

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

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600

Regional Assistance Program II

Opportunity Number: *NEAAC-ACBURGR-17-007*

Competition ID: *NEAAC-ACBURGR-17-007-058864*

Key Information:

Announcement Type	New
Date Opened	April 7, 2017
Date of NOFO Amendment #1	April 28, 2017
Questions & Intent to Apply Due (Section VI.I)	May 15, 2017
Application Deadline	June 1, 2017
Expected Date of Notification (Section VI.A)	June 30, 2017
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis:

Project Synopsis:

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region continues to face ongoing and significant change, challenges and opportunities. Recognizing the dynamic nature of this region, NEA seeks to rapidly respond to emergent political developments, and support civil society actors through near-term technical or other assistance.

To address current challenges, Regional Assistance Program (RAP) II will enable NEA, U.S. Embassies, and civil society throughout the MENA region to respond to unanticipated and often sudden developments, such as supporting election monitoring during snap elections or advancing dialogue at critical junctures through technical assistance. RAP II will also be responsive to local needs in concert with identified U.S. policy goals by enabling the provision of technical and other assistance to bolster civil society organizations.

Eligible Countries and Territories:

In this announcement, we seek to support projects in the MENA region. The program can be implemented in countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. **Please note: Applications that focus on activities in countries and territories other than those discussed will not be considered.**

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants MAY ONLY submit only one (1) application.

Background Information about NEA/AC:

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office 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.

Table of Contents

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	- 6 -
II. AWARD INFORMATION	- 13 -
III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	- 14 -
A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	- 14 -
B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	- 14 -
<i>B.1 Prime Applicant</i>	- 14 -
<i>B.2 Local Partners</i>	- 15 -
<i>B.3 UEI Number</i>	- 16 -
<i>B.4 System for Award Management (SAM)</i>	- 17 -
C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS	- 17 -
<i>C.1 Cost-Sharing or Matching</i>	- 17 -
IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	- 19 -
A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS	- 19 -
<i>A.1 Required Documents</i>	- 19 -
<i>A.2 Optional Documents</i>	- 21 -
<i>A.3 Application Formatting Requirements</i>	- 21 -
B. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION	- 21 -
<i>B.1 GrantSolutions.gov</i>	- 22 -
<i>B.2 Grants.gov</i>	- 22 -
C. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES	- 22 -
D. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	- 23 -
<i>D.1 Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction</i>	- 23 -
<i>D.2 Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations:</i>	- 23 -
<i>D.3 Audit Requirements:</i>	- 23 -
V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS	- 24 -
A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA	- 24 -
B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS	- 26 -
A. AWARD NOTICES	- 27 -
B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	- 27 -
C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS	- 28 -
D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD	- 28 -
E. SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA (SPOT)	- 29 -
F. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES	- 30 -
G. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB-AWARDEES	- 30 -
H. SUB-AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT	- 30 -
I. AGENCY CONTACTS	- 30 -

II. DISCLAIMER _____ **- 31 -**

APPENDICES (ENCLOSED WITH NOFO)

APPENDIX 1— Excel Budget Template and Instructions. Budget Narratives should be submitted as Word documents.

APPENDIX 2— Results Monitoring Plan Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

APPENDIX 4— Pre-submission Checklist

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for a Cooperative Agreement to establish a Regional Assistance Program (RAP) II mechanism. Recognizing the dynamic nature of the MENA region, NEA seeks to establish a mechanism to respond to emergent needs, especially snap elections, and support civil society actors through near-term technical or other assistance.

The Regional Assistance Program (RAP) II will enable NEA, U.S. Embassies, and civil society throughout the MENA region to respond to unanticipated, often sudden developments, such as supporting election monitoring during snap elections or advancing dialogue at critical junctures through technical assistance. RAP II will also be responsive to local needs in concert with identified U.S. policy goals by enabling the provision of technical and other assistance to bolster civil society organizations.

