

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Global Public Affairs
Foreign Press Centers

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): International Media Reporting Program

This is the announcement of funding opportunity number SFOP0009609

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: *19.040*

Type of Solicitation: Open Competition

Application Deadline: May 22, 2023

Total Amount Available: \$600,000*¹

Type of Funding: *FY24 Public Diplomacy .7 funding under the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961*

Anticipated Number of Awards: 1

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Period of Performance: 12 Months

Anticipated Time to Award: October 1, 2023

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The *Foreign Press Centers* (FPC), part of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Global Public Affairs (GPA), announce an open competition for organizations to submit proposals to support its International Media Reporting Programs. The FPC offers three types of programs:

- 1) Co-operative Media Productions (CMP; 2-4 participants)
- 2) Sub-regional Reporting Programs (SRRP; 4-12 participants) and
- 3) Multi-Regional Reporting Programs (MRRP; 12-25)

Priority Region: *All*

¹ Ceiling is subject to the availability of funds and does not guarantee or provide an authorized commitment on behalf of the USG. GPA/FPC reserves the right to incremental funding on a non-competitive basis, should future funds be made available and the current award is in good standing.

Background:

The Bureau of Global Public Affairs (GPA) serves the American people by effectively communicating U.S. foreign policy priorities and the importance of diplomacy to American audiences, and engaging foreign publics to enhance their understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States. Through proactive outreach, interaction, and engagement with foreign media, GPA expands the reach and effectiveness of U.S. policy messaging on issues that are important to the United States and the American people.

The FPC, with offices in Washington D.C. and New York, NY, enhances the United States' role in the world by deepening global understanding of U.S. policy, society, culture, and values through engagement with foreign media. The FPC works to promote accuracy, objectivity, and balance in foreign media coverage of issues of strategic importance to the United States.

The goal of the FPC's International Media Reporting Programs is to engage directly with foreign media to advance U.S. foreign policy priorities by providing visiting and resident foreign journalists with direct access to authoritative sources of information about U.S. foreign policy through informational and policy briefings, as well as local and national reporting tours. In turn, those foreign media members report on important facts and insights regarding the social, political, economic, historical, and cultural context within which U.S. foreign policy is developed via broadcast, print, radio, and online media.

Through its different types of International Media Reporting Programs, the FPC offers groups of visiting foreign media direct engagement with U.S. government officials, academics, private sector leaders, and civil society subject-matter experts that these journalists may not otherwise obtain.

A key feature of International Media Reporting Programs is that they promote transparency and improve the quality and accuracy of foreign reporting on the United States. Participants gain a deeper understanding and more nuanced

view of the United States that is reflected in their reporting, telling America's story in a context and format accessible to the journalists' audience.

Proposal Objectives:

The FPC invites qualified and experienced applicants to submit proposals for a cooperative agreement to serve as an implementation partner for their International Media Reporting Programs, which support Department of State (DOS) foreign policy goals and objectives for foreign audiences.

Awardee will implement all three types of FPC International Media Programs: 1) Co-operative Media Productions (CMP; 2-4 participants); 2) Sub-regional Reporting Programs (SRRP; 4-12 participants); and 3) Multi-Regional Reporting Programs (MRRP; 12-25).

Co-operative Media Productions (CMP)

- CMPs are conducted primarily for foreign visual or audio content creators from the same country or region. Most CMPs are comprised of one or two media outlets. Participants from each outlet typically include a journalist and a camera operator. CMPs are led by an American contracted field producer with extensive experience in both visual productions and in arranging "on location" coverage of sites and events.

Cooperative agreement partners will be responsible for the following general responsibilities:

- Contracting and coordinating with local producers who will work through all phases of the program from developing a production schedule that includes a production timeline, budget, destinations, appointments, and other content creating opportunities.
- Arranging all logistical support for travel in the U.S. for the contracted producer and participating journalists, including lodging, flights and ground transportation.

Sub-regional Reporting Programs (SRRP)

- SRRPs are conducted primarily for foreign media from the same country or region. SRRPs are typically comprised of three to six media outlets,

including a journalist/editor and camera operator from each outlet. These outlets from the same country or region share common reporting interests on a narrowly defined topic. SRRPs are normally led by an American contracted field producer with extensive experience in both visual productions and in arranging "on location" coverage of sites and events.

