Issuance Date: 20 March 2013
Question Receipt Date: 26 March 2013
Closing Date: 30 April 2013
Closing Time: 4:00 p.m. El Salvador time

Subject: **Request For Applications (RFA) No. SOL-523-13-000011 for the Implementation of the Workforce Development (WFD) for Youth in Mexico: Strengthening Education-to-Employment Systems**

Dear Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mexico, is seeking application from organizations to implement a program entitled Workforce Development (WFD) for Youth in Mexico: Strengthening Education-to-Employment Systems for a 36-month period, subject to the availability of funds, as described in the following Request for Applications. This award is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

The Recipient will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the program objectives. Please refer to the Section I, the Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under the agreement when awarded.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide up an amount ranging from $3,000,000 to $4,000,000 in total USAID funding to be allocated over the 36 months. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the application to be submitted.

This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following:

1. Section I, Funding Opportunity Description
2. Section II, Award Information
3. Section III, Eligibility Information
4. Section IV, Application and Submission Information
5. Section V, Application Review Information
6. Section VI, Award and Administration Information
7. Section VII, Agency Contacts
8. Section VIII, Other Information

If you decide to submit an application, it should be received by the closing date and time indicated at the top of this cover letter via email attachment to Ms. Beatriz Chinchilla, at ssmexproposals@usaid.gov or via www.grants.gov. Modifications to your application (if any) shall be submitted also to the email address provided above in order to expedite the process.

Any questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing to Ms. Beatriz Chinchilla, at ssmexproposals@usaid.gov.

If it is determined that the answer to any question(s) is of sufficient importance to warrant notification to all prospective recipients, a Questions & Answers document, and/or if needed, an amendment to the RFA, will be issued. Therefore, questions should be submitted no later than 26 March 2013.

Applicants are requested to submit both technical and cost portions of their applications in separate volumes. Award will be made to that responsible applicant whose application offers the greatest value to the U.S. Government.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. In addition, final award of any resultant grant(s) cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicant is hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Application is submitted at the risk of the applicant; should circumstances prevent award of a cooperative agreement, all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Sincerely,

Luis A. Rivera
Regional Agreement Officer

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SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1. Program Summary

The United States Agency for International Development in Mexico (USAID) intends to award a Cooperative Agreement for a 36-month activity focusing on Mexico's northern border region entitled Workforce Development (WFD) for Youth in Mexico: Strengthening Education-to-Employment Systems.

The overall goal of this activity is to support Mexican initiatives at a systemic level to increase labor market skills acquisition among youth[1], adapt upper- and post-secondary education and training programs to labor market needs, and increase portability of skills across the education, training and labor market systems.

2. Program Description

This activity will support systemic changes that facilitate job search and skills matching for youth entering the workforce and strengthen competency-based certification. In addition, this activity will seek to support and assist Mexican governmental, non-governmental, private sector and academic institutions to work together to adopt, implement, and account for more effective policies that address critical workforce skills gap-related issues, creating necessary linkages for the education to employment continuum to function more effectively.

More specifically, this activity will directly address the deficit of workforce-ready skills in youth, while also supporting the participation of education institutions, Government of Mexico at the national and subnational levels, as well as the private sector and local NGOs in building an education to employment system to support youth employment, skills building in critical areas identified by employers and recognized, competency-based certifications processes. This activity will not support isolated activities focused on scholarships, exchanges, internship programs, or workforce training in one geographic location or based on one technical training area; the intent instead is to focus on a systems-level approach that establishes coordination and information-sharing mechanisms among key stakeholders (education / training providers, employers, youth, and government policy makers) in workforce development.

This is "wholesale" development at its core, and—as such—could be teacher-centered, student-centered, employer-centered, or an approach using any combination of these. While the focus of this activity is along the northern Mexican border, the activity should have the potential to leverage broader systemic changes through the provision of external (public or private sector) non-USAID resources. In addition, USAID will seek activities with the potential for scale up, sustainability and replicability. The activity should be designed from its inception to be sustainable and potentially scaled-up upon completion without the provision of additional USAID resources.

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1 While there are many different definitions of youth, the youth targeted by this program are expected to be ages 16-24, in the transition to adulthood and prepared to enter the job market.

A. Background and Problem Statement

Mexico has a relatively large youth population ages 14-29, representing 30% of the population. Mexican students consistently perform at the bottom of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests.[2] As noted by the OECD, only 54% of 15-19 year-olds in Mexico are enrolled in school.[3] While that figure is 12 percentage points higher than in 2000, it is low compared to Brazil (76%), Chile (75%) and the OECD average (83%). Only 12% of Mexicans aged between 20 and 29 participate in education; that is only 3 percentage points higher than in 2000, and around half of the proportion of 20-29 year-olds enrolled in Chile (25%), Brazil (20%), and on average across OECD countries (27%). [4]

In addition, data show that there are a significant number of youth not employed or involved in education or training (NEET)[5] in Mexico, at 23% in 2011 for youth ages 15-24. It is important to note these numbers are contested by local youth experts, on the basis that they do not accurately capture informal or temporary employment and childcare or household responsibilities.

Local and international organizations have identified a number of issues negatively affecting the youth education to employment continuum in Mexico. The most significant and commonly cited challenges include:

1. A relatively high school drop-out rate;
2. For those who do complete their education, a disparity between the skills of graduates and those required by employers, which is exacerbated by poor access to and/or insufficiently relevant vocational training programs;
3. A lack of functioning systems or mechanisms for effectively matching job seekers with employers; and
4. Obstacles to entrepreneurial activities.

More detail on each of these issues is provided below.

1. Significant School Dropout Rate

Despite nearly universal primary school registration of 97-99% in Mexico, only 23% of students graduate in a timely manner, at grade level, with uninterrupted progress through the end of upper secondary school.[6] In fact, Mexican upper secondary school graduation rates are the second lowest among the 34 OECD countries.[7] It is estimated that 700,000 young people dropped out of school in the last year. For the northern border cities of Monterrey, Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana,

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2 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study that was launched by the OECD in 1997. It aims to evaluate education systems worldwide every three years by assessing 15-year-olds' competencies in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science. To date, over 70 countries and economies have participated in PISA.

3 Upper secondary education (grades 10-12 for ages 16-19, known as "*preparatoria*") became compulsory in Mexico in February 2012.

4 Garcia, Pedro L., pedro.garciadeleon@oecd.org, OECD Indicators, Education at a Glance 2012, www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012

5 NEET:' Not in Education, Employment or Training', a term coined by psychiatrist Okonogi Keigo in the 1970s referring to youth who are reluctant to join the adult world.

6 Mexicanos Primeros, Now is the Time, http://www.mexicanosprimero.org/images/stories/Resumen_Ejecutivo_Metas_2.0_ingles.pdf

7 Garcia, Pedro L., pedro.garciadeleon@oecd.org, OECD Indicators, Education at a Glance 2012, www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012.

the dropout rates are consistent with the national average, running between 46-55% on an annual basis. In Mexico overall, educational attainment decreases significantly at the 10th, 11th and 12th grade brackets.

School retention appears to be more affected by educational quality than by access, although available information can be contradictory. For example, according to a 2012 study completed by *Mexicanos Primeros*, "Empirical evidence shows that declining rates of participation in lower and upper secondary education has more to do with the lack of quality than with economic barriers to continued schooling", as youth do not see the benefit or relevance of continuing their education to achieve their life goals. However, based on a McKinsey survey between August and September 2012, 29% of youth respondents in Mexico age 15-29 stated that they did not enroll in post-secondary education or training because they had to work. For 24% of the respondents in the same survey, the main reason they did not continue their education was because they were not able to afford it.

2. Disparity Between Skills Acquired and Skills Required by Employers

With almost 70 Fortune 500 firms (non-retail) having a major presence in the region, mostly in the Ciudad Juárez *maquila* sector,[8] this skills gap must be addressed by providing the quality and type of skilled labor needed for Mexico's growing economy. The disparity between the skills acquired through education and those needed by employers leads to the perception of a lack of job opportunities, particularly among young people where the national unemployment rate is around 9.6%[9], while domestic and transnational companies complain of a lack of skilled labor and their inability to find adequate workers.[10] Although there is evidence of growth in the Mexican labor market in certain sectors, employers report that they cannot find sufficient numbers of workers with demand-driven technical and soft skills, evidence of previous work experience or credentialed skills.

According to 2012 survey data from thousands of Mexican companies, 42% of employers report difficulty in filling open positions.[11] According to the Mexican *Centro de Investigación para el Desarrollo, Asociación Civil* (CIDAC), efforts to understand and address this gap have generally been either too broad in nature—identifying skills such as "leadership", "collaboration" and "scientific literacy"—or too specific, identifying on-the-job abilities that often take several years to master and, hence, cannot be expected of recent high school or university graduates. Other efforts at coordinating school/university programs and skill requirements among companies have usually been industry-specific, regional, and non-public.

In terms of vocational education, the OECD noted that in 2011, Mexico had few vocational programs to support student entry into the labor market. At 1%, the graduation rate from vocational tertiary programs is 8 percentage points lower than the OECD average and one of the lowest among OECD countries.

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8 Regional Stakeholders Committee (2009), "The Paso del Norte Region, US-Mexico: Self-Evaluation Report", p. 9.
9 Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud (IMJUVE)
10 OECD, "Towards an OECD Skills Strategy", 2011
11 Manpower Group, 2012 Talent Shortage Survey Research Results, p. 5.

