

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

Assistance Listings Number: 19.600

Tunisia Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program

Opportunity Number: [DFOP0016640]

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	June 4, 2024
Deadline for Questions:	June 21, 2024
Application Deadline:	July 8, 2024
Expected Date of Notification:	September 30, 2024
Federal Agency Contact:	NEA-Grants@state.gov

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and Embassy Tunis Public Affairs office seek proposals to empower Tunisian student leaders through the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP), with educational and extracurricular experiences at U.S. colleges and universities in academic year 2025-2026. TJSP will address the critical need to enhance Tunisian youth leadership skills and cross-cultural understanding. The program will equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary to contribute effectively to Tunisia's economic growth and development.

All applications must be submitted in English. Complete information on how applicants must submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposals and should refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in Section VIII while drafting all materials.

Eligible Countries and Territories

In this announcement, we seek to support project activities in Tunisia and the United States. Please note: Applications that focus on activities in countries and territories other than those listed will NOT be considered.

Background Information about NEA/AC

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Federal assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. NEA/AC works in 19 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts.

Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs. NEA/AC is committed to advancing equity and support for minority and marginalized populations. All programs should consider strategies for expanding the pool of individuals/organizations/beneficiaries to afford opportunities for as diverse and inclusive a population as is feasible to bring perspectives based on religion, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, national origin, and age to implementation of the program.

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APPENDICES (Posted with NOFO)**APPENDIX 1 –Budget Sample Template and Budget Narrative Guidance****APPENDIX 2 –Logic Model Template****APPENDIX 3 – Results Monitoring Plan Template****APPENDIX 4 – Application Guidance****APPENDIX 5 – Gender Analysis Guiding Questions**

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP) will offer talented Tunisian students full scholarships for an academic year of non-degree study at accredited four-year colleges and universities in the United States. The program will provide students from across Tunisia a deeper understanding of the United States and American culture and values, as well as leadership and other soft skills and knowledge to help them contribute to Tunisia's economic growth and development.

The Recipient must facilitate participants' studies and provide enrichment activities to achieve program objectives. Participants will enroll in full-time undergraduate coursework, including courses related to their fields of study as well as American Studies to broaden their knowledge of their chosen field and the United States. Students may not enroll in clinical coursework. TJSP students will fulfill community service requirements in the first semester and complete an internship in the second semester. Students must return to Tunisia at the conclusion of the program in the United States and complete a mandatory re-entry workshop in Tunis organized by the recipient.

The TJSP program contributes to the following overarching objectives from Tunisia's Integrated Country Strategy:

- **Mission Goal 1:** Tunisia strengthens democratic institutions and increases citizen confidence in government responsiveness.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Tunisian citizens and civil society understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities in a democratic system.
- **Mission Goal 2:** Tunisia stabilizes government finances and allows the private sector to generate inclusive growth.
- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Accelerated private sector development and investment climate improvements catalyze incremental policy reforms

and create investment and trade opportunities for the United States and Tunisia.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Talented leaders, entrepreneurs and managers who can lead businesses, private and public organizations, run companies and create jobs will strengthen Tunisia's economic development. Through the TJSP, we aim to support Tunisia's economic growth, stability, and democratic development by equipping young Tunisian students with essential skills to become leaders in their professional fields and communities through entrepreneurial and educational opportunities and professional development. The successful implementation of the program depends on ensuring equitable access to quality education for students from underserved communities, establishing fair and transparent selection processes, and providing comprehensive support services for cultural adjustment and academic success. The U.S. Department of State seeks to identify a qualified implementer capable of advancing the objectives of the TJSP through innovative solutions and strategic program management.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will result in:

1. Participants prepared for the professional marketplace and entry-level professional positions in Tunisia.
2. Participants building and sustaining networks with emerging young leaders from across Tunisia and in the United States.
3. Participants capable to serve in leadership positions in public or private sectors.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

Applicants must address the management of the following responsibilities in the project narrative.