Proposals should demonstrate ability to work with partners such as local, regional and international organizations and individuals to respond rapidly (e.g., through sub-awards and direct training and technical assistance) to changing events on the ground in the MENA. (While MENA-based organizations and individuals will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this assistance, funding might be provided through non-MENA based groups, as appropriate.)

The successful applicant to this opportunity will be issued a Cooperative Agreement, with substantial involvement from NEA/AC in the applicant's operation of this program. As such NEA/AC will closely work with the applicant to provide direction on potential beneficiaries to receive assistance, including but not limited to, the selection of projects and sub-award mechanisms.

Funding Opportunity Objectives:

A successful RAP II mechanism will enable civil society and other MENA actors to respond to emergent needs in the MENA region, especially snap elections, and provide support to these actors through near-term technical or other assistance.

In furtherance of objectives for participatory governance and economic growth, the RAP II mechanism will:

1. Prepare local organizations and individuals to respond to snap local and national elections and other political developments.
2. Enhance Civil Society Organizations' ability to successfully complete an existing local or national political, legal or social campaign that would benefit the society and strengthen the relationship between governmental and non-governmental institutions.

3. Provide expertise and concrete tools to beneficiaries to apply in reforming their communities and organizations, by developing their skills for effective public discourse, professional collaboration, and project management.

Project Design:

Interested applicants are encouraged to read this entire NOFO before submitting an application. Applicants **MUST** present a cohesive application that provides mechanisms to address the following three elements: 1) ability to respond to unexpected political developments including snap local and national elections, 2) targeted advocacy projects, and 3) technical assistance.

1.1 Mechanism to respond to political developments such as snap local and national elections (up to \$1.2 Million)

Objective:

Prepare local organizations and individuals to respond to snap local and national elections and other political developments.

This fund will provide a response mechanism to **emerging, unanticipated** and/or **time-bound** opportunities that support building partnerships with and among the people of the MENA to achieve shared political, economic and stability objectives.

Applications must demonstrate applicant's ability to improve actors' timely response to issues; collection of information; formulation of policy positions; allocation of resources to advocacy, coalition and network building; actions taken to influence policy, follow-up to foster implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the actors' activities.

In consultation with NEA/AC, the successful applicant would develop a mechanism to disburse sub-grants and technical assistance that would unblock challenges and amplify existing or foster new partnerships between governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and citizens in solving problems collaboratively to advance stability and prosperity within selected MENA countries.

Assistance Program Statement (APS):

In consultation with NEA/AC, applicants would develop an Assistance Program Statement (APS) that would allow the dispersing of up to approximately \$400,000 in funds an estimated three times per year to rapid response proposals. *All funds not spent on urgent*

assistance activities will be applied to pre-identified projects listed in section 1.2 below. The APS will have a mechanism to release sub-grants rapidly to qualified applicants on a staggered basis. It is anticipated that every four months \$400,000 will become available to be divided between one (1) and eight (8) sub-grants ranging between approximately \$50,000 and \$400,000. Funds for a project must be spent within a maximum of 12 months by the grantee unless otherwise approved by NEA/AC.

Potential beneficiaries may be referred by U.S. Embassies or other stakeholders to apply for assistance under this APS.

Funds under this APS will provide sub-grants and/or technical assistance to projects focused on political participation and activities around one of six main themes:

- Activities aimed at improving laws related to political participation such as freedom of assembly, political party formation and operations, and the act of voting.
- Improving advocacy and accountability functions including pilot projects (for example, test a pilot project on the positive effects of election campaigning in tribal communities).
- Increasing access for hard to reach and marginalized groups and in post-crisis contexts for approved political activities.
- Election monitoring
- Political reconciliation activities
- Urgent time-sensitive or local needs not listed above

1.2 Second-tier projects: Targeted assistance projects (up to \$1.2 Million)

All funds **not utilized** to respond to snap local and national elections or political developments (as explained in 1.1), will become automatically available at the end of the four-month period to award on a staggered basis to pre-qualified applicants. **“Pre-qualified” means that these second-tier projects will be identified through the Targeted Assistance Program Statement (T-APS, described below) in a process starting from the beginning of the prime award and on a rolling basis throughout the life of the prime award, concurrently to projects for 1.1 being developed. Money that has not been utilized by Tier 1/1.1 projects within a given 4-month period, will be released to tier-two projects that have been reviewed and recommended for funding (“pre-qualified”).**