In Ciudad Juárez, one of Mexico's most important communities in terms of manufactured exports, 60% are employed in manufacturing jobs, primarily by transnational corporations who are engaged in the *maquila* sector. Additionally, a significant portion of the persons employed in business services, transportation and communications are involved with providing support services to the city's manufacturing sector. Within the manufacturing sector of Ciudad Juárez, 14.5% of the personnel are identified as "technicians."[12] Therefore, the major employment opportunities are in the manufacturing industry. Electronics, telecommunications, and auto parts account for 55% of the manufacturing employment.[13] In Tijuana, limited educational enrichment programs and after-school programs for area youth—especially in the sciences, including inadequate and under-funded public libraries, create growing inequities in the region.[14]

3. Lack of Functioning Systems for Effectively Matching Job Seekers with Employers

While there is less empirical data about the magnitude of this issue among Mexican youth, anecdotal evidence from youth job-seekers in the cities of Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana points to a lack of a functioning system for linking youth to formal employment opportunities. Despite statistics showing that employers are unable to fill vacancies and that youth who are actively seeking employment are unable to find it, there are not widely available mechanisms for helping to match the two. Youth find it difficult to get information about job vacancies, especially in the areas in which they studied. Youth are often told that they are either not qualified (since they do not have the right academic formation or work experience) or are over-qualified.

Employers complain that the youth who do apply do not have the right combination of skills to be effective. Similar anecdotal evidence points to corrupt or discriminatory hiring practices that further limit job opportunities.

4. Obstacles to Entrepreneurship Development

For much of the Mexican labor force, informal or self-employment is the only available option. While entrepreneurship development is also dependent on the availability of low-cost business/start-up loans/funds, supporting cooperation among higher education, the private sector and NGOs can help. If youth possessed the skills needed to start their own businesses, perhaps more would consider this as an avenue to meet economic needs (vs. criminal activities).

While it is important to keep all four of these issues (and others) in mind, this activity will explicitly focus on addressing the second and third issues related to the adequacy and relevance of education supply compared to employers' demands, and linking young job-seekers ages 16-24 with employment opportunities.

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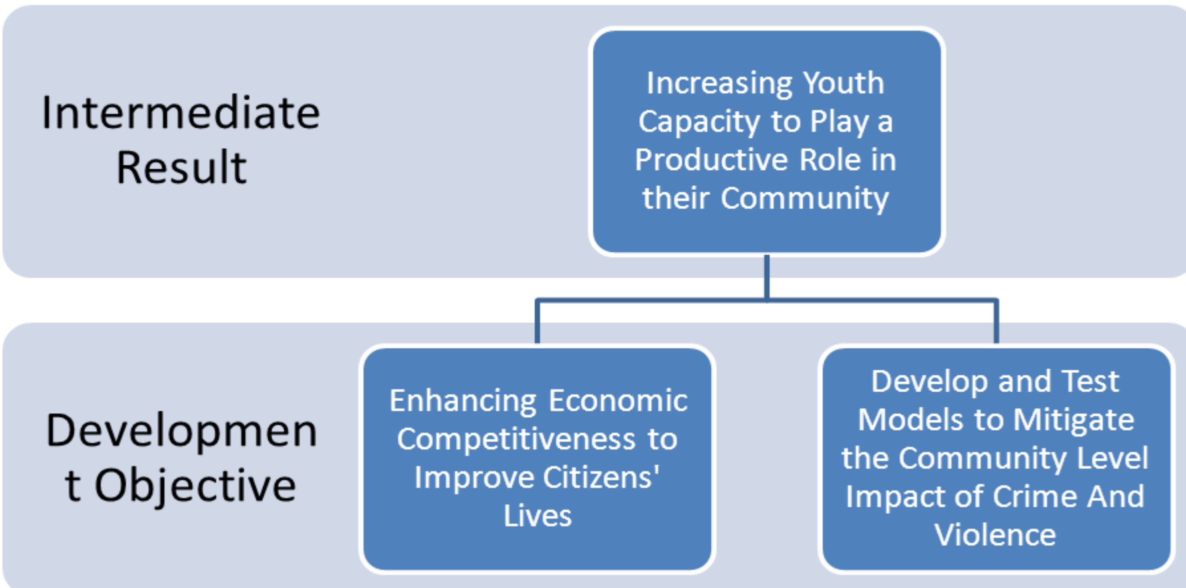
12 Regional Stakeholders Committee (2009), "The Paso del Norte Region, US-Mexico: Self-Evaluation Report", p 8.
13 Ibid, p. 12.
14 Blurred Borders: Trans-Boundary Impacts & Solutions in the San Diego-Tijuana Border Region, International Community Foundation, March 2004. http://www.icfdn.org/publications/blurredborders/21education.htm

B. Linkages to USAID/Mexico Strategy and USAID Policies

USAID/Mexico Strategy

USAID/Mexico has an interim strategic framework covering its programming during FY 2012-2013. This activity connects to a cross-cutting intermediate result in this framework that supports two development objectives as shown below:



The workforce development activity outlined in this program description will contribute to both objectives. By supporting systemic changes that improve the likelihood of youth being formally or self-employed, there will be less incentive to turn to crime and illicit livelihoods. Increased employment skills among youth will also improve Mexico's overall economic competitiveness, as employers will be able to fill open positions with local workers.

USAID Policies

In addition to forming part of USAID/Mexico's strategic approach, this activity also must comply with USAID's overall policies for educational programming. Specifically, this activity relates to Goal Two of the worldwide **USAID Education Strategy**, which focuses on improving the ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country's development goals. In countries with high potential for rapid economic growth and increased integration with the global economy like Mexico, USAID's priority focus is on tertiary education that generates the human capacity and workforce skills needed for the country's development. An effective workforce development strategy must include attention to demand driven systems that offer a wide range of education, training and information for skills development and creation of a new mindset for work. Establishing extensive business, non-profit and public sector linkages and partnerships at all levels – local community, national, regional, and international – are also important. USAID interventions in this area can focus on:

- Establishing partnerships with regional and U.S. institutions and the private sector to deliver employability skills relevant to market needs, establish skills standards, and develop demand driven curricula;

- Improving career counseling and mentoring; and

- Promoting policies that support development of effective vocational and technical programs.

These same areas are priorities for this activity in Mexico.

In addition, according to USAID's Education Strategy, programs that provide one-off training within a targeted institution are discouraged in favor of those that develop the capacity of public and private tertiary institutions both on the demand and the supply side and that also address the needs of learners, as well as programs that address institutional systems and incentive structures. Investment in leverage points in the system is encouraged, such as tertiary education partnerships financing broadly inclusive and high quality training programs; mainstreaming of workforce readiness in vocational and higher education systems, or funding platforms that enable private sector partners to collaborate more effectively with education and training providers for more relevant curriculum and higher standards.

The USAID Education Strategy also includes a focus on systemic reform and partnership development, both of which are critical aspects of this activity in Mexico. Systemic reform promotes policies and strengthens systemic capacity to provide quality, demand-driven formal and non-formal workforce development opportunities. Partnership development increases stakeholder participation and establishes networks to identify workforce needs and coordinate efforts to create and sustain equitable, effective workforce development programs, especially for youth.

In addition to the Education Strategy, this activity also should take into account USAID's **Youth in Development Policy**. The goal of this policy is to "Improve the capacities and enable the aspirations of youth so that they can contribute to and benefit from more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities and nations." In particular, the design and approach of this activity should recognize that youth participation is vital for effective programming.

C. Relationship to Other Initiatives

This activity is designed to fill a gap in the Mission's current approach to workforce development issues, and to complement a wide range of other related initiatives already being undertaken by the Government of Mexico and the private sector.

Using other mechanisms and in support of the Mission's economic competitiveness development objective, USAID/Mexico is prepared to provide technical assistance to the Government of Mexico on economic competitiveness policy issues, to include the implementation of the 2012 labor reform and access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, USAID/Mexico is working with a Mexican think-tank to analyze the existing university curricula compared to the needs of employers. Similarly, other programs supported by USAID/Mexico related to the Mission's crime and violence prevention development objective are testing models in the community which will increase school retention and youth employment in nine specific communities (three each in Ciudad Juarez, Monterrey and Tijuana).

With its systems-level approach, this activity will meet the strategic gap between local-level models for youth workforce development and national policy development that will affect employment to create linkages among the key stakeholders in the education to employment continuum. The graphic below shows the relationship of these initiatives. The activity supported through this announcement is highlighted / in the center of the graphic.

More detail on each of the related programs is below.

<u>Policy Level</u>

<u>Mexico Competitiveness Project (MCP) II</u> (May 2013-May 2016): MCP II's development hypothesis is that USAID support for Mexican-led efforts to strengthen economic governance will help Mexico progress in its transition from an efficiency-driven economy as defined by the World Economic Forum to one based on innovation. By supporting Mexican-led efforts to obtain and implement systemic reforms in targeted areas, the Project will enhance Mexico's economic competitiveness, ultimately contributing to sustained economic growth and improved living standards. Initial areas of focus are expected to include transparency, market regulation, implementation of labor law reform, access to credit particularly for small and medium enterprises, and commercial law administration. *[This program is currently being competed.]*

<u>Human Capital</u> (February 2013-February 2015): Under this two-year program, CIDAC (a Mexican think-tank) will analyze the gaps between human capital supply and demand.

