

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.601

**Supporting Education in Syria
Opportunity Number: SFOP0008124**

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	May 20, 2021
Deadline for Questions:	June 4, 2021
Application Deadline:	July 15, 2021
Expected Date of Notification:	September 30, 2021
Federal Agency Contact:	NEA-Grants@state.gov

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) aims to support stabilization activities in the education sector in areas liberated from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in northeast Syria, as well as potentially in other non-regime-held areas of Syria, including formal and informal internally displaced person camps. Equitable access to formal, informal, and vocational education services for children, youth, and adults is vital to enable Syrians to begin to return to normalcy and pave the way for Syrians to rebuild their country following a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Education services are also vital components of reintegration and social cohesion efforts. Matriculation and consistent access to education services, coupled with a positive learning environment, contribute to the rebuilding of communities and individual identities, providing hope for a productive future. Inclusive educational opportunities deny extremists the opportunity to inculcate the next generation of Syrians with violent extremist ideologies. Access to education also improves living conditions, helping to reduce further flow of Syrians to neighboring countries in pursuit of opportunities for their children, avoiding a lost generation of children. Continued NEA/AC support for education should build on past and current efforts to: bolster civil society and local governance education oversight bodies; provide training in teaching methodology and psychosocial support to educational staff; and, ensure schools have adequate human capital and supplies to deliver educational services in an equitable, effective and conflict-sensitive manner. Other critical interventions in education can include but are not limited to developing teaching materials/resources as well as light non-construction refurbishment of damaged schools.

All applications must be submitted in English. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal, and should refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in Section VII while drafting all materials.

Eligible Countries and Territories

In this announcement, we seek to support activities in Syria. The project should be implemented from a third country, with a strong justification for why that country was chosen. This award highly recommends a presence in **Berlin, Germany** for operational and donor liaison purposes. NEA/AC requires that applicants be in sound legal standing with appropriate government authorities in the country where the project will be managed at the time of application to this funding opportunity. Key overseas personnel must be co-located, while consideration should be taken for minimizing the need for expatriate and/or Third-Country National staff and operational costs. Award recipients will be required to maintain legal standing throughout the life of the award, including for any sub-grant made under its auspices. **Please note: Applications that focus on programmatic activities in countries other than Syria will NOT be considered.**

Background Information about NEA/AC

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Federal assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. NEA/AC works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

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APPENDIX 1— Budget Sample Template and Budget Narrative Guidance

APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) aims to support stabilization activities in areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as well as those in non-regime-held areas of Syria. Integral to stabilization efforts is improved equitable access for Syrians to moderate, quality education services for children and youth as well as access to technical and vocational education for out-of-work youth and young adults. Quality education services are critical to denying extremists the space to indoctrinate the next generation of Syrians with violent extremist ideologies, as well as to help reduce the flow of further Syrians to neighboring countries in pursuit of opportunities for their children in order to avoid a lost generation.

Proposals should outline approaches to continue ongoing U.S. efforts to: support and develop the capacity of the local education providers, education oversight bodies, and civil society organizations to more effectively manage education; develop innovative approaches to ensure students are recognized for their learning gains; provide teacher training to ensure quality and grade-appropriate education is provided in classrooms; support light refurbishments of damaged schools; and, provide psychosocial support and training to children, teachers, and community members to address the trauma epidemic in a country in which over 80% of children have been affected by conflict (according to UNICEF).

Current program activities are focused in northeast Syria in Raqqa and Deir Ezzor governorates. However, previous activities included areas of northwest Syria. Project proposals should focus primarily on implementation in Raqqa and Deir Ezzor governorates, but also consider potential expansion in Hassakeh Governorate as well as other non-regime-held areas of Syria as the situation permits.

Applicants must incorporate plans on how their proposals will de-conflict and coordinate with ongoing civilian assistance efforts being undertaken by the United States and other international donors. In particular, all applicants must take into consideration that award activities will be coordinated through the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) – a U.S. government assistance coordination platform based in Turkey. Each applicant must present a plan on how it will be flexible and responsive to time-sensitive requirements; monitor and evaluate activities inside Syria; and coordinate activities with NEA/AC and other relevant U.S. government entities, as well as international donors. Applicants should consider the context of Syria's dynamic and challenging operating environment in their proposals, especially in terms of program implementation and monitoring. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to conduct baseline and needs assessments of potential Syrian beneficiaries. The award will be issued as a cooperative agreement, with substantial involvement from START and NEA/AC in the recipient's implementation of this project. As such, START and NEA/AC will work closely with the recipient and provide direction regarding the design and development of programming as well as guidance on intended beneficiaries of assistance efforts; such direction will include, but not be limited to, development of program activities and the selection of subrecipient organizations.