1. Recruiting and selecting program participants;
2. Recruiting and selecting accredited, four-year host institutions in the United States;
3. Arranging TOEFL tests in Tunisia for all participants and intensive pre-academic ESL courses in the United States for students who require it;
4. Placing participants at U.S. host institutions;
5. Organizing a pre-departure orientation in Tunisia, mid-year workshop in the United States, and re-entry workshop in Tunisia;
6. Providing monitoring and support services for participants at host institutions in the United States;
7. Assisting with community service and internship arrangements and other special program management;
8. Overseeing financial administration of the program budget including, but not limited to, stipend disbursement; travel arrangements; student reimbursement for cultural events; adherence to federal, state, and local income tax laws; and fiscal reporting;
9. Managing all travel logistics, program reporting and evaluation;
10. Managing and monitoring the visa process, including the processing of DS-2019s;
11. Supporting alumni tracking, coordination, and follow-on activities and;
12. Ensuring participants complete a release form regarding the use of photos and quotes in publications related to TJSP.

Applicants must address the management of the following components in the project narrative.

Programmatic Components

Academic: All participants must be enrolled full-time in undergraduate coursework and will be required to take at least two courses in their fields of study and one American Studies course (such as American history, literature, or government) per semester. In addition to TJSP course requirements,

participants may enroll in elective courses and should work closely with the Recipient and host institution advisors to determine suitability.

Cultural: Participants will be encouraged to take part in enrichment activities such as discussion groups on U.S. issues, exposure to local and regional governance such as school board or city council meetings and election offices, and exposure to U.S. religious institutions. Participants' visits to museums, concerts, plays, and other cultural events that feature American content should be encouraged and facilitated whenever possible. An enrichment allowance will be available to enable participants to engage in campus, community, and regional activities of a cultural nature, such as concerts, plays, museum exhibits, cultural festivals, etc. Participants may pursue enrichment activities on their own or as a group. The Recipient will be encouraged to assist participants in identifying potential enrichment activities.

Practical Experience: To develop key professional skills, students will participate in at least 20 hours of community service at local nonprofit organizations during the first semester of the program. Students may not receive salaries, stipends, or wages for their community service.

Participants must conduct at least one local presentation (at area schools or community organizations) about Tunisia during their exchange year. This will not count toward community service hours.

Additionally, participants will do an unpaid practical internship during the second semester for a minimum of 80 hours. Internships will be part-time and must relate to the participants' field of study and/or career plans. This is a key component of the program intended to prepare participants for eventual entry into the Tunisian workforce. Participants should seek out opportunities on their own, but the Recipient should guide students in their search and provide sample resumes and other resources, as necessary.

Pre-Departure Orientation: The cooperating organization will host a substantive pre-departure orientation program in Tunisia covering topics such as the terms and conditions of the scholarship, including a clear

explanation of J visa requirements and the two-year home residency requirement; detailed information about health insurance, finance, safety, diversity, and sexual harassment issues; and, to the extent possible, information regarding host institutions and placements. The orientation will also provide a general introduction to U.S. undergraduate education and campus life, U.S. culture, and cultural adjustment. The Recipient should provide detailed program handbooks at the pre-departure orientation.

U.S. Orientation: Host universities and colleges should provide academic/program orientations for participants upon their arrival to reiterate the topics mentioned above as well as introduce participants to the host institution and community. The Recipient should provide materials for such orientations to ensure participants associate themselves with TJSP, as well as with their host institutions.

Pre-Academic English Language Study: The Recipient will provide placements in intensive two to six-week ESL classes in the United States (just prior to the start of the academic year) for students who need it to successfully complete the TJSP. Proposals must outline how suitable training programs will be identified and how students will be assessed for need and eligibility.

Mid-Year Workshop: The Recipient will host a substantive mid-year conference in the United States that should address issues including, but not limited to, cultural adjustment, academic and future job search skills, leadership, and other topics as appropriate. Students should have an opportunity to present their community service activities from the previous semester.

Re-entry Workshop: The Recipient must hold a re-entry workshop right after the participants' return to Tunisia. The workshop dates should be scheduled in consultation with the Embassy. This workshop should address issues including, but not limited to, reverse culture shock, academic and job search skills, alumni opportunities, and other topics as appropriate.

