



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

EducationUSA Malaysia 2026-2027

U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur, Public Diplomacy Section,
Department of State

Opportunity number: PDSKLEDUSA2026

Application deadline: June 1, 2026

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**U.S Department of State
U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur, Public Diplomacy Section
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	EducationUSA Malaysia 2026-2027
Funding Opportunity Number	PDSKLEDUSA2026
Announcement Type	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	June 1, 2026, 11.59pm GMT +8
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	12 months
Number of awards anticipated	3
Award amounts	Up to \$74,000
Total available funding	\$74,000
Type of Funding	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchanges
Anticipated projects start date	August 26, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less.
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

Priority Region:

Malaysia-wide outreach with physical advising centers in the Klang Valley, Penang, and East Malaysia.

The Public Diplomacy Section at the United States Embassy in Malaysia announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to promote U.S. higher education opportunities for Malaysian students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. This project includes maintaining physical presences of at least three EducationUSA advising centers manned by trained EducationUSA advisors that will serve as the primary resource for accurate, comprehensive, and current information about studying in the United States. Programmatic requirements will include education fairs, presentations at secondary schools and universities, and other programs in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy. Please follow all instructions below.

Freedom250: All successful Education USA Malaysia 2026 proposals must clearly celebrate and promote the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America (Freedom250) and align with: making America safer, strengthening our nation, expanding our prosperity, and defending freedom of speech.

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/nongovernmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

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

1. Project Background, Goals, and Objectives

Policy Framework

EducationUSA Malaysia 2026–2027 advising proposals must clearly advance America First foreign policy principles by demonstrating how EducationUSA-focused engagement makes the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous, while celebrating Freedom250 and American excellence.

Priority Areas

Malaysia-wide with physical advising centers in the Klang Valley, Penang, and East Malaysia.

Project Audience

Primary beneficiaries of EducationUSA Malaysia 2026–2027 advising may include, but are not limited to:

- Students (secondary, pre-university, and university-level) seeking accurate, comprehensive guidance on U.S. higher education opportunities.
- Youth and early-career professionals preparing for graduate study in the United States and developing academic, digital, or professional skills aligned with priority economic growth sectors.
- Educators, school counselors, university advisors, and education practitioners who support student pipelines to U.S. institutions.
- U.S. government exchange alumni and EducationUSA alumni who mentor prospective applicants or collaborate on outreach, advising, or capacity-building activities.

Target audiences may vary but should clearly identify geographic reach, professional background, and demographic characteristics relevant to EducationUSA objectives.

Goal: The implementing partner will work in coordination with the Higher Education Coordinator in the Public Diplomacy Section of the United States Embassy in Malaysia, to support EducationUSA advising activities in Malaysia during the 2026–2027 fiscal year and to maintain a physical presence in keeping with EducationUSA standards for advising centers in the Klang Valley, Penang and East Malaysia.

Objectives

All successful EducationUSA Malaysia 2026–2027 advising proposals must include the following objectives, with a clear link to increasing the number of Malaysian students who are advised by EducationUSA, participate in EducationUSA activities, and ultimately study in the United States:

1. Increase the number of Malaysian students who receive accurate, comprehensive EducationUSA advising services (e.g., individual advising, group advising, virtual advising, school visits) across priority regions, leading to a larger pool of qualified applicants to U.S. institutions.
2. Increase attendance and participation in EducationUSA programs and events (e.g., U.S. college fairs, information sessions, webinars, bootcamps, outreach visits) to expand awareness of U.S. higher education opportunities.
3. Engage U.S. university alumni and Malaysian graduates of U.S. institutions as speakers, mentors, and ambassadors in EducationUSA activities to boost attendance, enhance the quality and credibility of information provided, and motivate more Malaysian students to apply to and enroll in U.S. colleges and universities.
4. Engage Malaysian educational partners (e.g., American Transfer Degree Program universities, scholarship bodies, public and private school network, counselors) to co-organize and support EducationUSA programming.