Specifically, the program will: map the most needed professional skills in young people by main economic sectors; identify gaps in the work supply and training, based on the most required skills; provide better information to families, high school and university students (who have chosen a major), federal and state governments, and public and private universities on what profiles are in most demand by main economic sectors; disseminate results; conduct a pilot study in two municipalities and document the two municipal experiences and create a guide. Activities will be carried out in Mexico City, Toluca, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla and Queretaro. The pilot projects will be carried out in municipalities within one or more of the following cities: Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez and Monterrey.

<u>Partnership for Youth</u> (September 2012-September 2015): Under this three-year program, Fundación IDEA will create a National Network for Youth Development with the capacity to design and evaluate projects and promote national youth policy. While the project will have national-level implications, special priority will be given to NGOs and local authorities in Ciudad Juarez, Monterrey and Tijuana.

<u>Crime and Violence Prevention Program</u> (February 2012 – January 2015): Under this three-year program, TetraTech ARD works directly with GOM counterparts at the national level to support crime and violence prevention strategies, which influence policy decisions. CVPP provides technical support to plan and implement community development strategies aimed at reducing crime and violence, and providing youth with alternatives to criminal activity and there is potential for impact in employability, workforce development and youth engagement in the community.

<u>Workforce Development Models at the Community Level</u>

<u>ICT Networking and Entrepreneurship Development</u> (September 2012-September 2015): Under this three-year public-private alliance, World Learning and CISCO will establish after school and summer information technology and entrepreneurship courses in four communities (one each in Monterrey and Tijuana and two in Ciudad Juarez). 1,200 youth and their families are expected to benefit from entrepreneurship training through Entrepreneurship Institutes, and 660 youth will benefit from information technology courses offered through Networking Academies. [This program is being implemented through a public-private alliance with CISCO, managed by World Learning.]

<u>Youth Pathways Mexico</u> (September 2012-September 2015): Under this three-year public-private alliance, YouthBuild will establish safe spaces in six communities (three in Monterrey and three in Tijuana), providing a full range of education, job readiness, training and leadership resources for 5,000 young people. Working with private sector resource partners Prudential Real Estate Investors and Intel Corporation as well as local private sector organizations, the alliance will support technical training programs focused on the construction and technology sectors that will place 600 young people in jobs, internships, self-employment and continuing education. Local NGO partners, *Jóvenes Constructores de la Comunidad*, A.C (JCC), and *Servicios a Juventud*, A.C. (SERAJ), will provide remedial education, leadership support, career counseling, mentoring, and after school support to address the root causes of school dropout. The project will also design and implement a re-entry program for 135 juvenile offenders.

Juarez Microlending Program (February 2013-February 2015): Under this two-year public-private alliance, the Mexican Federation of Private Associations (FEMAP) will facilitate access to financial resources for women entrepreneurs in Ciudad Juarez through a micro-credit revolving fund and providing financial and business training. 1,200 low income women micro-entrepreneurs are expected to directly benefit from this program.

Youth Work Mexico (June 2010-June 2013): USAID and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) launched Youth: Work Mexico in 2010 to address youth challenges in Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana. Working with local civil society groups, the initiative will help create safe spaces for disadvantaged young people, strengthen and expand after-school and summer programs, and prepare Mexican youth for viable futures through self or salaried employment. The program equips youth with the education, training, and life skills needed to participate actively in the workplace and become positive role models in their communities. It also leverages private sector resources and expertise and increases community involvement to help at-risk youth stay in school, and decrease their vulnerability to engage in violent or criminal activity.

School Retention Models at the Community Level

Expanding Youth Development (August 2012-August 2015)**:** Under this three-year program, the Chihuahuan Business Foundation (FECHAC) will support after-school activities and summer camps; provide civic education; offer cultural and scientific workshops and provide academic assistance for youth ages 10-16 in three Ciudad Juarez communities. A total of 1,200 youth are expected to participate in after-school programming and 1,000 youth are expected to participate in summer camps.

Music in Human Development for a Culture Free from Violence (August 2012-August 2014): Under this two-year program, Citizens Committed to Peace (CCOMPAZ) will engage 150 youth in after-school music activities in one Ciudad Juarez community.

Messengers of Peace (September 2012-September 2015): Under this three-year program, the Scouts Association in Mexico will provide physical, mental, emotional and professional support and direct academic counseling to adolescents and youth, and will implement a leading world scout program on social leadership. The project is expected to reach a total of 1,500 youth and 1,000 parents from three Tijuana communities. This program will set the national standard for the Scouts organization for work on life skills, school retention and youth involvement.

Empowering Youth in Monterrey (September 2012-September 2015): Under this three-year program, Alianza Heartland will expand educational and recreational programs for at-risk youth aged 6-18 through community centers, and provide group and individual mental health and psychosocial services to youth and families affected by gang and domestic violence. The program will take place in five communities in the Monterrey metropolitan area, benefitting 6,000 youth and 2,000 parents.

Crime and Violence Prevention Program (CVPP) (February 2012 – January 2015): One of the key objectives of CVPP at the community level is to build sustainable local capacity through small grants and public-private partnerships. CVPP supports the premise that engaging at-risk youth in constructive activities and healthy practices and behaviors is a primary intervention for preventing crime and violence in communities. To that end, CVPP supports the development and implementation of community-based models that engage at-risk youth, and promote healthy behaviors and relationships in the target communities.

D. Program Components of Workforce Development for Youth in Mexico: Strengthening Education to Employment Processes

The main focus of this activity is to increase Mexican youth employment by providing relevant labor market skills acquisition, adapting upper- and post-secondary education and training programs to labor market needs and increasing portability of skills across the education, training and labor market systems. The sustainability and scalability of this activity will depend on a comprehensive, integrated design, including the major stakeholders: youth—which could also include disabled youth—and, education/training institutions, teachers, parents/guardians, GOM at the national and/or subnational level, private sector and local NGOs.

Rather than design an after-school program, scholarship or exchange program or employment program focusing on directing support to individuals at the "retail" development level, this activity will focus on affecting *systemic* change, leveraging resources *to create linkages* in key junctures in the education to employment process. Examples of these junctures are: when youth enroll in upper- and post-secondary institutions, when and how they select career paths, when and how they build skills, as well as when and how youth seek work and/or employers seek skilled labor. Through this activity, USAID seeks *alternative approaches* that will *strengthen collaboration* between educators, employers and youth to achieve the goal of increasing Mexican youth employment in relevant labor market skills. The activity will take a multi-faceted approach and work closely within communities to ensure that processes and systems created are sustainable, replicable and desirable.

In the context of this project, linkages refer to formal or regularized methods of coordination, communications, interactions, and networks between and among representatives of different government institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, youth and parents. The types of coordination, communications, interactions, or networks the activity could foster include, but are not limited to, ICT-based information sharing and dissemination tools, web-based solutions, protocols and memoranda of understanding between relevant institutions and the GOM. The activity may also focus on strengthening communication and cooperation mechanisms between and among GOM institutions at the national, subnational and local levels.

Although the activity may ultimately (especially in later stages) leverage changes at the national level, given resource limitations, the activity is expected to specifically focus on addressing systemic changes and establishing linkages among organizations that can have a catalytic effect on workforce development along Mexico's northern border, at a minimum. The northern border area is defined for these purposes to be – at a minimum – the Mexican states of Baja California, Chihuahua and Nuevo Leon, with a preference for an approach that reaches or has an impact on all six Mexican states which border the United States. Activities that include the geographic target area of the northern border as well as other areas within Mexico **without sacrificing program quality or impact** will be reviewed favorably.

The overall goal of this youth WFD activity is to effect systemic change to increase Mexican youth employment by providing relevant labor market skills acquisition, adapting upper- and post-secondary education and training programs to labor market needs and increasing portability of skills across the education, training and labor market systems. The activity shall contain the following core components:

A. *Component One: Supporting Youth Transition from School to the Workforce*

USAID will support targeted programs that support youth transition from formal (i.e. class-room based) and informal (i.e. non class-room based) education or training opportunities to the workforce. These programs must be linked to private sector needs at a systemic and strategic level. A key component of these initiatives will be ensuring private sector and governmental commitment to participate in the programming and support ultimate job placement. These programs are expected to focus on bridging the information and capacity gap between job seekers and potential employers, to include the collection, packaging and dissemination of reliable information on career options and training pathways.