Alumni Tracking and Follow-On Activities: Alumni activities are an important part of the State Department’s exchange programs that maximize and extend program benefits. Proposals must outline ways to creatively organize and support alumni engagement without additional Embassy funding and include a timeline of the proposed activities. Proposals should explain how alumni activities will be integrated with initiatives for alumni of other State Department programs, rather than being isolated events.

Alumni tracking is critical for the evaluation of the TJSP and for the implementation of worthwhile follow-on programs. Proposals must detail how database systems will be maintained and updated beyond the duration of the cooperative agreement and when updated database information will be provided to the Embassy. All statistical information gathered and compiled by the award recipient on program participants and alumni must be available to the Embassy and transferable in an easy-to-use manner.

NOTE: All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the TJSP must acknowledge that the program is funded by the U.S. Department of State (if the audience is primarily American) and/or the U.S. Embassy in Tunis (if the audience is primarily Tunisian). The Department will retain copyright use of and distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Virtual Exchange Component: The Embassy welcomes innovative ideas using mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration, and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. The Embassy encourages applicant organizations to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during, and/or after the physical exchange.

Operational Components

Participant Selection: Participants will be highly motivated undergraduate students who demonstrate leadership through academic work, community

involvement, and extracurricular activities. Their fields of study will be varied. To be eligible, a candidate must:

- Be a Tunisian citizen;
- Currently reside in Tunisia;
- Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in good academic standing at the time of application at a registered academic institution in Tunisia;
- Be from an underserved community
- NOT be in the final year of his/her undergraduate program at the time of application. (Note: Undergraduate programs in Tunisia include three-year license programs, four-year American-style bachelor programs, and five-year engineering and architecture programs. End Note)
- Be able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Be committed to returning to Tunisia after completion of the program;
- Be able to achieve a TOEFL score of at least 500, either at the time of application or after short-term pre-academic English language study in the United States; and
- Complete the academic year prior to study in the United States in good standing with a passing average (aka *moyenne générale*).

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the TJSP:

- Part-time students;
- U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years;
- Employees of non-profit organizations that administer the TJSP on behalf of the U.S. Department of State and their families. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents;
- Locally employed staff of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia and their immediate family members. This applies to the staff's period of

employment and one year following the termination of employment;
nor

- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime.

All eligible student applications will be considered, though priority will be given to students who have never travelled to the United States. The selected cohort should be at least 50% female and reflect Tunisia's diversity, with recruitment efforts focusing on students from underrepresented governorates.

U.S. Host Institution Selection and Participant Placement: In collaboration with the Embassy, the Recipient will recruit U.S. host institutions and serve as the main point of contact for the host institution. The proposal should describe in detail how the U.S. host institution competition will be conducted, including what measures will be taken to secure tuition awards and/or other cost sharing. Host institutions for the TJSP will be accredited four-year colleges and universities that will provide students with a supportive environment and personalized attention. Placement at community colleges will not be permitted under this program. Host institutions should be selected based on geographic diversity, academic rigor, overall cost and ability to cost share, and their ability to engage TJSP students in the local community. These communities should offer quality internships as well as accessible housing, accommodations, and transportation. The Embassy will approve the proposed placements at U.S. colleges and universities for all participants. No more than three participants should be placed at a single institution.

Program participants will live in on-campus housing and have access to a comprehensive meal plan with provisions for religious-specific or other dietary needs. Participants should be paired with U.S. student roommates, not other TJSP participants or international students. The proposal should include a description of appropriate accommodations for participants' religious observances and take into account needs such as single-gender and substance-free dorms/floors.