Applicants must have experience implementing projects in conflict zones similar to Syria. Ideally this will include a demonstrated ability to deliver cash cross-border; provide technical assistance and training in areas with volatile security conditions; manage education projects in complex political environments; produce analytical research on conflict and education dynamics; manage monitoring and evaluation efforts; and, adapt programming based on evaluation and the market needs of the area, such as tailoring vocational training for youth to the highest demand fields.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Over ten years of brutal conflict in Syria has devastated the education system in Syria— creating a lost generation of youth who have known nothing but war. The collapse in education is most profound in areas hit hardest by violence, such as Aleppo, Idlib, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, and Hassakeh – areas which historically witnessed lower numbers of literacy rates for Syria even prior to the conflict. In addition to the decrease in the number of students enrolled, violence has impacted education infrastructure; schools have been destroyed, damaged, or turned into shelters for internally displaced people. Classrooms are overcrowded and insufficient supplies exist to accommodate student demand. A lack of reliable statistics on school-aged children also makes it difficult to reach vulnerable populations who remain out of school.

Three years after liberation from ISIS, education remains one of the top three priorities for local populations in northeast Syria. Without access to primary and secondary education, Syrian youth face increased risk for recruitment by violent extremists. Secular education and psychosocial support mechanisms are critical tools to begin to address the psychological damage incurred, as well as to prepare the next generation of citizens, leaders, and civic actors to assist in mending the country once there is a political solution to the conflict.

The protracted nature of the Syrian conflict has led to deteriorating educational and economic opportunities. Successful proposals will consider the lack of educational accreditation in Syria outside of the 9th and 12th grade exams administered by the Ministry of Education and include innovative approaches to tackle the issue despite inherent challenges. Additionally, significant numbers of students missed too many years within the educational system for resumed education services to properly prepare them to succeed. As a result, technical and vocational training programs are necessary to equip young adults with requisite skills. Market studies and assessments will be necessary to prepare these programs and should consider how apprenticeships can be incorporated to ensure students are fully prepared to take advantage of economic opportunities.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful proposal will demonstrate how to best set the stage for a Syria that will eventually have functioning school systems in non-regime-held areas, enabling youth to obtain an education that prepares students for higher education or the ability to access economic and vocational opportunities. Proposed project activities should achieve the following objectives:

1. Increase equitable access to educational opportunities to reduce the risk that youth will be recruited to join violent extremist groups and/or be forced to migrate outside of Syria to pursue opportunities;
2. Provide teachers and caregivers with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide psychosocial support to youth to address trauma and help overcome fear and personal security concerns;
3. Strengthen the capacity of education authorities/supervisory bodies, other education actors, and child protection officers to deliver vital education services;
4. Incorporate consideration of a unified education system (K-12) in Syria in all relevant programming in order to contribute to broader reintegration of the Syrian education system;
5. Support education that promotes inclusivity, generates safe spaces, and alternatives to radicalized education as a way to expel violent extremists from communities and effectively counter violent extremists' ideologies;
6. Provide safe and adequate school structures for children including water, sanitation, and health facilities;
7. Provide technical and vocational education training (TVET) to out-of-school youths and out-of-work young adults, especially for women in female-headed households to secure market-driven skills to find employment;
8. Evaluate impact of all training in preparing students for higher level education, adjusting trainings as necessary; and
9. Develop pilot programs related to education, reintegration and social cohesion for youth, especially considering expansion into Hassakeh Governorate and potentially non-regime-held areas of northwest Syria if the security situation permits.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

This solicitation invites applications that support provision of quality, inclusive education in non-regime-held areas of Syria, including those liberated from ISIS. Proposals should outline approaches to: support and develop the capacity of the local education providers, education oversight bodies, and civil society organizations to more effectively manage education; ensure students are recognized for their learning gains; provide teacher training to ensure quality and grade-appropriate education is provided in classrooms; conduct light refurbishment of damaged schools; and, provide psychosocial support and training to children, teachers, and community members to address the trauma epidemic.

The successful applicant is expected to engage local contacts and authorities to better understand the statistics on out-of-school children in non-regime-controlled areas and develop materials to encourage those students to take advantage of education opportunities, where available. In addition, it is expected that activities will strengthen relevant education oversight bodies through capacity building in administration, finance, and monitoring, as well as empowering them to be respond to the educational needs of the teachers and school administrators.

Projects must include:

- a. Teacher training based on local needs assessments;

- b. Development of teaching materials especially related to remedial education and psychosocial training activities;
- c. Psychosocial training and support activities for students in grades 1-12, teachers, parents, and community members;
- d. Technical and Vocational Education Training – including market research to identify viable areas for employment, curriculum development, review of materials and employability of graduates, and linkages to apprenticeships;
- e. Light, non-construction school rehabilitation (e.g. replacing windows, doors and minor repairs), with a particular focus on WASH facilities to limit the spread of infectious diseases and also encourage female students to remain in school;
- f. Capacity building activities for local education authorities to better manage education; and,
- g. A rigorous results-based monitoring plan with demonstrated feedback loops to show tangible outputs and outcomes of the project.

NEA/AC will implement this project in collaboration with other international donor governments supporting education in Syria.

NEA/AC will require weekly reporting on project activities and standard quarterly reporting (at a minimum) in addition to ad hoc reporting requests.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

D. GENDER INTEGRATION

NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address gender considerations, ensuring that both men and women (boys and girls) benefit from support where applicable, and that gender awareness is a built-in component of project activities. This should be documented through gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the project's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programming should view the training video located here:

https://encompassworld.com/elearningfiles/DOS/DOS_Gender_Integration_E-Course/story_html5.html

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model or a theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II. Please see Section VI below for more information.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams to create a results monitoring plan (RMP) based on the proposed logic model/theory of change to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design, and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

Below is a list of U.S. Department of State standard education, social service, and workforce development indicators for foreign assistance that are commonly used for measuring and reporting program results. Not all of the indicators below will be applicable to the proposed project, though the applicant is encouraged to use them where relevant in the development of the logic model. NEA/AC's M&E team will work with the successful applicant on finalizing indicators and an RMP that will be utilized for the negotiated award.

Education and Social Service Indicators

- ES.1-1 Percent of learners who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of grade 2 with USG assistance
- ES.1-2 Percent of learners attaining minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of primary school (or grade 6, whichever comes sooner) with USG assistance
- ES.1-3 Number of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance
- ES.1-4 Number of learners in secondary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance
- ES.1-6 Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance
- ES.1-12 Number of education administrators and officials who complete professional development activities with USG assistance
- ES.1-13 Number of parent teacher associations (PTAs) or community governance structures engaged in primary or secondary education supported with USG assistance
- ES.1-14 Number of classrooms built or repaired with USG assistance
- ES.1-46 Percent of individuals who transition to further education or training following participation in USG-assisted programs
- ES.1-47 Percent of learners with a disability targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of grade 2
- ES.1-48 Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance with an increase of at least one proficiency level in reading at the end of grade 2

- ES.1-50 Number of public and private schools receiving USG assistance
- ES.1-51 Number of learning environments supported by USG assistance that have improved safety, according to locally-defined criteria
- ES.1-53 Number of learners in pre-primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance
- ES.1-54 Percent of individuals with improved reading skills following participation in USG-assisted programs
- ES.1-55 Percent of primary-grade learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations

Workforce Development Indicators

- EG.6.13 Percent of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs
- EG.6-14 Percent of individuals who complete USG-assisted workforce development programs

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	One (1)
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$18,000,000
Estimated Base Year Award Ceiling:	\$6,000,000
Estimated Base Year Award Floor:	\$3,000,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged; NOT Required
Estimated Length of Project Period:	One to Three (1-3) years

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$18,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately one (1) award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for one base year with the potential to be awarded an additional two option years, depending on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2021.

NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

Non-Competing Continuation

Continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; grantee's progress in meeting grant requirements, including timely submission of required reports and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award; timely submission of a request for additional funding; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

Pending successful implementation of this project for the initial estimated length of time as indicated above, and pending the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, NEA/AC may extend this grant for additional time, not to exceed a three year total project period. Please note that this NOFO requires that applicants submit additional budget materials to plan for potential out-years of non-competing continuations. See Section VI Application and Submission Information for more details.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC and START (field team) and will be involved in the project and management performance of this cooperative agreement through consultation and technical collaboration on project activities. It is expected that the recipient will remain adaptable to the requests of both NEA/AC and START team members.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

Examples of NEA/AC responsibilities for a cooperative agreement may include:

- Collaboration in establishing annual project objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in identifying and developing opportunities to expand programming;
- Collaboration in identifying and designing on-the-ground activities;
- Collaboration in the creation and development of training materials;
- Selection of local partners to implement activities and project participants; and
- Collaboration in identifying fields for vocational training.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:
U.S. or foreign

- Non-profit organizations;
- For-profit organizations;
- Private, public, or state institutions of higher education;
- Public international organizations; and
- Small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of education in conflict zones in the MENA region.

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

NEA/AC strongly encourages applications from civil society organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region. International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition.**

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region and organizational capacity to implement project components in Syria. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Have experience in conducting risk assessments and monitoring and evaluating projects and sub-recipients in order to document and assess the short- and long-term outcomes of proposed projects.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively work through extensive partnerships with Syria-based education actors and administrative bodies, which are necessary to ensure that all project activities can be implemented quickly.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

Additionally, applicants should:

- Demonstrate expertise in NEA/AC's strategic focus areas of civic engagement and a strong understanding of needs in Syria.
- Demonstrate experience implementing similar projects in Syria or other conflict areas.
- Demonstrate capacity to operate an assistance management project of multiple and diverse activities across Syria.
- Demonstrate experience managing and monitoring a significant number of sub-recipients and/or direct assistance projects. Applications must clearly outline this experience, including total volume (total dollar amount, number of partners, and number of projects), size and length of sub-awards managed, and geographic and thematic focus. If the applicant has

provided capacity-building support to sub-grantees, please indicate the type of support. A sample sub-grant risk assessment and monitoring plan, and sub-award policy/manual, must be provided as part of the proposal.

- Demonstrate in the project and budget narratives how the assistance mechanism will be managed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure compliance with the project objectives and Federal regulations. The successful applicant will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of all sub-recipients, and/or other direct assistance to ensure completion of activities, programmatic efficacy, institutional strengthening, and financial propriety.
- Demonstrate the ability to accomplish the required activities with minimal full-time staffing and without establishing a dedicated local office in Syria.
- Demonstrate the ability to involve local partners.
- Demonstrate the ability to recruit/hire education specialists, especially those working in early-childhood development, psychosocial support, curriculum development, and TVET programming, etc.

A.2. Local Partners

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. **In particular, NEA/AC strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations.**

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

UEI Number

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC) (https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic_manual.html), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant

applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, each applicant must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, an applicant must renew it at least once each year. **If an organization's account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

Log In to complete authentication and create an account. On the My SAM page, select *Entity Registrations* from the sub-navigation menu and select *Register New Entity*.

Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM Quick Start Guide for Grant Registration: https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **12 - 15 business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 866-606-8220 (U.S.) or +1-334-206-7828 (international).

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1 Cost-Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is not an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

C.2 Host Country Legal Compliance

NEA/AC requires that applicants be in sound legal standing with appropriate host government authorities at the time of application to this funding opportunity. If the applicant is not currently based in Berlin, Germany and intends to operate from that location, they should demonstrate the ability to establish a base there in a timely manner following notification of the award. Award recipients will be required to maintain legal standing throughout the life of the award, including for any sub-grant made under its auspices.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one (1) application.** Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b)

Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding. The SF-424B is only required for those applicants who a) have not registered in SAM.gov or b) have not recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019.

If an organization has an active registration in SAM.gov that was either created or updated **on or after 2/2/2019**, then the applicant does **NOT** need to submit the SF-424B because their registration or recertification will have included the necessary information.

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3.

NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlined below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Application Evaluation Criteria section of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. This section may be **no longer than 12 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission

Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

A detailed budget for 12 months is required as well as a notional budget for one additional out (option) year, with the option period being one year. The option period should be its own detailed tab within the budget.

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their

Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, "...key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award." The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Logic Model

Applicants shall provide a logic model or theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section may be **no longer than 3 pages**.

Project Timeline

Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model/Theory of Change. This section may be **no longer than 2 pages**.

Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent

Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners. **There is no page limit for this section of the application.**

Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary

This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks, and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but

should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. This section may be **no longer than 5 pages**.

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions

For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.
- OR**
2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

NOTE: If an applicant is proposing sub grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included**. This section of the application may be **no longer than 5 pages**.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

NOTE: This item is required only IF applicable. Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than a 10% de minimis rate must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). **There is no page limit for this section of the application.**

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required. Some examples of additional documents an applicant may wish to submit include but are not limited to organizational chart, etc. This section of the application may be **no longer than 10 pages**.

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in Section VI above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using SAMS Domestic. Applications will **NOT** be accepted from grants.gov. SAMS Domestic requires that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in Section V. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to <https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>, and click the “create an account” hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled “User Registration Request;” complete the online form and click the “Submit” button. Users will receive an activation email entitled “Verify Your Grants Account Registration;” click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on April 26, 2021.

There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

E. AWARDS TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS OR FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of

the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

F. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693136.pdf>

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

G. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE FEDERAL FUNDING REGULATIONS AND DOS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-01-2019508.pdf>) and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (40 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- **Impact and Effectiveness:** The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results. Additionally, the applicant details how the project will prioritize the objectives of providing remedial education, psychosocial support, light non-construction school rehabilitation, and TVET.
- **Timeframe:** The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award. Additionally, the applicant outlines how training materials, especially for TVET, will be reviewed and adapted and how often. How will the length and impact of trainings be assessed and revised?
- **Beneficiaries:** The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them. The applicant specifically details how the project addresses the issue of reaching out-of-school children and overcrowded classrooms. Additionally, the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the local players associated with education in Syria, detailing how they will engage with the local authorities, when possible, and the community-based organizations to coordinate efforts.
- **Milestones:** The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement. In addition to weekly coordination meetings with NEA/AC and monthly updates, how will the applicant report on impacts?
- **M&E:** The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them. Ideally, the applicant will have an embedded team member specialized in M&E that can offer regular feedback to NEA/AC and assist with adjusting the project in response.

Project Design (30 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- **Responsiveness to NOFO:** The applicant describes how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- **Rationale:** The applicant justifies how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- **Project Management:** The applicant provides a clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation, and closing. The applicant should detail experience implementing programming in conflict zones, demonstrating specific knowledge of the operational environment in Syria.
- **Partnerships and Buy-ins:** The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies any local partners. Local partners can include civil society organizations or their members, as well as local education authorities.
- **Feasibility:** The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation. The main focus remains on activities in northeast Syria but should also consider expansion to Hassakeh and the northwest. Please keep in mind that internet connectivity is problematic in northern Syria.
- **Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process:** The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).

- **Duplication:** The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking, or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- **Contingency Plan:** The applicant articulates programming assumptions and potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans. Contingency planning should include infectious diseases such as leishmaniasis, chicken pox, and COVID.
- **Marginalized Populations:** The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion. This can include outreach to encourage girls to remain in school, religious and ethnic minority populations, female-headed households, and students with disabilities.
- **Gender Considerations:** The applicant includes gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. The applicant demonstrates how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the project's goals and objectives and how the project will benefit both men, women, boys, and girls.

Organizational Capacity (20 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful projects in the content area proposed (e.g., developing remedial education content, preparation of training materials for psychosocial support of populations impacted by war, developing classes for technical and vocational professions).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant). The applicant additionally needs to address the challenges and abilities related to the transferring of funds into a conflict environment.
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing with demonstrated capacity to manage the proposed project.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- The applicant details pre-identified key staff members – including volunteers – with demonstrable experience working in the country/territory/region proposed, in the proposed content area, and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- The applicant provides a description of the roles of each person or position as well as language abilities on the project – whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer – demonstrating that the project will be sufficiently staffed but will avoid redundancy or duplication of effort.
- The application clearly details the division of labor among the applicant and its staff, and any partners.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.

- Key programming staff should have expertise in early childhood education, technical and vocational curriculum development, education administration, psychosocial support, and similar fields.
- The applicant details a reasonable staffing pattern to effectively and efficiently implement and manage project activities. The location of staff identified to work on the project is detailed and clearly articulates the necessity for the proposed staffing plan.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC 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 V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Section VI. 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.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be technically eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Section VIII. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by September 30, 2021. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Successful applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) business days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD AND RECIPIENT AND SUBRECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. laws prohibit transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, certain individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. Applicants proposing activities in Syria are advised that successful passing of vetting to mitigate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists is a condition of the award.

It is the legal responsibility of a recipient and any sub-recipient to ensure that all activities covered under an award issued under this NOFO conform to applicable U.S. laws and related provisions, including Executive Order 13224, and other statutory and regulatory limitations on the provision of material support or resources or other benefit to designated entities and individuals.

The State Department has implemented a Risk Analysis and Management (RAM) Program to vet potential contractors and grantees seeking funding from the Department of State to mitigate the risk that such funds might benefit entities or individuals who present a national security risk. To conduct this vetting program the Department collects information from contractors, subcontractors, grantees, and sub-grantees regarding their directors, officers and/or key employees through mail, fax or electronic submission. The information collected is compared to information gathered from commercial, public, and U.S. government databases to determine the risk that the applying organization, entity, or individual might use Department funds or programs in a way that presents a threat to national security. The Grants Officer will inform the recipient of when vetting will be initiated and provide the complete details and requirements prior to the issuance of the award.

For awards issued under this NOFO, vetting is required for three general categories of individuals as follows:

1. Prime Awardee
 - a. All Key Personnel of a Prime Awardee must be vetted.
 - b. The following Key Individuals must be vetted:
 - i. All field-based (i.e., Turkey-, Jordan-, or Syria-based) Key Individuals.
 - ii. Key Individuals who are based elsewhere but travel to Turkey, Jordan, or Syria for more than 25 percent of the Award's period of performance to deliver trainings and support.
 - c. *For clarity, vetting is not required for Key Individuals based elsewhere who do not travel to Turkey, Jordan, or Syria for more than 25 percent of the Award's period of performance.*
2. Sub-Awardee
 - a. All Key Personnel of a Sub-Awardee must be vetted.
 - b. The following Key Individuals must be vetted:
 - i. All field-based (i.e., Turkey-, Jordan-, or Syria-based) Key Individuals.

- ii. Key Individuals who are based elsewhere but travel to Turkey, Jordan, or Syria for more than 25 percent of the Sub-Award's period of performance to deliver training and support.
 - c. *For clarity, vetting is not required for Key Individuals based elsewhere who do not travel to Turkey, Jordan, or Syria for more than 25 percent of the Award's period of performance.*
3. *Recipients of Assistance and Participants in Award-Funded Activities*
 Recipients of award-funded assistance and participants in award-funded activities must be vetted in accordance with the following:
- a. ***Training Activities:*** Unless otherwise approved in writing by the GO, all participants and Syrian trainers involved in trainings held outside Syria (e.g., in Turkey or Jordan) must be vetted. For training activities taking place inside Syria, unless otherwise determined by the GO, vetting will generally be required for Syrian trainers but not for participants. However, the GO may require additional vetting of participants on a case-by-case basis. The GO will review risk profiles prior to training activities to determine the appropriate level of vetting.
 - b. ***Recipients of cash or in-kind support:*** Vetting of Key Individuals is required when DOS-funded cash (e.g., operational or project funds) or in-kind assistance (e.g., medical equipment, community center users, food baskets) is provided to a recipient entity, whether or not such entity is a Sub-Awardee. For example, vetting would be required for Key Individuals of a local council or other group that receives DOS-funded communications equipment or specific project support via a Sub-Award or other means.

Even if vetting would not otherwise be required under these three categories, on a case-by-case basis, and prior to GO approval of a Sub-Award or project activity, the GO may require additional vetting for specific activities funded under an award.

All individuals meeting these specifications, whether previously vetted or not, must be submitted for vetting. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, RAM usually requests the vetting information via emails to the recipient's Authorizing Official. The recipient should submit the required information on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions regarding the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Forms must be submitted no later than five business days after RAM provides the Authorizing Official (identified by the Grants Officer) with a username and password for the secure portal.

Only those individuals for whom vetting is required and who have successfully passed the required vetting may receive assistance or participate in an Award. Individuals refusing to provide vetting data – or who provide false data – will not be eligible to receive assistance. Vetting must be completed 10 business days prior to an activity and may not occur retroactively.

The government reserves the right to terminate awards for convenience based on vetting results. For activities lasting more than one year, in accordance with the vetting policy, the recipient must resubmit required individuals to maintain compliance with this award requirement.

For the lifetime of the award, no funds from Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO), Specially Designated Global Terrorists, or other prohibited groups will be used to finance activities or organizations associated with the award, including but not limited to advertising, program performance/support, etc.

To mitigate the risk of prohibited dealings with or for the benefit of terrorists, the recipient must check the System for Award management (SAM) (www.SAM.gov) for all individuals and entities associated with this program.

E. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

F. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Section V. B. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

G. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsrs.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact: nea-grants@state.gov.

All questions must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by June 4, 2021 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). All questions should include the opportunity number (SFOP0008124) in the subject of the email. NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the

answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

<https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.