Systemic interventions could include (but are not limited to) the following illustrative types of activities:

- Create pro-active school counseling programs within the tertiary education system (re-structure, enhance and build on the existing *maestros vinculadores* concept) and encourage counselors' outreach into the community of employers to better match students to employers;
- Develop a system to expand career counseling services to assist youth in identifying career tracks, and show them the benefits of advanced educational opportunities (including links to technological universities, skill certification programs, technical vocational education, technological high schools, general *bachillerato, licienciatura*) and other professional development programs;
- Create systems/networks to match employed professionals with students seeking employment in related fields to support training, professional attitude and alignment with potential employers;
- Coordinate information related to job availability by close collaboration with employers in regional/geographic areas to improve transparency and ensure a better match between employers and job seekers;
- Enhance and expand the concept of internship programs "*practicas profesionales"*—already a requirement for students graduating high school—to make it a meaningful, substantive student internship program linked to the area(s) of future study the student plans to pursue as well as private sector demand;
- Develop a system of incentives to reduce labor market rigidity where employers support paid or unpaid internships, part-time employment, summer employment programs or other mechanisms to support youth integration into the workforce;
- Develop models for linking job seekers with employers, including monitoring both groups: those selected and those not selected for positions to provide greater insight into labor market dynamics; and/or

- Develop an anonymous reporting system to report inappropriate and illegal behavior by human resources personnel, hiring managers and others—and encourage community enforcement of existing laws governing labor hiring practices.
- Create a working group with representatives of GOM , NGOs, universities and/or the private sector to discuss topics and develop solutions to topics related to the education to employment transition

Illustrative Expected Results

While the specific results that this program will achieve may be refined based on Mexican stakeholder interests, USAID expects that the program will result in the following:

- Improved systems and mechanisms established among the most significant employment sectors along the northern Mexico border to facilitate youth awareness of job opportunities;
- Improved systems and mechanisms established among the most significant employment sectors along the northern Mexico border to facilitate youth readiness to enter into the workforce;
- Increased mechanisms exist within the formal and non-formal education sectors along the northern Mexico border to identify potential career tracks and better match youth ages 16-24 to employers; and
- Partnerships and linkages are created between and among all stakeholders, including youth, parents and teachers, in the education to employment process (learning institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and government at local, state and national levels) along the northern border to achieve higher student employment rates.

B. Component Two: Improving Match between Education Supply and Employer Demand

The activity should work at a strategic level with the private sector and post-secondary learning institutions to identify those skills that are most in demand by the workforce and then adjust curricula to better meet these needs. The focus will be on increasing the relevance and quality of post-secondary, vocational and university curricula. Partnerships among learning institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the government will be supported to achieve these objectives.

Systemic interventions could include (but are not limited to) the following illustrative types of activities:

- Link multiple education providers with multiple employers to develop competency-based skill certification programs on a sector-wide, geographic or other basis;
- Link and standardize existing competency-based certifications to support job skills portability, create on-line accessible certification verification system and provide information on where/how competency-based certifications can be obtained;
- Develop and expand the use of non-traditional education delivery mechanisms in this area, such as the internet, television and radio.

- Link GOM certification entities with schools and private sector to improve communication and expand information on how and where these certifications can be obtained; and/or
- Identify successful WFD programs in Mexico at the tertiary level and create a system to replicate these and/or scale them up.

<u>Illustrative Expected Results</u>

While the specific results that this program will achieve may be refined based on Mexican stakeholder interests, USAID expects that the program will result in the following:

- Vocational institutions, technological universities and other higher- and post-secondary education institutions located along the northern border will institute processes for designing and adopting curricula developed in collaboration with regional employers;
- Job portability skills of youth graduating from secondary and post-secondary education institutions along the northern border will increase;
- Nationally or internationally recognized technical skills-based certifications will be accessible, available and sought by youth ages 16-24 along the northern border;
- Partnerships and linkages are created between and among all stakeholders in the education to employment process (learning institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and government at local, state and national levels) along the northern border to achieve higher student employment rates

E. Sustainability

The WFD activity will include a core element of sustainability that will be considered essential to achieving the project purpose. This should include GOM and private sector buy-in and collaboration, as well as capacity building and training for local organizations, including NGOs and sub-national governments. Sustainability objectives will include the possible replicability of the activity after USAID funding is no longer available and will be integrated throughout the project, to ensure the benefit of the project and results can continue beyond the life of the availability of USAID funding for the project.

F. Link to Government of Mexico Priorities

On December 1st, the new Mexican president and his cabinet formally took office. During his inauguration address, the president announced 13 immediate actions that he plans to take, as well as five principal objectives for his administration. Four of the five principal objectives for the Mexican government relate to this activity. These include the objectives of achieving peace through a national violence reduction strategy, achieving inclusion through reducing social inequality, achieving education with quality for all and achieving a prosperous Mexico through accelerated economic growth. In addition, on December 2nd, the president signed a Pact for Mexico with the three leading political parties. This document outlines 95 additional commitments to promote policy and institutional reform in key areas.

Information on the Government of Mexico's objectives and the Pact for Mexico are available at this site: **http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/**.

G. Suggested Implementation Approaches

Best practices in the design of WFD activities highlight the importance of including a wide range of stakeholders. At a minimum, these are expected to include the Mexican government (at the federal, state and local level), the private sector, education and training providers and youth participants.

This WFD activity should be designed and implemented in close coordination with a wide range of Mexican counterparts at various levels—federal, state and local governments, the private sector, civil society, youth —and consultations with and concurrence of federal-level GOM counterparts, such as the *Secretaria de Educacion Publica (SEP)*, *Secretaria de Trabajo* and *Secretaria de Economia*. A successful approach will include a combination of some or all of the following stakeholders / partners: local and/or U.S. NGOs, the GOM (including *Secretaria de Educacion Publica (SEP)*, *Secretaria de Trabajo* and *Secretaria de Economia*, as well as state and municipal governments), private sector, and research and learning organizations (such as universities or think tanks) and engage families, communities and young people. This range of principal stakeholders and potential partners is critical to the activity's success. The specific engagement that will be required of stakeholders and partners shall be based on the overall approach to implementing this activity.

A successful activity design will include bilateral (U.S.-Mexico) cooperation and the engagement of state and local actors on specific activities based on the references of federal level counterparts and should include some or all of the following components: GOM buy-in, private sector participation, youth participation, and national, sub-national as well as local participation.

The activity should also consider cross-cutting impacts of gender and capacity building as well as institution-building to ensure sustainability.

H. Monitoring and Evaluation

Typically, a workforce development system will be evaluated on:

- How many learners entered a training program completed it (disaggregated by sex);
- How many earned a recognized certification (whether recognized by government or private industry entities);
- How many participants obtained jobs related in the training field six months after completing a program;
- How many participants obtained any kind of job;
- Job retention rate among participants at one year;
- Job placement rate of tertiary and workforce development institutions targeted by USG;
- Number of people transitioning to further education and training as a result of participation in USG-funded workforce development programs

While these indicators may provide important information for evaluating the ultimate impact of this activity on the education to employment continuum, especially if baseline information is available in order to document the magnitude of the changes supported by this particular activity, this activity will also be measured on the degree to which it is successful in promoting systemic changes.

Illustrative indicators for measuring the impact of this activity at a systems level may include:

- Number of school counselors trained to collaborate with employers to better match students to employers;
- Number of substantive internships in areas relevant to students' studies and employers' requirements;
- Number of linkages created between existing career counseling services, websites and other online tools at the national and subnational level to assist youth in identifying careers tracks leading to employment;
- Number of students enrolled in vocational institutions using curricula developed in collaboration with employers;
- Number of students enrolled in universities and higher education institutions using curricula developed in collaboration with employers;
- Number of youth who obtained nationally or internationally recognized certifications in technical, ICT or other technical skills-based specialized trades;
- Number of partnerships created between learning institutions and the private sector and non-governmental organizations to achieve higher student employment rates;
- Number of partnerships created between learning institutions and the government to achieve higher student employment rates.

In addition to output indicators, USAID would expect to develop outcome indicators for the selected proposed activity to measure the impact and success of the activity.

I. Environmental Considerations

This activity is covered by a Categorical Exclusion, as it involves technical assistance pursuant to 216.2(c)(2):

> (i) Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.);
>
> (ii) Controlled experimentation exclusively for the purpose of research and field evaluation which are confined to small areas and carefully monitored;
>
> (iii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings;

As a result, there are no special environmental considerations to take into account for the implementation of this activity.

3. Authorizing Legislation

This program is authorized under the **Foreign Affairs Act**. Awards made under this announcement to U.S. Non-Governmental organizations will be subject to **22 CFR 226 -- Administration of Assistance Awards to U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations**.

4. Award Administration

For U.S. organizations, **22 CFR 226**, **OMB circulars**, and the **Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations** are applicable.

For non-U.S. organizations, the **Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations** will apply.

[END OF SECTION I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY]

SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available

USAID expects to fund the program in the amount of approximately $3,000,000 - $4,000,000 over a period of 36 months. This amount is subject to availability of funds. USAID reserves the right to determine the resulting level of funding for the award.

2. Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this RFA to the responsible applicant whose application conforming to this RFA offers the greatest value to the U.S. Government; however, USAID at its discretion may make awards to more than one organization.

Note: The Government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate applications, and (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

3. Start Date and Anticipated Period of Performance

USAID anticipates making an award no later than September 30, 2013. The period of performance anticipated herein is 36 months.

4. Type of Award

USAID plans to negotiate and award an assistance instrument known as a Cooperative Agreement with the successful Applicant for this activity. A Cooperative Agreement implies a level of “substantial involvement” by USAID through the Agreement’s Officer Representative (AOR).

The intended purpose of the AOR involvement during the award is to assist the recipient in achieving the supported objectives of the agreement. The USAID AOR for this activity will be substantially involved in the following areas:

- Approval of the Recipient's Annual Work Plans;
- Approval of Specified Key Personnel;
- Approval of the Recipient's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; and
- Approval of any sub-grants/awards.

[END OF SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION]

SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

This is a full and open competition, under which all potential applicants may apply, large or small commercial (for profit) firms and non-profit organizations (including public or private universities) in partnerships or consortia. Please note that pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments.