Allowances: The proposal should present participant maintenance allowances in accordance with suggestions below or an alternative benefit package that includes the costs of campus housing, meals, books, and incidental expenses. The Recipient must monitor and directly distribute approved allowances (e.g. maintenance) and reimbursements (e.g. relevant fees); authorize special allowances as stipulated in the program terms and conditions (e.g. enrichment funds); clarify policies and procedures; and resolve problems relating to participant benefits and payments. Suggested amounts for allowances are:

- Travel Allowances: \$250 (for baggage, transit to airport, incidentals, etc. \$100 for the arrival journey to the U.S. and \$150 for the return journey to Tunisia)
- Monthly Maintenance Allowance: \$500/month
- One-time Settling-in Allowance: \$200 (for items needed immediately upon arrival and not provided by host institution)
- Book Allowance: \$450/semester or \$300/quarter
- Enrichment Allowance: \$500/year (dispersed via an application process or other mechanism)

Monitoring and Support: The proposal should demonstrate that the applicant can provide support systems to TJSP participants based on previous management of exchanges and an awareness of Tunisian culture. The Recipient must verify participant enrollment in approved U.S. colleges/universities and resolve any initial placement and/or adjustment problems upon arrival at the host institution. The Recipient should assist program participants in finding adequate academic and counseling services as needed. The Recipient should monitor and evaluate the performance of TJSP participants to ensure satisfactory progress in the achievement of academic goals, including periodic campus visits, consistent communication with host advisors and professors, and review of academic reports.

Working in close consultation with the embassy, the Recipient should assist participants, as required, in resolving academic issues and personal or health emergencies; provide counseling or make appropriate referrals; perform

domestic travel to resolve participant emergencies; and provide other assistance as needed.

Tax Requirements: The administration of the scholarships must comply with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes, as applicable. Applicant organizations must present a plan for assisting participants to comply with federal income tax regulations and for calculating appropriate amounts that must be withheld from students' allowances, in accordance with the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Health Benefits: The Recipient must enroll participants in a health insurance plan offered by the host university in addition to insurance similar to the State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Accident and Sickness Plan for Exchanges (ASPE), which provides limited accident and sickness coverage, medical evacuation, and repatriation of remains for all students during the duration of the exchange program. When university health insurance plans are not available, the Recipient should work with the embassy to find a suitable alternative. The Recipient must provide TJSP participants with information regarding their healthcare coverage and assist them in filing claims. Applicant organizations should include a line item to purchase health insurance plans as part of their budget proposal.

Participant Travel: In consultation with the embassy, the Recipient should manage students' international and domestic travel, including the distribution of travel allowances. All travel must be in accordance with the Fly America Act.

Adherence to all Regulations Governing the J Visa: The proper administration of J visa requirements is essential. Proposals must demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting, and other requirements. The award recipient will issue DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete

regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov>. TJSP participants are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement under U.S. law, Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 212(e).

Diversity: The TJSP must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social, and cultural life in the United States and abroad. “Diversity” should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences, including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Proposals must demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program’s goals and objectives and the participants’ exchange experience.

Fiscal Management: The proposal must demonstrate suitable financial systems to track, audit, and disburse TJSP funds. The Recipient will be expected to submit interim, residual, and final reports, as directed by the Embassy, detailing expenditures, and to consult with the embassy on the reprogramming of funds. Administration of TJSP scholarships must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes where applicable.

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

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories other than the U.S. and Tunisia;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;

- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc. for other than as required in the NOFO; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

D. GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION INTEGRATION

NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address intersectional gender and inclusion considerations, ensuring that individuals of all genders, and diverse backgrounds¹ benefit from support to the extent feasible, and that gender and inclusion awareness is a built-in component of project activities. This should be documented through gender and social inclusion analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender and inclusion gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender and inclusion gaps will enhance the project's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programing should view the training video located here:

https://encompassworld.com/elearningfiles/DOS/DOS_Gender_Integration_E-Course/story_html5.html

E. DEFINITIONS

Inclusion:

¹ Consideration of diversity of race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status.

The term “inclusion” means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of persons of all backgrounds.

Equity:

The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as ethnic minorities, and indigenous persons, members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Logic Model:

A rigorous methodology used for program or project design that focuses on the causal linkages between project inputs, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes. It is a visual representation that shows the sequence of related events connecting a planned program’s or project’s objectives with its desired outcomes.

