

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
United States Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Program Office: Public Diplomacy Section, Embassy Colombo
Funding Opportunity Title: Build Misinformation Resiliency by Empowering Youth
Funding Opportunity Number: PDS-COL-2024-DCMISR
Deadline for Applications: 30 August, 2024 at 11.59 p.m. (Colombo Time)
Assistance Listing Number: 1) 19.040 Public Diplomacy Programs
Total Amount Available: \$75,000
ICS Goal: 2.1, 2.3, 3.1

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact ColomboPDGrants@state.gov. Please note: Questions received on or before 14 August, 2024, at 11:59 p.m., (Colombo Time) will be answered in a question and answer document and posted at www.lk.usembassy.gov on 16 August, 2024. Please include NOFO number in subject line. To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

In order to be eligible to receive an award under this NOFO, organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. **Please begin the registration processes immediately to ensure the registrations are completed well in advance of the submission deadline.** The process can require several **weeks** for the registrations to be validated and confirmed. See *Section D: Submission Requirements* for further details.

Due to the volume of applicants and inquiries, Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) **does not** accept letters of intent, concept papers, or requests for meetings or phone calls prior to application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application package has been received in its entirety. Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible. Applicants are urged to begin the application process well before the submission deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Executive Summary:

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the U.S. Embassy in Colombo is seeking proposals to establish and support a network of youth clubs across Sri Lanka aimed at enhancing skills in fact-checking, debating, discerning misinformation, and promoting media literacy. These clubs will provide young Sri Lankans with the opportunity to learn top-notch speaking and discerning skills thereby developing misinformation resiliency skills through classroom exercises, hands-on workshops, and competitions. The aim is to offer a structured yet flexible format for members to learn to identify, analyze, and discern false information using evidence-based methods, fostering critical thinking and informed citizenship.

Proposals should outline how the grantee will establish and train a network of administrators, who will then manage youth-oriented clubs in multiple locations across Sri Lanka, utilizing skill-building sessions, case studies, and various engagements. The goal of this program is to support the development of the next generation of Sri Lankan youth debaters, fact-checkers, critical thinkers, and public speakers.

Please follow all instructions below.

Background:

Misinformation, exacerbated on social media, undermines public trust in democratic institutions, divides communities with false narratives, and obstructs access to accurate information, necessitating critical thinking and new debunking strategies. Gathering online and at locations around the world, debate and debunk clubs for young adults contribute to creating resilient information environments and combating misinformation – a strategy that would be effective in Sri Lanka as well. Debate and debunk clubs train members to research topics, verify facts, and use evidence to expose inaccuracies, emphasizing critical thinking, scientific analysis, and the presentation of factual information. This hands-on approach complements any existing academic curriculum and equips students with a process to debunk information, as well as the necessary critical thinking skills for their academic, professional, and personal growth. While similar to standard debate clubs, which focus on structured debates through persuasive communication, the discernment aspect adds a focus on fact-checking, case studies and correcting misinformation while developing argumentation and public speaking skills.

Learning leadership skills such as critical thinking, analysis, teamwork, and public speaking can build self-confidence in youth, foster resilience to misinformation and empowering them as independent thinkers and future leaders. Debate and debunk clubs serve as a tool for instilling these life-changing skills. This pilot program would help universities, schools, or social organizations that work with a diverse group of young Sri Lankans, specifically to include disadvantaged youth, to establish self-sustaining clubs. By engaging with their peers on diverse social topics, participants gain leadership skills and self-confidence, motivating them to achieve more academically, professionally, and personally, and become active community leaders.

Project Audience(s):

The program will collectively engage at least 500 similarly aged youth ages 18-25 from across Sri Lanka, including from outside of urban centers, who are looking to enhance their critical thinking, fact-checking, and leadership skills, while ensuring gender, ethnic and geographic balance. Special emphasis should be on training those who may lack access to quality educational resources and opportunities for personal development and students involved in extracurricular activities who are interested in joining clubs that promote critical thinking, analysis, and public speaking.

Project Goals:

The goal of this funding opportunity is to create awareness and empower more than 500 Sri Lankan youth by equipping them with skills to critically analyze information, learn debunking strategies, promote media literacy and resilience against misinformation and foster a community dedicated to truth and transparency while strengthening people-to-people ties between the United States and Sri Lanka through information and expertise exchange.