Targeted Assistance Program Statement (T-APS):

In consultation with NEA/AC, applicants would develop a second APS that would allow the dispersal of up to \$400,000 from the RAP funds, three times per year to an estimated three qualified proposals. The T-APS will have a mechanism to release on a staggered basis sub-grants and/or technical assistance to applicants that qualify to receive these funds. At the end of every four-month period up to \$400,000 will become available to fund such projects.

Funds for each project must be spent within a maximum of 12 months by the grantee. The qualified proposal applicant must be notified that funding is contingent upon the availability of funds as these funds will only become available should 1.1-type RAP projects not materialize.

Objective:

Enhance Civil Society Organizations' ability to successfully complete an existing local or national political, legal or social campaign that would benefit the society and strengthen the relationship between governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Example: Lebanese lawmakers just took the first step to overturn a law that allows rapists to avoid punishment if they marry their victims. The move came in response to a long campaign that has been carried out by a network of activist organizations in partnership with the media and academia, and has experienced recently intensified protests and media coverage. Currently, a parliamentary committee agreed to push forward with a plan that would abolish the law. Supporting such an effort in its final stages would allow the campaign to accomplish its targeted goals.

Targeted Projects funds will provide sub-grants and/or technical assistance to organizations focused on existing local or national political, legal, or economic campaign around one of four main themes:

- Campaigns aimed at improving laws related to political participation such as freedom of assembly, political party formation and operations, and the act of voting.
- Campaigns aimed at introducing economic reform.
- Campaigns aimed at improving human rights (including gender and minority rights).
- Campaigns aimed at improving government accountability or political reconciliation.

The T-APS should include mechanism to solicit, evaluate and respond to technical assistance requests explained below (in section 1.3).

1.3 Technical assistance (up to \$300,000)

Objective: Provide expertise and concrete tools to beneficiaries to apply in reforming their communities and organizations, by developing their skills for effective public discourse, professional collaboration, and project management.

Using their field experience and evidence-based risk assessment, applicants should discuss ways they plan to provide technical assistance to organizations and individuals in the MENA region detailing how capacity-building of organizations and individuals can be achieved in sensitive environments (e.g., in conflict environments, where potential beneficiaries face repression, or where the space for civil society support is otherwise

constrained), and when there is a need for rapid responses to time-sensitive opportunities and events.

By including instructions and application for technical assistance in the T-APS, applicant may use funds to respond to technical assistance requests, develop and disseminate training materials, organize a regional conference on thematic issues related to capacity building in addition to or as a part of technical assistance and capacity building. However, applicant must design an evaluation mechanism for all training, conferences, meetings and assistance provided. Applicants must also provide a minimum of five professional profiles or position descriptions for potential qualified local and international consultants, ***not employed by applicant***, who can be deployed to the region (or are already in the region) to provide technical assistance in areas such as the following:

- For specific target groups (youths, journalists, etc.) on advocacy, civic engagement, and regional NGO network formation.
- Organizational management, leadership, effective campaigning, gender integration, and building alliances
- Building journalism, social media, and reporting skills

DEFINITIONS

Civil Society Capacity Building Definition:

Strengthen the capacity of CSOs for policy analysis, advocacy, coalition-building, internal governance, membership representation and services, and engage in other activities aimed at fostering more peaceful and democratic societies. CSOs include, but are not limited to, human rights organizations, women's groups, labor unions, business and professional associations, youth movements, religious organizations, indigenous organizations, think tanks, and organizations representing vulnerable populations. Areas of capacity building may include, but are not limited to, technical expertise (e.g. human rights, legal reform); CSO self-regulation (e.g. establishing NGO Codes of Conduct); organizational capacity (e.g. strategic planning, financial management and accountability, public relations, issue management, and outreach, revenue generation, accountable fundraising); and targeted advocacy training and technical assistance.

