

**United States Department of State
Bureau of Global Talent Management
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): 2025 Thomas R. Pickering Graduate
Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0010282**

Assistance Listing Number:	19.020
Solicitation Type:	Open Competition
Award Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Ceiling:	\$6,065,980 \$702,500 issued as first installment in FY2024; \$5,363,480 issued in installments in FY 2025
Funding Authority:	DOS Basic Authorities
Funding Type:	Discretionary
Source of Funding:	Diplomatic and Consular Programs
Funding Activity Category:	Education
Cost Sharing:	Not Required
Number of Awards:	One (1) award
Est. Project Start Date:	June 2024
Est. Project End Date:	September 2027
Period of Performance:	39 months
Application Deadline:	11:59 PM EST on 24, April, 2024
Question Submission Deadline:	11:59 PM EST on 15, April, 2024
Notification of Recommendation for Funding:	Approximately 5 weeks from the Application Deadline
Application Submission:	Electronic. Application must be submitted through www.grants.gov
Eligibility Applicants:	U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations with 501(c) (3) status of the U.S. tax code; U.S.-based private, public, or state institutions of higher education.
Number of Applications:	One per applicant organization.

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SECTION A: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The United States Department of State's Bureau of Global Talent Management, Talent Acquisition Directorate (GTM/TAC) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support programmatic, financial and administrative activities for the 2025 Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program. A cooperative agreement for up to \$6,065,980 U.S. Dollars (USD) in FY 2024 and FY 2025 Diplomatic and Consular Programs Funds will be awarded, pending availability of funds, for work that will support activities for the 2025 Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program. In support of the Department's goal of cultivating a workforce that reflects the diversity of the United States, the program develops a diverse cadre of diplomats who are dedicated to representing America's interests abroad.

A.1. Background

Established in 1992, the Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program attract highly talented and qualified candidates to the Foreign Service who represent ethnic, racial, gender, social, and geographic diversity. The Pickering Fellowship Program is one of the Department of State's premiere diversity recruitment programs and fundamental to increasing the representation of diverse groups in the U.S. Foreign Service. The program encourages applications from members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the Foreign Service, women, and those with financial need.

The Pickering Fellowship Program directly support FY22-26 State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan's Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive resilient and dynamic workforce and supports GTM's Functional Bureau Strategic Objective 1.1: Recruit and hire a highly qualified workforce from all segments of society.

A.2. Program Description

The Pickering Fellowship provides outstanding candidates entering graduate school with funding to assist in the completion of a two-year master's degree in an area relevant to the Foreign Service of the Department of State. Fellows complete a domestic internship at an office of the Department of State in Washington D.C. and an overseas summer development experience at a U.S embassy or consulate. In addition, Fellows receive mentoring from a Foreign Service Officer and professional

development training during the program. Fellows who successfully complete the fellowship program and Foreign Service entry requirements receive appointments as Foreign Service Officers, in accordance with applicable law and State Department policy. Fellows are obligated to complete a minimum of five years of service as a Foreign Service Generalist. Fellows who do not successfully complete the fellowship program and the subsequent five-year service obligation may be subject to a reimbursement obligation.

This award will provide for the selection of 45 fellows and will cover approved program expenses for the program period. Recipient will be advised of the final number of fellows prior to the selection cycle. The current model allocates: 1) up to \$24,000 per academic year per Fellow for actual expenses for tuition and mandatory fees during the first and second years of graduate school, 2) a stipend for up to \$18,000 per academic year, for each of the two years of graduate study to help cover room and board, books/laboratory fees, other academic fees not covered by tuition, and travel between the Fellow's residence and the academic institution and 3) up to \$11,000 per summer for costs related to the summer domestic internship and overseas summer development experience— stipend, housing during the domestic internship, domestic and overseas internship travel, baggage fees, visa fees, mandatory inoculation fees, and emergency medical evacuation insurance.

Fellowship Applicant Criteria

The Pickering Graduate Fellowship Program requirements include: 1) proof of US citizenship at time of application; 2) seeking admission to a two-year full time master's degree program for the following academic year (fall entrance) in selected fields of study representing the needs of the Department including public policy, public administration, international relations, business administration, economics, history, political science, communications, foreign languages, management science, and organizational development/leadership (degrees must have an international component); 3) minimum 3.2 undergraduate grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale; and 4) in addition to outstanding leadership and academic achievement, demonstration of financial need.

A.3. Program Goals

- Contribute to a Foreign Service workforce that is “representative of the American people.”¹.

