

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.601

Supporting Moderate Education in Syria

Opportunity Number: NEAAC-ACSYRIA-18-001

Competition ID: NEAAC-ACSYRIA-18-001-056370

Key Information:

Announcement Type	New
Date Opened	November 22, 2017
Questions & Intent to Apply Due (Section VI.I)	December 14, 2017
Application Deadline	January 8, 2018
Expected Date of Notification (Section VI.A)	February 28, 2018
Federal Agency Contact	Jeff Bell NEA-Grants@state.gov

Funding Opportunity Synopsis:

Project Synopsis:

The Office of Assistance Coordination in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA/AC) of the Department of State aims to support stabilization activities in areas liberated from the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIS) as well as those in opposition-held areas of Syria. An integral requirement for such a transition to normalcy is improved equitable access for Syrians to moderate, vital education services for children and youth.

Matriculation and persistence in school and a positive learning environment contribute to the rebuilding of communities and individual identity, and provide hope for a productive future. Moderate educational opportunities deny designated terrorists the space to inculcate the next generation of Syrians with extremist ideologies, prevent the flow of further Syrians to neighboring countries in pursuit of opportunities for their children and avoid a lost generation of children. This announcement seeks to continue the support and development of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) aligned Provincial Education Directorates and other education actors to better manage education in non-Regime controlled communities; provide stipends and salaries for education staff to deliver a critical public service, thereby minimizing the opportunity for armed or violent extremists groups to co-opt or exert influence over education; and ensure schools have the human capital and supplies/materials to deliver education. Other critical interventions in education include teacher training, provide light refurbishment of damaged schools, and psychosocial support and training to children, teachers, and community members.

Eligible Countries and Territories:

In this announcement, we seek to support activities in Syria. The program can be implemented from third countries except for Lebanon. NEA/AC requires that applicants be in sound legal standing with appropriate government authorities in the country where the project will be managed at the time of application to this funding opportunity. Award recipients will be required to maintain legal standing throughout the life of the award, including for any sub-grant made under its auspices. This award highly recommends a presence in Turkey for operational and donor liaison purposes. **Please note: Applications that focus on activities in countries and other than Syria will not be considered.**

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one application.

Background Information about NEA/AC:

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Office of Assistance Coordination in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA/AC) of the Department of State aims to support stabilization activities in areas liberated from the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIS) as well as those in opposition-held areas of Syria. An integral requirement to stabilize communities and preserve moderate institutions that will contribute to a negotiated solution to the Syrian conflict is improved equitable access for Syrians to moderate, quality education services for children and youth. Quality, moderate education is a critical means to deny designated terrorists the space to indoctrinate the next generation of Syrians with violent extremist ideologies and prevent the flow of further Syrians to neighboring countries in pursuit of opportunities for their children and avoid a lost generation. Proposals should outline approaches to continue to support and develop the capacity of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) aligned Provincial Education Directorates and other local education providers to more effectively manage education; provide stipends and salaries for education staff for the 2018 and 2019 academic school years and support summer exams to ensure students are recognized for their learning gains; provide teacher training to ensure quality and grade appropriate education is provided in classrooms; light refurbishments of damaged schools; and provide psychosocial support and training to children, teachers, and community members to address the trauma epidemic in a country in which over 60% of students have seen a shelling or bombing; nearly half have seen people wounded; one-third have witnessed a massacre and 20% have seen people killed during the war in Syria.

Applicants must incorporate plans on how their proposals will be de-conflicted with ongoing civilian assistance efforts being undertaken by other USG and international donor offices. In particular, all applicants must take into consideration that award activities will be coordinated through USG assistance platforms: the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) in Turkey, and the Southern Syrian Assistance Program (SSAP) in Jordan. Each applicant must present a plan on how it will be flexible and responsive to time-sensitive requirements; monitor and evaluate activities inside Syria; and coordinate activities with NEA/AC and other relevant USG entities, as well as international donors. Applicants should consider the context of Syria's dynamic and challenging operating environment in their proposals, especially in terms of program implementation and monitoring. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to conduct baseline and needs assessments of potential Syrian beneficiaries. The award will be issued as a cooperative agreement, with substantial involvement from NEA/AC in the grantee's implementation of this program. As such, NEA/AC and the USG assistance platforms will work closely with the grantee and provide direction regarding planned beneficiaries of assistance, including but not limited to the selection of beneficiary organizations and scope of programming.

Applicants must have experience implementing programs in conflict zones similar to Syria. Ideally this will include a demonstrated ability to deliver cash cross border, provide technical assistance and training inside of Syria, manage education programs in complex environments, produce analytical research on conflict and education dynamics in the country, and manage monitoring and evaluation.