The following activity areas and costs are **ALLOWABLE** under this announcement:

- Election monitoring
- Open government partnerships
- Transparency and accountability
- Capacity assessment and capacity building for organizations or organizational networks – including for both technical and financial aspects
- Procurement assistance – direct provision of supplies/resources to beneficiaries in lieu of grant funding

- Fielding of consultants to provide activists, NGOs, and others with trainings and technical expertise
- Travel, venue and consultant support for consortium building, participation in peace talks, etc.

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);
- 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).

Applications that include any of these activities or costs above will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

Key Deliverables:

Successful grantees would achieve the following at the end of the program:

1. Participating local organizations and individuals receive the proper preparation needed to respond to snap local and national elections and other political developments.
2. Participating Civil Society Organizations successfully complete an existing local or national political, legal or social campaign that benefits the society and strengthens participatory governance.
3. Participating individuals, CSOs and others use technical assistance provided to improve their communities and organizations, and they acquire the skills needed for effective public discourse, professional collaboration, and project management.

Measurement of Results:

In order to clearly assess successful execution and completion of proposed projects, measuring results must to be tied back to the project design and the proposed activities.

The first step to monitoring is to create a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP). An RMP describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of the proposed project. The RMP may also include project-specific sub-objectives (i.e. project outcomes). There will be an RMP for the

successful applicant to measure the success of the overarching award; as well as RMPs for each funded activity that analyzes the results of that specific sub-grant.

The RMP should include the following elements:

- *Well-defined objectives:* Do the objectives provide a clear statement of what the project specifically plans to achieve?
- *Realistic project objectives:* What results are achievable during the period of the award?
- *Qualitative and quantitative indicators:* How and what will you measure to show the project's results based on outcomes (impact) as well as outputs (raw numbers)?
- *Data collection and analysis:* How (and how often) will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to show progress toward the project objectives?
- *Monitoring and reporting:* How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt to changes on the ground and maintain progress?

All RMPs should include one or more of the following objective(s), based on the proposed project:

- ***Encourage civic engagement through increased citizen cooperation and participation***
 - *Sub-objective:* Increased frequency and quality of civic engagement
 - *Sub-objective:* Increased citizen knowledge about civic participation and processes
- ***Support civil society to address citizen needs and increase government accountability***
 - *Sub-objective:* CSOs effectively advocate on behalf of citizens' needs
 - *Sub-objective:* A highly competent media increases government accountability
- ***Strengthen individuals and organizations with democratic knowledge & skills to advocate for citizen interests at all levels of government***
 - *Sub-objective:* Increased individual, organizational and institutional capacity for promoting democratic processes
- ***Improve governments' technical skills and processes to transparently and effectively respond to citizen needs***
 - *Sub-objective:* Improved processes for responding to citizen needs in all levels of government
 - *Sub-objective:* Improved technical skills among civil servants and elected officials

SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

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

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in assessing progress and identifying issues which may affect the success of the program;
- Collaboration in determining corrective actions, when necessary;
- Approval of APS, T-APS, and all sub-award activities;
- Approval of key personnel and any subsequent changes in the positions during the life of the award; and
- Collaboration in the creation of any training materials.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$1,500,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$1,500,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$1,500,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged; not required. Overall cost-effectiveness will be evaluated.
Length of Project Period:	One year (base year. Plus up to two option years)
Estimated Award Start Date:	August 1, 2017

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$1,500,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately 1 award (cooperative agreement) will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for one year, depending on the activities and countries proposed. The estimated start date for this project is May 2017. 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.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applications 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 to the Technical Review stage. Nothing can be added to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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. Additional requirements outlined below.

B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

B.1 Prime Applicant

Eligible applicants include registered U.S. non-profit organizations or for-profit organizations (excluding small businesses) with substantial experience in assistance management; political, economic, and social reform; and implementing programs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The following eligibility requirements will be screened through a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review. Only applications that pass the SME review will advance to the Technical Review stage.