¹ Foreign Service Act of 1980, Section 101(a)(4).

- Develop new talent for the Department of State’s Foreign Service at the graduate level; individuals who are dedicated to pursuing Foreign Service careers and can effectively “respond to the complex challenges of modern diplomacy and international relations,”² and can “provide the highest caliber of representation”³ for America’s interests abroad.
- Advance the Department’s diversity goals.

A.4. Program Objectives

- Attract and recruit highly talented and qualified candidates who represent the cultural, social, ethnic, racial, gender, and geographic diversity of the United States to a Foreign Service career in the U.S. Department of State through a program of educational support and professional development.
- Provide candidates and fellows with information on the service elements, benefits, challenges, and requirements of a Foreign Service career.
- Provide candidates and fellows with information on the benefits and obligations of the fellowship and need to complete Foreign Service entry requirements including obtaining and maintaining required clearances (security and suitability), meeting the minimum medical qualification standard, taking the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT), and passing the Foreign Service Officer Assessment (FSOA).
- Provide funding to assist fellows towards completing graduate degrees in academic disciplines representing the skill needs of the Department’s Foreign Service.
- Enhance fellows’ understanding of U.S. foreign policy and the work and lifestyle of the Foreign Service through a domestic internship in Washington D.C. and an overseas summer development experience at an embassy, consulate, or mission.
- Provide fellows with mentoring and professional development training to expose them to information that will help to prepare them to be successful

² FSA 1980, 101(a)(3).

³ FSA 1980, Sec. 101(b)(10).

Foreign Service Officers. Emphasis will be placed on the critical contributions of all five career tracks to the Department's mission to assist fellows with career track selection.

- Administer the program in a strategic and efficient way that produces the intended results.

A.5. Expected Outcomes

Based on the goals and objectives of the program, expected results include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recruitment activities will target diverse candidates and institutions across the United States and highlight the Department of State's commitment to building a workforce that represents the broad and inclusive elements of our nation's diversity.
- The applicant pool will represent ethnic, racial, gender, social, and geographic diversity.
- Candidates' knowledge of the benefits, challenges, and requirements of a Foreign Service career will increase.
- 45 fellows will be selected through a highly competitive nationwide selection process.
- Fellows will be prepared for careers with the Department of State as Foreign Service Generalists through a program that includes financial assistance towards the completion of a two-year master's degree, mentoring, internship, summer development experience, and professional development.
- Fellows will complete graduate degrees in academic disciplines representing the skill needs of the Department's Foreign Service.
- Fellows will complete Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT), Foreign Service Officer Assessment (FSOA), medical review, security clearance, and

suitability clearance requirements as outlined in the fellowship agreement in a timely manner.

- Participant surveys will indicate successful to fully successful performance ratings on delivery and impact of program elements - orientation, financial assistance towards the completion of a two-year master's degree, professional development training, internship/summer development experience support, and mentoring.
- The program will be administered in a cost-effective manner, resources will be matched to program objectives, and all program elements will be completed within budget.

A.6. Performance Indicators

Performance indicators should include but are not limited to the following:

- Demographics of the applicants including information on race, ethnicity, gender, geographic origin, disability, and financial need
- Number of recruitment events held during which information was shared with applicants about the benefits and obligations of the Fellowship, Foreign Service entry requirements, Foreign Service career tracks, and the benefits and challenges associated with a Foreign Service career
- Number of recruitment events held at Minority-Serving Institutions, public universities and colleges, major research universities, liberal arts colleges, and major community colleges
- Number of recruitment events held that target candidates with an interest in management, consular and economic work
- Number of applicants
- Effectiveness of program elements in preparing Fellows for Foreign Service careers and increasing their knowledge of U.S. foreign policy and the work and lifestyle of the Foreign Service:
 - Assessed through participant surveys on program elements - orientation, professional development training, internship, summer development experience, and mentoring

- Percent of Fellows indicating an increase in their understanding of the five Foreign Service career tracks
- Percent of Fellows indicating successful to fully successful performance ratings on delivery program elements - orientation, financial assistance towards the completion of a two-year master's degree, professional development training, internship/summer development experience support, and mentoring
- Number of Fellows completing the program requirements – including:
 - graduate degree in a discipline representing the skill needs of the Foreign Service
 - medical review and security and suitability clearances in a timely manner
 - taking the FSOA/FSOT as outlined in the Fellowship agreement in a timely manner
- Number of Fellows matched with Foreign Service mentors by the start of their first semester of graduate school
- Number of quarterly one-on-one mentoring sessions held with Fellows
- Attrition and retention rates of the cohort
- Program elements completed on time and within budget

A.7. Main Activities

The attached Scope of Work (SOW) outlines main activities of the program and the Recipient's responsibilities.