Problem Statement:

Over six years of brutal conflict in Syria has been detrimental to the state of children's education—creating a lost generation of youth who have known nothing but war. The collapse in education is most profound in areas hit hardest by violence, such as Aleppo, Idlib, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, and Rif Damascus. In addition to the decrease in the number of students enrolled, violence has impacted education infrastructure; schools have been destroyed, damaged, or turned into shelters for internally displaced people. Classrooms are overcrowded and insufficient supplies exist to accommodate the demand.

As areas are liberated from ISIS, education will play a critical role in stability efforts. Without critical services for primary and secondary education, Syrian youth face increased risk for recruitment by violent actors. War, poverty, desperation and the desire for revenge have pushed Syrian youth and young adults to join the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIS) and other violent extremist groups. These violent extremist groups provide relative security, protection, education, and structure on a daily basis, key learning tools that are found if a child is enrolled in school. For those children who currently live under violent extremists' ideologies, such as ISIS, moderate, secular education and psychosocial support mechanisms are critical tools to begin to heal from the psychological damage incurred under ISIS and prepare the next generation of citizens, leaders and civic actors to assist in mending the country once there is a political solution to the conflict.

Newly formed education platforms in eastern Aleppo will contribute to international efforts to hold moderate space. Existing moderate education offices and partners will contribute to successful stabilization efforts by providing education services that complement good governance and other basic services delivery, sustain legitimacy of local actors, allowing them to manage the education sector and help mitigate the spread of violent extremist ideology in schools, and build the resilience of individuals and communities. Support to moderate education institutions provides opportunities for students, thus reducing the risk that vulnerable youth will be recruited by violent extremist groups. Quality learning opportunities contribute to an educated citizenry and workforce which will be critical to Syria's future.

Since 2014, NEA/AC has supported the Syrian Interim Government's (SIG) Ministry of Education inside Syria through its Education Directorates (EDs), which oversee education assemblies and sub-assemblies and provide stipends to all school staff registered with the EDs, including Rif Damascus, Idlib, and Aleppo. In addition, NEA/AC has supported summer academic programs that focus on psychosocial activities, math and science competitions, and athletics and arts programming, as well as summer exams. Furthermore, NEA/AC has provided psychosocial support to teachers and children in newly liberated areas of Syria as well as provided support for light rehabilitation of school buildings damaged by the Regime, ISIS and other armed actors. With NEA/AC funding, the EDs have successfully established themselves as legitimate education institutions, providing a critical public service, and minimizing the opportunity for armed and Islamist groups to co-opt or exert excessive influence over education.

Funding Opportunity Objectives:

A successful project will result in a Syria that will have functioning school systems in non-Regime controlled areas, enabling youth to obtain a moderate, secular education recognized by the Syrian Ministry of Education. Interventions should achieve the following objectives:

1. Increase equitable access to educational opportunities to reduce the risk that youth will be recruited to join violent extremist groups and/or migrate outside of Syria to pursue opportunities;
2. Assist youth in overcoming fear and personal security concerns through psychosocial support;
3. Strengthen the capacity of education directorates and other education actors, including teachers, to deliver vital education services to people in the parts of Syria supported by moderate actors; and
4. Promote a unified education system in Syria to contribute to broader reintegration of the Syrian education system following a political resolution of the conflict.
5. Support moderate, secular education that promotes inclusivity, generating safe spaces, and alternatives to radicalized/religious education, as a way to expel violent extremists from communities and eventually defeat violent extremists' ideologies.
6. Provide safe and adequate school structures for children.

Project Design:

This solicitation invites applications that support provision of moderate, secular and quality education services in opposition-held areas of Syria, including those recently liberated from ISIS in Raqqa and the surrounding area. These efforts should build upon existing program efforts to continue the support of education services in opposition areas. Funds will support the delivery of teacher stipends payments in select parts of Syria for the 2018/2019/2020 academic school years. Activities should include support for preparation and provision of summer exams for grades 9 and 12 at the end of the school year; teacher training; psychosocial support; and light school rehabilitation and school supplies. Stipends, if applicable, will be delivered through the Education Directorates where applicable, or through another credible non-Regime education oversight body. In addition, the project will strengthen relevant education oversight bodies through capacity building in administration, finance, and monitoring.