Applicants must have the organizational capacity to implement program components in the MENA region. Applicants must also have experience in conducting risk assessments and monitoring and evaluating programs and sub-recipients in order to document and assess the short- and long-term outcomes of proposed projects. Extensive partnerships with MENA-based civil society organizations are necessary to ensure that all program activities can be implemented quickly. Additionally, applicants must:

- Dedicate a program manager with strong technical knowledge in NEA/AC areas of work, demonstrated experience creating quality proposals.
- Demonstrate expertise in NEA/AC's strategic focus areas of participatory governance, economic growth, and educational advancement, and a strong understanding of needs in the region. Experience implementing projects similar to those addressed in this NOFO.
- Demonstrate experience working in the MENA region and expertise in developing and implementing political and social reform projects.
- Demonstrate capacity to operate an assistance management program of multiple and diverse activities across the MENA region.
- 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 program 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 the MENA region.
- Demonstrate the ability to involve local partners.

B.2 Local Partners

Applicants must identify potential U.S.-based and MENA-based organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate to implement the proposed projects and provide technical assistance, and describe any previous cooperative activities.

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, applicants that do not have a physical presence in the MENA region are strongly encouraged to partner with local organizations.** For this type of organization, inclusion of a partnership will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information). While having a presence in each eligible country is not required, applicants that are able to demonstrate institutional capacity in many of MENA countries listed above (whether through their own resources or through partnerships with other organizations or institutions) will be given strong consideration.

A partnership is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations or individuals that defines substantive, collaborative roles for each of the partners in planning and implementing a project. If proposing partners, applicants should provide the following in their submission:

- Describe how the partner(s) will contribute to the objectives of the project;
- Detail how the partner(s) has been involved in the project design at the proposal stage;
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, project evaluation, and project sustainability relative to the lead applicant's;
- Provide a description of the organization (including a link to its website) as well as specific examples of its experience working in the proposed content area(s);
- Explain how the applicant organization will provide programmatic oversight and support to the partner(s); and,
- Provide a letter of intent or letter of agreement from the prospective partner(s) detailing how they will collaborate with the applicant organization on the proposed project.

In addition, applicants who propose working with sub-grant(s) must describe in both the program and budget narratives how the sub-grant(s) will be managed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure compliance with project objectives and Federal regulations.

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., applicants 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).

B.3 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:

1. Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.
2. 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), and annual revenue.

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

B.4 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, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants 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:

1. Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.
2. Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details*. Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.
3. Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the [SAM User Guide](#)), 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 **three to fourteen 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: 001-334-206-7828.

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 but overall cost-effectiveness will be evaluated.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, recipients must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as their contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB 2 CFR 200.306 - Cost Sharing and Matching.

IV. 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 A.1](#) below will not advance to the Technical 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, SF-424a, and SF424b):

Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding.

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

Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may be **no longer than 10 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 Submission:

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

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

There is **no page limit** for this section of an application. **The budget narrative should be prepared as a Word document.** More details on preparing the Budget Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

Results Monitoring Plan:

A Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of the proposed project. Please see the “Measurement of Results” section above for further guidance. The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See [Part V, Section A](#) for more information). **More information about preparing this Plan can be found in Appendix 3.** **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. RMPs should be attached as a separate document.

NOTE: The Project Narrative and Results Monitoring Plan **may not exceed 15 pages.** Applications that exceed the allowable page limit will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

Attachments – 20 pages maximum

- **Professional bio for lead project personnel in applicant and partner organizations:** Summary professional information may be included within the project narrative or as a separate document included in the optional documents of the application.
- **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
- **Work Plans, Project Timeline, and/or Calendar of Activities:** A work plan is a detailed list of proposed activities, milestones, and approximate dates. Applicants may choose to include a work plan, project timeline, and/or calendar of proposed activities in order to meet this requirement.

