



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) Freedom 250 Special Edition

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State

Opportunity number: USAFCPFreedom250

Application deadline: Deadlines vary by participating U.S. embassy or
consulate

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**U.S Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) Freedom 250 Special Edition
Funding Opportunity Number	USAFCPFreedom250
Announcement Type	Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	Deadlines vary by participating U.S. embassy or consulate
Assistance Listing Number	19.025
Length of performance period	12 to 60 months
Number of awards anticipated	25-35 awards
Award amounts	Awards range from a minimum of \$25,000 to a maximum of \$250,000
Total available funding	\$6 million, pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY 2026 Smith-Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	September 1, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. An FAA can also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 60 months or less.

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

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

Priority Region: All regions

Executive Summary

The Cultural Heritage Center (CHC) in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is pleased to announce the start of the 2026 grants cycle for the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). The 2026 grant cycle celebrates 250 years of American independence. The year 2026 is also the 25th anniversary of the AFCP. As part of Freedom 250, ECA is placing special emphasis on projects that honor the global contributions of the United

States throughout history. Each AFCP project will be an opportunity to highlight the enduring cultural and historical relationships between the United States and countries around the globe that shaped our national story and identity since 1776. These projects should involve technical exchange between Americans and foreign counterparts. The 2026 AFCP grant cycle will have expanded country eligibility. To synchronize with other Freedom 250 celebrations, ECA is accelerating the 2026 program calendar and simplifying the application process to a single, full application round. Contact the appropriate U.S. embassy or consulate for application deadlines and instructions. You will find U.S. embassy or consulate contact information here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>. Full implementation of this AFCP Freedom 250 special edition is subject to the availability of funds.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Foreign Institutions of Higher Education
- Foreign-Based Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Foreign Public Entities (where permitted)
- Public International Organizations and Governmental Institutions
- U.S. Institutions of Higher Education
- U.S. Non-Profit Organizations (IRS section 501(c)(3))

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing required for this competition. When an applicant offers cost sharing, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its application and later included in an approved agreement. The applicant will be responsible for tracking and reporting on any cost share or outside funding, which is subject to audit per 2 CFR 200. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

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

The AFCP Freedom 250 special edition is open to all countries with which the United States maintains diplomatic relations.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

This Freedom 250 special edition of the AFCP honors the enduring commitment of the United States to freedom, democracy, and unity via cultural heritage stewardship. In the spirit of these values, priority projects should incorporate technical exchange between Americans and foreign counterparts and illuminate the rich historical and cultural ties between the United States and countries around the world. CHC will prioritize projects that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Cultural objects or sites in other countries associated with, or frequently visited by notable Americans, such as homes, studios, or institutions. [Example: Conservation of the 19th-century Finca Vigía, the American writer Ernest Hemingway's house in Cuba (AFCP 2024)]
- b) Cultural objects or sites in other countries developed, excavated, or otherwise brought to light by American archaeologists or other heritage professionals. [Example: Conservation of the 6th-century Rosalila Temple at the Maya site of Copan in Honduras (AFCP 2022), excavated by American archaeologists in the 1890s]
- c) Cultural objects or sites in other countries associated with American history or American contributions to significant historical events, such as peace agreements, military memorials, and other commemorative sites. [Example: Preservation of the World War II battle site at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, the first major engagement between U.S. and Axis forces in Africa (AFCP 2001)]
- d) Cultural objects or sites in other countries associated with American innovations and leadership in the sciences, such as laboratories or observatories.
- e) Cultural objects or sites in other countries highlighting the intellectual and philosophical roots of American institutions. [Example: Conservation of the Ishtar Gate and other structures at ancient Babylon in Iraq, site of the first example of codified law that paved the way for later legal systems, including America's (AFCP 2010)]
- f) Cultural objects or sites in other countries associated with American-inspired independence movements that showcase the United States as an example for nations striving toward liberty and self-governance. [Example: Conservation of 19th- and 20th-century monuments in Colombia commemorating the 1819 Battle of Boyacá and Simón Bolívar—military leader, liberator, and admirer of American ideals of self-governance and popular sovereignty (AFCP 2019)]
- g) Forms of traditional cultural expression such as music and dance that heavily influenced American art forms. [Example: Documentation of endangered musical traditions in Mali, which helped lay the foundations for American jazz and blues (AFCP 2011)]
- h) Historical sites of significance to diaspora communities in the United States. [Example: Conservation of the 14th-century fortified Alma Vii church in Romania, a cultural touchstone for Americans of Transylvanian Saxon ancestry (AFCP 2019)]

2. Funding Areas

The AFCP Freedom 250 special edition supports the preservation of archaeological sites, historic buildings and monuments, museum collections, and forms of traditional cultural

expression, such as indigenous languages and crafts. Appropriate project activities may include:

- a) **Anastylosis:** Reassembling a site using its original parts.
- b) **Conservation:** Addressing damage or deterioration to an object or site.
- c) **Consolidation:** Connecting or reconnecting elements of an object or site.
- d) **Documentation:** Recording the condition and important features of an object, site, or tradition in analog or digital format.
- e) **Inventory:** Listing objects, sites, or traditions by location, feature, age, or other unifying characteristics.
- f) **Preventive Conservation:** Addressing conditions that threaten or damage a site, object, collection, or tradition.
- g) **Restoration:** Replacing missing elements to recreate the original appearance of an object or site, usually appropriate for fine arts, decorative arts, and historic buildings.
- h) **Stabilization:** Reducing the physical disturbance of an object or site.

