Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Promoting Responsible Investment and Rights Respecting Production Models

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State

Opportunity number: DFOP0019659

Application deadline: August 31, 11:59PM, EDT

Contents

U.S Department of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Promoting Responsible Investment and Rights-Respecting Production Models
Funding Opportunity Number	DFOP0019659
Announcement Type	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	August 31, 11:59PM, EDT
Assistance Listing Number	19.345
Length of performance period	36 months
Number of awards anticipated	One award
Award amounts	$2,959,500
Total available funding	$2,959,500
Type of Funding	FY25 Democracy Fund
Anticipated project start date	September 30, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 36 months or less.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

Priority Region: EAP, EUR

Executive Summary

This program will help responsible businesses counter unfair competition from production models relying on forced labor, worker exploitation, and other violations or abuses of internationally recognized labor rights. The program will also promote worker upskilling by working with leading foreign companies in critical industries to develop and strengthen private-sector workforce development practices and programs that support resilient, rights-respecting supply chains.

Through a phased, evidence-based approach, the program will first conduct research and engage foreign companies and other relevant stakeholders to identify workforce-related barriers to investment and expansion, assess promising workforce development practices, identify effective private-sector upskilling models in critical industries, and develop recommendations for targeted interventions. Informed by these findings, the program will then provide subawards to qualified implementing partners to address identified gaps through activities such as strengthening partnerships between foreign companies and U.S. workforce stakeholders, adapting and piloting employer-led workforce development approaches, developing and implementing worker upskilling initiatives for companies operating in critical industries, facilitating technical exchanges and peer learning, providing practical guidance and technical assistance, and strengthening worker voice and engagement.

Through these efforts, this program will seek to reduce workforce-related barriers to responsible foreign investment, expand opportunities for American workers, promote workforce upskilling and responsible production practices among companies in critical industries, and advance investment and production models grounded in innovation, productivity, workforce skills, and respect for internationally recognized labor rights.

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
- Public and private educational institutions
- For-profit organizations (only if allowed by appropriation - not for PD funds)
- Individuals
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

The Department of State does not allow for-profit or commercial organizations to make a profit from its assistance awards. Profit is defined as any amount more than allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs for commercial organizations is determined by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not required for this NOFO and will not improve competitive ranking of an application. Any budget items proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR 200, Subpart E—Cost Principles.

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 D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

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.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

American workers and businesses compete in a global economic environment in which production models that rely on forced labor, worker exploitation, suppression of freedom of association and collective bargaining, and other violations or abuses of internationally recognized labor rights can artificially lower production costs, distort markets, and disadvantage American workers and rights-respecting businesses. Strengthening responsible production and industrial capacity in the United States and promoting workforce upskilling and responsible production practices among companies in critical industries can help reduce reliance on supply chains vulnerable to forced labor and worker exploitation while supporting more resilient, transparent, and rights-respecting models of global production.

At the same time, the United States is working to strengthen its industrial base, expand domestic manufacturing capacity, and build the skilled workforce needed in sectors critical to U.S. economic and national security, including semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, critical minerals, battery production, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and other emerging technologies. Responsible foreign companies can contribute significantly to these objectives by investing in and expanding U.S. operations, creating opportunities for American workers, transferring advanced industrial knowledge and expertise, and strengthening domestic production capacity. In addition, leading companies operating in industries critical to U.S. economic and national security possess valuable expertise in workforce development, employer-led training, and skills development that can help allied and partner economies strengthen industrial competitiveness while reducing reliance on supply chains vulnerable to forced labor and worker exploitation. Supporting the development and dissemination of these private-sector upskilling practices can strengthen responsible production models globally. Collaboration with responsible foreign companies and trusted foreign partners can also help advance investment and production models that compete on the basis of innovation, productivity, workforce skills, and respect for internationally recognized labor rights rather than labor exploitation.

However, foreign companies seeking to invest or expand operations in the United States may face workforce-related barriers, including mismatches between available skills and industry needs; limited understanding of the U.S. workforce development landscape; challenges adapting training and apprenticeship models to the U.S. operating environment; difficulties establishing partnerships with relevant workforce stakeholders; and other institutional, informational, or labor market constraints.

