U.S. Embassy Yaoundé-Cameroon

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) 2025

U.S. EMBASSY YAOUNDE, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SECTION (PDS)

Opportunity number: EMB-Yaounde-AWE-FY25-03

Application deadline: January 12, 2025

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A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) 2025
Funding Opportunity Number	EMB-Yaounde-AWE-FY25-03
Announcement Type	initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	January 12, 2025, 05:00 pm Central Africa Time
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	3 to 6 months
Number of awards anticipated	2 awards (dependent on amounts)
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	FY25 Fulbright-Hays
Anticipated project start date	September 2025

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement.

Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 6 months maximum.

The Department of State 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.

2. Executive Summary

Priority Region: All ten (10) regions of Cameroon.

Executive Summary

The U.S. Embassy in Cameroon announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to implement the 2025 Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) in Cameroon. AWE is a U.S. Department of State-led initiative around the globe to support gender equity

and equality by promoting women's economic opportunities and giving enterprising women the knowledge, networks, and access they need to launch and scale successful businesses.

The U.S. Embassy Yaoundé Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) invites proposals to design and implement an export-focused AWE cohort in Cameroon to support Mission Goals of strengthening economic ties between Cameroon and the United States of America, and supporting women entrepreneurs. This specialized program will provide a six-month training program in the summer or fall of 2025 to train 50 women business owners in product quality enhancement, export compliance, and U.S. market entry strategies. The program will leverage Thunderbird's 100 Million Learners platform, complemented by specialized workshops on U.S. FDA regulations, USDA requirements, packaging best practices and export compliance procedures. The program will culminate in an "AWE Alumni Trade Fair and Export Forum." This targeted approach aims to create a pipeline of export-ready women-led businesses in Cameroon.

Organizations interested in competing for the AWE 2025 should submit proposals to **PDSGrantsYaounde@state.gov** by January 12, 2025, at 5:00 pm.

Please carefully follow all instructions below.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

PDS encourages applications from the United States and Cameroon:

- Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks, community associations, and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience;
- Alumni of U.S. government exchange programs;
- 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 is NOT required.

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.

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Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices with regard to beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

- Equip participants with knowledge and skills to enhance product quality and meet U.S. export standards.

- Expand participants' understanding of international trade regulations and compliance.

- Foster participants' ability to promote economic opportunities for women and increase the number of women-led businesses in the high potential business sectors.

Project Activities:

Phase 1: Develop and Recruit

- Develop a curriculum and training materials.

- Identify, recruit, and train facilitators and mentors from the USG alumni community, U.S. Embassy, USAID, American Chamber of Commerce, and African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) network.

- Announce, conduct outreach, and recruit participants.

- Produce an export readiness SOP for entrepreneurs willing to export products in the U.S.

   Proposals should provide a recruitment strategy for recruiting target participants and specify how the Embassy would be involved.

Phase 2: Train the Cohort

- Organize a 3-day Export Readiness Bootcamp alongside the official launching ceremony in Yaoundé.

- Facilitate training of the online DreamBuilder or Thunderbird's 100 Million Learners courses through weekly 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.

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

Phase 3: Milestone Finale

- Organize a 2-day final gathering on "AWE Alumni Trade Fair and Export Forum" in Douala to showcase AWE participants and alumnae's businesses, connect them with potential investors, U.S. buyers and increase their access to funding and export opportunities.

The AWE Export Readiness Bootcamp will feature a comprehensive training program designed to empower women entrepreneurs in expanding their businesses internationally. Session topics will provide strategic insights and practical skills, focusing on comprehensive export market development. The program will cover critical areas including, but not limited to:

- A diagnostic assessment of participants' current export product potential.
- Strategic U.S. market positioning, detailed guidance on compliance and documentation requirements.
- In-depth financial management techniques, and digital marketing strategies tailored to international trade.
- Additionally, a targeted social media campaign will highlight the remarkable success stories of AWE participants, showcasing their entrepreneurial achievements and creating visibility for women-led businesses seeking to enter global markets.

  Proposals are encouraged to include ideas for follow-on activities after program implementation. Please note that this award would not cover the costs of any such follow-on activity, which would be subject to additional funding resources.

Participants and Audiences:

The 2025 AWE program will consist of 50 dynamic Cameroonian women entrepreneurs including AWE Alumnae who:

- Reside in Cameroon.
- Own social enterprises or businesses with demonstrable potential for U.S. market export.
- Have a proven business track record of 2-5 years, indicating operational maturity and entrepreneurial resilience.
- Demonstrate advanced digital literacy, including computer proficiency and reliable internet connectivity.
- Demonstrate commitment to business growth and international market expansion.
- Have innovative business models with scalable export potential.

2. Substantial Involvement

- The grantee will propose for Embassy input:
  - Details of program content and design
  - Participant selection strategy
  - List of speakers and alumni
  - Guest list
- The grantee can request Embassy assistance with:
  - Sharing project promotional content on U.S. Embassy Cameroon social media platforms
  - Inviting press
- The Grants Officer must give final approval of the following before action by the grantee:
  - Keynote speakers, facilitators, and participants
  - Promotional materials
  - Date and venue

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

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 and will not be reviewed.

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

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

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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 (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:** 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 forms required above are available at embassy website or grants.gov.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: **PDSgrantsYaounde@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.

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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)

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 January 10, 2025, 05:00 pm Central Africa Time.

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).

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 or 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.

Funds under this notice cannot be used for construction programs, vehicle purchases or anything other than specifically defined in this funding opportunity.

6. *Other Submission Requirements*

All application materials must be submitted by email to ***PDSgrantsYaounde@state.gov.***

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*

    A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. *Risk Review*

    i.   Risk factors – must include

    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. If there are any program specific risk factors that will be considered, describe them here

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 three business days after final decision by the review committee 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

- o 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.

   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.

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.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.