Attachments – No Page Limit

- **Sub-award monitoring policy/manual and sample risk assessment and monitoring plan.** This plan must 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.
- **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:** Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget Narrative greater than the 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

A.2 Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and **there is no page limit** for this section of the application. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

- **Pre-Submission Checklist** can be found in Appendix 4 and a fill-able template can be downloaded online with the announcement at www.grantsolutions.gov or www.grants.gov. This Checklist ensures that an applicant has accurately documented the eligibility requirements and included all major components of the application.
- **Theory of Change (or Program Logic)** diagram outlining how the different components of the program will connect to the project goal and to the proposed activities of the project. The theory of change (or program logic): 1) defines a program goal linked to country and regional strategies, 2) lists objectives necessary to reach the goal, 3) provides illustrative activities to accomplish each objective, and 4) provides strong justification for how the implementation of proposed activities and the achievement of proposed objectives will ultimately reach the stated goal.

A.3 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 A.1](#) and [A.2](#) 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. In addition, applicants are strongly encouraged to include a Table of Contents with their submission.

Adhering to the standards outlined above will help to ensure the accurate submission of the document. Failure to comply with these requirements may affect the successful transmission and consideration of an application.

B. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either GrantSolutions.gov OR Grants.gov. Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in [Part III](#) above.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their application; do not submit an application through both systems.

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.

B.1 GrantSolutions.gov

GrantSolutions.gov 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 www.grantsolutions.gov.

To create an account, go to www.grantsolutions.gov, and select the orange “Login to GrantSolutions” button, located on the right-hand side of the site. Select the “Register” button under the “First Time Users” header. Organizations will be directed to a page entitled “Welcome to the GrantSolutions New Organization Registration Page;” select the link entitled “Register with GrantSolutions with your DUNS number,” and complete the online form.

Please Note: When completing and uploading the application documents (excluding the SF-424 form) applicants must use the *Upload Files* attachment link. Applicants will also see an attachment link entitled *Mail-in Items* which may not be used. NEA/AC does not accept Mail-in items to our announcements.

GrantSolutions has training videos available to educate users about the system. These videos can be found at: <https://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/grantee-training-videos/>

B.2 Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the “Register” link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

C. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on **June 1, 2017**. **There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert Grant Officer Sara Curley (curleysl@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.

D. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

D.1 Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction

In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

(1) Was “convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or

(2) Has any “unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.”

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

D.2 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 must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

D.3 Audit Requirements:

Foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in Department of State 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 <http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.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.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the application and to determine the likelihood of its success and impact. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Achieving Objectives (20 points)

- The project objectives are specific and clearly explained.
 - Prepare local organizations and individuals to respond to snap local and national elections and other political developments.
 - Enhance Civil Society Organizations' ability to successfully complete an existing local or national political, legal or social campaign that would benefit the society and strengthen the relationship between governmental and non-governmental institutions.
 - Provide expertise and concrete tools to beneficiaries to apply in reforming their communities and organizations, by developing their skills for effective public discourse, professional collaboration, and project management.
- The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out and who will be responsible for them.

- The RMP indicators measure realistic/feasible project impact (outcomes) rather than just outputs.

Approach (40 points)

- The applicant clearly describes experience relevant previous experience managing similar activities and clear plans for responding to emerging, unanticipated and/or time-bound opportunities
- Outline of Assistance Program Statement and Targeted Assistance Program Statement.
- The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- The applicant explains how sub-awards will be managed, and participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- The applicant articulates potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.

Organizational Capacity (30 points)

- Demonstrate expertise in NEA/AC's strategic focus areas of participatory governance, economic growth, and educational advancement, and a strong understanding of needs in the region. Experience implementing projects similar to those addressed in this NOFO.
- Demonstrate experience working in the MENA region and expertise in developing and implementing political and social reform projects.
- Demonstrate capacity to operate an assistance management program of multiple and diverse activities across the MENA region.
- 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.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content areas proposed (e.g., local CSO skills training, rapid response mechanism) – particularly of building the capacity of local partners.
- Demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- Demonstrated ability of the applicant to oversee the monitoring and evaluation of their sub-grantees' projects (or build the capacity of the local sub-grantee so that they have the ability to properly do so themselves)

- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed or prospective partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Demonstrated ability to accomplish the required activities with minimal full-time staffing and without establishing a dedicated local office in the MENA region.
- Applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- The roles and qualifications of each key person, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer, are described in a biographical sketch.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area.