This program will use a phased, evidence-based approach to identify and address these barriers. During the first phase, the recipient will conduct research and engage foreign companies and

other relevant foreign stakeholders to identify workforce-related constraints affecting investment and expansion in the United States, as well as opportunities to strengthen responsible investment models that benefit American workers and U.S. industrial competitiveness. Research will assess barriers across sectors, countries, company types, and investment contexts
and identify promising workforce development practices, private-sector worker upskilling models used by leading companies in critical industries, and opportunities for targeted intervention. During the second phase, informed by the research findings, the recipient will provide subawards to qualified implementing partners to design and implement targeted, evidence-based interventions addressing identified gaps. As a cooperative agreement, implementation will involve substantial DRL involvement, including co-design of workplans and close coordination on research priorities, strategic opportunities, and the development of targeted interventions.

Program Goal: Counter unfair competition from production models that rely on forced labor, worker exploitation, and other violations or abuses of internationally recognized labor rights by strengthening the ability of responsible foreign companies to contribute to U.S. industrial competitiveness and promote worker upskilling through private-sector workforce development practices that strengthen resilient and rights-respecting supply chains in critical industries.

Objective 1: Improve understanding of the factors affecting responsible investment and production by identifying unfair labor practices that undermine fair competition, assessing workforce-related barriers to responsible foreign investment and expansion in the United States, and identifying promising worker upskilling models and workforce development practices for companies operating in critical industries.

Illustrative activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct research and analysis on workforce-related factors that may deter, delay, or constrain foreign investment and expansion in the United States, including skills gaps, recruitment and retention challenges, barriers to worker advancement, and institutional or informational constraints.
- Engage foreign companies that have invested, are currently investing, or are considering investment in the United States to identify common and sector-specific workforce challenges and document lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful investment experiences.
- Assess challenges foreign companies face in navigating the U.S. workforce development ecosystem and establishing effective partnerships with workforce development boards, labor organizations, educational and training institutions, industry associations, employers, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Identify leading private-sector worker upskilling practices and employer-led workforce development models used by companies operating in critical industries and assess their potential to strengthen workforce capacity, improve supply chain resilience, and reduce forced labor risks across allied and partner economies.

- Examine the applicability of foreign technical training systems, apprenticeship models, employer-led training approaches, and other workforce development and upskilling practices to U.S. investment and operating contexts.
- Identify opportunities for foreign companies and other relevant foreign stakeholders to support investment and production models that strengthen the competitiveness of American workers and businesses while respecting internationally recognized labor rights.
- Analyze how workforce-related barriers and opportunities vary across countries, sectors, company types, and investment contexts, with particular attention to industries critical to U.S. economic and national security.
- Develop practical recommendations for targeted interventions that address identified barriers, strengthen responsible foreign investment, and improve employment, skills development, retention, and advancement opportunities for American workers.
- Establish mechanisms to share research findings and recommendations with DRL and relevant stakeholders and to inform the design of interventions under Objective 2.

Objective 2: Design and implement targeted, evidence-based interventions that address identified workforce barriers, strengthen responsible foreign investment and expansion in the United States, improve opportunities for American workers, and reduce global reliance on forced labor, worker exploitation, suppression of freedom of association and collective bargaining, and other violations or abuses of internationally recognized labor rights.

Illustrative activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Provide subawards to qualified implementing partners to design and implement targeted interventions responding to specific barriers or opportunities identified through research and stakeholder engagement under Objective 1.
- Support partnerships between foreign companies or other eligible foreign stakeholders and relevant U.S. workforce development actors to improve recruitment, skills development, training, retention, and advancement of American workers.
- Adapt and pilot relevant train-the-trainer, employer-led workforce development and upskilling for use in foreign companies' U.S. operations, where appropriate and responsive to identified needs.
- Facilitate collaboration among leading companies, industry associations, workforce institutions, and other relevant stakeholders to exchange successful private-sector upskilling practices that can strengthen resilient supply chains and reduce reliance on forced labor.
- Facilitate technical exchanges, peer learning, and knowledge sharing among foreign companies and other relevant foreign stakeholders on effective approaches to workforce development, worker engagement, labor-management cooperation, and respect for internationally recognized labor rights.
- Develop practical tools, guidance, training resources, or technical assistance to help foreign companies better understand and navigate the U.S. workforce development landscape and establish effective partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