Projects must include:

- a. Stipends and/or salaries for education staff to ensure schools have human capital to deliver education and summer exams;
- b. Teacher training based on local needs assessments;
- c. Psychosocial training and support activities for students grades 1-12, teachers, parents, and communities;
- d. Light school rehabilitation and school supplies for identified schools;
- e. Capacity building activities for Provincial Education Directorates and local education authorities to better manage education; and

- f. A rigorous results monitoring plan with demonstrated feedback loops to show tangible outcomes of the project.

NEA/AC will implement this project in collaboration with other governments supporting education in Syria. Project implementers funded under this solicitation will be required to collaborate with other donors and the holder of the U.K. implementing mechanism to jointly implement the education program.

NEA/AC will require weekly reporting on program activities and standard quarterly reporting in addition to ad hoc reporting requests.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

Applications that include any of these activities or costs above will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

Measurement of Results:

The first step to monitoring is to create a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP). A Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of the proposed project. The RMP may also include project-specific sub-objectives (i.e. project outcomes).

The RMP should include the following elements:

- *Well-defined objectives:* Do the objectives provide a clear statement of what the project specifically plans to achieve?
- *Realistic project objectives:* What results are achievable during the period of the award?
- *Qualitative and quantitative indicators:* How and what will you measure to show the project's results based on outcomes (impact) as well as outputs (raw numbers)?

- *Data collection and analysis:* How (and how often) will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to show progress toward the project objectives?
- *Monitoring and reporting:* How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt to changes on the ground and maintain progress?

Below is a list of NEA/AC Syria standard indicators that have been created to measure the overarching NEA/AC Syria program's results. Thus, not all of the indicators below will be applicable to the proposed project, though the applicant is encouraged to use them where relevant. It is expected that the applicant will propose a combination of the relevant indicators below along with custom indicators, which NEA/AC will review. RMPs will be finalized with the successful applicant at the time of the award.

Objective: Moderate opposition governance capacity and legitimacy are increased.

Intermediate Result: Increased engagement between citizens and opposition governance structures

- #/% of community members who report improved interaction with the opposition governance structures.

Objective: Community resilience is strengthened by improved access to essential services and economic self-sufficiency.

- #/% of citizens who report improvement in essential services received in their communities.

Intermediate Result: Improved capacity of local logistics partners which enable the restoration of essential services.

- # of essential services restoration projects undertaken

SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

Examples of NEA/AC responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in assessing progress and identifying issues that might affect the success of the program;

- Collaboration in determining corrective actions, when necessary;
- Approval of key personnel and any subsequent changes in the positions during the life of the award;
- Approval of notification of travel to Turkey, Jordan, and Syria;
- Collaboration in the creation of any training materials;
- Selection of local beneficiaries; and
- Facilitating approval through Embassy Teams.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Total Funding:	\$39,000,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$13,000,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$ 12,000,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Not required
Length of Project Period:	Funded for one year. Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is NEA/AC's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for at least two additional fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

Assuming the availability of funds, one organization will be selected through this directed announcement. If selected to receive funding, the Period of Performance is anticipated to be up to 12 months, depending on the activities and countries proposed. NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, or for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date. Further, the U.S. Government reserves the right to reject any or all of the submissions received. This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

Non-Competing Continuation

Continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; grantee's progress in meeting grant requirements, including timely submission of required reports and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award; timely submission of a request for additional funding; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applications will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in [Section A](#) and [Section B](#) will not advance to the Technical Review stage. Nothing can be added to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include U.S. or foreign non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations; private institutions of higher education, public or state institutions of higher education; public international organizations; and small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of education in conflict zones in the MENA region. **NEA/AC strongly encourages applications from civil society organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region.** International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition.**

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

B.1 Prime Applicant

Applicants must have the organizational capacity to implement program components in Syria. Applicants must also have experience in conducting risk assessments and monitoring and evaluating programs and sub-recipients in order to document and assess

the short- and long-term outcomes of proposed projects. Extensive partnerships with Syria-based education actors and administrative bodies are necessary to ensure that all program activities can be implemented quickly. Additionally, applicants should:

- Demonstrate expertise in NEA/AC's strategic focus areas of civic engagement and a strong understanding of needs in Syria.
- Experience implementing similar projects in Syria or other conflict areas.
- Demonstrate capacity to operate an assistance management program of multiple and diverse activities across Syria.
- Demonstrate experience managing and monitoring a significant number of sub-recipients and/or direct assistance projects. Applications must clearly outline this experience, including total volume (total dollar amount, number of partners, and number of projects), size and length of sub-awards managed, and geographic and thematic focus. If the applicant has provided capacity-building support to sub-grantees, please indicate the type of support. A sample sub-grant risk assessment and monitoring plan, and sub-award policy/manual, must be provided as part of the proposal.
- Demonstrate in the program and budget narratives how the assistance mechanism will be managed, monitored and evaluated to ensure compliance with the project objectives and Federal regulations. (The successful applicant will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of all sub-recipients, and/or other direct assistance to ensure completion of activities, programmatic efficacy, institutional strengthening, and financial propriety.)
- Demonstrate the ability to accomplish the required activities with minimal full-time staffing and without establishing a dedicated local office in Syria.
- Demonstrate the ability to involve local partners.

