



EMBASSY AND CONSULATES
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN CANADA
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SECTION

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Academy for Women Entrepreneurs 2025 Canada

Department of State
U.S. Embassy Ottawa

Opportunity number: PD-FY25-CANADA -AWE

Application deadline: 15th January 2025



Contents

A.	Basic Information	1
B.	Eligibility	2
C.	Program Description	3
D.	Application Contents and Format	4
E.	Submission Requirements and Deadlines	7
F.	Application Review Information	9
G.	Award Notices	10
H.	Post-Award Requirements and Administration	11
I.	Other Information	13

**U.S Department of State
U.S. Embassy Ottawa
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Academy for Women Entrepreneurs 2025 Canada
Funding Opportunity Number	PD-FY25-CANADA -AWE
Announcement Type	Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	January 15, 2025 at Midnight
Assistance Listing Number	19.022– Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs Appropriation Overseas Grants
Length of performance period	12 months
Number of awards anticipated	1 award
Award amounts	Awards may range from a minimum of \$ 25,000 to a maximum of \$35,000
Total available funding	\$35,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	Fiscal Year 2025 Fulbright-Hays Act
Anticipated project start date	September 2025

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement.

Project Performance Period: Proposed programs must be completed in *12 months* or less. U.S. Embassy Ottawa will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Priority Region: Montreal will be the site of in-person activities, but participants may be recruited from Montreal and the broader province of Quebec.

2. Executive Summary

U.S. Embassy Ottawa announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to implement the 2025 Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) in Montreal, Canada.

AWE is a U.S. Department of State-led initiative established in 2019 to provide women with the professional skills, knowledge, networks, and access to launch or scale successful businesses. Cohorts of approximately 30 women meet online and in-person to learn core business skills such as strategic planning, marketing, and finance, then discuss the material with local facilitators, business leaders, and U.S. exchange alumni mentors.

Through its partnerships with Arizona State University's Thunderbird School for Global Management, AWE utilizes no-cost, online learning platforms. Used by AWE since 2019 in partnership with ASU & Freeport-McMoRan, [DreamBuilder](#) -- available in English and Spanish -- teaches participants the fundamentals of starting or growing a small business from a U.S. perspective, offering modules on marketing, pricing, and bookkeeping, and includes a built-in business plan generator. [The Najafi 100 Million Learners Global Initiative](#) provides more advanced curriculum and can be used alongside or instead of DreamBuilder.

U.S. Embassy Ottawa invites proposals to design and implement the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs in Montreal, Quebec, through a training program in the fall of 2025 to train 30 women business owners from under-represented backgrounds in Montreal and the broader province of Quebec. The program, in English and French will follow a hybrid model, combining the U.S. online platforms DreamBuilder and/or Thunderbird's 100 Million Learners courses, with localized in-person mentorship and facilitation. Successful projects will harness the power of U.S. exchange alumni and/or alumni networks to help participating women and their business grow.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following are eligible to apply:

- U.S. and Canadian registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks, community associations, and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience
- Alumni of U.S. government funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs in Canada
- Non-profit media organizations
- Professional trade organizations
- Non-profit or governmental educational institutions
- Private educational institutions

For-profit or commercial entities are not eligible to apply.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required. If an applicant offers cost sharing, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its application and later included in an approved agreement.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via www.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.

An applicant may submit a proposal before completing the process to register in sam.gov and obtain a UEI. However, before a proposal is accepted, the organization must obtain a UEI and have an active SAM.gov registration. Therefore, we recommend starting the process of obtaining a SAM.gov registration as soon as possible. The process can take several weeks. Please note there is no cost associated with UEI or SAM.gov registration.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

Program Objectives:

- Train 30 women entrepreneurs from under-represented backgrounds in foundational business skills, including strategic planning, marketing, and finance, through globally recognized curricula like [DreamBuilder](#) and/or the [Najafi 100 Million Learners Global Initiative](#) .
- Empower program participants to create scalable business models.
- Expand participants' understanding of social enterprise models.
- Foster participants' ability to promote economic opportunities for women and increase the number of women-led businesses in Canada.
- Facilitate the development of a network of female entrepreneurs and investors in Canada to grow women businesses and drive local partnerships
- Foster alumni engagement through follow-on activities.

Project Activities:

Phase 1: Develop and Recruit

- Develop a curriculum and training materials.
- Identify, recruit, and train facilitators and mentors from alumni of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs in Canada, the American Chamber of Commerce, and other networks of Canadian women entrepreneurs.
- Develop a transparent and widely-publicized recruitment process and recruit participants.

Proposals must provide a recruitment strategy for recruiting target participants, that includes a participant application and selection process and specifies how the U.S. Consulate General Montreal Public Diplomacy Section will be involved.