2. Substantial Involvement

U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur will have substantial involvement in the development, content, and operations of EducationUSA advising services and programming. In consultation with the U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur, the award recipient must actively coordinate with relevant U.S. government stakeholders on advising strategies, outreach activities, and program implementation.

Working closely with U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur, the recipient of this cooperative agreement shall develop a robust program for the project; schedule the event at a mutually agreed upon location; develop the agenda and content for the project; and generate content for social media and other publicity.

The recipient is expected to provide all design files, photos and video recorded, as well as a promotion-ready, U.S. Embassy approved photo album and a video series of the project after completion.

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 critical to the success of this cooperative agreement. This includes regular reporting on advising metrics, student placement data, and program outcomes that demonstrate advancement of American interests.

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 pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are required: (Forms and templates are accessible on GRANTS.GOV at <https://grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>)

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals) at grants.gov
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at grants.gov

- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)

2. Proposal (15 pages maximum)

Applicants must submit a complete narrative proposal in the format of their choice. The proposal should contain sufficient information so that anyone not familiar with it will 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 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 as well as experience with and expertise in areas related to those described in the NOFO.
- **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).
- **Beneficiaries:** Please provide an estimated number of direct and indirect beneficiaries. Direct beneficiaries are defined as people who directly participate in your project. Indirect beneficiaries are usually not directly connected with the project but will still benefit from it. Example: Direct beneficiaries: 200 trained teachers; Indirect beneficiaries: 10,000 students (taught by trained teachers).
- **Communication and Outreach Plan:** The communication and outreach plan should lay out how you will promote your project and through which channels. Include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media you intend to use to share information. Include in the plan how you intend to engage your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate and how you will report project highlights and achievements.
- **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. Refer back to your established project goal/s and project objectives. Consider the data

needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how you will collect the data. Use well-crafted indicators to measure a project's progress toward the desired results. 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. 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 on the following budget categories: *personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs*. 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.

Additional Budget Notes:

- **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.
- **Costs NOT supported by this opportunity include:**
 - Staff salaries & office space
 - Large items of durable equipment or construction programs

- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments not integral to the project, or entertainment
- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in the project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

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 and Finance Officer, 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. Malaysia-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 Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

1. Contact for additional information:

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

2. 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 June 1, 2026, at 11.59 p.m. GMT +8.

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 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.

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.

iv. **Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities**

(a) **Definitions.**

- 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>
- FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.
- Unmanned aircraft means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.
- 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) **Prohibition.** Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

1. delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;
2. Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and
3. 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.].

v. **Pre-Award Costs:** Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.

vi. **Construction:** Any award made as a result of this NOFO will not allow for construction activities or costs.

vii. **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

Applications may be submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov or MyGrants

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 Malaysia. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and Malaysia.

Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S. and Malaysian 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 EducationUSA advising services and programming, and to determine the likelihood of its success.

Relevance to EducationUSA Mission and U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities– 30 points

The proposal provides sufficient information on how EducationUSA advising services and programming will promote U.S. higher education opportunities and advance American interests. The narrative explains relevant local context regarding Malaysian students' educational aspirations, barriers to U.S. study, and opportunities to strengthen bilateral educational ties.

The project clearly demonstrates how EducationUSA advising contributes to current U.S. foreign policy priorities, including expanding American prosperity through educational exchange, strengthening people-to-people ties, and promoting American excellence in higher education. The project will enhance America's reputation as the premier destination for international students and positively impact relationships with foreign government partners and 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"

Participation and Support from Local Partners – 10 points

Commented [NZ1]: Need further review/discussion.

Commented [NE2R1]: @Zulkifli, Nur Farizan (Kuala Lumpur) Is this what you would like to see?