B.2 Local Partners

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. The inclusion of a partnership will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information).

A partnership is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations or individuals that defines substantive, collaborative roles for each of the partners in planning and implementing a project. If proposing partners, applicants should provide the following in their submission:

- Describe how the partner(s) will contribute to the objectives of the project;
- Detail how the partner(s) has been involved in the project design at the proposal stage;
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, project evaluation, and project sustainability relative to the lead applicant's;
- Provide a description of the organization (including a link to its website) as well as

- specific examples of its experience working in the proposed content area(s);
- Explain how the applicant organization will provide programmatic oversight and support to the partner(s); and,
- Provide a letter of intent or letter of agreement from the prospective partner(s) detailing how they will collaborate with the applicant organization on the proposed project.

In addition, applicants who propose working with sub-grant(s) must describe in both the program and budget narratives how the sub-grant(s) will be managed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure compliance with project objectives and Federal regulations.

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM).

B.3 UEI Number

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

1. Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.
2. Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary [Standard Industrial Code](#) (SIC), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

B.4 System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. **If an organization's account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

1. Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

2. Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details*. Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.
3. Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the [SAM User Guide](#)), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at: <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 001-334-206-7828.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1 Cost-Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is not an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, recipients must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as their contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB 2 CFR 200.306 - Cost Sharing and Matching.

C.2 Host Country Legal Compliance

NEA/AC requires that applicants be in sound legal standing with appropriate host government authorities at the time of application to this funding opportunity. Award recipients will be required to maintain legal standing throughout the life of the award, including for any sub-grant made under its auspices.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one application.** Please refer to [Section B](#) below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in [Section A.1](#) below will not advance to the Technical Review stage. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1 Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF424b):

Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding.

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424a is provided in Appendix 3.

Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement, including how it will deconflict with other ongoing civilian assistance as well as demonstrate the organizations experience working in conflict zones with multiple partners. It may be **no longer than 15 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission:

Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

**A detailed budget for one year is required as well as a notional budget for out years two and three.*

There is **no page limit** for this section of an application. A sample budget template can be found in Appendix 1 and also includes guidance on completing the budget narrative.

NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the

sample. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. Applicants are strongly recommended to provide their line item and summary budget in excel form as shown in the template. It is recommended that budget narratives are provided in word doc or PDF format. More details on preparing the Budget Narrative are provided in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Narrative.**

Results Monitoring Plan:

A Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of the proposed project. Please see the “Measurement of Results” section above for further guidance. The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information). **More information about preparing this Plan can be found in Appendix 2. NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. RMPs should be attached as a separate document and has no page limit.

Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent: Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.

Organizational Chart: The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.

Proof of legal registration in Turkey and/or Jordan

Theory of Change (or Program Logic) diagram outlining how the different components of the program will connect to the project goal and to the proposed activities of the project. The theory of change (or program logic): 1) defines a program goal linked to country and regional strategies, 2) lists objectives necessary to reach the goal, 3) provides illustrative activities to accomplish each objective, and 4) provides strong justification for how the implementation of proposed activities and the achievement of proposed objectives will ultimately reach the stated goal.

Security Plan: The security plan should describe in separate sections: operational security procedures for in-person activities, online security procedures, and/or security procedures for any additional activities essential to the project. The security plan should demonstrate a knowledge and ability to perform the project activities taking into account risks and safeguards, listing tangible steps that have been and will be

taken. Security plan should be attached as a separate document and may not exceed **5 pages**.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: *Required IF applicable: Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget Narrative greater than the 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

Professional bio for lead project personnel in applicant and partner organizations: Summary professional information may be included within the project narrative or as a separate document included in the optional documents of the application.

A.2 Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a **15 page limit** for this section of the application. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

- **Work Plans, Project Timeline, and/or Calendar of Activities:** A work plan is a detailed list of proposed activities, milestones, and approximate dates. Applicants may choose to include a work plan, project timeline, and/or calendar of proposed activities.
- **Pre-Submission Checklist** can be found in Appendix 4 and a fill-able template can be downloaded online with the announcement at www.grants.gov. This Checklist ensures that an applicant has accurately documented the eligibility requirements and included all major components of the application.