Cooperative agreement partners will be responsible for the following general responsibilities:

- Contracting and coordinating with local producers who will work through all phases of the program from developing a production schedule that includes a production timeline, budget, destinations, appointments, and other content creating opportunities.
- Arranging all logistical support for travel in the U.S. for the contracted producer and participating journalists, including lodging, flights and ground transportation.

Multi-Regional Reporting Programs (MRRP)

- MRRPs are conducted for groups of 12-25 foreign correspondents reporting in all formats: print, radio, online, and self-sufficient video or multi-media. These groups may consist of twelve or more journalists from a single country, from different countries within a geographic sub-region, or from multiple regions of the world. MRRPs do not typically accommodate broadcast television crews with accompanying camera operators, although group participants may capture their own video.

Cooperative agreement partners will be responsible for (but may not be limited to) the following tasks:

- Coordinating with local community partners in the development of the program schedule, including dates, destinations, and appointments.
- Arranging all logistical support for travel in the U.S. including lodging, budgets, flights and ground transportation.
- Preparing a participant bio book, program books and supporting materials.
- Conducting post-program reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to conduct international CMP, SRRP, and MRRP programs or capacity to conduct programs by providing examples of similar international media programs. In addition, applicants must display understanding of U.S. media in relation to international media operations, particularly in regard to U.S. foreign policy. The FPCs in Washington, D.C. and New York, NY and U.S. Missions abroad will be actively involved in the overall project design, including the nomination, selection, and majority of the travel of participants to the U.S. for both types of programs. Applicants will be responsible for arranging and using cooperative agreement funds to pay for all domestic travel, and in limited circumstances, international travel. In support of an applicant's qualifications to implement CMPs and SRRPs, proposals must demonstrate experience in or the ability to work with a consortium or network of experienced producers that can research, plan, execute, and facilitate the production by one or more outlets of content creation. Applicant's qualifications to implement MRRPs should demonstrate experience in successfully conducting programs for large groups of international journalists.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Primary organizations can submit one application in response to the NOFO. If an applicant submits multiple applications, the applicant will be disqualified.

The U.S. government may: (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, and (d) waive irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

The Foreign Press Centers anticipates awarding either a grant or cooperative agreement depending on the needs and risk factors of the program. The final determination on award mechanism will be made by the Grants Officer. The distinction between grants and cooperative agreements revolves around the existence of “substantial involvement.” Cooperative agreements require greater Federal government participation in the project. If a cooperative agreement is awarded, the **Foreign Press Centers** will undertake reasonable and programmatically necessary substantial involvement. Examples of FPC substantial involvement can include, but are not limited to:

- Providing specific themes for project implementation including, but not limited to: Agriculture, Counterterrorism, Countering Disinformation, Democracy and Human Rights, Diversity and Inclusion, Economic and Business Development, Energy, Environmental Issues, International Crime, Rule of Law, Science and Technology, U.S. Foreign Policy and U.S. Government.
- Approval and co-management of all reporting programs including, but not limited to: program design, production plans, itineraries, program books, and supporting documentation.
- Coordination on all communication with U.S. Missions overseas and participating journalists prior to the program opening session.
- Collaboration in program planning including assistance in scheduling appropriate and relevant appointments, site visits, and cultural experiences.
- Guidance and/or review and approval on a social media plan and social media engagement.

The FPC will provide a current consortium of available producers that can be utilized for the implementing partner/cooperative agreement.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

The Foreign Press Centers welcomes applications from U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations with or without 501(c) (3) status of the

U.S. tax code; foreign-based non-profit organizations/nongovernment organizations (NGO); Public International Organizations; Foreign Public Organizations; private, public, or state institutions of higher education.

Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for regulations regarding program income.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility requirement for this NOFO but is encouraged. Cost share will only be considered in the merit review, in the event of a tie. Applicants who offer cost sharing among applications with equivalent scores will receive an additional (5) points to break a tie.

C.3 Other Eligibility Requirements

Primary organizations may submit one proposal in response to the NOFO. If an organization submits multiple applications, the applicant will be disqualified. The U.S. government may: (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, and (d) waive irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of the initial application received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. Government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (www.sam.gov) and/or has a current debt to the U.S. government is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR,1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR,1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and

Suspension.” Additionally, no entity or person listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their application.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Application Submission Process: Applications are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), on Monday, May 22, 2023 on Grants.gov <https://www.grants.gov/> or **SAMS** Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “International Media Reporting Program,” funding opportunity number “SFOP0009609”.