Project Objectives:

The Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Embassy (PDS) seeks proposals that:

1. Collaborate with universities, schools in underprivileged areas, and/or educational organizations in Sri Lanka to strengthen the resilience of youth towards disinformation, fake news, conspiracy theories, and propaganda through training and engagement to develop research and debunking skills.
2. Identify experienced trainers, based across Sri Lanka, who understand how to structure formal debate and debunk clubs and fact-checking procedures to coach administrators and youth in debating and debunking.
3. Implement a train-the-trainer program to equip club administrators with the necessary skills to independently manage and sustain debunking clubs.
4. Teach youth through a core methodology for exposing falsehoods to include fact-checking, identify false elements in problematic narratives, and create and share counternarratives.
5. Prioritize achieving gender, ethnic, and geographic balance when developing membership criteria and recruiting both youth and trainers.
6. Increase participants' understanding of U.S. policy goals related to climate change, entrepreneurship, diversity and inclusion, security and resilience, democracy, good governance, and human rights, including the importance of a free and open media environment.
7. Raise public awareness of fact-checking and the benefits of debate and debunk clubs in fostering critical thinking.

Expected outcomes:

- Youth will strengthen their leadership, critical thinking, and persuasive speaking skills as surveyed by administrators through monitoring and evaluation from establishment of club till end of program, with relevant key performance indicators (KPI's) developed for evaluation.
- 90% of the attendees of debunking workshops will attest to improved media literacy, fact-checking and critical analysis, as evidenced by pre- and post-training assessments
- 80% of participants will identify concrete steps to access fact-checking resources, as evidenced by pre- and post-training assessments.
- 80% of participants will strengthen their understanding of the importance of fostering a culture of fact-checking and evidence-based narratives, as evidenced by pre- and post-surveys.
- 80% of participating debate club participants trained will be aware of how to effectively debunk misinformation, through the use of case studies, debate clubs, and tournaments, as evidenced by pre- and post-training assessments.
- 75% of attendees of debunk sessions will have increased awareness of how to fact-check current socio-political issues relevant to Sri Lanka, monitored by tracking the topics discussed, achieving this throughout the 12-month period.
- Develop a sustainability plan that includes securing ongoing support and institutional backing, ensuring that at least 75% of debunk clubs remain active and self-sustaining two years after the program.

Expected Activities for Awardee:

Proposals should describe how the awardee plans to address the requirements listed below: All activities should be carried out in close consultation with PDS. The final topics for debunk meetings will be determined in collaboration with PDS.

- Establish and organize a network of at least 20 debate and/or debunk clubs across Sri Lanka, in partnership with universities/schools/youth associations, including the five American Spaces and mobile American Space, each with a minimum of 25 youth members, integrating debunk clubs into extracurricular activities.
- Recruit and create a pool of experienced trainers and workshop facilitators to eventually develop a sustainable network of at least 40 debate and/or debunk club administrators (2 per club) and train-the trainers, through cross-country training ensuring vernacular representation (English, Sinhala and Tamil). These qualified trainers will be learned in debunking misinformation and disinformation, ideally located in areas in proximity to established debunk clubs, to train the trainers and whose contact information are made available to the clubs to reach for training new debunk club administrators and youth members.
- Provide mentorship and support through experienced trainers who provide ongoing support and feedback to ensure effective learning.
- Create a comprehensive training manual and toolkit for fact-checking and media literacy to be used by clubs and their administrators. These resources will focus on local news and media analysis, historical misinformation, health and science myths, political misinformation, social media trends, and economic literacy, myths, and misconceptions.

The materials will be designed to be relevant to the Sri Lankan context, providing practical and relatable examples for participants.

- Qualified trainers will train at least two administrators per club who can then train youth members during and post-program, mentoring at least 25 youth members per club annually ensuring continuous education and resilience against misinformation within their communities.
- Logistics and necessary resources and supplies for regularly scheduled trainings/workshops, including:
 - Design and procure materials for each participant (training materials, etc.)
 - Design and produce additional materials, such as backdrops, agenda, and other club materials.
 - Photos and certificates as needed
 - Support travel logistics for trainers and staff
 - The partner will arrange lodging and in-country transport for any international trainers, as determined by PDS.
- Identify suitable locations to establish clubs and host club meetings; recruit at minimum 25 participants per club and dedicate at least 10 hours of club meetings to training, and the rest for regularly scheduled activities dedicated towards debate and debunking.
- At the conclusion of the program, identify youth office-bearers with at least 5 participants per club elected and trained to teach their peers and new recruits, with new office-bearers elected every club year to train new recruits and continuing members.
- Work with PDS to develop a standard framework for activities, developing an agenda for regular meetings, and monthly and yearly planning schedules, including suggesting engaging formats and locally available speakers.
- Organize a final event at the end of the program period, which does not have to be based in Colombo, to showcase the network of debunkers, such as a debunk competition, encouraging cross-regional engagement.
- Develop engaging case studies and materials for debate and/or debunk clubs in Sri Lanka to serve as effective training tools.
- Support clubs in developing a community service activity, where club members conduct programs for members of the community exemplifying the tools and resources to combat misinformation and disinformation, utilizing real-life examples and case studies. Encourage a community-focused program conducted at least once a quarter from establishment of the club.
- Measure and communicate the feedback, impacts and outcomes of events and develop a plan to capture long term sustainability. Ensure tools for assessing the understanding and application of debunking skills, with constructive feedback to improve.
- Develop a media plan including both press and social media elements to amplify the project and program activities on a regular basis.
- Published monthly highlights from debunk sessions, success stories, findings and research, and debunking tips, to reach at least 2,000 subscribers on social media.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: 18 months