3. Substantial Involvement

An AFCP award may be a cooperative agreement with substantial involvement that may include, but is not limited to, the selection or approval of project participants, subjects, or courses of action.

D. Application Contents and Format

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements may be ineligible.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font, with 1-inch margins at minimum.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – Organizations)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs)

- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) (only if applicant is not registered in SAM.gov)
- SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) (if applicable)

2. *Summary Page (optional)*

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

3. *Proposal (20 pages maximum)*

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

- **Project Description:** Provide a project summary and clearly describe the goals of the project. Explain the outputs and outcomes the project will produce to achieve each goal and the activities that will generate these outputs and outcomes. Do this for both primary goals (such as restoring a part of a monument) and secondary goals (such as improving economic opportunities). Successful applications describe a clear, logical pathway from activities to goals, including the necessary steps in between. Unsuccessful applications state broad goals but omit details on how they will be achieved. In addition to the description, applicants may include a list, table, or Gantt chart of activities in chronological order, along with major outputs and outcomes and target dates for achieving them.
- **Key Personnel:** Provide the names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project.
- **Statement of Importance:** Highlight the historical, architectural, artistic, or cultural (non-religious) values of the cultural heritage.
- **Freedom 250 Statement:** Describe how the cultural heritage relates to one or more of the AFCP Freedom 250 goals and objectives (see section C.1. *Program Description: Goals and Objectives*).
- **Project Maintenance Plan:** Outline the steps or measures that the applicant will take to maintain the site, object, or collection in good condition after the AFCP-supported project is complete; or, in the case of forms of traditional cultural expression, preserve and disseminate the documentation, knowledge, or skills gained from the project.
- **Implementer Public Outreach Plan:** Describe, as appropriate and in close coordination with the U.S. embassy, how the implementing partner will build awareness, engage communities and stakeholders, and promote U.S. branding of the project. Awareness-building activities typically include social media posts, ribbon-cutting events, and news stories. Community and stakeholder engagement activities may include community-led or community-produced workshops, short videos, documentary films, oral histories, storytelling or interpretive exhibits, and educational or enrichment events tailored for specific audiences, such as young people. Successful applications feature strong and innovative public outreach activities.

- **Data and Information Access Plan:** Outline how the implementing partner will share, as appropriate, raw data or processed information, such as publications, generated from the project with the public and the State Department.

4. Budget Justification Narrative

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information. You may use your own format or request a budget template from the U.S. embassy or consulate.

- **Detailed Project Budget:** Provide a detailed project budget that lists all costs in separate categories (personnel, fringe benefits, travel [including per diem], equipment, supplies, contractual, other direct costs, indirect costs) and indicates funds from other sources.
- **Budget Narrative:** Explain how the costs were estimated (quantity x unit cost, annual salary x percentage of time spent on project, etc.) and any large budget line items.

5. Attachments

- **Resumes or CVs:** Provide resumes or CVs of the proposed project director and other key personnel.
- **Support Letters:** If applicable, provide letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- **Proof of Official Permission:** Include official permission letters, if required for project activities.
- **Relevant Supporting Documentation:** Provide relevant supporting documentation, as applicable, such as historic structure reports, restoration plans and studies, conservation needs assessments and recommendations, architectural and engineering records, etc., compiled in preparation for the proposed project.
- **Visual or Audiovisual Documentation:** Provide a minimum of five high-quality digital images (JPEGs or PNGs) or audiovisual files that convey the nature and condition of the heritage and show the urgency or need for the proposed project (e.g., collapsing walls, extensive water damage).
- **NICRA:** If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above and their instructions are available here:

<https://www.grants.gov/forms>

Contact the appropriate U.S. embassy or consulate for application deadlines and instructions. You will find U.S. embassy or consulate contact information here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please reach out to the U.S. embassy or consulate in the country where the project will take place. You will find U.S. embassy or consulate contact information here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

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

Required Registrations

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NCAGE Homepage:

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

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](#)

Exemptions

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

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. Submission Dates, Times, and Method

Contact the appropriate U.S. embassy or consulate for application deadlines and instructions. All application materials must be submitted by email to the address provided by the U.S. embassy. You will find U.S. embassy or consulate contact information here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

5. Funding Restrictions

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

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

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

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal representation in the United States.

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

iii. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

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

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
- 2) It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

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

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

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

v. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan

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

- 1) To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);

- 2) The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in [2 CFR 175\(b\)\(5\)](#).
 - 3) That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.
 - 4) Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.
- vi. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities

(a) *Definitions.*

American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>

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

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

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

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

(1) delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;

(2) Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and

(3) Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system.

