Syria Annual Program Statement

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs,
Office of Assistance Coordination,
Department of State

Opportunity number: DFOP0018862

Application deadline: Rolling, See Section E

Contents

U.S Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

Annual Program Statement

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Syria Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number	DFOP0018862
Announcement Type	Annual Program Statement
Deadline for Applications	Rolling, See Section E.4
Assistance Listing Number	19.601
Length of performance period	12-15 Months
Number of awards anticipated	3 awards pending availability of funds
Award amounts	Award amount denoted under opportunity descriptions
Total available funding	$10,000,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act
Anticipated project start date	October 1, 2026

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit statements of interest (SOIs) for innovative foreign assistance projects benefiting Syria that also advance U.S. commercial diplomacy and put American interests first. SOIs must demonstrate how projects will leverage foreign assistance for U.S. partners as a tool of statecraft to advance U.S. economic, security, and diplomatic objectives. Programming should promote trade, not aid, by leveraging assistance resources to champion American enterprise and infrastructure and catalyze private capital through market principles. SOIs must address foreign assistance programming for Syria in sectors that include but are not limited to: energy, digital connectivity, emerging technologies (particularly AI and telecommunications), agriculture, regional economic integration, advanced manufacturing, workforce training aligned with U.S. business needs, and economic recovery in conflict-affected areas. Projects should orient implementing partners toward the American business community, and foster burden-sharing. Applicants must review guidance in the sections below and tailor SOI's to address identified priorities. The submission of the SOI is the first step in a two-step process. Applicants must first submit a concise (1-3 page) statement of interest designed to clearly communicate the project idea and objectives. This is not a full proposal and will not result in a federal assistance award at this stage.

The purpose of the SOI process is to allow applicants to submit project ideas for evaluation prior to requiring the development of a full proposal application. Upon a merit review of eligible SOIs, selected applicants will be invited to expand on their project idea(s) by submitting full proposal applications. Full proposals will go through a second merit review before a final decision on funding is made. NEA/AC may decide to grant multiple awards, one award, or no awards, subject to funding availability and proposal viability.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in programmatic implementation of the project. An FAA may also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

Project Performance Period: Proposed project should be completed in 12-15 months.

The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the project, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

Application Submission Process: SOIs must be submitted via the Department of State's MyGrants system. Applicants using MyGrants for the first time will need to register with MyGrants by navigating to https://MyGrants.servicenowservices.com. [Click "Create an Account" under "New User?" On the pop-up, select "Create a MyGrants Applicant/Grantee Account" and complete all required fields.] Once finished, an email will be sent to verify the account creation followed by an Okta account set-up, which will require the use of a smartphone for multi-factor authentication. If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of account creation, please contact the help desk at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the self-service online portal that can be accessed from **ILMS Self Service Portal**. Customer support is available 24/7.

Submission Timeline: SOIs must be submitted by August 31, 2026 at 11:59pm ET, in order to be considered by the initial panel. Applications submitted after August 31, 2026, will be reviewed on a rolling basis subject to the availability of funding. See Section E: Submission Requirements and Deadlines. