

**United States Department of State
Notice of Funding Opportunity:**

**UNDERSTANDING CHINA'S INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS AND
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION**

Announcement Type: Grant – initial

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0002260

Application Deadline: 11:59 p.m. United States Eastern Time August 18, 2017

CFDA: 19.040, Public Diplomacy Programs

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Department of State (the Department) is pleased to announce through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) an open competition for a grant award. The Department invites U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations to submit *proposals to conduct, compile, analyze, submit, and present in two or more public forums research on the scope and resource commitments of China's public diplomacy in Asia*. The Department will award up to \$650,000 contingent on funding availability.

Project administration and policy perspective:

The United States engages in public diplomacy to support foreign policy, advance national interests, and enhance national security by understanding foreign publics and informing them about the United States, thereby fostering, expanding, and strengthening relationships between the United States and global citizenry.

The United States employs a multi-disciplinary approach to public diplomacy based on Congressional mandates that incorporate international engagement, educational exchanges, and information platforms. English-language teaching, educational advising, and cultural programs encourage and contribute to conversations that matter to host-country participants and the American public alike. Social media platforms amplify these personal engagements. The best-known U.S. public diplomacy programs include the Fulbright Program, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), and the Young Southeast Asian Leadership Initiative. Many leaders throughout the region are alumni of either the IVLP or Fulbright Programs. Their prior experiences help forge a lasting bond and an understanding of the United States that resists inaccurate narratives and eases cross-cultural communication.

Project purpose/reasoning:

The United States government, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the public sector would benefit from a comprehensive understanding of China's state-sponsored public outreach and information campaigns in Asia. This project seeks to capture all of China's state-sponsored activities in a single report.

Project goals

- Goal 1. The scope of Chinese state-supported public diplomacy in East Asia and the Pacific will be succinctly and comprehensively expressed.
- Goal 2. China's public diplomacy resource allocation will be quantified within a reasonable approximation in both U.S. dollar and Chinese yuan terms.

Project Outputs

1. The grantee will produce a comprehensive report of its findings and print at least 2,000 copies for no-cost public distribution. This report should be no more than 40 pages, exclusive of appendices.
2. The complete report will be available in digital format publicly accessible via the Internet.
3. The grantee will include in its report at least three case studies of Chinese public diplomacy in representative Asia-Pacific countries.
4. At least two public forums presenting the grantee's research will take place, one in Asia (location to be determined), the other in Washington, DC.

Funding Priorities

Proposals must describe how each of the following activities will be undertaken:

- Presentation: Proposals should include a plan for public presentations of the report requested in this NOFO, at least one in Asia and one in Washington, DC. These presentations should occur in a professional format similar to that in which other academic- and professional-level forums take place. Proposals must include a plan for widely publicizing the conference and any recommendations resulting from it, both within the United States and the East Asian and Pacific region.
- Participation: Proposals should include criteria for determining presenters and participants that are consistent with the goal of encouraging think tanks, specialists, strategic thinkers, and academics to examine China's public diplomacy in Asia. The presenters and participants should include "next generation perspectives." Please include prospective presenters' biographies and/or résumés.
- Travel: Proposals should include in their research plans travel costs associated with both field work and the required case studies. Proposals should include management of travel and lodging logistics for select conference attendees, speakers, and conference staff, as well as the conference venue. Proposals must show how the grantee will identify conference attendees whose travel and lodging logistics will be covered by grant funds. Proposals must show how grant funds will be used to cover the cost of the conference venue, transportation, visas, travel insurance, lodging, and meals or per diem for eligible participants. All travel funded under the grant agreement should be economy class and must comply with Fly America requirements.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State anticipates committing up to \$650,000 in fiscal year 2017 .7 Public Diplomacy funds to support one successful application submitted in response to this NOFO, subject to the availability of funding.

The U.S. Department of State may issue one or more awards resulting from this NOFO to the applicant(s) whose application(s) conforming to this NOFO are the most responsive to the objectives set forth in this NOFO. The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate applications, and (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

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 not under 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.

Applications should request no more than \$650,000. Applicants should include an anticipated award start date on or about October 1, 2017 and the period of performance should not exceed eight (8) months.

The U.S. Department of State anticipates awarding a grant, and expects not to be substantially involved during the implementation of the grant.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

The U.S. Department of State welcomes applications from U.S.-based non-profit organizations/nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and private, public, or state institutions of higher education. Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, for-profit, and foreign entities are not eligible to apply.

C.2 Cost Sharing

Providing cost sharing is not a requirement for this NOFO.

C.3 Other

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM) (www.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 Excluded Parties List System in SAM can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

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 www.grants.gov under the announcement title “Understanding China’s Information Campaigns and Public Diplomacy in Asia” funding opportunity number SFOP0002260. Please contact the point of contact listed in section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note: reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

For all application documents, please ensure:

1. All documents are in English and all costs are in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents. If any documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version);
2. All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
3. All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
4. All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10 point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

Complete applications must include the following:

1. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B, as directed on Grants.gov; completed and signed SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities”(if applicable) (which can be found with the solicitation on Grants.gov); and your organization’s most recent audit (single program audit, if applicable, or standard audit).
2. Table of Contents (not to exceed one (1) page in Microsoft Word) that includes a page numbered contents page, including any attachments.
3. Executive Summary (not to exceed two (2) pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:

- a) The target country/countries and thematic area(s);
 - b) Name and contact information for the project's main point of contact;
 - c) The total amount of funding requested and project length;
 - d) A statement of work or synopsis of the project, including a concise breakdown of the project's objectives, activities, and expected results; and,
 - e) A brief statement on how the project is innovative and will have a demonstrated impact.
4. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed ten (10) pages in Microsoft Word). Please note the ten-page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word or Adobe file, (i.e., Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file).
5. Detailed Line-Item Budget (in Microsoft Excel) that includes three (3) columns including the request to the U.S. Department of State, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see below for more information on budget format). A summary budget should also be included using the Office of Management and Budget approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample). Costs must be in U.S. dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-awardees should be included in additional tabs within the excel workbook.
6. Budget Narrative (in Microsoft Word) that includes substantive explanations and justifications for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, the U.S. Department of State recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed budget. Personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff, base salary, and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should provide additional information that might not be readily apparent in the detailed-line item budget, not simply repeat what is represented numerically in the budget, i.e., salaries are for salaries or travel is for travel.
7. Attachments:
 - a) Information about the team of people who would execute the work, with descriptions of the experiences and skills of each and his/her role in the bidder's organization and in the team
 - b) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan
 - c) Timeline of the overall proposal. Components should include activities, evaluation efforts, and project closeout.
 - d) Additional optional attachments: Attachments may include further timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding (MOUs)/agreement, etc. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the projects implementation (e.g., from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

8. If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a .pdf file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by project and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding and therefore does not count against the submission page limitations. If your proposal involves subawards to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit the applicable NICRA also as a .pdf file. If your organization does not have a NICRA per 2 CFR 200. 414(f) the organization can elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. The budget narrative should indicate what costs will be covered using the 10% de minimis rate.

Please note: the U.S. Department of State retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this NOFO. Additionally, to ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the U.S. State Department Review Panel will review the first page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further.

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

1. Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel;
2. Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award.

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants must have an active registration in SAM (www.sam.gov) prior to submitting an application, must prove a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, formerly referred to as a DUNS number, and must continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by the U.S. government.

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. SAM is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM 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.

SAM 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 and to also maintain its active registration in SAM.

No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR Part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR Part 1989 Comp., p. 235).

The U.S. Department of State may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the U.S. Department of State is ready to make an award, it may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

An exemption from this requirement may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- The applicant's identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on August 18, 2017 by email to www.grants.gov with the subject line "Understanding China's Information Campaigns and Public Diplomacy in Asia FY17"

Submission via email will automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the U.S. Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered unless the U.S. Department of State point of contact listed in section G is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors outside of the applicants' control and is the sole reason for a late submission. Applicants should not expect a notification upon the U.S. Department of State receiving their application.

If ultimately provided with a notification of intent to make a Federal award, applicants typically have two to three weeks to provide additional information and documents requested in the notification of intent. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

The U.S. Department of State will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance.

Federal awards generally will not allow reimbursement of pre-Federal award costs; however, the grants officer may approve pre awards cost on a case by case basis. Generally, construction costs are not allowed under U.S. Department of State awards.

D.6 Other

All application submissions must be emailed to www.grants.gov.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that an application has been received in its entirety. The U.S. Department of State bears no responsibility for applications not received before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission.

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.

Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable solicitation and these instructions.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

Evaluators will judge each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications.

Quality of Project Idea

Applications should be responsive to the NOFO, appropriate in the regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the stated mission.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

A strong application will include a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. A comprehensive monthly work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable results-focused and achievable in a reasonable time frame. Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners have been identified, the U.S. Department of State strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Additionally, applicants should describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any local partners. If applicable, applications should identify target areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and the specific roles of sub-awardees, among other pertinent details. In particularly challenging operating environments, applications should include contingency plans for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan and address any operational or programmatic security concerns and how they will be addressed.

Institution's Record and Capacity

The U.S. Department of State will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives.

Cost Effectiveness

The U.S. Department of State strongly encourages applicants to clearly demonstrate project cost-effectiveness in their application, including examples of leveraging institutional and other resources. However, cost-sharing or other examples of leveraging other resources is not required and does not need to be included in the budget. Inclusion in the budget does not result in additional points awarded during the review process. Budgets however should have low and/or reasonable overhead and administration costs and applicants should provide clear explanations and justifications for these costs in relation to the work involved. All budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate its necessity, appropriateness, and its link to the project objectives.

Please note: If cost-share is included in the budget then the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, the U.S. Department of State's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

Applications should clearly delineate how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant. A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Complete applications will include a detailed plan (both a narrative and table) of how the project's progress and impact will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. Incorporating a well-designed monitoring and evaluation component into a project is one of the most efficient methods of documenting the progress and results (intended and unintended) of a project. Applications should demonstrate the capacity to provide objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes and engage in robust monitoring and assessment of project activities. The quality of the M&E plan will be judged on the narrative explaining how both monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, as well as who will be responsible for those related activities. The M&E plan will also be rated on the M&E performance indicator table. The output and outcome-based performance indicators should not only be separated by project objectives but also should match the objectives, outcomes, and outputs detailed in the logic model. Performance indicators should be clearly defined (i.e., explained how the indicators will be measured and reported) either within the table or with a separate Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (or "PIRS"). For each performance indicator, the table should also include baselines and yearly and cumulative targets, data collection tools, data sources, types of data disaggregation, and frequency of monitoring and evaluation. There should also be metrics to capture how project activities target the most at risk and vulnerable populations or addresses their concerns, where applicable.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

The U.S. Department of State 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 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 panel's conditions and recommendations, being registered in required systems, and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by the U.S. Department of State. Final approval is also contingent on final review and approval by the Department of State's warranted grants officer.

The notice of Federal award signed by the U.S. Department of State's warranted grants officers is the sole authorizing document. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via email to be counter-signed.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities (for more information on these exceptions, see Chapters 5, Federal Assistance to Individuals, and 6, Federal Assistance to Foreign Public Entities Directive.) Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities.

The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/Documents/2015DeptTermsAndConditionsForUSandForeignOrg.pdf>.

F.3 Reporting

Applicants should be aware that the U.S. Department of State awards will require regular financial and progress reporting. These reports must be received quarterly, and fully reflect the performance of the grant toward its goals and objectives and its financial status.

Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Scope of Work (SOW) and in the Monitoring and Evaluation

(M&E) Statement. An assessment of the overall project's impact should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Explanation and evaluation of significant activities of the reporting period and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the M&E plan. In addition, attach the M&E plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators;
- 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 a corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why established goals were not met;
- Project Indicators or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer;
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 90 days after the expiration of the award.

Please 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.

The U.S. Department of State reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period.

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

For technical submission questions related to this solicitation, please contact Kevin Schwartz at SchwartzKM@state.gov.

For a list of federal holidays visit:

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/#url=2015>

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Applicants should be aware that the U.S. Department of State 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 U.S. Department of State cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any U.S. Department of State representative. Explanatory information provided by U.S. Department of State that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The U.S. Department of State reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project evaluation requirements.

This NOFO will appear on www.grants.gov.