- Pilot approaches that strengthen worker voice and engagement in workforce development, training, retention, and advancement strategies, consistent with internationally recognized labor rights.
- Support targeted interventions that help responsible foreign investors address workforce constraints that delay or limit U.S. investment or expansion while strengthening employment and advancement opportunities for American workers.
- Collect and analyze performance data and beneficiary feedback to assess the effectiveness of interventions, make evidence-based program adjustments, and identify approaches with potential for replication or scale.
- Document and disseminate lessons learned, promising practices, and practical recommendations for responsible foreign investors and other relevant stakeholders seeking to strengthen workforce development and industrial capacity in the United States.
- Note on program pacing: DRL does not expect to begin interventions under Objective 2 until initial research from Objective 1 is in its final stages and recommendations have been surfaced and interventions are co-designed between the implementer and DRL.

Expected Outcomes and Performance Measurement

Expected outcomes may include identifying factors leading to forced and exploitative labor practices and how to reduce them; improved understanding of workforce-related barriers affecting responsible foreign investment and expansion in the United States; identification and dissemination of effective private-sector worker upskilling practices for companies operating in critical industries; increased adoption of employer-led workforce development approaches; strengthened partnerships among foreign companies and relevant workforce stakeholders; increased capacity of participating foreign companies and other stakeholders to address identified workforce challenges; development and implementation of targeted approaches to improve the recruitment, training, retention, and career advancement of American workers; and documented lessons and promising practices that can inform future responsible investment and workforce development efforts. Expected outcomes may also include strengthened investment and workforce development approaches that promote respect for internationally recognized labor rights and help counter unfair competition from production models that rely on forced labor, worker exploitation, and other labor rights violations or abuses.

Applicants should propose clear performance indicators, targets, data collection methods, and feedback mechanisms aligned with the program goal and objectives. Indicators may measure, for example, stakeholders engaged; barriers and opportunities identified; partnerships established or strengthened; participants reached; changes in participant knowledge or capacity; and practices, tools, or approaches developed, adopted, or piloted. Where baseline data is not available at the outset, applicants should describe how they will establish it. Because activities under Objective 2 will be informed by the findings of Objective 1, indicators and targets may be refined in coordination with DRL during implementation.

Program Participants and Budget Considerations

Program participants may include foreign companies investing or seeking to invest or expand operations in the United States; foreign civil society organizations, labor organizations, industry associations, educational and training institutions, and other relevant foreign stakeholders whose participation supports achievement of the program objectives. Applicants should describe transparent, objective selection criteria for program participants.

Applicants should budget for all costs necessary to implement the program, including research, stakeholder engagement, data collection, travel, workshops and other convenings, technical assistance, interpretation and translation, monitoring and evaluation, and subawards under Objective 2. Where participant travel is necessary for program-supported activities, applicants should budget for reasonable and allowable transportation, lodging, meals and incidental expenses, and other necessary travel-related costs, consistent with applicable Federal regulations and award terms and conditions.

Program Requirements:

- Within 30 days of activation of this award, the recipient will schedule and participate in an orientation meeting with DRL to discuss reporting requirements, finalize award agreement attachments, address best practices for implementation, and discuss the primary conditions and obligations of performance of this award.
- Within 30 days of the start of the award, the recipient will have key personnel in place sufficient to initiate program implementation and will provide DRL with a staffing plan and timeline for filling any additional positions needed as program activities expand.
- DRL will approve, on an annual basis, the recipient's detailed work plan and timeline of activities for this program. The first year's work plan is due to DRL within 45 days of the award and annually thereafter. A revised work plan is due prior to moving from the research phase (Objective 1) to the interventions phased (Objective 2). Requirements for the work plan will be addressed at the initial orientation meeting. The next year's draft work plan shall be due at least 30 days before the commencement of the next 12-month period of implementation of the award.
- A detailed monitoring and evaluation plan will be due to DRL 90 days after the start of the award and supplemented following the research phase to encompass any newly added activities under Objective 2.