Underserved communities:

The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity”.

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model and a theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model and theory of change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. Please see Section VI below for more information.

Applicants may also provide an illustrative Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) to describe how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives of the proposed project. This includes any disaggregation of indicators relevant to the specific sub-populations you intend to serve. Please see **Appendix 3** for the RMP template.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) teams to create or finalize the RMP-based on the proposed logic model and if provided, illustrative RMP to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicant will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes. A MEL Plan outlining the data collection plan and timeline will be required 90 days after issuance of award for review, feedback, and approval.

Below is a list of U.S. Department of State standard development indicators for foreign assistance that are commonly used for measuring and reporting program results. Not all indicators below will be applicable to the proposed project, though the applicant is encouraged to use them where relevant, in addition to customized indicators, in the development of the Logic Model and associated RMP. NEA/AC's MEL team will work with the successful applicant on finalizing indicators as part of a RMP that will be utilized for the negotiated award. The complete list of Foreign Assistance Standard Indicators, including the indicator reference sheets, is at the following link: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-assistance-resource-library/>

- ES.2-2: Number of individuals attending higher education institutions with USG scholarship or financial assistance
- ES.2-55: Number of learners reached by USG-assisted higher education interventions

- YOUTH-1: Number of youth trained in soft skills/life skills through USG assisted programs
- YOUTH-5: Percentage of youth who participate in civic engagement activities following soft skills/life skills training or initiatives from USG assisted programs
- YOUTH-6: Number of youth who complete USG-assisted leadership programs
- EG.6-12: Percentage of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs
- EG.6-13: Percentage of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$200,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$200,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$180,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Required
Estimated Length of Project Period:	18-24 Months

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$ 200,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately one (1) cooperative agreement will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to 24 months, depending

on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2024.

NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

Non-Competing Continuation

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

Pending successful implementation of this project for the initial estimated length of time as indicated above and pending the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, NEA/AC may extend this grant for additional time, not to exceed a four (4) year total project period. Please note that this NOFO requires that applicants submit additional budget materials to plan for potential out-years of non-competing continuations. See Section VI Application and Submission Information for more details.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Examples of NEA/AC and U.S. Embassy Tunis responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Participating in the design and direction of program activities, including timelines;
- Approving the selection process and final selection of program participants;
- Approving and providing input for all program agendas and timelines;
- Reviewing and approving all program recruitment, publicity, and outreach materials;
- Approving final host institution selections;
- Providing final approval of all student placements;
- Providing final approval of internships;
- Providing guidance in the execution of all project components;
- Arranging for Department of State speakers during workshops;
- Advising during participant emergencies, including SEVIS-related issues;
- Approving decisions related to specific circumstances or problems throughout the program; and
- Providing background information on Tunisia and Tunisian culture.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3)

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

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.
- Demonstrate the ability to advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) through a project team inclusive of [benefiting country/countries] nationals with previous experience managing [programming area] programming in the region reflected at all levels of project management.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

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

who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

UEI Number

All applicants must have a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number.

Entities must register in SAM.gov and will be assigned their Unique Entity ID (SAM) within SAM.gov. Entities will no longer obtain or use a UEI (DUNS) for entity registration or reporting.

To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located.

Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC)

(https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic_manual.html), and annual revenue.

System for Award Management (SAM)

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

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

To create a new SAM account, go to <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 866-606-8220 (U.S.) or +1-334-206-7828 (international).

Note: Obtaining an active SAM.gov registration may take **12 - 15 business days** to complete the process of creating an account in the system.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Cost-Sharing or Matching

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

Cost-sharing or matching is an evaluation criterion of this NOFO.

All cost share or matching must be included in detail in the line-item budget and noted in the budget narrative. Proposals offering potential, yet-to-be-determined cost share sourcing will NOT be considered to have met this requirement and will be deemed ineligible. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, the recipient must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as their contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB 2 CFR 200.306 – Cost Sharing and Matching.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below.

