



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Vietnam CyberSafe Hacks 2026

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Department of State

Opportunity number: FY26-PDS-HCMC-01

Application deadline: August 2, 2026

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**U.S Department of State
U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Public Diplomacy Section
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Vietnam CyberSafe Hacks 2026
Funding Opportunity Number	FY26-PDS-HCMC-01
Announcement Type	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	August 2, 23:59 p.m. GMT +7
Assistance Listing Number	19.441– ECE – American Spaces
Length of performance period	06 to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated	1
Award amounts	\$35,633.00
Total available funding	\$35,633.00 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY26 Fulbright Hays
Anticipated project start date	November 1, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, with substantial involvement of U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City in program implementation, as included below.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 06-12 months. The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under this award beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

This notice is subject to availability of funding. 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.

2. Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of State’s Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City announces an open competition to implement a program to combat cyber scams.

Transnational organized crime in Southeast Asia is increasing at an unprecedented pace. The region has witnessed the proliferation of industrial-scale cyber fraud and scam operations, driven by sophisticated transnational criminal syndicates and networks of human traffickers. These criminal enterprises have expanded to inaccessible border areas, particularly in the Mekong region, and have become global leaders in cyber-enabled and cryptocurrency investment fraud—defrauding Americans of over \$10 billion in 2024 alone.

Vietnam stands at a critical inflection point where rapid digital transformation and adoption meet these sophisticated transnational cybercrimes. Economic losses in Vietnam from cyber-enabled scams have reached billions of dollars. Thousands of Vietnamese, primarily aged 18-35, have been trafficked to neighboring countries and forced to work in scam operations against their will, often targeting Americans. Traffickers target young jobseekers with technology skills, including students, and recruit primarily through social media platforms.

Against this backdrop, this program will equip and deploy students and early-stage professionals aged 18-30 to raise awareness of, and reduce vulnerabilities to, cyber scams and trafficking. Participants will examine the cyber-enabled scam and trafficking landscape and develop skills in emerging American technologies and cybersecurity to build practical, innovative, secure, and legally compliant solutions that address these challenges and advance U.S. and regional prosperity and security.

Please follow carefully all instructions below.

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Not-for-profit public and private educational institutions
- Public International Organizations and Governmental 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. For more information on the difference between sub-contract and sub-recipient, please refer to 2 CFR 200.[331](#).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section E.3 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; including direct social services such as medical, psychological, and/or humanitarian support
- 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;
- Illegal activities

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Project Background, Goals, and Objectives

With rapid technological adoption and the proliferation of industrial-scale cyber fraud and scam operations, an informed and equipped youth population is critical. Vietnam is ranked among the top 10 countries with the highest number of social media users, making younger generations primary targets of both financial scams and human trafficking. While victims of scams come from across Vietnam, targets of financial fraud are often concentrated in densely populated urban and economic centers, whereas trafficking victims disproportionately originate from rural areas. Vietnamese victims trafficked into cyber-scam operations are increasingly between the ages of 18 and 35.

This program will bring together youth and early-stage professionals from across Vietnam to hear from experts and explore scam operations and impacts. It will then equip participants with training on creative problem-solving, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies—including American open-source AI. Finally, it will support a core group of participants in building solutions (prototype or concept pitches) under hackathon formats that address cyber-enabled threats across three tracks, such as: scam detection and prevention; community awareness and protection; and digital trust and safe commerce.

Program designs are encouraged to include:

- Experts on transnational organized crime in Southeast Asia;
- Private sector, including American social media leaders and financial actors;

- U.S. cybersecurity tools and products, and cybersecurity and law enforcement experts;
- U.S. AI tools and emerging tech products
- Vietnamese universities and/or technical institutes
- Coordination with Vietnamese government agencies responsible for cybersecurity, youth affairs, and anti-trafficking efforts
- Hackathons in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi

Program activities will take place at U.S. Mission Vietnam’s American Spaces (American Center Hanoi, American Center Ho Chi Minh City, American Hangout Thai Nguyen, and American Hangout An Giang), but may also include virtual or external components.

Project Audience(s): The primary beneficiaries should be high school and university students and young professionals aged 18-30, in both urban and rural areas across Vietnam.

Project Goal: Disrupt the financial and labor pipelines that sustain transnational scam operations in Southeast Asia by strengthening knowledge and capacity to identify, assess, and address scams, utilizing American technologies.