USAID will accept applications from U.S. or Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In support of the Agency's interest in fostering a larger assistance base and expanding the number and sustainability of development partners, USAID encourages applications from potential new partners.

It is important to note that NGOs do not need to be registered Private Voluntary Organizations to submit an application. **Potential for-profit applicants should note that USAID policy prohibits the payment of fee/profit to the prime recipient under assistance instruments. Forgone profit does not qualify as cost-sharing or leveraging.**

USAID especially encourages applications directly from local Mexican organizations. USAID encourages other non-Mexican organizations to include a significant and substantive role for local Mexican organizations in the activity to take advantage of considerable local expertise and to strengthen activity sustainability.

USAID also encourages the formation of partnerships or consortia and the leveraging of private sector resources to meet program objectives.

2. Cost Sharing and Leveraging

ADS Chapter 303.3.10 entitled "Cost Share" defines cost share as "the resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement. It is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government."

USAID defines "leveraging" as significant resource mobilization. In the case of public-private alliances or Global Development Alliances, USAID seeks the mobilization of resources of other actors on a 1:1 or greater basis. Resources may include funds, in-kind contributions, and intellectual property.

There is no cost share requirement for this RFA. However, USAID/Mexico strongly encourages potential Applicants to propose cost sharing or leveraging since it is critical that the activity continues after USAID assistance ends. Cost sharing or leveraging can ensure that the project establishes adequate alternate sources of funding, as well as give the Applicant a financial stake in the success of the program.

USAID encourages Applicants to propose for which activities and in which amount cost sharing or leveraging will be applied. The exact level of cost share is left to Applicants to propose per ADS 303.3.10.1. USAID strongly encourages Applicants to explore opportunities for leveraging funds from the private sector. Applications which propose at least a 1:1 match from the private sector and meet the criteria outlined below may be considered as a Global Development Alliance (GDA).

GDAs are a particular type of public-private partnership whereby USAID works with the private sector to tackle important business challenges and development problems - in a replicable, sustainable and scalable manner. USAID pursues and supports Global Development Alliances as a means to increase the sustainable impact of our development assistance programs and more effectively address critical development challenges worldwide. GDAs typically employ market based approaches and solutions. They are co-created and partners share risks and responsibilities. The GDA combines the assets and experience of strategic partners, leveraging their capital and investments, creativity and access to markets to solve complex problems facing government, business, and communities. A well-constructed GDA furthers the objectives of the USAID mission while benefiting the business interests of the resource partner. A GDA meets the following criteria:

- Mobilize private sector expertise, contributions and resources on at least a 1:1 basis
- Common goal defined for all partners;
- Jointly-defined solution to a social or economic development problem;
- Non-traditional resource partners (companies, foundations, etc.);
- Shared resources, risks and results, with a preference for additionality of impact; and
- Innovative, sustainable approaches to development.

[END OF SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION]

SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. General

This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this RFA. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the RFA, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Any Prospective Applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this RFA must request it in writing by the date and time stated on the cover page. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a Cooperative Agreement will not be binding. Any information given to a Prospective Applicant concerning this RFA will be furnished promptly to all other Prospective Applicants as an amendment of this RFA, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other Prospective Applicants.

2. Electronic Submission Guidelines

The application must be in English and submitted electronically via email to ssmexproposals@usaid.gov, by the date and time specified on the cover letter of this request. The file size for each transmission shall not exceed 5 MB.

Applicants must confirm with USAID whether their e-mail submissions were successfully received by the required due date. If you send your application by multiple e-mails, indicate in the subject line of the email whether the e-mail relates to the technical or cost proposal, and the desired sequence of multiple e-mails and sequence of attachments (e.g. Organization X, Cost Proposal, Part 1 of 4, etc.). You are requested to consolidate, as much as possible, the various parts of your technical application into one technical application document and the various parts of your cost application into one cost application document. Each Applicant is responsible for its submissions.

3. Hard Copy Submission Guidelines

In addition to the e-mail submission specified above, Applicants shall submit one hard copy of the technical application and one hard copy of the cost application to the following addresses:

> Regional Office of Acquisition & Assistance,
> USAID/San Salvador, Embajada Americana,
> Final Blvd. Santa Elena,
> Antiguo Cuscatlan,
> Depto. La Libertad, El Salvador
> Attn.: Beatriz Chinchilla

The hard copies must be received within three (3) business days after the closing date of the RFA.

The hard copies of applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages addressed to the office specified above, with the RFA number, the name and address of the Applicant, and whether the contents contain technical and/or cost applications noted on the outside of the envelopes/packages. Applications must be in the English language.

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes should:

> (a) Mark the title page with the following legend: "This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed -in whole or in part - for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a grant is awarded to this applicant as a result of - or in connection with - the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting cooperative agreement. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in pages XXX"; and
>
> (b) Mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend: "Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application."

If your organization decides to submit an application, it must be received by the closing date and time indicated. The Applicant must comply with the instructions for submission herein including providing required information found in any attachments to this RFA.

To be eligible for award, the application should be prepared according to the structural format set forth below in section **(4)** Technical Application Format and section **(5)** Cost Application Format. Applications which are received late or are incomplete run the risk of not being considered in the review process.

USAID will consider only applications conforming to the format prescribed below. All applications received by the closing date and time will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit in accordance with the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Section V addresses the selection criteria and procedures for the applications. Receipt of any amendments to this RFA published on Grants.gov is the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

4. Technical Application Format

Technical applications must not exceed **20** pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, single spaced, typed in standard 8 ½"x11" paper size with one-inch margins both right and left, and each page numbered consecutively. Cover letter, dividers, table of contents, annexes (e.g.

activity monitoring and evaluation plan, personnel resumes, past performance information, forms, acronym list etc.) will not count toward the page limitation. Any pages that exceed the page limitation will not be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee. There is no page limit on attachments or for the cost application. Additional information specifically referenced in this solicitation which is requested to be submitted as part of the Annex to the technical application are not included as part of the 20 page limit.

Applications shall demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this project. Therefore, it should be specific, complete and presented concisely. It should take into account and be arranged in the order of the technical evaluation criteria specified in Section V.

Application Contents: The technical application, at a minimum, shall contain the following:

A. Cover Page: A single page with the project title and RFA number, with the name of the Applicant clearly identified. In addition, the Cover Page should provide a contact person for the Applicant, including this individual’s name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address. State whether the contact person is the person with authority to contract for the Applicant, and if not, that person should also be listed with contact information. If available, the **Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)** numbers of the Applicant shall also be listed on the cover page.

B. Table of Contents: Listing all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments.

C. Executive Summary (counts toward the page limitation and shall not exceed 2 pages): Briefly describe a) the proposed goals, b) the key activities and anticipated results, and c) managerial resources of the Applicant, and how the overall project will be managed.

D. Program Description: In this section, Applicants are not to merely repeat what is already described in this RFA. Applicants should focus on describing how they propose to achieve the program objective(s) and how the program will make a significant contribution towards achieving the objectives and areas for action identified in the program description. Applicants shall elaborate in their program description the most effective way to develop and realize the objectives of this project including the specific approach and activities that are relevant to the current needs of Mexico. Applicants should present a convincing and compelling articulation of their program approach.

At a minimum, the Program Description shall address the following:

a. **Methodology/Proposed Approach -**

The Applicants shall describe their methodology and proposed approach in the following areas:

- Detailed and clear description of all proposed activities and interventions showing innovation and technical soundness, as well as lessons learned from the Applicant's programs implemented elsewhere (if any);
- Results and interventions Applicant believes should be prioritized and why;
- Description of how the proposed activities will affect Mexico's improvements in the areas of youth workforce development as they apply to supporting youth transition from education to employment and addressing the gap between students' skills and regional employers' hiring needs;
- Discussion of planned coordination with other relevant activities undertaken by Mission Mexico (as described in Section I.2.C Relationship to Other Initiatives);
- Discussion of how relevant stakeholders will be integrated and the importance of each partner's participation to a successful intervention;
- Substantive attention on how Applicant will incorporate any significant gender considerations and other suggested implementation approaches listed in this RFA into the implementation of the program;
- Illustrative activity timeline demonstrating how the project objectives will be reached within the required time period of performance;
- Plan for effective rapid launch of activities; and
- Strategy for the sustainability and potential replication of project activities and impact.

b. **Impact and Sustainability**

In this section, the Applicants shall provide, at a minimum, the following information:

- Evidence and reasonable assumptions of how the activities will achieve the overall goal.

- Realistic plan to strengthen the technical capacity and effectiveness of local partners and stakeholders, as applicable, which is appropriate for and consistent with the Applicant's overall proposed approach.

- Description of external non-USAID-funded human, financial, technical and other resources that will be leveraged to achieve activity objectives. This should include a comprehensive approach to private sector engagement that includes the following:

    - Understanding of the need for potential private sector partnership opportunities and how potential partnerships will contribute to activity objectives/results and to the business interests of potential partners;
    - Approach for private sector partner engagement, with a focus on innovative approaches and sustainable development outcomes and a detailed explanation of how partnerships, including leveraged funds, will be solicited, established, and managed;
    - Measurable indicators and targets that will determine success;
    - Experience building and managing public-private alliances, and achievement of concrete results from previous partnerships.

E. Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: As an annex to the Program Description, Applicants shall submit a draft Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This section should include the Applicants' proposed methodology for effective monitoring and evaluation of the project achievements. The plan must explain how the Applicant proposes to monitor the program and assess program impact. At a minimum, the performance monitoring and evaluation plan shall address the following:

- Clearly articulated results directly corresponding with measurable, realistic and direct indicators that reliably quantify program progress;
- Realistic plan for data collection methods and frequency of collection, sources of data, data verification, and responsible parties of data collection, including how baseline information will be compiled, and benchmarks, and the ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project;
- Human and financial resources necessary for activity implementation. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all costs related to the implementation of the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan are included in the cost proposal;
- All people-level data collected must be disaggregated by sex. Applicants can suggest other disaggregation criteria as well.

USAID will negotiate the final Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with the successful Applicant following program award.

F. Management Approach: In this section, the Applicant shall describe the proposed management approach and offer evidence of their technical and managerial resources and organizational expertise (or ability to obtain such) in program management, as well as a staffing pattern that includes proposed key personnel. This should be supported with a clear description of the professional qualifications, education and relevant experience of all proposed key personnel. For each of the proposed individuals, the Applicant shall describe the relevant experience in similar workforce development and/or education to employment integration programs, as well as education and additional qualifications, demonstrated effective interpersonal skills, and creative problem-solving abilities. The Applicant shall clearly describe the rationale for proposing expatriate personnel to support activity implementation (if applicable) and how existing local capacity and resources have been incorporated into the management approach.

a. Key Personnel Qualifications and Experience

The Applicants shall propose no more than two key personnel including the Chief of Party.

Chief of Party: should have minimum 10 years of progressively responsible related experience and must have the ability to work in Spanish. Candidate must have a successful track record in supervising, designing, managing, and implementing similar workforce development and/or education to employment integration related programs and proven ability to develop and monitor work plans, training plans, and procurement plans; manage teams; and ensure quality and timely project reporting. Proposed COP candidate for the project should be explicitly stated in the application.

Other Key Person: should have minimum 8 years of relevant expertise and must have the ability to work in Spanish. Demonstrated ability to design and deliver effective programming in one or more of the mentioned areas of workforce development.

The Applicant should identify the need for other proposed staff and short or long-term consultants, local or international, to be involved in the project but they should not be considered as key personnel.

As an annex to this section, Applicants shall submit resumes for each key personnel. The resumes must be no more than two pages each and should include at least three professional references with current telephone numbers or email addresses for each reference. Each résumé shall be accompanied by a SIGNED letter of commitment from each candidate indicating his/her (a) availability to serve in the stated position on a specific date and for a definitive term of service and (b) agreement to the compensation levels as set forth in the cost proposal. Please note that documentation that reflects an "exclusive" relationship between an individual and an applicant is not requested and should not be submitted.

b. **Organizational and Team Effectiveness**

At a minimum, this section shall address the following:

– Composition and organizational structure of the proposed project team and a description of each long-/short-term key or non-key team member's role, technical expertise, estimated amount of time to be devoted to the activity for each person

G. Organizational Experience: The Applicants shall include a brief description of their organizational history and experience.

H. Past Performance: As part of the evaluation of performance USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant complies with the following:

- Quality of performance in recent and relevant technical experience in similar program areas.
- Demonstrated record in involving and creating partnerships with other stakeholders, including but not limited to government, civil society, the private sector and the education system,.

Performance information will be used for both the responsibility determination and best value decision. Information on past performance must be provided in accordance with the following table for the past three (3) years. USAID may use performance information obtained from other than the sources identified by the Applicant/sub-grantees. USAID will utilize existing databases of contractor performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided herein and contact the individual(s) indicated as well as others. If the performance information contains negative information on which the Applicant has not previously been given an opportunity to comment, USAID will provide the Applicant an opportunity to comment on it prior to its consideration in the evaluation.

In cases where a Recipient lacks relevant performance history, information on performance is not available, then the Recipient will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on performance.

Program Description summary	Primary location of work	Term of performance	Dollar Value	Award type & Number	Contact name	Contact email address and Tel. No.

NOTE: USAID relies on the prime organization's review of partner/subcontractor institutions. However, if deemed necessary to ensure prudent use of USG funds, USAID may conduct its own past performance review of proposed partners/subcontractor institutions.

5. Cost Application Format

Applicants must submit the Cost Application in a separate volume. There is no page limit for the Cost Application. It must include required forms, certificates and schedules and other information necessary to support and/or explain the proposed costs.

The Applicant's estimating processes must be clearly evident and concise as possible but still provide necessary details. Financial data and information must be fully supported and organized in a manner that facilitates review. The proposed budget should provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). Applicants should minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities. Accordingly, those applications with minimal administrative costs may be deemed to offer a "greater value" than those with higher costs for program administration. Additionally, those applications with a greater proportion of cost share may be deemed to offer a "greater value."

The following sections describe the documentation that applicants for an Assistance award must submit to USAID prior to award. While there is no page limit for the cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible, but still provide the necessary detail to address the following:

I. **Budget:** which provides in a breakdown by elements of cost (e.g. personnel, fringe, equipment, etc.), the total estimated amounts for implementation of the project your organization is proposing.

II. **Budget narrative:** that provides detailed budget explanations and supporting justification of each proposed budget line item. It must briefly describe programmatic relevance and clearly identify the basis of estimate (i.e. how the budget number was determined fair and reasonable) for each cost element, such as market surveys, price quotations, current salaries, historical experience, etc.

A summary of the budget must be submitted using the following Standard Forms (SF):

- **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance,**
- **SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs,** and
- **SF-424B, Assurances – Non-construction Programs.**

The budget must include:

1. The breakdown of all costs associated with the project according to costs of headquarters, regional and/or country offices, if any;

2. Potential contributions of non-USAID resources and private sector funding to the expected cooperative agreement; if any

3. The name (if identified), annual salary, and expected level of effort of each candidate named or TBD and charged to the activity. **Provide annual salary history for at least the three most recent years for all identified and proposed long-/short-term key and non-key personnel;**

4. If applying fringe benefit rates, the applicant must provide information regarding how this rate is being applied for each category of employees and an explanation of the benefits included in the rate. Should the applicant have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with the U.S. Government, submission of their approved NICRA is all that is required.

5. Travel, per diem and other transportation expenses detailed to include number of trips, expected itineraries, number of per diem days and per diem rates;

6. All equipment proposed to be purchased;

7. Details regarding the level of cost share and/or leveraging your organization is proposing for this activity. Cost sharing and/or leveraging may be proposed from any available and interested international or local funding sources; and

8. A current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA);

The following information should be taken into consideration when developing the budget:

(1) Salaries and wages must be reflective of the "market value" for each position. Salaries and wages may not exceed the Applicant's established written personnel policy and practice, including the Applicant's established pay scale for equivalent classifications of employees, which shall be certified by the Applicant. No individual salary or wage may exceed the employee's current salary or wage, or the highest rate of annual salary or wage received during any full year of the immediately preceding three (3) years without the approval of the Agreement Officer. In general, salaries for locally employed staff should not exceed the Local

Compensation Plan for USAID/Mexico. The current salary ranges for USAID/Mexico – exclusive of benefits – are as follows:

Professional level	**Minimum annual basic rate***	**Maximum annual basic rate***
Clerical staff	$3,949.80	$9,455.28
Administrative staff	$7,434.17	$16,787.65
Professional [low level]	$14,002.27	$21,003.83
Professional [mid-level]	$19,450.35	$41,036.90
Professional [high level]	$37,147.15	$63,109.30

NOTE: Salary scales are offered to potential offerors for them to have access to the prevailing compensation paid to personnel performing comparable work in Mexico. The cost principles in OMB A-122 describe reasonable compensation as comparable to that paid for similar work in the labor markets.

(2) Base pay, or base salary, is defined as the employee's basic compensation (salary) for services rendered. Taxes which are a responsibility or liability of the employee are inclusive of, and not additive to, the base pay or salary. The base pay excludes benefit and allowances, bonuses, profit sharing arrangements, commission, consultant fees, extra or overtime payments, overseas differential or quarters, cost of living or dependent education allowances, etc.

(3) This USAID-funded project implemented under the anticipated Cooperative Agreement will be for an estimated period of performance of 36 months; also referred to as the award period. Unless the Applicant/Recipient demonstrates otherwise to the USAID Agreement Officer's satisfaction, Cooperating Country Nationals (CCNs) employed by the Applicant/Recipient solely to work under the USAID-funded project under this agreement are considered by USAID as employed by the Applicant/Recipient for a specified period not to exceed the agreement period. This provision shall be interpreted in accordance with applicable cost standards including 2 CFR 230 – Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122) for non-profit organization, 2 CFR 220 – Cost Principles for Education Institutions (OMB Circular A-21), as applicable, including, but not limited to Selected Items of Cost - Compensation for Personal Services, and 22 CFR 226.

Annual Salary Increases - Annual salary increase and/or promotional increase may be granted in accordance with the Applicant's established policies up to a maximum of 5%. Salary increases may be granted after the employee's completion of each twelve months of satisfactory services under the USAID award.

Fringe Benefits - If accounted for as a separate item of cost, fringe benefits should be accounted in accordance with Mexican labor law.

Supplies and Equipment - Differentiate between expendable supplies and nonexpendable equipment (NOTE: Equipment is defined as tangible nonexpendable personal property including exempt property charged directly to the award having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit, unless the Applicant's established policy establishes nonexpendable equipment anticipated to be required to implement the project, specifying quantities and unit cost.)

