

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Academy for Women Entrepreneurs

Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Mission to South Africa, Department
of State

Opportunity number: PAS-ZAF-FY25-03

Application deadline: **14 March 2025 at 23h59 GMT+2**

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U.S Department of State
Public Diplomacy Section/ U.S. Mission to South Africa
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Academy for Women Entrepreneurs
Funding Opportunity Number	PAS-ZAF-FY25-03
Announcement Type	Initial
Deadline for Applications	02/16/2025 at 23h59 GMT+2
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	8 to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated	1
Award amounts	Up to \$69,000
Total available funding	\$69,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY2025 Fulbright-Hays Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	May 1, 2025

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements are different from grants in that bureau/embassy staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less.

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

-----**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**-----

2. Executive Summary

Priority Region: Project activities will take place in five cities across South Africa, one city in Lesotho, and one city in Eswatini.

Executive Summary

The U.S. Embassy in Pretoria of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out a program to train 100 women entrepreneurs based in South Africa (60), Lesotho (20), and Eswatini (20). The Academy for Women Entrepreneurs is a program of the U.S. Department of State, using a hybrid model that combines online learning with in-class mentoring and facilitation. The program in South Africa is centered on the Francis and Dionne Najafi 100 Million Learners Global Initiative, an online course spearheaded by the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University.

Applicants for this notice of funding opportunity will support cohorts of women entrepreneurs in up to seven cities – five in South Africa and one each in Lesotho and Eswatini. The cohorts will attend virtual, hybrid, and in-person events at American Spaces or Embassy partner locations in each city.

For participation in the Najafi 100 Million Learners course, the applicant will work with the U.S. Embassy to identify an in-person U.S. government program alumni facilitator in each city to lead the participants. The coursework features eighteen modules/themes key to global entrepreneurial success in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The program aims to provide entrepreneurs with proven 21st Century strategies for creating value through innovation in existing enterprises across the private, nonprofit and public sectors.

Facilitators will also lead in-person discussions and serve as mentors for program participants. Facilitators will be alumni of related U.S. government programs and will be selected in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General. Facilitators will attend a pre-program training and orientation provided by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The eventual implementing partner will need to run program launch, pitch and graduation events. These sessions are to be held in-person. The implementing partner will also work in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy to host online masterclasses led by industry experts.

Additional information about the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs:

<https://eca.state.gov/awe>.

Additional information about our American Spaces:

- [South Africa](#)

- [Lesotho](#)
- [Eswatini](#)

Participants:

- Young women (aged 21–35).
- Early-stage entrepreneurs, or aspiring entrepreneurs with a viable business idea that has a community improvement or other social impact, such as pursuing green technology or social entrepreneurship ventures.
- Citizen/legal resident and residing in the country where the participant’s cohort is based.
- Resident in urban, semi-urban, and semi-rural areas of Gauteng, Bloemfontein, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Western Cape, Lesotho and eSwatini: Pretoria (25 participants); Soweto (25 participants); Bloemfontein (20 participants); Cape Town (20 participants); Durban (20 participants); Maseru (20 participants); Mbabane (20 participants).
- Committed to an average of 5 hours per week to the AWE program.
- Basic computer skills and must have access to a laptop/computer with internet access.

Partnerships:

The implementing partner is encouraged to include potential partners in their networks that may benefit the program in the following areas:

- National, provincial, and municipal (or equivalent) government departments and agencies focused on economic development, women’s empowerment, and gender equity
- Non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations focused on related topics and subject matter
- Investors and other entities focused on economic prosperity, trade and investment opportunity development, and other related subject matter.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

Only **non-profit South African or U.S. organizations** are eligible to apply. This includes non-profit think tanks, civil society/non-governmental organizations, and public and private educational institutions.

Applicants may be asked to provide proof of their non-profit status if such status is unclear to the selection committee.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required.

3. 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. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

Program Goal:

- Promote economic prosperity, including equitable economic development opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups and individuals.

Program Objectives:

- Provide a resource for women entrepreneurs to engage in online education with guided facilitation and localization;
- Foster networks that support participants' access to peer-to-peer mentorship, business partners, and scaling opportunities with businesses in the region and in the United States;
- Provide access to a range of educational programs tailored to women's economic empowerment to expand the effects of participation.

2. Substantial Involvement

The Department of State will be substantially involved in carrying out the following aspects of this cooperative agreement:

- Collaboration in the recruitment and selection of 7 alumni facilitators across the 7 cities
- Collaboration in the selection and final approval of participants
- Collaboration in recruitment of guest speakers and thematic experts for masterclasses
- Collaboration in identifying appropriate fairs for pitch event winners to participate across the 7 cities
- Active participation in program launch, masterclasses, pitch competition and graduation event
- Integration of participants into the wider U.S. government-funded program alumni community.

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 Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)

An additional form, SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov.

These forms can be downloaded from <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>. Do not create your own form and name it “SF-424” or “SF-424A”.

2. Summary Page (optional)

Cover sheet stating the applicant’s name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. Proposal (8 pages maximum)

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

4. Budget Justification Narrative

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

5. Attachments

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- 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.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at <https://za.usembassy.gov/grants/>

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:

PretoriaGrants@state.gov

An information session for this Notice of Funding Opportunity will be held via Teams on January 13, 2025 at 14h00 (GMT+2) to answer questions from all potential applicants.

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.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](https://ncagecode.nato.int/)

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](#) 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 **March 14, 2025 at 23h59 GMT+2**.

5. Funding Restrictions

- i. 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).

- ii. 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 or 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.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to PretoriaGrants@state.gov

Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

None of the funds awarded under this agreement may be used for any initiatives or programs, or any activities that do not comply with Executive Order 14173 titled Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.

The Recipient shall submit, prior to award or upon request from Grants Officer, a certification that confirms:

1. 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;
2. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws.

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

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

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 20 points: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 points: The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget – 10 points: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Monitoring and evaluation plan – 15 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

Sustainability – 10 points: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Risk Review

i. Risk factors – must include

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:

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance
- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements
- f. If there are any program specific risk factors that will be considered, describe them here.

ii. 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 (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in 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 March 14, 2025 via PretoriaGrants@state.gov

Payment Method:

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer. Payment will be made by EFT. For South African bank accounts, the exchange rate on the date of the transaction will be used.

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: NOTE:

- [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).

- [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 [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program advances equity with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. The proposal should also demonstrate how the program will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

The support of underserved communities will be part of the review criteria for this opportunity. Therefore, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

2. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and project reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. It is anticipated that reports will be due within thirty days of each reporting period, and within one hundred and twenty days of the final completion of the award period.

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](#).

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

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.