The Recipient must have sufficient staff with relevant qualifications. There is a preference for staff to have knowledge of the Department's Foreign Service career system and/or diversity recruitment experience. The Recipient is advised to designate sufficient staff to liaise with GTM/TAC and the Grants Office on all aspects of the program.

A.8. Substantial Involvement

GTM/TAC anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement. The distinction between grants and cooperative agreements revolves around the existence of "substantial involvement." Cooperative agreements require greater Federal government participation in the project. GTM/TAC will undertake reasonable and

programmatically necessary substantial involvement. Substantial involvement areas include, but are not limited to:

- Active participation and collaboration with the recipient on program implementation.
- Review and approval all program policies, program guidelines, and materials.

Specific areas of substantial involvement are included in the **attached SOW and will be** outlined in the final Agreement. The final determination on award mechanism will be made by the Grants Officer.

A.9. Non-Competitive Solicitation

Pending successful implementation of the program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, GTM/TAC may make use of a sole source solicitation agreement for a period of two additional years before openly competing the program again. As each year adds a new cohort of fellows to the program, applicants will need to demonstrate the ability to handle multiple years of cohorts.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1. Available Funding

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Foreign Relations Authorization Act FY1990 and 1991, Public Law 101-246, 101st Congress, 104 STAT.42 Section 47 (February 16, 1990). It states, “The Secretary of State may make grants to post-secondary educational institutions or students for the purpose of increasing the level of knowledge and awareness of, and interest in employment with the Foreign Service, consistent with section 105 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. To the extent possible, the Secretary shall give special emphasis to promoting such knowledge and awareness of, and interest in employment with the Foreign Service among students.”

Applicants can submit one application in response to the NOFO. If more than one application is submitted by an organization, only the first application received, and time stamped by grants.gov will be reviewed for eligibility.

The Department of State reserves the right to (a) fund any or none of the applications received; (b) reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the budget in accordance with bureau proprieties and the availability of funds.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

B.2. Award Management

The successful applicant will need to routinely collaborate with GTM/TAC through regular meetings and conference calls to discuss progress, challenges, emerging topics, etc. The successful applicant must ensure that all funds are used in a manner consistent with any applicable restrictions on funding. See D5 below for funding restrictions.

SECTION C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants:

Preference will be given to organizations with at least three years of experience in administering a program of this size, nature, and complexity.

C.2. Cost-Sharing or Matching

The non-Federal share of costs, frequently called “cost share” or “matching costs”, refers to that portion of the project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government. This may include cash and third-party in-kind contributions. These costs must reflect the realistic capacity of the applicants and any third-party contributors.

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility factor or requirement for this NOFO and providing cost share will **not** result in a more

favorable competitive ranking. Per 2 CFR §200.306, items that are proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR §200, Subpart E—Costs Principles.

Voluntary cost-share: Should the applicant choose to contribute voluntary cost-share, in the event the applicant does not meet the minimum amount of the voluntary cost-sharing stipulated in the applicant’s budget, DOS contribution may be reduced in proportion to the Applicant’s contribution.

C.3. Other Eligibility Criteria

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management \(sam.gov\)](#) 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.” Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in sam.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms, kits, or other materials needed to apply on [grants.gov](#) under the announcement title “2025 Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program,” funding opportunity number “SFOP0010282.” Please contact the GTM/TAC point of contact listed in Section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note that reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Proposals packages must adhere to the attached Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Proposal submissions that do not meet all the requirements outlined in this NOFO and the PSI will be deemed technically ineligible. To ensure that all

applications receive a balanced evaluation, the review panel will review from the first page of each section up to the page limit and no further.

Complete applications must include the following:

1. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B forms (OPTIONAL but strongly encourage for FPE/PIOs)
2. Organizations that engage in lobbying the U.S. government, including Congress, or pay for another entity to lobby on their behalf, are also required to complete the SF-LLL "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" form (only if applicable).
3. Cover Page/Executive Summary
4. Proposal Narrative
5. Budget Documents (two (2) component submission requirement)
6. Program Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative and Plan
7. Key Personnel
8. Timeline
9. Attachments, (if applicable):
 - CVs of Key Personnel

D.3. Unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management ([sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov))

The Unique Entity Identifier (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. www.sam.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated www.sam.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in [sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov) **before submitting an application**. GTM/TAC may **not** review applications from or make awards to applicants that have not completed all applicable UEI and SAM.gov requirements.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before the award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

UEI is assigned by sam.gov assigned to organizations that have to register/or renew their sam.gov registration.