Project Objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen knowledge on cyber scam operations and trafficking threats among 5000 Vietnamese aged 18-30 nation-wide. Increase beneficiary ability to identify, report, and counter cyber scams, as measured by pre and post training assessments.
- **Objective 2:** Boost skills in problem-solving, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies, including American open-source AI, among 200-400+ Vietnamese aged 18-30 nation-wide.
- **Objective 3:** Run hackathons that generate 50-100 prototype solutions targeting scam prevention, detection, public awareness, and victim protection.

2. Substantial Involvement

The U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City will have substantial involvement in the development and schedule of the program. In consultation with U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, the award recipient must actively engage relevant U.S. Mission Vietnam American Spaces. All major elements of the program require advance approval by U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City. Working with U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City, the recipient of this grant must: develop a robust program; schedule the components at mutually agreed upon locations; manage the participant application and selection process; develop the agenda and content for the various components; recruit experts, mentors and/or speakers; and generate content for social media and other publicity. Regular, transparent communication via email, phone and video conference calls and face-to-face meetings (as appropriate) with the Grants Officer, Grants Officer Representative, and Program Officer throughout the period of performance is important to the success of the program.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

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

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents are **required**:

1. *Mandatory application forms*

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)

2. *Proposal (10 pages maximum)*

Applicants must submit a complete narrative proposal in a format of their choice, or they may use the attached proposal template if they like (Attachment 1). The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. The proposal must include all the items below:

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **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 State Department and/or U.S. government agencies as well as experience with and expertise in areas related to those described in the NOFO. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use the attached Applicant Organization Information Survey form to provide this information (**Attachment 2**). If the applicant chooses not to use the attached form, all of the requested information from the form will still need to be addressed in the application package.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Methods, Design, Activities, and Deliverables:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable. Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.

- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees (if applicable).
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** Proposals must include a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) that explains how the applicant plans to track project performance and measure progress toward the project’s goals and objectives. The PMP should include “If-Then” statements to illustrate how the project activities will lead to the intended results, along with a short datasheet outlining proposed project activities and the indicators that will be used to measure success.

3. *Budget Justification Narrative*

- **Detailed Budget** - 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 3**). 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 Annex Section I 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§200.1. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.
- **Budget Justification Narrative** – Applicants must submit a budget justification narrative to accompany the detailed line-item budget. The purpose of the budget justification narrative is to supplement the information provided in the detailed budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget justification narrative is a tool to help Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the requested costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the detailed budget spreadsheet, the budget justification narrative, and the SF-424A 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.
- **Audit Requirements:** Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions <https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm> and 2CFR200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization’s established indirect costs in the award’s detailed budget.

- **Visa Fees:** Include all visa application and related fees in your budget as applicable. Please note DS-2019s for post-funded programs must be submitted directly by the award recipient. If you anticipate your program will include the DS-2019 visa processing, your organization must be a registered Designated Sponsoring Organization. For more information go to: <https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/become-a-sponsor/>

4. *Attachments*

- **Key Personnel Resumes:** A résumé, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a résumé.
- **Letters of support from program partners:** Letters of support should be included for sub-recipients or other partners. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.
- **Indirect Costs:** If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included in the application submission.
- **Proof of Non-profit Status:** Documentation to demonstrate the applicant's non-profit status (e.g., U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Service determination letter, and non-U.S. organizations should provide evidence of non-profit status issued by a government entity).
- **Proof of Registration:** A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Vietnam-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

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. Documentation that demonstrates the recipients' plan and/or policy to safeguard PII of participants and beneficiaries. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure protection of personally identifiable information (PII) and safeguard PII when collecting, maintaining, using and disseminating such information

- e. 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
- f. The Consulate reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at [U.S. Mission Vietnam website](#) and [Grants.gov](#).

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: achcmc@state.gov.

Question Deadline: For questions on this solicitation, please contact achcmc@state.gov. Questions must be received on or before **JULY 24, 2026**, at 11:59 p.m., Ho Chi Minh City 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 [U.S. Mission Vietnam website](#) and [Grants.gov](#).

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

Required Registration: All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

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

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

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

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

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

Exemptions

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

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

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.”

4. Submission Dates and Times

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by August 2, 11:59 p.m. GMT +7. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, PDS will utilize the timestamp provided by Grants.gov. 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.

Submission Method A: Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: achcmc@state.gov. Applicants opting to submit applications via email to achcmc@state.gov **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

Submission Method B: Submitting all application materials through Grants.gov. For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or go to <https://www.grants.gov/support.html>. Please note that achcmc@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov.