In addition, competitive proposals will meet the following criteria:

- Proposals should describe clear performance indicators, data collection methods, and how progress toward objectives will be measured.
- Explain how feedback from beneficiaries will be incorporated into ongoing program adjustments and how lessons learned will be documented and shared.
- Individual projects may be implemented directly by the prime implementer/consortium members, or though subawards to local or regional organizations.
- Describe a management approach and capabilities to successfully work closely with DRL to implement this highly flexible, adaptive program.

- Grantmaking: Under Objective 2, DRL envisions up to 40% of funds will be provided as grants to international and local organizations for activities that are responsive to Objective 1 research findings. While some prospective partners should be included in the proposal, DRL seeks the flexibility to grant to subgrantees identified over the life of the award, with subgrantees identified by the Department and the implementer.

2. Substantial Involvement

The award will be a cooperative agreement. The Department of State will be substantially involved in carrying out the following various aspects of this cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include but are not limited to:

- Active collaboration with the recipient on research priorities, stakeholder engagement strategies, and the implementation of activities under the award;
- Review of recommendations under Objective 1 before activities under Objective 2 begin;
- Collaboration with the recipient to identify priority workforce-related barriers, sectors, investment contexts, or other strategic opportunities to be addressed through targeted interventions under Objective 2;
- Collaboration on the development and refinement of targeted interventions and subaward priorities based on research findings and stakeholder engagement;
- Involvement, as appropriate, in the identification or selection of key program participants, stakeholders, subaward priorities, or program venues; and
- Joint preparation or presentation of research findings, lessons learned, promising practices, or other program results, as appropriate.

Please note that areas of substantial involvement will be negotiated with the applicant prior to award issuance.

D. Application Contents and Format

<u>Please follow all instructions below carefully</u>. 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 pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **<u>required</u>**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) at https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)

2. Summary Page (optional)

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. Proposal Narrative (15 pages maximum)

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it 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 or Individual 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.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** 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.
- **Project Activities**: Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project Methods and Design**: A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **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:** Resumes are not required at this time. Instead, provide only the selection criteria your program will apply throughout the grant period of performance when filling key positions.
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

4. Budget Justification Narrative

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

5. *Attachments*

- A line-item budget, expanding upon the summary categories found in the SF-424A. Subgrantee budgets, if known at time of submission, should also be included as tabs (please see budget template attached to NOFO).
- Key personnel position descriptions. Resumes are not required at this time. Instead, provide only the selection criteria your program will apply throughout the grant period of performance when filling key positions.
- 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, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

Successful applicant(s) may be required to submit the following documents prior to award. Please **do not** include any of these documents in your application.

Organizational Policies

- Personnel Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Travel Polices
- Procurement Polices
- Sub-Award Manual
- Sample Sub-Award Agreement (if applicable

Financial Management Policies/ SOP

- Completion of the Financial Management Survey

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at grants.gov and MyGrants.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: DRL-PRU-Solicitation@state.gov.

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

Required Registrations

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 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. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.

- 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.

- **<u>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.</u>** 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.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx
NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):
NCAGE Code Request Tool (nato.int)

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.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than August 31, 11:59PM, EDT.

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:

1) 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;

2) 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:

1) 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.

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 <u>for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds $500,000:</u>

1) 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);

   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).

2) 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.

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 their 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 (UAS). If your project involves the purchase or use of an UAS, see this link for requirements and information you must include in your application.

vi. Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA)

Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR Part 602, 603, and 604.

These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.

602: The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

603: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

604: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov or MyGrants.

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The proposal does not include any activities contrary to any standing Executive Orders. For a full list, see https://www.federalregister.gov/.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants: The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account. If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Monitoring and evaluation plan: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

Sustainability: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

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 review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

4. *Risk Review*

i. Risk factors

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 requirements
f.

ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313)

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

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.

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email.

Payment Method:
Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS).

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each PMS 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.

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.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

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.

For more information, visit: https://brand.america.gov/

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 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.