Note: The process of obtaining a sam.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible. Numerous errors require correction, such as an address mismatch, and can delay final registration. If the application is not corrected within 90 calendar days of original registration/or renewal submission, it will be automatically deleted, and the organization will need to re-start the process.

- 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). Organizations **based outside of the United States** and do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS, but they do need a UEI number prior to registering in sam.gov. **Please note that as of November 2022, newly** registering organizations based outside of the U.S. that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense awards are no longer required to have CAGE and NCAGE codes.

All prime organizations must also continue to maintain active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by a Federal award agency. SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov and to maintain that active registration. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements at the time of application, the applicant may be deemed technically ineligible to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Note: SAM.gov is NOT the same as SAMS/MyGrants. It is free to register in both systems, but the registration processes are different.

Information is included on the SAM.gov website to help international

registrations: Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA's website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change and currently being updated. Applicants should review the website frequently for the most up-to-date guidance.

The attached "UEI and SAM.gov FAQ updated 021623" is a resource provided by the grants policy office. Any content shown from SAM.gov is not owned by the Department of State. This guidance and instruction are to the best of our knowledge based at the time of posting this solicitation. Where guidance in this attachment differs from the SAM.gov website, SAM.gov prevails and the applicant is encouraged to seek and document clarity provided by the SAM.gov helpdesk.

D.3.1 Exemptions

An exemption from these requirements may be permitted under the following circumstances:

- Recipient is a foreign organization receiving an award that will be performed outside the United States valued at less than \$25,000, if the Grants Officer deems it to be impractical for the entity to obtain a UEI or register in SAM.gov.
- The recipient is an overseas school and does not currently have a UEI number.
- The award relates to a classified or national security matter.
- The recipient's identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or the beneficiary being served by the recipient.
- There are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a UEI and completing SAM registration prior to receiving the award. These circumstances are identified in the justification below and the recipient will be

required to register within 30 days of the award date in accordance with 2 CFR 25.

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.

D.4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), on 24, April, 2024, on [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) under the announcement title “2025 Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program,” “Funding Opportunity Number SFOP0010282.”

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) and that an application has been received by the system in its entirety. [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered. Applicants should not expect a notification upon GTM/TAC receiving their application.

GTM/TAC bears no responsibility for disqualification that results from applicants not being registered before the due date, for registrations errors in either system, or other errors in the application process.

D.5. Funding Limitations, Restrictions, and Other Considerations

GTM/TAC will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. Please refer the link for Foreign Terrorist Organizations: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>. Consistent with Department guidance on State Funding and the Risks of Terrorist Financing, for all State Department funded programs and requirements, Department bureaus must assess the likelihood that the funds or Department funded activities, goods, services, training, expert advice or assistance, or other benefits to be provided, could inadvertently or incidentally benefit terrorist organizations or their members or supporters, and put in place appropriate risk mitigation measures to mitigate such risk. In accordance with 14 FAM 247, and consistent with the 2 FAM 050, Counterterrorism (CT) name-check vetting may be performed in countries and programs designated by the Department.

Unallowable Costs

The following activities and costs are not covered under this announcement (this list is NOT exhaustive):

- Construction or renovations is not an allowable activity under this award;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the applicant organization;
- Projects seeking funds for personal use;
- Administration of a project that will make a profit;
- Expenses incurred before or after the specified dates of award period of performance (unless prior written approval is received);
- Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities, and any associated costs, are unallowable, except where specific costs that might otherwise be considered entertainment have a

programmatic purpose and are authorized either in the approved budget for the federal award or with prior written approval of the Grants Officer.

Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction: In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

- (1) Was “convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or
- (2) Has any “unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.”

For the purposes of Section 7073, it is the Department of State’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the U.S. Government.

Organizations should be cognizant of these restrictions when developing project proposals. Funding restrictions will require appropriate due diligence of program beneficiaries and collaboration with GTM/TAC to ensure compliance with these restrictions. Program beneficiaries subject to due diligence vetting will include any individuals or entities that are beneficiaries of foreign assistance funding or support. Due diligence vetting will include a review of open-source materials.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E1. Proposal Review Criteria

GTM/TAC review panel will evaluate each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications. Please use the below criteria as a reference, but **do not structure your application according to the sub-sections**.

Applications should contain the applicant's best terms from both cost and technical standpoints. The implementing partners (sub-recipients) of the primary Recipient will be subject to Department of State approval.

1. 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.

2. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives (20 points):

Proposals should be original, well-defined and relevant to the goals of the Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the applicant will meet the program's objectives. Applicants should propose activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation. The applicant should address how the program will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders. Program logic is sound showing plausible pathways to achieve program outcomes.

3. Organizational Capacity and Record of Performance (20 points):

Applicant must provide evidence of its past performance and management of programs of comparable complexity and size. Proposals should include the necessary personnel and institution resources to achieve the program results.

The organization should have adequate staffing to manage the proposed project (staffing must include a fully dedicated senior level program manager with decision making authority; fully dedicated program coordinator/assistant; and a full or part time recruitment staff with diversity recruitment experience and/or knowledge of the Department of State's Foreign Service).

4. Financial Capacity and Cost Effectiveness (15 points):

The organization has internal controls in place to manage federal funds. The budget justification is detailed, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. 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. In addition, it is recommended that the budget narrative demonstrate the applicant's ability to economize and plan effectively. Cost-share is voluntary and will not be used as a factor to evaluate the submission.

5. Monitoring & Evaluating and Sustainability (15 points):

Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key performance 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. The applicant clearly details how activities will result in benefits that will continue beyond the funding period.

6. Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) (10 points):

Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation. Proposals should have a clearly articulated DEIA plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEIA.

E.2. Review and Selection Process

The Department of State is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in section C and have submitted all required documents outlined in section D. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

All applications that are deemed eligible will move forward to the Merit Review Panel consisting of U.S. government subject matter experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. GTM/TAC reserves the right to request the assistance of non-US government Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if appropriate to the solicitation. Panel Reviewers will determine scores based on the strengths and weaknesses of the afore-mentioned categories and for consistency with the program goals and objectives outlined in this NOFO. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory. Panel Reviewers may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of US Government funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

GTM/TAC reserves the right to make an award based on the initial application received with or without discussion or negotiations. Therefore, applications should contain the Applicants' best terms from both cost and technical standpoints.

Final selection authority resides with GTM/TAC senior level official. Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets the Department of State's programmatic goals and objectives and how it supports the Department's overarching policy priorities.

E.3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly FAPIIS)

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

The applicant, at its option, may review information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through www.sam.gov. Currently, federal agencies create integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

The Department of State will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with or support to individuals or organizations associated with terrorism.

- Proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative or a designate to terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker, including elected members of government, will NOT be considered. This provision must be included in any sub-awards/sub-contracts issued under this award.
- U.S. Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination

with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

- Applicants under DOS-funded projects are responsible for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for project participants.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Federal Award Notices

GTM/TAC will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will receive a letter electronically via email requesting that the applicant respond to review panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the review panel's conditions and recommendations, Congressional Notification requirements, registration in required systems; and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by GTM/TAC or the Department's warranted Grants Officer.

Additional information that successful applicants may be required to submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel and awarding bureau;
- Completion of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving funding for the first time or requested by the Grants Officer;
- If applicable, submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System (PMS) managed by the Department of Health and

Human Services if receiving funding for the first time. PMS registration is bureau-specific;

- Other requested information or documents included in this funding opportunity or subsequent communications with the recommended applicant prior to issuance of a Federal award.

The Grants Officer is the U.S. Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State, Procurement Executive, to award and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The notice of Federal award signed by the Grants Officer is the sole authorizing document. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the organization's designated Authorizing Official via SAMS/MyGrants to be electronically counter signed in the system.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), it is U.S. Department of State policy **not** to award profit under assistance instruments.

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS) or by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form. Final determination will be made in conjunction with the Grants Officer. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis. Instructions for requesting payments via PMS are available at: <https://pms.psc.gov/>. Instructions for requesting payments via SF-270 are available at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html>.

2 CFR §200.501 requires domestic/US non-federal entities that expend \$750,000, or more, in federal assistance during organization's fiscal year to have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year. In addition, the entity must report the collected audit data elements on the form SF-SAC and submit it to the FAC. Any

findings such as material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or material noncompliance are reported on the SF-SAC.

F.2. 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:

- [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 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:

- The President's September 2, 2020 memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities*;
- *Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence* (E.O. 13933); and
- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:

- Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
- Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
- 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 in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

F.3. Reporting

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report. Applicants should be aware that GTM/TAC awards will require that all reports (financial and progress) are uploaded to the grant file in SAMS/MyGrants on a quarterly basis.

Financial Reports

The Recipient will be required to submit quarterly financial reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) throughout the project period, using form SF-425, the Federal Financial Report form. If payment is made through the Payment Management System, all financial reports must be submitted electronically

through the Payment Management System. The Recipient will also be required to upload to SAMS/MyGrants a pdf version of all financial reports (Federal Financial report) they have submitted in the Payment Management System. Form (SF-425) can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1>

Program Reporting

The Recipient will be required to submit quarterly narrative progress reports (unless stipulated otherwise in the final Agreement) throughout the project period to the award file in SAMS/MyGrants.

Narrative progress reports should reflect continued focus on measuring the project's progress in achieving the overarching. Explain and evaluate how activities reflect progress toward expected outcome and outcomes towards achieving objectives. In addition, attach the M&E Tracker, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators. Reports should also include an update on expenditures during the quarter. Where relevant, progress reports should also include the following:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;
- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why activities have not been conducted or deliverables were not met in accordance with the timeline;

- Proposed activities for the next quarter; and,
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

Final Reporting

A final summary financial report (FFR) and a final summary progress report(PPR) will be due no later than 120 calendar days after the end date of the award. The Final PPR shall include the following elements: executive summary, successes, outcomes, best practices, how the project addresses gender issues and marginalized communities, how the project will be sustained. Additional guidance may be provided prior to the award end date.

NOTE: Delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipient's ability to receive future U.S. government funds. GTM/TAC reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period of performance.

It is the Department of State policy that English is the official language of all award documents. If reports or any other supporting documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, it must be stated in each version that the English language version is the controlling version. U.S. dollar is the controlling currency. Financial reports must be submitted in U.S. dollars.

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](#).

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

G.1. Contacts

For technical submission questions related to this NOFO, please contact:
Christa George

Pickering/Rangel Program Manager
Bureau of Global Talent Management
Talent Acquisition Directorate
GeorgeCM@state.gov

For assistance with Grants.gov accounts and technical issues related to using the system, please call the Contact Center at +1 (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

For a list of federal holidays visit:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/>

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

G.2. Question Submission Deadline

To maintain fairness and transparency in competition, GTM/TAC will not answer questions related to proposal concept or design. All questions must be submitted via email to contact listed in G.1. by 11:59 PM EST by **15, April 2024**. GTM/TAC will create a document of submitted questions with answers and post it in grants.gov. Questions and answers will be posted within 1-2 business days from the date of receipt. Prospective applicants are advised to regularly review the announcement page in grants.gov for any updates.

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any GTM/TAC representative. Explanatory information provided by GTM/TAC that contradicts this language will not be binding. 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.

H.1. Conflict of Interest

In accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy, applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.

H.2. Freedom of Information Act

Applicants should be aware that GTM/TAC understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that GTM/TAC cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

H.3. Marking Policy

Applicants are advised that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal assistance awards are subject to the State Department's Marking Policy. More information on this policy can be found in Section N of the [Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#).

H.4. Evaluation Policy

Applicants are advised that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal assistance awards are subject to the Department of State Evaluation Policy. More information on this policy can be found here: [Department of State Managing for Results](#).

H.5. Monitoring Site Visits

A monitoring site visit, at least once during the lifetime of an award, may be conducted by Department of State personnel. The site visit is conducted to gather

additional information on the recipient's ability to properly implement the project, manage DOS funds and share substantiating document for programmatic and financial reporting. Specifically, the site visit may involve the review of the programmatic progress (progress on activities, sub-recipient/consultant work, etc.) as well as administrative and financial management controls. This may include observing classroom modules virtually or in person and visit applicant's headquarters and regional offices to observe operations.

H.6. Privacy Disclosure

DOS understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that DOS cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

H.7. Mandatory disclosures (2 CFR 200.113)

Non-federal entity, applicant or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. Non-federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in Appendix XII of the 2 CFR 200—Award Terms and Conditions for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters -- are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to www.sam.gov. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in §200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

H.8. Background Information on the Bureau of Global Talent Management

The Bureau of Global Talent Management strives to recruit, retain, and sustain a diverse, talented, and inclusive workforce that is prepared to advance U.S. national security interests and American values in every corner of the world. Under the leadership of the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global

Talent, the Bureau of Global Talent Management leads the recruitment, assignment, and career development processes to build an engaged and effective workforce.

Additional background information on the Bureau of Global Talent Management and its efforts can be found on <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-management/bureau-of-global-talent-management/>.