Procurement - A list of proposed non-expendable property purchases. Specify all equipment to be purchased, including the type of equipment, the manufacturer, the unit cost, the number of units to be purchased and the expected geographic source. Goods and services provided by the Applicants under this USAID-financed award are expected to be subject to the 937 Geographic Code.

Allowances, if any, must be broken down by specific type and by person and must be in accordance with the Applicant's established policies.

Travel and Per Diem - The narrative should indicate the purpose of trip(s), number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated unit cost of each. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel and number of individuals traveling. Proposed per diem rates must be in accordance with the Applicant's established policies and practices that are uniformly applied to federally financed and other activities of the Applicant.

Communications – Specific information regarding the type of communication cost at issue (i.e. mail, telephone, cellular phones, internet etc.) must be included in order to allow an assessment of the realism and reasonableness of these types of costs.

Other Direct Costs (ODC) - could include costs such as communications, office rental, utilities, report preparation costs, passports, visas, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than the Applicant's normal coverage), other filed office operation costs, etc. The narrative, or supporting schedule, should provide a complete breakdown and support for each item of other direct costs.

Proposed (Sub) contracts/agreements - Applicants who intend to utilize subcontractors or sub recipients should indicate the extent intended and a complete cost breakdown, as well as all the information required herein for the Applicant. Extensive (sub) contract/agreement financial plans should follow the same cost format as submitted by the Applicant.

Indirect Costs – The applicant should support the proposed indirect cost rate with a letter from a cognizant U.S. Government audit agency or with sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of any such cost proposed to be associated with this agreement. (For example, a breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools, the method of determining the direct versus the indirect costs, a description of all costs in the pools, etc.).

The Applicant and each proposed major sub recipient shall include a complete copy of its most current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or other documentation from its cognizant Government Audit Agency, if any, stating the most recent final indirect cost rates.

If the Applicant or any major subcontractor(s) does not have a cognizant Government Audit Agency, audited balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the last two complete years, and the current year-to-date statements (or such lesser period of time if the Applicant is a newlyformed organization), must be included in the proposal. The profit and loss statements should include detail of the total cost of goods and services sold, including a listing of the various indirect administrative costs, and be supplemented by information on the prime contractor's customary indirect cost allocation method, together with supporting computations of the basis for the indirect cost rate(s) proposed.

Non-US organizations without an authorized Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) should charge the administrative/management costs as direct costs.

Cost share: ADS Chapter 303.3.10 entitled "Cost Share" defines cost share as "the resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement. It is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government."

There is no cost share requirement for this RFA. However, USAID/Mexico encourages the potential Applicants to propose cost sharing since it is critical that the activity continues after USAID assistance ends. Cost sharing can ensure that the project establishes adequate alternate sources of funding, as well as give the Applicant a financial stake in the success of the program. The Applicants' proposed cost share may enable additional worthwhile activities to be undertaken which USAID funds could not support. Cost share may secure the programmatic and financial sustainability of the initiatives.

USAID encourages Applicants to propose for which activities and in which amount cost sharing will be applied. The exact level of cost share is left to Applicants to propose per 303.3.10.1 (http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf). Ultimately the Agreement Officer shall determine if the Applicant's cost share contributions (e.g. categories or items) meet the standards set in the Standard Provision entitled "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. or Non-U.S. organizations (Mandatory References, 22 CFR 226.23; and Standard Provisions for U.S. and Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients, and ADS 303.3.10 Cost Sharing). Once approved, cost sharing becomes a condition of an award. Cost sharing must be verifiable from the recipient's records, is subject to the requirements of 22 CFR 226.23, and can be audited. If the recipient does not meet its cost sharing requirement, it can result in questioned costs.

Leveraging – USAID defines "leveraging" as significant resource mobilization. In the case of public-private alliances or Global Development Alliances, USAID seeks the mobilization of resources of other actors on a 1:1 or greater basis. Resources may include funds, in-kind contributions, and intellectual property. Leveraging represents all of the non-USAID resources that are expected to be applied to a program. It may include cost share, but may also include resources that third parties bring to the program without necessarily providing them to the recipient. These parties may include the host government, private foundations, businesses, or individuals.

Responsibility Determination - An award shall be made only when the Agreement Officer makes a positive determination that the applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence in planning and carrying out assistance programs and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID. For the organizations that are new to USAID, or organizations with outstanding audit findings, it may be necessary to perform a pre-award survey. The cost/business applications of all applicants submitting a technically acceptable application will be evaluated for general reasonableness, cost realism, allowability and allocability.

I. Applicants who do not currently have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from U.S. Government agency shall submit the following information:

- Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by
- a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;
- Cash flow and organizational chart; and
- A copy of the organization's accounting manual.
- Copies of applicable policies and procedures (e.g., accounting, purchasing, property management, personnel).

II. Apparently successful Applicants will be required to submit Pre-award Certifications, Assurances and other Statements of the Recipient which can be found here: **http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mav.pdf**

These Pre-award Certifications, Assurances and other Statements of the Recipient **shall not** be submitted as part of the initial application. The Agreement Officer will notify the apparently successful applicant to submit these documents after evaluation of applications.

III. Applicants should submit any additional evidence of financial responsibility if the Applicant deems it necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility to manage USG funds. The information submitted should substantiate that the Applicant:

- Has adequate financial, management and personnel resources and systems, or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award;

- Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, nongovernmental and governmental;

- Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance; and

- Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.

- Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Grant under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity).

[END OF SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION]

SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Technical applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below. Applicants shall organize the narrative sections of their technical applications in the same order as the selection criteria. Technical evaluation of applications will be based on the extent and appropriateness of proposed approaches and feasibility of achieving the strategic objectives, in accordance with the following criteria.

If award is not made on the initial applications, USAID may request clarification and supplemental materials from Applicants whose applications have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. The entry into discussion is to be viewed as part of the evaluation process and shall not be deemed by USAID or the Applicants as indicative of a decision or commitment upon the part of USAID to make an award to the Applicants with whom discussions are being held.

A. Technical Evaluation

A Technical Evaluation Committee, using the criteria shown in this Section, will score technical Applications. The criteria set forth will serve as the basis for evaluating the technical Applications. Please reference Section IV.6 Technical Application Format, for additional details regarding how Applicants should prepare their applications to address each of the following evaluation criteria. The various functional elements of the technical criteria are listed in order of importance, so that the Applicants will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of Applications. Applicants should note that these criteria:

(a) Serve as the standard against which all Applications will be evaluated; and

(b) Serve to identify the significant matters which Applicants should address in their Applications.

1) **Program Description**

a. Methodology/ Proposed Approach

Applicants will be evaluated based on their detailed and clear description of all proposed activities and interventions showing innovation and technical soundness, as well as lessons learned from any prior programs of the Applicants. The Applicants will also be evaluated based on the results and interventions the Applicants believe should be prioritized and why. In addition, Applicants will be evaluated based on proposed gender considerations and suggested implementation approaches incorporated in the implementation of the program, timeline for implementation, proposed plan for effective rapid launch of activities, and the proposed strategy for the sustainability of project activities and impact.

b. **Impact and Sustainability**

Impact: The extent to which the proposed activities are likely to achieve the overall goal.

Sustainability: The extent to which the Applicant presents a realistic plan to strengthen the technical capacity and effectiveness of local partners and stakeholders, as applicable, and based upon the Applicant's overall proposed approach. The extent to which the Applicant demonstrates leveraging of external non-USAID-funded human, financial, technical and other resources to achieve activity objectives, and an understanding/analysis of potential opportunities for private sector engagement, including innovative ideas for partnerships that contribute to sustainability.

2) **Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** Extent to which the Applicant includes clearly articulated results directly corresponding with measurable, realistic and direct indicators that reliably quantify activity progress. Extent to which Applicant proposes a realistic plan for data collection methods and frequency of collection, sources of data, data verification, and responsible parties of data collection, including how baseline information will be compiled, and benchmarks, and the ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data will be managed under the activity.

3) **Management Approach**

a. **Key Personnel Qualifications and Experience**

Applicants will be evaluated based on the demonstrated relevant experience, education, qualifications and capability of their proposed key personnel to carry out the activity in accordance with the following sub-criteria:

I. Demonstrated capability, experience, education and qualifications of the proposed Chief of Party.

II. Demonstrated capability, experience, education and qualifications of other key personnel**.**

b. **Organizational and Team Effectiveness**

USAID will evaluate the extent to which Applicants propose a team and/or partnerships with other organizations to provide the relevant skills and experience to implement the proposed program.

4) **Past Performance**

As part of the evaluation of performance USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant complies with the following:

- Quality of performance in recent and relevant technical experience in similar program areas.

- Demonstrated record in involving and creating partnerships with other stakeholders, including but not limited to government, civil society, the private sector and the education system,.

Performance information will be used for both the responsibility determination and best value decision. Information on past performance must be provided in accordance with the following table.

In cases where an Applicant lacks relevant performance history, information on performance is not available, then the Applicant will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on performance.

Program Description summary	Primary location of work	Term of performance	Dollar Value	Award type & Number	Contact name	Contact email address and Tel. No.