NOTE: Applications that exceed the allowable page limit will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

A.3 Application Formatting Requirements

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in [Section A.1](#) and [A.2](#) above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted. In addition, applicants are strongly encouraged to include a Table of Contents with their submission.

Adhering to the standards outlined above will help to ensure the accurate submission of the document. Failure to comply with these requirements may affect the successful transmission and consideration of an application.

B. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using Grants.gov. The system requires that the applying organization have an account login, and also requires a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in [Part III](#) above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

B.1 Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the “Register” link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

C. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on **January 8, 2018**. **There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline. Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

D. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

D.1 Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction

Section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) provides that none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

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

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

It is the Department of State’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by the description in (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

D.2 Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations:

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

D.3 Audit Requirements:

Foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in Department of State federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity’s financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government’s Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country’s laws or adopted by the host country’s public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer’s approval. More information can be found at <http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf>

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that

Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the application and to determine the likelihood of its success and impact. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Achievable Objectives (30 points)

- The project objectives are specific and clearly explained.
- The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward NEA/AC goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out and who will be responsible for them.
- The RMP indicators measure realistic/feasible project impact (outcomes) rather than just outputs.

Approach/Project Design (30 points)

- The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address the objectives outlined in the requested priority area.
- The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- The applicant proposes activities that are interactive, practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage greater understanding of curriculum.
- The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how

proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.

- The applicant articulates potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- The proposed project design is innovative and original, as well as feasible.
- The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.

Organizational Capacity (30 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., local government skills training).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- The roles and qualifications of each key person, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer, are described in a biographical sketch.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area.

Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country and includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding Economic Support Fund grants. Applications will be screened initially to determine whether applicants meet the requirements and priorities outlined in [Part I](#); meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [Part III](#); and submitted the required documents outlined in [Part IV](#). Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Technical Review stage. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to Technical Review.

All applications that proceed to Technical Review will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in [Part V, Section A](#). Technical Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

VI. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance to the Technical Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants about the status of their application by February 28, 2018 Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. **NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.**

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the NEA/AC program office coordinating this competition.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports and a Quarterly Financial Report. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

Applicants proposing activities in **Syria** are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. The Recipient and any sub-recipient will ensure that all activities covered under this agreement conform to Executive Order 13224, the Supplemental Appropriations of 2006, and other statutory and regulatory limitations on the provision of support or assistance to prohibited entities and individuals. In particular, the Recipient will take all

necessary steps, including but not limited to the vetting of sub-recipient organizations and relevant entities and individuals, to ensure compliance with all statutes and regulations.

For the lifetime of this cooperative agreement, no funds from Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) or other prohibited groups will be used to finance activities or organizations associated with this cooperative agreement, including but not limited to advertising, program performance/support, etc. To ensure that all individuals and entities associated with this program are eligible, the recipient must check the System for Award management (SAM) (www.SAM.gov).

The Recipient will submit the DS Form 4184 Risk Analysis Information to the Risk Analysis and Management (RAM) Office providing information on key individuals as defined by form DS-4184 and for each key staff member or program personnel in the Recipient's organization, all sub-awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing as well as appropriate beneficiaries as described in the official vetting guidance provided as part of this award. All individuals meeting these specifications, whether previously vetted or not, must be submitted. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer RAM usually requests the vetting information, via emails to the Authorizing Official, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions regarding the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Forms must be submitted no later than five business days after RAM provides the Authorizing Official (identified by the Grants Officer) with a username and password for the secure portal.

Only individuals, sub-recipients and beneficiaries who have successfully passed vetting may receive assistance or participate in this award. Individuals refusing to provide vetting data – or who provide false data – will not be eligible to receive assistance. Individuals who do not successfully pass vetting will not be eligible to receive assistance. Vetting must be completed 10 business days prior to an activity and may not occur retroactively.

The government shall vet these personnel changes and reserves the right to terminate assistance awards for convenience based on vetting results. For activities lasting more than one year, in accordance with the vetting policy, the Recipient will resubmit the DS Form 4184.

E. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to mark all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-

awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

F. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB-AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Part III, Section [B.1](#). **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

G. SUB-AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsrs.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

I. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Grants Officer

Jeff Bell

NEA-Grants@state.gov

All questions and a confirmation of Intent of Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by December 14, 2017 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

Applications will NOT be accepted from organizations that do not meet the Intent to Apply Deadline.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using Grants.gov to submit an application, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center

(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

II. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of

the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.