Number of awards anticipated: 1 award

Total available funding: \$75,000

Award Ceiling: \$75,000

Award Floor: \$40,000

Type of Funding: FY24 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds

Anticipated program start date: 15 October 2024

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type:

Cooperative agreement

As this is a cooperative agreement, the U.S. government will have significant involvement in this effort including but not limited to the selection and final approval of selection of trainers and workshop facilitators, topics for debate and/or debunk club workshops, content of the core methodology and finalization of club locations.

Program Performance Period:

Proposed programs should be completed in 18 months or less. The suggested timeline would be 2 to 3 months of planning, workshops held months 3-15, and subsequent period for evaluation and determining sustainable changes.

Support for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA):

All programs should consider strategies for expanding the pool of individuals/organizations/beneficiaries to afford opportunities for as diverse and inclusive population as is feasible to bring diverse 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.

The Public Diplomacy Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. government, pending the availability of funds and approval of the designated grants officer.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations
- Civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Think tanks
- Public and private educational institutions

For-profit entities, even those that may fall into the categories listed above, are **not** eligible to apply for this NOFO. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, non-profit, non-governmental entity can be the prime recipient of the award.

When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal. Applicants must be registered in Sri Lanka. International organizations, Sri Lankan government entities and individuals are not eligible to apply. Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this funding opportunity.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

4. This opportunity will not support:

- Projects relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities;
- Construction projects;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or programs
- Scientific research or surveys;
- Commercial projects;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
- Projects that duplicate existing projects; or
- Illegal activities

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at U.S. Embassy Colombo website, and www.grants.gov.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

- Applicants must ensure:
- Proposal clearly addresses the goals, audiences, and objectives of this notice.
- All documents are in English.
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars.
- All pages are numbered.
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents and components are **required and must be included in the applicant's submission**:

We recommend that you submit your program proposal using accompanying suggested templates: Applicant Organizational Information (**Attachment 1**), M&E Performance Monitoring Plan (**Attachments 2 & 3**), and detailed budget using "Budget Template" template (**Attachment 4**). Feel free to submit additional information, as you deem necessary.

- Forms SF-424: **Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational** and SF-424A: **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs** are completed and submitted with the application. These forms and the instructions for completing them are available at SF424 <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html> under the heading SF424 family.
- **Summary Page:** Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program. Include an introduction to the Organization applying: A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Detailed Budget by line-item:** Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the template provided with the funding

opportunity, but are not required to do so (Attachment 4). Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. See Point H below for a description of the types of costs that should be included in each category. Personnel salaries should include the level of effort and the rate of pay, which should cover the percentage of time each staff member will dedicate to grant-based activities. If an organization is charging an indirect cost rate without a NICRA, it must apply it to the modified total budget costs (MTDC), refer to 2CFR§200.68. **Budgets must be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

- **Budget Narrative:** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information. The budget narrative supplements the information provided in the budget spreadsheet and justifies how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. Together, the budget narrative and spreadsheets should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's proposal.
- **A proposed Project Monitoring Plan (PMP)**, which will detail how the overall project will track its progress. Please see template included, Attachment 2 and 3.

Attachments:

- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities
- Organization's registration certificate;
- A report of any recent audits;
- Bio-data of Key Personnel: CVs or biographies of any personnel cited in budget, including trainers, implementing partners, or sub-contractors;
- If applicable, MOUs/Agreements: with any sub-contractors, implementing partners, etc. involved in the project
- **Proof of Non-profit Status:** Documentation to demonstrate the local primary partner's non-profit status (e.g. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter; Sri Lankan organizations should provide a copy of their NGO status).

The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request additional programmatic and financial information regarding the proposal.

Questions:

For questions on this solicitation, please contact Grants Applications Manager at: ColomboPDGrants@state.gov. Please include NOFO number in subject line.