Applicants must follow the NOFO instructions and requirements contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in ineligible application.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

D.2 Application Requirements

For all application documents, please ensure:

- All documents are in English and all costs are in U.S. Dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents). If any document is provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version.
- All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments.

- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- All documents are single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Calibri font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

D.2.1. Application requirements:

Complete applications must include the following:

1. Mandatory application forms (completed online via grants.gov)
 - SF-424 *Application for Federal Assistance*
 - SF424A *(Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)*
 - SF424B *(Assurances for Non-Construction programs)*
2. If your organization engages in lobbying the U.S. government or Congress, or pays for another entity to lobby on your behalf, the **SF-LLL** “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” form is also required.
3. Proposal (Max 13 pages): 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.
 - Executive Summary Page (Max 1 page): States the applicant’s name and organization, proposal date, project title, project period, proposed start and end date, and summary of proposed objectives, activities and expected results.
 - Introduction to the Organization Applying: A description of past and present operations, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies, including fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements. In addition, the application should describe how they will collaborate with the FPC.
 - Organizational Capacity/Project Planning: A clear description of the applicants’ organizational and management structure, and previous

experience with similar international media reporting programs as it relates to the proposed activities. Include examples of logistical coordination and multi-project management.

- Program Objectives: The intermediate accomplishments and measurable targets to achieve a goal. Objectives of the program should be SMART:
 - Specific: Detailed and specifies what will be achieved
 - Measurable: have associated metrics or measurements of success
 - Attainable: appropriately challenging, objectives can be reasonably attained given the available resources
 - Relevant: align with the policy/program goal and appropriate within the country or beneficiary audience
 - Time-Bound: achievable within the timeframe of the program
- Program Activities: Describe specific actions taken under Objectives. All activities should be clearly developed and sufficiently explain the resource and time requirements (inputs) and things done or produced (outputs). Activities should detail: target areas, participant groups or selection criteria for participants; how relevant stakeholders will be engaged.
- Project Partners: List the names and/or types of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- Future Funding or Sustainability: Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
- Key Personnel (Max 2 pages): Names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project. At least one role should clearly demonstrate collaboration with FPC. Given the limited space, CVs or resumes are not recommended for submission, rather a short biography. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, please explain how you foresee key personnel implementing their roles.

4. Detailed Budget (Preferably as an MS Excel workbook): The detailed line-item budget should outline specific cost requirements for proposed activities and must be organized according to the OMB cost categories described in the SF-424A. The budget should be organized into three (3) columns containing the request to the FPC, any cost share contribution, and the total budget. Costs must be in U.S. dollars. Please see attached *Budget Guidelines-Template for Multi-Year Awards (FY2023)*
5. Budget Justification Narrative: Applicants must submit a budget narrative to explain each line-item in the budget and how the amounts were derived, as well as the source and description of all proposed costs (and cost-share, if applicable). The narrative should complement the budget rather than repeat information provided in the budget. Sources of all cost-share offered in the application should be identified and explained in the budget narrative. When organizations have made a reasonable, good-faith effort to obtain cost sharing or are pursuing avenues to cost share, the FPC encourages applicants to note this in the proposal. Cost share is not required. Please see *Budget Guidelines-Template for Multi-Year Awards (FY2023)*

D.2.2 Additional Information Requested for Those Receiving Notification of Intent

Successful applicants must submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award:

- Written responses and revised application documents addressing conditions and recommendations from the Review Panel.
- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Your organization's most recent A-133 (if applicable), Single F Audit (if applicable), or standard audit (if applicable.) OR completion of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving federal funding for the first time.
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, if receiving funding for the first time. Submission of required documents to register in State Assistance Management

Systems (SAMS) Domestic Portal, if receiving funding for the first time.

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Required Registrations:

All prime organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as DUNS, and an active registration with the SAM.gov before submitting an application. The **Foreign Press Centers** may not review applications from or make awards to applicants that have not completed all applicable UEI and SAM.gov requirements. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

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

Note: The process of obtaining 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). A Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code and a UEI number are issued through SAM.gov. Once received continue with the remainder of the SAM.gov registration.
- Organizations based outside of the United States and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS, but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov. Please note that as of December 2022, 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 CAGE

(NCAGE).