Phase 2: Train the Cohort

- Organize an in-person launch event/training in Montreal. -Organize all event logistics, including participant travel and accommodations, if needed.
- Facilitate training with the online DreamBuilder and/or Thunderbird's 100 Million Learners courses through regular virtual or in-person sessions to discuss challenges, share best practices, and receive guidance from facilitators.

- Organize activities that integrate localized content to supplement the online DreamBuilder or Thunderbird's 100 Million Learners courses.
- Establish a support network among participants to foster peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.

Proposals are encouraged to incorporate a variety of interactive activities, workshops, field trips, case studies, and other learning experiences to help participants develop their entrepreneurship skills.

Phase 3: Milestone Finale

- Organize a closing event-in Montreal to showcase AWE participants' businesses, connect participants with potential investors, and increase participants' access to funding opportunities. Organize all event logistics, including participant, speaker, or facilitator travel and accommodations, if needed.
 - Closing event session topics must include, but are not limited to:
 - Addressing the unique challenges, needs, and opportunities of women entrepreneurs in accessing capital.
 - Inviting potential investors to participate in the forum and provide funding opportunities for promising women-led businesses.
- Conduct a pitch competition where selected AWE participants present their business plans to a panel of investors and the winners received seed fundings.
- Create social media content that showcases AWE success stories.

Participants and Audiences:

The 2025 AWE participants will consist of 30 Canadian women entrepreneurs who:

- Reside in province of Quebec, Canada.
- Own social enterprises or businesses.
- Have 1-5 years of business experience and demonstrate computer proficiency and internet access.
- Belong to under-represented backgrounds.
- Are recruited from the province of Quebec via a competitive application process.

2. Substantial Involvement

For this award, the U.S. Mission to Canada will:

- Review and approve:
 - program content and design
 - Participant recruitment strategy and selection
 - List of speakers, resource persons
- Identify and contact alumni of U.S. government exchange programs and other networks for potential speakers, trainers and mentors
- The grantee can request Embassy assistance with:

- Securing commitment from high-level speakers or inviting government representatives
- Inviting press to participate in events
- Sharing AWE promotional activities on U.S. Embassy social media platforms
- The Grant Officer must give final approval of the following before action by the grantee:
 - Keynote speakers, participants, facilitators, and expert speakers
 - Training curriculum and promotional materials
 - Venues and dates for in-person events and ceremonies.

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 and is no more than 4 pages in length
- 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**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals) at <https://www.grants.gov/>
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at <https://ca.usembassy.gov/u-s-mission-to-canada-funding-opportunities/>
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at <https://ca.usembassy.gov/u-s-mission-to-canada-funding-opportunities/> (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)

2. Summary Page

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 (4 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:** 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.
- **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

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- 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.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application and budget forms required above are available on the [U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Canada](#) website under “Academy for Women Entrepreneurs” and <https://www.grants.gov/>.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: Ottawa-PA@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. 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.

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 \(nato.int\)](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx)

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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-25/subpart-1/section-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 *January 15, 2025, at Midnight*

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. Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to Ottawa-PA@state.gov

Participant Protection in Grants Language for Notices of Funding Opportunity and Annual Program Statements:

Section 6 - Appendices: (c) Beneficiary Protection Plan (Required) – a description of the organization’s standards of conduct policy, training protocols, and reporting mechanisms to prevent discrimination, harassment, and abuse of beneficiaries of the program, especially if the beneficiaries include minors or other particularly vulnerable groups.

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 – 20 points: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 points: 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.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget – 10 points: 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 – 15 points: 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 – 10 points: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

Support of Equity and Underserved Communities – 10 points: Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

2. Review and Selection Process

An Embassy Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications and will contact successful applicant(s) for next steps following a decision by the Review Committee meeting. If the grant is awarded in Washington DC, the implementing partner should anticipate beginning programming by September 2025.

3. 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

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 within two weeks of the Review Committee meeting via email.

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.

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: NOTE:

- [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).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
 - [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
 - [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
 - [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
 - [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
 - [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
 - [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

In accordance with the [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program advances equity with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. The proposal should also demonstrate how the program will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and underserved communities will enhance the program’s goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

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

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. Closing reports are due within 120 days of the grant’s end date.

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](#).

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.

Beneficiary protection:

Organizations that have their proposals for funding recommended for funding by the Embassy Ottawa grants review panel will be asked to submit safety protocol and procedures for addressing formal complaints of sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, sexual assault, stalking, misconduct, and retaliation during the life cycle of any Federal Assistance Award made under this notice.

This plan must include addressing complaints against both project implementing staff and beneficiaries as well as how the plan will be presented to beneficiaries.