Questions must be received on or before **14 August, 2024** at 11:59 p.m., (Colombo Time). Please include NOFO number in subject line. Applications must be submitted to Grants Applications Manager at: ColomboPDGrants@state.gov. **30 August, 2024**.

Other items NOT required/requested with the application submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved to move forward in the review process include:

- a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
- b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
- c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
- d. Information to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures an organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and identify other financial transactions that may be necessary to undertake the project activities
- e. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

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

Required Registration: All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain a SAM.gov registration as well as a Unique Entity Identifier Number (UEI). Registration through www.SAM.gov is free of charge.

Required Registration: All organizations applying for grants must obtain a SAM.gov registration as well as a Unique Entity Identifier Number (UEI). Registration through www.SAM.gov is free of charge, and must be renewed annually.

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

If an organization plans to issue a sub-contract or sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.

If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application could be deemed **ineligible**. All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, the latter are free of charge.

Please note: Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

Submission Dates and Times

Submission Method: Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: colombopdgrants@state.gov. Applicants must include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by 30 August, 2024 at 11.59 p.m. (Colombo Time). This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.

Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must acquire all required registrations and rights in the United States and Sri Lanka. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and Sri Lanka.

Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S. and Sri Lanka requirements described above.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria: Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria enumerated below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success.

- **Completeness of Proposal (20 points):** The proposal meets all of the outstanding activities-related technical and logistical criteria required in this cooperative agreement, addressing the objectives detailed above.
- **Institutional and organizational capacity (15 points):** The organization and any partners demonstrate subject matter expertise in the form and content of the proposal, and in organizing and managing the project.
- **Budget and narrative justification (15 points):** The budget and narrative justification are complete and reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The cost estimates are realistic.
- **Monitoring and evaluation (15 points):** The proposal outlines in detail how program completion and success and impact will be determined and may include pre and post program analysis. The proposal outlines in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goal (listed above). A strong proposal will include:
 - A schedule of when programmatic activities will occur that includes overview of planning, recruitment, and monitoring activities and progress. Results of those checks are expected to be reported quarterly.
 - Expected project outputs, including definitions and targets. Examples of outputs include: number of planning meetings held; progress on recruitment numbers outlined in proposal; follow-on evaluation activities.
 - Success story capture: a documented process for requesting and receiving success stories from clubs.
 - A final report to include the feedback of administrators and youth on the benefit of the program and the future of clubs. As applicable, a strong final report would be supported by success stories, behaviors changed, lessons learned, and results obtained, as well as the detailed feedback of project participants, including American and Sri Lankan trainers and other experts.
- **Sustainability (15 points):** The project demonstrates sustainable capacity building, ensuring plan for the longevity of clubs, as appropriate. The proposal describes how activities will be carried on after the program ends and may include (but not be limited to) continued involvement of stakeholders; future commitment of funding; on-going training; planned meetings of program participants.

- **Agenda/Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives (20 points):** Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

2. Review and Selection Process

- Acknowledgement of receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.
- Review. All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. **If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed above in Section D, it will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the grants review committee.** A technical review panel will review eligible proposals based upon the criteria noted in this NOFO.
- Follow up notification. Applicants will generally be notified within 120 days after the NOFO deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

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

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions:

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

- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)

- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

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

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
 - Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) prioritizes inclusive and integrated programs that address barriers to access for individuals and groups based on their religion, gender, disabilities, ethnicity, or sexual orientation and gender identity. In accordance with the [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program will advance principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) related to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or disability.

Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and/or the status of underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

The support of underserved communities will be part of the review criteria for this opportunity. Therefore, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in the program's administration, design, and implementation phases.

Definitions:

Diversity:

The term "diversity" means the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of a community.

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.

Inclusion:

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

Accessibility:

The term "accessibility" means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

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."

Reporting

Recipients are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. The quarterly progress report should include an up-to-date copy of the PMP datasheet. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 120 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high-risk designation has been removed.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.

Foreign Assistance Data Review

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

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about this funding opportunity or the grant application process, please contact: colombopdgrants@state.gov.

Question Deadline: For questions on this solicitation, please contact colombopdgrants@state.gov. Questions must be received on or before **14 August, 2024**, at 11:59 p.m., (Colombo Time). Applicants should not expect an email response to questions, as questions received before the deadline will be answered in a question and answer document and posted at www.lk.usembassy.gov on 16 August, 2024.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

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

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

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

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

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

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

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

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

Branding Requirements

As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity.

Note: The awardee’s brand will not be prominently displayed, as this is primarily a USG promoted event. Note: Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.