All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only 1 application each. Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

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

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424 and SF424a)

Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding.

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 4. NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlined below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Application Evaluation Criteria section of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.

Executive Summary

Provide the following information about the project: name of organization/participating institutions; beginning and ending dates of the program; nature of activity; funding level requested from the Embassy as well as total program cost and total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources; scope and goals (number and description of participants; wider audience benefiting from program/overall impact; geographic diversity of

program, both U.S. and overseas); and anticipated results (short and long-term). **This section may be no longer than 1 page.**

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 12 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 4 before preparing their Narrative.**

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission

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

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line-Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

*A detailed budget for up to two years is required as well as a notional budget (in a separate tab) for up to two out years.

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, “...key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award.” The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line-Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line-Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: - Applicants are**

strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line-item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Budgeted items of expenditure may include, but are not limited to, the items listed below.

Program Expenses

- Recruitment and selection-related expenses (such as travel)
Pre-departure orientation expenses
- Visa-related expenses (travel to interviews)
- Round-trip travel from participants' home cities to international points of departure
- Round-trip international travel (in accordance with Fly America regulations)
- Round-trip domestic travel from U.S. ports of entry to host institutions
- TOEFL fees
- Pre-academic ESL training costs not exceeding six weeks, including, but not limited to, room and board, instructional fees, and use of facilities (effort should be made to limit these costs, both overall and per fellow, as much as possible)
- Orientation and workshop costs, including, but not limited to, room and board, per diem, instructional fees, additional staff costs, use of facilities, materials, guest lectures, etc. Include costs for pre-departure, arrival, mid-year, and re-entry orientations/workshops
- Travel and per diem for monitoring and evaluation of programs at host campuses
- Tuition and fees
- Monthly maintenance allowances

- Incidental expenses, including travel allowances
- Health insurance plans
- School break maintenance costs, including for any time period between pre-academic sessions and academic programs
- Student advising and monitoring
- Educational materials, including a book allowance each semester
- Community service activities and internships costs
- Cultural enrichment activities
- Disability accommodations
- Alumni activities
- Evaluation
- SEVIS fees
- Tax withholdings, as necessary.

Administration Costs

- Staff salaries and fringe benefits (Each staff member and his/her position must be listed separately, including the percentage of his/her total time spent on this program and duties performed on behalf of the program. Proposed salaries and time on task must be certified as true and accurate representations of actual costs and percentage of time. Resumes must be included for all staff.)
- Staff travel and per diem
- Communication costs (fax, telephone, postage, communication equipment, etc.)
- Office supplies
- Printing and duplication costs
- Administration of tax withholding and reporting as required by federal, state, and local authorities and in accordance with relevant tax treaties
- OMB Circular 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F Audit fees, if not included in the indirect cost pool
- Other direct costs

- Indirect costs (per OMB Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)
- Cost sharing or matching funds

Logic Model and Theory of Change

Applicants shall provide a Logic Model and Theory of Change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives, with particular attention to how your approach will reach individuals of diverse backgrounds relevant to your specific context. A Theory of Change describes how and why a program is expected to achieve its stated outcomes using if-then-because language. Findings from the Gender & Inclusion Analysis (see below) should be clearly addressed in the program design and Logic Model. The Logic Model and Theory of Change can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages**.

Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis

The gender and social inclusion analysis (not to exceed three (3) pages, preferably as a Word Document) provides a concise analysis of relevant gender norms, equity and equality for underserved communities and marginalized populations, power relations, and conflict dynamics in target countries. Potential domains of analysis include institutional practices and barriers, cultural norms, gender roles, access to and control over assets and resources, and patterns of decision-making. Applicants should briefly explain how they have integrated findings from their analysis into project design and/or other proposal documents, including a plan for regularly reviewing and updating the gender and social inclusion analysis with local

partners/beneficiaries, and making any necessary adjustments to program implementation. A set of guiding questions can be found in Appendix 5.

Project Timeline

Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model / Theory of Change. This section **may not exceed 2 pages**.

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions

For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.