Budget and Budget Narrative (Acceptable, Acceptable with Conditions, 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 and includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- Strong justifications are provided for all staff and for any office locations and costs are reasonable in proportion to the scope of work.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding Economic Support Fund grants. Applications that include each of the required documents outlined in [Part IV](#) will be screened by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to determine whether applicants meet the requirements and priorities outlined in [Part I](#); meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [Part III](#). Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

All applications that proceed to Technical Review 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 [Part V, Section A](#). Technical 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.

VI. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance to the Technical 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 about the status of their application by June 30, 2017. 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.**

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the NEA/AC program office coordinating this competition.

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 Progress Reports and a Quarterly Financial Report. Progress Reports 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. Financial Reports 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

Selected 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) 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

Applicants proposing activities in **West Bank/Gaza** are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. Applicants may be asked to submit information about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information may also be required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted via email. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting an application for award.

E. SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA (SPOT) REQUIREMENTS

Applicants proposing activities in **Iraq** are required to adhere to the following:

All recipient personnel deploying to areas of combat operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense under federal assistance awards over \$150,000 or performance over 30 days must register in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register in SPOT before deployment, or if already in the designated operational area, register upon becoming an employee under the assistance award and maintain current data in SPOT. Information on how to register in SPOT is available from your Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are not performing private security functions must account for personnel within the SPOT system anonymously through the use of the aggregate count functionality. This includes U.S. Citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN), and Locally-hired Iraqi or Syrian personnel except as noted in the following paragraph.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; are performing duties as a translator or interpreter; require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support; or desire consideration for refugee or special immigrant status under the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007 (subtitle C of title XII of Public Law 110–181 must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. If a locally-hired Iraqi or Syrian national falls into one of these categories, the recipient must enter all of the required identification data into SPOT.

When the Recipient is ready to enter U.S. Citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN), and/or locally-hired individuals using the Aggregate Count method, the Recipient will notify the Grants Officer who will contact the Department SPOT Program Manager (A/LM/AQM) to obtain the “Aggregate Count” template. The Recipient will complete the “Aggregate Count” template and return to the SPOT Program Manager who will ensure that aggregate counts are loaded into SPOT.

The Recipient’s SPOT Administrator is responsible for updating the aggregate locally hired national count on a quarterly basis by providing updated information via the “Aggregate Count” template to the GO/GOR for each award who will forward to the Department SPOT Program Manager for SPOT entry.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to these policies and procedures are considered to be a material requirement of their award. Recipients of federal assistance awards are reminded that only the Grants Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO, but shall advise the Grants Officer and the GOR of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

F. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to mark 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.

G. 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 Part III, Section [B.1](#). **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.**

H. 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.

I. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Grants Officer

Sara Curley
(202) 776-8691
curleysl@state.gov

All questions AND a confirmation of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to curleysl@state.gov AND nea-grants@state.gov by May 15, 2017 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on GrantSolutions and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed. Intent to Apply confirmations will not be binding.

In addition, a phone call for questions and answers will be held at 15:00:00 pm eastern time (ET) on May 10, 2017 for all interested applicants. Please email Sara Curley curlevsl@state.gov AND nea-grants@state.gov by 17:00:00 pm eastern time (ET) May 9, 2017 if you are interested to receive call-in information for the call.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using Grants.gov to submit an application, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center

(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding creating an account or using GrantSolutions.gov to submit an application, contact the GrantSolutions.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Eastern Standard Time.

GrantSolutions.gov Contact Center

(866) 577-0771

(202) 401-5282

help@grantsolutions.gov

II. 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 published 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.