

Leadership and English Teaching Program (SCAKAB-23-CA-004-SCA-04282023)

Questions and Answer

Due Dates to Receive Questions was May 15, 2023

- 1) **Questions:** Could the Embassy please provide a list of potential target third countries where applicants can locate program activities?

Answer: The programs should take place outside of Afghanistan, in third countries where Afghan refugees are located. This could include Pakistan, Tajikistan, Albania, Turkey, or any other countries in the region that host displaced Afghan refugees.

- 2) **Questions:** I am writing to inquire if US-based Institutions of Higher Education can apply and target the new-settled Afghan refugees in the United States. The NOFO reads “third countries,” but does not specifically name any country. Is the US considered as a third country?

Answer: Eligibility is open to all types of applicants (except individuals) including U.S.-based institutions of higher education; however the program activities should take place in countries that host large number of Afghan refugees including Pakistan, Tajikistan, Albania, Turkey, or any other countries in the region.

- 3) **Questions:** What is the expectation for a "camp" site? One option would be to have an on-campus camp, where participants stay in campus housing and the camp takes place on campus grounds. A more "prototypical" camp would be out in the wilderness, with camp counselors and activities in a natural environment. For example, the YMCA gyms offer camps for youth out in the wilderness near our city.

Answer: The location of “camp” sites can be determined by the applicant. The program activities should take place in-person, at a location where participants are in close proximity to the classrooms and activity sites, limiting transportation between locations when possible. This could include a partnership with an institute of higher education or a local organization/institute that would host the training camp. There is no requirement for the “camp” to take place in a wilderness or natural environment. The location of the camp should be safe and secure for students who will be residing there during the camp period.

- 4) **Questions:** If 3 - 4 camps are required, must there be 3 - 4 camps for each cohort (teachers and language learners)? Or can the camps be split - for example, 2 for teachers and 2 for students?

Answer: We anticipate the applicant to facilitate 3 - 4 training camps (or more) throughout the life of the project. Each camp will be considered a cohort of students who will complete at least three weeks of intensive on-campus training. Yes, the teacher camp should be separate from student camp and activities for each camp should be designed based on the needs of each cohort.

- 5) **Questions:** The request is for 3 – 4 camps of 50 individuals in 12 months. How long is each camp program expected to be? Will a 2-week camp of courses and activities be sufficient in the eyes of the Embassy?

Answer: Each camp/cohort is expected to be at least three weeks of on-campus training for a period of 24 months.

Clarification: The period of performance for this award can be up-to 24 months. The NOFO has been modified to reflect this.

- 6) **Questions:** For the Senior Group of English Teachers, must these be Afghani refugees who are actively teaching English in the United States (in our case)? Or could these be individuals with strong English proficiency and a desire to teach English here, or back in Afghanistan?

Answer: The senior group of English teachers is expected to share their experiences and knowledge with other members of the Afghan refugee communities where currently they live, and the recipient could enroll for the training camps those with strong English proficiency and have the desire to teach English.

- 7) **Questions:** As part of the recruitment, English proficiency must be assessed. Are there requirements for what this proficiency test should include?

Answer: There are no set requirements for testing. The recipient of the award should propose a standard or use an existing testing mechanism for evaluating English capabilities, based on the students' categories (junior or senior).

- 8) **Question:** We know that there are hundreds of refugees from Afghanistan in Indiana. If the camps are to be held in Indianapolis, is there a limit to how far outside city limits we can go to recruit?

Answer: This NOFO is designed to support Afghan refugees in third countries such as Pakistan, Tajikistan, Albania, Turkey, or any other third countries in the region that host displaced Afghan refugees. Grant funds cannot be used to support Afghan refugees who have been resettled in the US under this award.

- 9) **Questions:** For selected teaching staff, the NOFO requires “qualified teaching staff.” Does the Embassy have a more specific definition of “qualified”? Is there a degree requirement,

for instance? Many strong teachers of English working at our university have Masters degrees in TESOL.

Answer: The teaching staff should be fluent in English and have prior experience teaching English as a second language.

10) Question: Could you please clarify what is meant by “counseling staff,” “mentors,” and “counselors”? For example, would the mentors be our university’s program staff, or would they be participating teachers in the Senior Group cohort? We’re having difficulty understanding what is expected.

Answer: Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Mission to Afghanistan has implemented multiple English language and soft skills training. Graduates/Alumni of those program or other Afghans with similar experiences could serve as mentors for the current cohort of students. These graduates/Alumni will be role models who would share their experiences and best practices.

11) Question: Regarding the plan for engagement beyond the camp period, specifically in connecting with the larger community of alumni from US programs, does the Embassy have suggestions for this? Is there already a network in place?

Answer: After completing the program, we anticipate the senior group of English language teachers to engage with the community where they reside. This could include volunteer activities by the English language teachers or small grants for programming. The graduated participants from this program will be considered an alumni of USG programs and will be eligible to connect with existing alumni networks.

12) Question: For the additional option period, beyond the original 2-year project, is another full year of camps (3 to 4) expected, or would a 6-month option, for running 1 or 2 camps be sufficient?

Answer: At this time, we intend to support for up-to 24 months of programming under this NOFO. The additional option period will be determined upon availability of fund and will be discussed directly with the potential grantee after the award.

13) Question: We understand the need for security and safety. Some questions and requirements, and some language (for example, “changing nature of security in Afghanistan”) leads us to wonder if there is an in-country requirement for program staff and/or program participants? Is there a requirement for alumni to work in Afghanistan? And if so, where and at what point would our “safety jurisdiction” end? What all is required in the security plan for U.S.-based camps?

Answer: The applicant is responsible for safety and security of participants throughout the camp or any project activities that the applicant intends to engage the participant. All

activities under this NOFO will take place outside Afghanistan. At this time there is no requirement for alumni to work in Afghanistan and there is no expectation of the awardee to provide “safety jurisdiction” outside of the camp or official program activities.

14) Question: The NOFO states a start date of September 2023, for 2 years. We presume that the 2 years, if beginning in September 2023, would consist of planning, recruitment and orientation, the camp programs, post-camp support, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. Is there an expected start date for the actual camp programs?

Answer: We defer to the applicants to propose a program schedule, including location where the camp will take place, the date and venue. We anticipate the 3- 4 camps should take place within 24 months, from the time the award is fully executed by a Grants Officer from U.S. Department of State.

15) Question: Can the PMP/Monitoring & Evaluation be attached to the proposal, or must it be included in the 15-page narrative?

Answer: PMP and M&E document should be submitted as an attachment, and it is not counted toward the 15-page narrative limit.

16) Question: Please confirm that the camps could take place on a university campus, in campus housing, with campus meal plans, and courses and activities both on and near campus.

Answer: Yes, the camp can take place at a university campus or local organization/institute that is safe and cost effective. The applicant is responsible for housing, meals and transportation of the participants.

17) Question: The NOFO references that PDS intends to issue an award for a period of 12 months, and the length of the period of performance is also indicated as 24 months. Could you clarify please?

Answer: The period of performance for this award can be up-to 24 months. The NOFO on grants.gov has been modified to reflect this.

18) Question: The NOFO mentions residential programs. Are day camps possible?

Answer: The program is designed to support participants for at least three weeks of on-campus intensive training and mentorship. Where overnight stay is not possible, day camps are permitted but the details should be clearly outlined in the proposal and the budget including transportation, students’ commitment and other logistical arrangement.

We strongly encourage residential programs for the junior students; this may not be necessary for the senior students.