OR

2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

NOTE: If an applicant is proposing sub grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included**. This section of the application **may not exceed 5 pages**.

Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent

Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners. **This section of the application does not have any page limits.**

Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary

This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. **This section may be no longer than 5 pages.**

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than a 10% de minimis rate must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10-page limit for this section of the application. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

1. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
2. **Sustainability Plan:** The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in **Appendix 4**. Sustainability Plans may not exceed **2 pages**.

3. **Results Monitoring Plan (RMP):** Applicants can provide an illustrative Results Monitoring Plan (RMP). The RMP can be generated using the template in Appendix 3. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** The RMP should be submitted as a **separate document and has no page limit.**

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The required font is 14-point, Calibri. All application documents must be single-spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. These settings do not apply if using provided templates.

Applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in Section VI above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424 and SF-424a) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using MyGrants. Applications will **NOT** be accepted from grants.gov. MyGrants requires that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in Section V. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application.** There are no exceptions to these requirements.

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

MyGrants

MyGrants is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com/mygrants>.

To create an account, go

to <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com/mygrants>, and click the “Create An Account” hyperlink, located below the new user prompt, then click the "Create a MyGrants Applicant/Grantee Account" button. Users will be directed to a page entitled “User Registration Request”; complete the online form and click the “Submit” button. Users will receive an activation email entitled “Verify Your Grants Account Registration”; click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

MyGrants has resources available to educate users about the system.

These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

For questions regarding creating an account or using MyGrants to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their MyGrants tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

<https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on July 8, 2024. There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, there are no exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. AWARDS TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS OR FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

B. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693136.pdf>

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

C. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE FEDERAL FUNDING REGULATIONS AND DOS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and

accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020-508.pdf>) and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (20 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- **Impact and Effectiveness:** The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results.
- **Timeframe:** The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- **Beneficiaries:** The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.

- **Milestones:** The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning:** The applicant explains how monitoring, evaluation and learning activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning:** The applicant includes a final evaluation of the project at the completion of the award.

Project Design (40 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- **Responsiveness to NOFO:** Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- **Rationale:** To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- **Project Management:** Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation and closing.
- **Partnerships and Buy-ins:** The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies any local partners.
- **Feasibility:** The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- **Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process:** The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- **Duplication:** The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking, or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.

- Contingency Plan: The applicant articulates programming assumptions and potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- Marginalized Populations: The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.
- Gender and Inclusion Considerations: The applicant includes gender and inclusion analysis in the project narrative that identifies relevant gender and inclusion gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender and inclusion gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives and how the project will benefit individuals of all genders and diverse backgrounds.
- **Logic Model and Theory of Change:** The applicant details how the proposed Logic Model and Theory of Change clearly links project activities, outputs, and outcomes to objectives. If applicable, findings from the Gender and Inclusion Analysis are clearly addressed within the program design.

Organizational Capacity (30 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed.
- The applicant demonstrates experience working equitably with individuals of all genders and diverse backgrounds.
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).

- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- The applicant details appropriate organizational senior staff member engagement to provide oversight and monitoring and evaluation of programs at host campuses.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from any proposed partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed, in the proposed content area, and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project – whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer – demonstrating that the project will be sufficiently staffed but will avoid redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

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

- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Section VI. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

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

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

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

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

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

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by September 30, 2024. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will

compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

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

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

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

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

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

N/A

E. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity.

Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

F. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

Every sub-awardee is required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Section V. B. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have their UEI numbers prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

G. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

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

H. PROGRAM DATA REQUIREMENTS:

Recipients must maintain data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database that can be shared with the embassy as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

1. Names, addresses, contact information, and biographic sketches of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.

2. Itineraries of international and domestic travel with dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be sent to the Embassy Program Officer at least three workdays prior to the official opening of the activity.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact: nea-grants@state.gov, detailing “TJSP 2024” within the subject.

All questions must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by June 21, 2024 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on **Grants.gov only**. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

For questions regarding creating an account or using MyGrants to apply, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their MyGrants tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

<https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding.

Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.