B. Cost Evaluation

Cost has not been assigned a weight but it will be evaluated for realism, reasonableness, allocability, allowability and cost-effectiveness. Cost sharing and/or leveraging, if any, will be evaluated on the level of financial participation proposed and the added value it represents to the program.

Cost Effectiveness will be measured as the degree to which the application demonstrates viable resources for in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-USG sources; the degree of efficient use of funding resources towards direct costs with direct correlations to the delivery of results; and ratio of funding to impact, dollar to results, proposed and feasible. The pre-award evaluation of cost effectiveness will also include an examination of the application's budget detail to ensure it is a realistic financial expression of the proposed project and does not contain estimated costs which may be unallocable, unreasonable or unallowable. Applications that have more efficient operational systems that reduce operation costs will be favorably considered.

Cost realism is an assessment of accuracy with which proposed costs represent the most probable cost of performance within the Applicant's technical and management approach. Cost realism evaluation will be performed as part of the evaluation process to: a) verify the Applicant's understanding of the requirements; b) assess the degree to which the cost/price proposal accurately reflects the approaches and/or risk assessments made in the technical and management approach as well as the risk that the Applicant will provide the supplies or services for the offered prices/cost; and c) assess the degree to which the cost included in the cost/price proposal accurately represents the work effort included in the technical proposal.

Applications that maximize direct activity costs including cost sharing and/or leveraging and that minimize administrative costs will be favorably considered. Other considerations are the completeness of the application adequacy of budget detail and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability, to be measured by a responsibility determination.

Evaluation System

The following adjectival scoring system will be used by the technical evaluation committee to assess each of the technical criteria and the technical applications as a whole:

"Outstanding"	**O** Very significantly exceeds most or all solicitation requirements. Response exceeds a "Better" rating. The applicant has clearly demonstrated an understanding of all aspects of the requirements to the extent that timely and highest quality performance is anticipated.
"Better"	**B** Fully meets all solicitation requirements and significantly exceeds many of the solicitation requirements. Response exceeds an "Acceptable" rating. The areas in which the applicant exceeds the requirements are anticipated to result in a high level of efficiency or productivity or quality.
"Acceptable"	**A** Meets all solicitation requirements. Complete, comprehensive, and exemplifies an understanding of the scope and depth of the task requirements as well as the applicant's understanding of the Government's requirements.
"Marginal"	**M** Less than "Acceptable." There are some deficiencies in the technical proposal. However, given the opportunity for discussions, the technical proposal has a reasonable chance of becoming at least "Acceptable." (Areas of a technical proposal which remain to be "Marginal" after "Final Application Revision" offers shall not be subject to further discussion or revision.) If award is made on the initial offers, there will not be an opportunity for discussions nor a chance to become at least "Acceptable."
"Unacceptable"	**U** Technical application has many deficiencies and/or gross omissions: Failure to understand much of the scope of work necessary to perform the required tasks; failure to provide a reasonable, logical approach to fulfilling much of the Government's requirements; failure to meet many personnel requirements of the solicitation. (When applying this adjective to the technical proposal as a whole, the technical proposal must be so unacceptable in one or more areas that it would have to be significantly revised to attempt to make it other than acceptable.)

C. Best Value Decision

Award will be made to the Applicant whose application offers the best value to the Government. Best value is defined as the expected outcome of a procurement that, in the Government's estimation, provides the greatest overall benefit in response to the requirement. Other areas of review and discussion will vary according to the circumstances pertaining to the application.

D. Cooperative Agreement Award

The Government may award a Cooperative Agreement 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. As part of its evaluation process, however, USAID may elect to discuss technical, cost or other pre-award issues with one or more Applicants. Alternatively, USAID may proceed with award selection based on its evaluation of initial applications received and/or commence negotiations solely with one Applicant.
Neither financial data submitted with an application nor representations concerning facilities or financing will form a part of the resulting Cooperative Agreement unless explicitly stated otherwise in the agreement.

To be eligible for award of a Cooperative Agreement, in addition to other conditions of this RFA, organizations must have a politically neutral mandate, a commitment to nondiscrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. 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, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all subcontracts/sub-awards issued under the Cooperative Agreement.

E. Authority to Obligate the Government

The USAID Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Cooperative Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

[END OF SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION]

SECTION VI – AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notices

Following selection of an awardee, USAID will inform the successful Applicant concerning the award. A notice of award signed by the Agreement Officer is the official authorizing document, which USAID will provide either electronically or in hard copy to the successful Applicant's main point of contact.

USAID also will notify unsuccessful Applicants concerning their status after selection has been made.

2. Applicable Standard Provisions

For awardees who are U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients, the Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will be included in any final agreement. They can be found at the following link:
http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303maa.pdf

For awardees who are Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will be included in any final agreement. They can be found at the following link:
http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf

3. Reporting Requirements

a) First Annual Work Plan and Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The Recipient must submit the first annual work plan and a final activity monitoring and evaluation plan covering the life of the program within the first 90 days of an award and before major activity implementation actions begin. All activity M&E plans shall include performance indicators that are consistent with and meet the data collection needs of the project M&E plan and the USAID Mission's Performance Management Plan (PMP). Activity M&E plans submitted to USAID should include only those indicators that the Mission needs for activity management, rather than the entire set of all indicators an implementer uses for its management purposes. The first annual work plan and the life-of-program activity monitoring and evaluation plan will be reviewed and approved by USAID. These documents should be submitted electronically in English.

b) Subsequent Annual Work Plans

The Recipient must submit annual work plans for the second and third year of program implementation 30 days before the award anniversary date. These work plans will be reviewed and approved by USAID. These documents should be submitted electronically in English.

c) Quarterly Performance Reports

Performance reports must be submitted on a quarterly basis, using the standard USAID fiscal quarters (i.e. October-December, January-March, April-June, July-September). Quarterly reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. These documents should be submitted electronically in English.

d) Final Performance Report

The final performance report is due 90 calendar days after the expiration or termination of the award. These documents should be submitted electronically in English.

Quarterly performance reports and the final performance report shall generally contain brief information on each of the following:

(1) A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives established for the period. Whenever appropriate and the output of activities can be readily quantified, such quantitative data should be related to cost data for computation of unit costs.

(2) Reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate, and corrective actions that have been taken / are planned.

(3) Other pertinent information, including actual performance indicator data that is due during the reporting period and, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

[END OF SECTION VI – AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION]

SECTION VII – AGENCY CONTACTS

Any questions concerning this RFA should be sent to the following contact:
ssmexproposals@usaid.gov.

[END OF SECTION VII – AGENCY CONTACTS]

SECTION VIII – OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

[END OF SECTION VIII – OTHER INFORMATION]

SECTION IX - BRANDING AND MARKING

It is a federal statutory and regulatory requirement (see Section 641, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended and 22 CFR 226.91) that all USAID programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under a USAID Grant or Cooperative Agreement or other assistance award or sub-award must be marked appropriately overseas with the USAID identity. In accordance with ADS 320.3.3 Branding and Marking Requirements for Assistance Awards USAID's policy is that programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities implemented or delivered under co-funded instruments – such as Grants, Cooperative Agreements, or other assistance awards that usually require a cost share – generally are "co-branded and co-marked."

The successful Applicant will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan. Standard Provisions Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012), Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012), and Marking and Public Communications under USAID-Funded Assistance (June 2012) to this RFA, contain detailed requirement on the content and submission of the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan.

More information on Branding and Marking is available at: http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/branding/assistance-awards.

The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will become material element of the Cooperative Agreement. Information on USAID's branding for "assistance" applies to this RFA. ADS Chapter 320 sections ADS concerning "acquisition" do not apply to this RFA. ADS Chapter 320 can be found on USAID website: **http://inside.usaid.gov/ADS/300/320.pdf**

[END OF SECTION IX – BRANDING AND MARKING]

ANNEX 1 – RELATED GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO PROGRAMS

Following is a partial list of ongoing programs being supported by the Government of Mexico.

SIGUELE caminemos juntos
An integral accompaniment for youth, its objective aims to improve the academic progress, contribute to reduce the drop out school and the failure as well as to elevate the efficiency at school.
http://www.siguele.sems.gob.mx/siguele/

CONECTADOS (CONECTED)
Portal Circuito Conectados Contigo aims to offer a wide variety of tools to facilitate the inclusion of students and graduates from public institutions to the labor market
http://www.circuito.conectadoscontigo.sems.gob.mx/

Decide tu Carrera (SEP) (Decide your career)
Provides free useful information to choose a professional career
http://www.decidetucarrera.ses.sep.gob.mx/

CONSTRUYE-T (BUILD yourself)
A program for Upper Secondary Schools that aims to guarantee the right for the development of education potential and the civic identity for youth 15-18 **http://www.construye-t.org.mx/web/**

OBSERVATORIO LABORAL (Labor observatory)
A public service of on-line reliable and free information related to the characteristics and trends of the different activities and professions with greatest demand in Mexico.
http://www.observatoriolaboral.gob.mx/swb/

P**ortal Del Empleo (Servicio Nacional del Empleo SNE) (EMPLOYMENT)**
Is the National Public Institution which handles in a personal and a free way the unemployment and sub-employment problems in benefit of the Mexican population.
http://www.empleo.gob.mx/

CONOCER Sistema Nacional de Competencias (COMPETENCE)
A Federal Government program, which contributes to the economic competitiveness, educational development and the social progress in Mexico, based on the evaluation of professional competencies. **http://www.conocer.gob.mx/**