If you are an organization based outside the U.S. and DO NOT plan to do business with the Department of Defense:

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

All prime organizations must also continue to maintain active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by a Federal award agency. SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov and to maintain that active registration. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements at the time of application, the applicant may be deemed technically ineligible to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Note: SAM.gov is not the same as SAMS Domestic. It is free to register in both systems, but the registration processes are different.

Information is included on the SAM.gov website to help international registrations:

https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0016380&sys_kb_id=194695221bfe4d983565ed3ce54bcbbb&spa=1 Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA's website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change and currently being updated. Applicants should review the website frequently for the most up-to-date guidance.

The attached "AQM Guidance for NCAGE-SAM.gov for Grant Applicants as of Feb 2023" is a compilation of resources gathered by AQM. Any content shown from SAM.gov is not owned by the Department of State. This guidance and instruction are to the best of our knowledge based at the time of posting this solicitation. Where guidance in these attachments differs from the SAM.gov website, SAM.gov prevails and the applicant is

encouraged to seek and document clarity provided by the SAM.gov helpdesk.

The attached “UEI and SAM.gov FAQ updated 021623” is a resource provided by the grants policy office. Any content shown from SAM.gov is not owned by the Department of State. This guidance and instruction are to the best of our knowledge based at the time of posting this solicitation. Where guidance in these attachments differs from the SAM.gov website, SAM.gov prevails and the applicant is encouraged to seek and document clarity provided by the SAM.gov helpdesk.

D.3.1 Exemptions

An exemption from these requirements may be permitted under the following circumstances:

- Recipient is a foreign organization receiving an award that will be performed outside the United States valued at less than \$25,000, if the Grants Officer deems it to be impractical for the entity to obtain a UEI or register in SAM.gov.
- The recipient is an overseas school and does not currently have a UEI number.
- The award relates to a classified or national security matter.
- The recipient’s identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or the beneficiary being served by the recipient.
- There are exigent circumstances that prohibit the recipient from receiving a UEI and completing SAM registration prior to receiving the award. These circumstances are identified in the justification below and the recipient will be required to register within 30 days of the award date in accordance with 2 CFR 25.

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.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations.

D.4 Submission Dates and Times:

All applications must be submitted on or before May 22, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on <https://www.grants.gov> or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “International Media Reporting Program,” funding opportunity number “SFOP0009609.” Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. Begin the application process early, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline. It is encouraged that organizations submit applications during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 9:00AM- 5:00PM Eastern Time).

Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered. Known system errors caused by Grants.gov (<https://mygrants.service-now.com>) SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.service-now.com>) that are outside of the applicant’s control will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Applicants should not expect a notification upon the Foreign Press Centers receiving their application.

D.5 Funding Restrictions:

The Foreign Press Centers will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. Please refer the link for Foreign Terrorist Organizations: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>.

Federal awards to for-profit organizations not allowed under the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961. Generally, construction costs are not allowed under GPA/FPC funding.

D.6. Other Submission Requirements

All application submissions must be made electronically via www.grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>). Both systems require registration by the applying organization. Please note that the Grants.gov registration process can take ten (10) business days or longer, even if all registration steps are completed in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov in its entirety. The Foreign Press Centers bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date, for system errors in either Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Additionally, applicants must save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable NOFO and these instructions.

The Foreign Press Centers encourages organizations to submit applications during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 9:00AM-5:00PM Eastern Standard Time (EST)). If an applicant experiences technical difficulties and has contacted the appropriate helpdesk but is not receiving timely assistance (e.g. if you have not received a response within 48 hours of contacting the helpdesk), you may contact the Foreign Press Centers point of contact listed in the NOFO in Section G. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk.

Note: The Grants Officer will determine technical eligibility of all applications.

SAMS Domestic Applications:

Applicants using SAMS Domestic for the first time should complete their “New Organization Registration.” To register with SAMS Domestic, click “Login to <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>” and follow the “create an account” link.

Please note that establishing an account in SAMS Domestic may require the use of smartphone for multi-factor authentication (MFA). If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of creating an account, please contact the helpdesk and request instructions on MFA for Windows PC.