5. Funding Restrictions

- i. **Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA):** None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).
- ii. **Certification Regarding Compliance with Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws**
If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:
 - a. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
 - b. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.
- iii. **Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements:** Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:
 - a. Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.
 - b. Applicants seeking clarification on the reporting requirement are encouraged to review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) resource developed by the U.S. Department of Education.
- iv. **Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan:** Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds \$500,000:

- a. To the best of the Recipient’s knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);
 - b. The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175(a) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).
 - c. That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.
- i. Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on its website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.
- v. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities
 - a. (a) *Definitions.*
 - i. *American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity* means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>
 - ii. *FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system* means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.
 - iii. *Unmanned aircraft* means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.
 - iv. *Unmanned aircraft system* means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.
 - b. (b) *Prohibition.* Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:
 - i. delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements
 - ii. Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and

- iii. Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system.
 - c) *Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.* The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 ([41 U.S.C. 3901](#) note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].
- vi. Pre-Award Costs: Pre-award costs are generally not allowable under this NOFO unless approved in advance by the Grants Officer and justified in the proposal.
- vii. Construction: Any award made as a result of this NOFO will not allow for construction activities or costs.
- viii. Direct Social Services: Costs that cover and provide direct social services, such as welfare, charity, health or economic relief, are unallowable. Medical assistance, such as costs to include medical professionals, including but not limited to doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists to participate in the project activities are not allowed.

6. *Other Submission Requirements: 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.

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

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

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. *Review Criteria*

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.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** – 30 points: The program idea should be innovative and well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives that align directly with the priorities and requirements of the NOFO. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline, and the project scope is appropriate and clearly defined. Finally, the proposal aligns with the following:

- The project clearly demonstrates a direct contribution to current U.S. foreign policy priorities.
- The project will positively impact America’s reputation among foreign government partners.
- The project will positively impact American’s reputation among foreign publics.
- The proposal does not include any activities contrary to the following Executive Orders:
 - Executive Order 14173: ["Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity"](#)
 - Executive Order 14287: ["Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens"](#)
 - Executive Order 14168: [Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#)
- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants** – 25 points:
 - The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills, and human resources to implement the project, including internal controls in place to manage federal funds. If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.
 - The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue that the project will address.
 - The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system, a bank account, and if applicable, satisfactory audit findings.
 - Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations, including the Award Provisions and Standard Terms and Conditions.
 - Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner’s respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate.
- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives** – 20 points: The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Budget** – 10 points: The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to accurately determine expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - 10 points: The project proposal includes an M&E plan. The applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives outlined in the proposal. The proposal includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured. Funded projects will have their plans finalized during the negotiation phase, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the life of the project.
- **Sustainability** – 5 points: The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability or advancement of project goals after the end of project activity.

2. *Indirect Costs*

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

3. *Review and Selection Process*

- a. Acknowledgement of receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.
- b. Review. All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. **If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed above in [Section D. Application Contents and Format](#), 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.
- c. Follow up notification. Applicants will generally be notified within 120 days after the NOFO deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

2. *Risk Review*

- i. Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:
 - a. Financial stability
 - b. Management systems and standards
 - c. History of performance
 - d. Audit reports and findings
 - e. Ability to effectively implement project requirements
- ii. High Risk Designation

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk based on the above risk factors will be held to special award conditions. At a minimum, the recipient and/or project designated as High Risk will be required to submit monthly narrative reports and/or quarterly detailed financial reports. Recipients may also be required, upon request of the Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative, to provide electronic copies of receipts or other supporting documentation (e.g., timesheets, travel documents) for costs incurred. The Grants Officer may withhold 10% of the award amount until final reports have been reviewed and approved by the GO. The recipient may be required to pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer. Other special award conditions may also be included if deemed appropriate by the Grants Officer.

G. AWARD NOTICES

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

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

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

Payment Method:

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer and Grants Officer Representative.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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:

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

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Promoting 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 pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department’s convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.

- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

2. *Reporting*

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted. *Note:* most recipients will be required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. The quarterly progress report must include updated M&E data for that quarter. 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.

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.

3. *Branding and Marking*

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

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

I. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages and other entertainment related expenses.

STEP Enrollment

U.S. citizens who travel to Vietnam are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) available at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. Enrollment enables citizens to receive security-related messages from the Embassy and makes it easier for us to locate you in an emergency. The Embassy also recommends that all travelers review the State Department's [travel website at travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for the [Travel Warnings](#), Travel Alerts, and Vietnam Specific Information.