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

Ineligible Activities and Unallowable Costs

The AFCP Freedom 250 special edition does not support the following activities or costs, and CHC will consider applications requesting support for any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- **Privately or Commercially Owned Property:** Preservation or purchase of privately or commercially owned cultural objects, collections, or real property, including those whose transfer from private or commercial to public ownership is envisioned, planned, or in process but not complete at the time of application.
- **Natural Heritage:** Preservation of natural heritage (physical, biological, and geological formations, paleontological collections, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, fossils, etc.) unless the natural heritage has a cultural heritage connection or dimension.
- **Human Remains:** Preservation of Hominid or human remains.
- **News Media:** Preservation of news media (newspapers, newsreels, radio and TV programs, etc.).
- **Published Materials:** Preservation of published materials available elsewhere (books, periodicals, etc.).
- **Mandated Educational Materials:** Development of curricula or educational materials for required classroom use.
- **Archaeological Research:** Archaeological excavations or exploratory surveys for research purposes.
- **Historical Research:** Historical research, except in cases where the research is justifiable and integral to the success of the proposed project.
- **New Collections:** Acquisition or creation of new objects or collections for new or existing museums.
- **New Construction:** Construction of new buildings, building additions, or permanent coverings (over archaeological sites, for example).
- **New Works of Art:** Commissions of new works of art or architecture for commemorative or economic development purposes.
- **New or Modern Adaptations:** Creation of new or modern adaptation of existing traditional dances, songs, chants, musical compositions, plays, or other performances.
- **Conjectural Reconstructions:** Creation of conjectural reconstructions of cultural objects or sites that no longer exist.
- **Relocation:** Relocation of cultural sites from one physical location to another unless under imminent threat of irreversible damage or destruction.
- **Removal:** Removal of cultural objects or elements of cultural sites from the country for any reason.

- **Digitization:** Digitization of cultural objects or collections, unless part of a clearly defined conservation, documentation, or public diplomacy effort.
- **Conservation Plans or Studies:** Conservation plans or other studies, unless they are one component of a larger project to implement the results of those studies.
- **Cash Reserves or Endowments:** Cash reserves, endowments, or revolving funds (funds must be expended within the award period [up to five years] and may not be used to create an endowment or revolving fund).
- **Fund-Raising Campaigns:** Costs of fund-raising campaigns.
- **Contingency Costs:** Contingency, unforeseen, or miscellaneous costs.
- **Pre-Award Costs:** Costs of work performed prior to the announcement of the award unless allowable per 2 CFR 200.458 and approved by the GO.
- **Project Cost Limits:** Individual projects which cost less than US \$25,000 or more than \$250,000.
- **Independent U.S. Projects:** Independent U.S. projects overseas.

6. *Other Submission Requirements*

Contact the appropriate U.S. embassy or consulate for application deadlines and instructions. You will find U.S. embassy or consulate contact information here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

F. Application Review Information

1. *Review Criteria*

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

Activities Description (including technical exchange) and Timeframe – 20 points: Goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes are clear, and the approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Importance of the cultural heritage site, object, or practice – 10 points: The importance of the cultural heritage and the urgency of the proposed actions are clear and persuasive.

Project Maintenance Plan – 5 points: The steps or measures proposed to maintain the site, object, or collection in good condition after the AFCP-supported project is complete, are reasonable and achievable; or, in the case of forms of traditional cultural expression, preserve and disseminate the documentation, knowledge, or skills gained from the project are reasonable and achievable.

Implementer Public Outreach Plan – 15 points: The awareness-building activities, as well as the community and stakeholder engagement activities are reasonable and achievable.

Data and Information Access Plan – 5 points: The plan for sharing data and information with the public and the Department of State is reasonable and achievable.

Budget and Budget Narrative – 10 points: The budget narrative is complete and sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is transparent and realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to carry out the proposed activities and to achieve the goals of the project.

Supporting Materials (resumes, assessments, reports, images, etc.) – 10 points: The supporting materials demonstrate that the project team is qualified, sufficiently prepared, and permitted to carry out the proposed project. The visual and audiovisual documentation effectively conveys the nature of the cultural heritage and, in the case of tangible heritage, the conditions the project seeks to address.

Rationale for Support, including Freedom 250 rationale (written and submitted by the relevant U.S. embassy) – 25 points

Innovative integration, collaboration, or coordination with other Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs programs – 5 bonus points max

2. Indirect Costs

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

3. Review and Selection Process

Embassy and Washington, DC-based review committees will evaluate all eligible applications in accordance with all relevant Department guidelines on grant awards.

4. Risk Review

i. Risk factors

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

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance
- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

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

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

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

G. Award Notices

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

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

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

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants may be notified via email from the relevant U.S. embassy.

Payment Method: Recipients must request payment by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis.

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before applying, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

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

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:

- Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Promoting freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
 - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
 - [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
 - [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
 - [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
 - [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
 - [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
 - [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)
 - Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

2. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted. Performance reports should contain a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives of the federal award established for the period, if applicable, the reasons why established goals were not met, and any additional pertinent information including an analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

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

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

3. Branding and Marking

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

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

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

I. Other Information

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.