Organizations **must** remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

SAMS Domestic Help Desk:

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsitsm.servicenow.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

Grants.gov Applications: Applicants who do not submit applications via SAMS Domestic may submit via www.grants.gov.

Please be advised that completing all the necessary registration steps for obtaining a username and password from Grants.gov **can take ten (10) business days or longer.**

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Additionally, organizations must remember to save a screenshot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Grants.gov Helpdesk:

For assistance with Grants.gov, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays. See <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/> for a list of federal holidays.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Proposal Review Criteria

The Foreign Press Centers review panel will evaluate each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications. Please use the below criteria as a reference, but do not structure your application according to the sub-sections.

- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Assistance – 30 points:** The organization has expertise in its stated field. The organization displays clear understanding of U.S. media, international media operations, U.S. foreign policy and has a demonstrated record in developing and implementing international media reporting programs or programs of similar types. The organization structure can effectively manage multiple projects at the same time and is appropriately resourced to transition effectively from donor coordination, project manage to logistical coordination.
- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 25 points:** The organization has the administrative capacity to plan and execute projects in a timely manner when it comes to the logistics and coordination of working with foreign journalists (i.e., familiarity with “I” Journalist Visas, air travel, hotel and transportation accommodations, expensing, records management, etc.) The organization can leverage resources and partner with professional

networks and multimedia organization to effectively respond to varying needs of the program.

- **Cost Effectiveness – 15 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. Overhead and administration costs are reasonable and necessary. Cost-sharing is a plus.
- **Monitoring and evaluation plan – 10 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 project includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.
- **Sustainability – 10 points:** Clear demonstration on how project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.
- **Support of Equity and Underserved Communities – 10 points:** Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will be administered in a manner that support and advances equity and engages or highlights underserved communities.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

The FPC strives to ensure each application receives a balanced evaluation by an FPC Review Panel. The Department of State's Office of Acquisitions Management (AQM) will determine technical eligibility for all applications. All applications for a given solicitation are then reviewed against the same six criteria.

In most cases, the FPC Review Panel includes representatives from the FPC and the Bureau of Global Public Affairs. In some cases, additional panelists may participate, including from other Department of State bureaus or offices or non-governmental subject matter experts. At the end of

discussion on an application, the Panel votes on recommending the application for approval by the GPA Assistant Secretary. If more applications are ultimately recommended for approval than the FPC has funding available for, the Panel will rank the recommended applications in priority order for consideration by the GPA Assistant Secretary. The Grants Officer Representative (GOR) for the eventual award does not vote on the panel. All Panelists must sign non-disclosure agreements and conflicts of interest agreements.

FPC Review Panels may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of FPC funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

E.3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (Formerly, FAPIIS)

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

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

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

Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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

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

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

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Federal Award Notices

The FPC will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will receive a letter via email requesting that the applicant respond to panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the panel's conditions and recommendations, being registered in required systems, including the U.S. government's Payment Management System (PMS), unless an exemption is provided, and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by the FPC or AQM. Final approval is also contingent on Congressional notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the Department's warranted Grants Officer.

The notice of Federal award signed by the Department's warranted Grants Officer is the sole authorizing document. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via (SAMS) Domestic Portal to be electronically counter signed in the system.

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.

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS). Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis. Instructions for requesting payments are available at: <https://pms.psc.gov/>.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities (for more information on these exceptions, see Chapters 5, Federal Assistance to

Individuals, and 6, Federal Assistance to Foreign Public Entities Directive.) Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities.

The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020-508.pdf>.

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.

- [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](#)

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

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:

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

F.3. Reporting Requirement:

Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports on a quarterly basis. The award document will specify the quarterly schedule. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports and must be submitted in PMS as well as downloaded and then uploaded to the grant file in the SAMS Domestic Portal. The progress narrative reports must also be uploaded to the grant file in the SAMS Domestic Portal.

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

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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please [contact: MediaCo-ops@state.gov](mailto:MediaCo-ops@state.gov).

For assistance with Grants.gov accounts and technical issues related to using the system, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

For a list of federal holidays visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/>

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

H. Other Information

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

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any FPC or Bureau of Global Public Affairs representative. Explanatory information provided by the FPC that contradicts this language will not be binding. 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.

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