Commented [NZ3R1]: Looks great, Puan! @Eink, Nur B (Kuala Lumpur)

The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from Malaysian educational institutions, universities, secondary schools, and relevant stakeholders. Partner involvement demonstrates community support and ensures the EducationUSA advising centers will effectively reach target audiences. Strong partnerships may include Malaysian Ministry of Education, secondary schools, universities, scholarship organizations, American Spaces, alumni networks, and U.S. higher education institutions.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 15 points

- The proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise in educational advising, international student recruitment, and U.S. higher education systems to implement EducationUSA services effectively, including internal controls to manage federal funds. If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.
- The organization demonstrates clear understanding of the Malaysian educational landscape, student needs, and barriers to U.S. study.
- The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management, including a financial management system, bank account, and if applicable, satisfactory audit findings.
- Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations, including Award Provisions and Standard Terms and Conditions.
- Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's role and provides CVs for EducationUSA advisers and persons responsible for financial administration. Proposed personnel have appropriate qualifications in educational advising, knowledge of U.S. higher education, and cross-cultural communication skills.

- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve EducationUSA Objectives– 15 points**

The project plan is well developed with sufficient detail about how EducationUSA advising services will be delivered. The proposal specifies:

- Target audiences (undergraduate vs. graduate students, geographic regions, academic fields of interest)
- Student recruitment and outreach strategies
- Advising center operations in Klang Valley, Penang, and East Malaysia
- Types of advising services (individual counseling, group workshops, college fairs, pre-departure orientations, etc.)
- Clear, achievable objectives with measurable outcomes (e.g., number of students advised, applications submitted, students placed at U.S. institutions)

- Reasonable implementation timeline
- Appropriate and clearly defined project scope

Budget – 10 points

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed and demonstrate accurate cost determination for EducationUSA operations, including:

- Advising center facilities and operations
- Qualified adviser salaries
- Outreach and promotional activities
- Educational materials and resources
- Technology and communication tools

Costs are reasonable in relation to proposed advising services and anticipated student outcomes. The results justify the total project cost. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Monitoring and Evaluation – 10 points

The proposal includes an M&E plan specific to EducationUSA advising metrics. The applicant demonstrates ability to measure program success against key indicators such as:

- Number of students receiving advising services (by level, field, region)
- Number of students applying to U.S. institutions
- Number of students accepted and enrolled at U.S. institutions
- Student satisfaction with advising services
- Outreach event attendance and engagement
- Geographic and demographic reach

The M&E plan should be reviewed for:

- Completion
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators aligned with EducationUSA goals
- Clear approach to monitoring advising activities and student outcomes
- Adherence to SMART criteria
- Feasibility of baselines and targets
- Data quality plan

- Capacity to implement plan and report on EducationUSA metrics

Funded projects will have their plans finalized during negotiation, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the project.

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan – 10 points

The proposal includes a clear plan and timeline for promoting EducationUSA services and U.S. higher education opportunities through:

- Social media campaigns highlighting U.S. study opportunities
- Educational fairs and workshops
- Partnerships with Malaysian schools and institutions
- Alumni engagement activities
- Media outreach to promote American higher education

The plan ensures U.S. Embassy recognition throughout all EducationUSA activities and materials.

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.

4. 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 f. Country and programmatic risk considerations, including operational and security risks associated with project implementation in Malaysia. Certain geographic areas may present elevated risks due to ongoing conflict, civil unrest, restricted access, infrastructure limitations, or disruptions to transportation, communications, or financial services. Applicants proposing activities in higher-risk locations should demonstrate appropriate risk mitigation measures, including contingency planning, participant safety considerations, and flexible implementation approaches.

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 20% 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 countersignature. 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.

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.

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.

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/>

In addition to the Department of State branding guidance referenced above, recipients of new Public Diplomacy awards **promoting Freedom 250** activities will also be required to incorporate the Freedom 250 logos in all program materials, activities, and communications.

The recipient will be expected to follow all existing marking and branding requirements in accordance with Department branding guidance. The Freedom 250 logos would be used in addition to, not in place of, these requirements.

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 Malaysia 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 for the Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Malaysia Specific Information.