagency Stakeholder Meeting during the final project year and any costs associated with Steering Committee meetings.

- **Project Planning and Sound Management (Maximum points: 15)**

Project planning and Sound Management will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the applicant presents a sound, workable, and cohesive technical plan demonstrating how the work would be carried out on-time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality to meet required objectives and outcomes.
- The extent to which the application includes a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments, to include the planning period activities, data analysis, and dissemination activities.
- The extent to which the applicant presents a sound administrative framework for monitoring, evaluating, and maintaining quality control over the implementation, ongoing operations, and timeliness of the study.
- The extent to which the applicant presents a clear and feasible plan for establishing, convening, and engaging the Steering Committee throughout the project lifecycle; the extent to which the proposed Steering Committee composition demonstrates appropriate expertise.
- The extent to which the applicant presents a sound plan for coordination of activities carried out by partners and demonstrates an effective approach to team-building among project staff, partnering organizations, and the Steering Committee.
- The extent to which the applicant presents a comprehensive, detailed, and feasible workplan for the planning period (up to 12 months) that addresses all required activities as outlined in the Project Description, including research refinement, comprehensive literature review, data access and

secondary analysis, expert consultation, team development, instrument development, and dissemination planning finalization.

## **2. Indirect Costs**

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

## **3. Review and Selection Process**

Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

All eligible applications will be evaluated for scientific, technical, and subject-matter merit by a review committee convened by the Department of State Office of Children's Issues, using the stated review criteria. Appeals of the review committee scoring will not be accepted for applications submitted in response to this NOFO.

## **4. Risk Review**

- Risk factors

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

- Financial stability
- Management systems and standards
- History of performance
- Audit reports and findings

- Ability to effectively implement requirements Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, 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 U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313)

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

Before making decisions in the risk review required by [2 CFR 200.206](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-200/subpart-200.206), the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

## G. Award Notices

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the 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.

**Unsuccessful applicants:** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by December 31, 2026, via MyGrants.

**Payment Method:** Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS).

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each PMS payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

## H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

### 1. 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:

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 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - 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 pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- [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](#)
  - Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

## 2. Reporting

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit quarterly financial reports and semi-annual program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

### 3. Branding *and Marketing*

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at [Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System](#). Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual [10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions](#).

For more information, visit: <https://brand.america.gov/>

## I. Other Information

### Guidelines for Budget Justification

**Personnel and Fringe Benefits:** 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, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. 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 \$10,000 per unit.

**Supplies:** List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 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 carry out 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 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. 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.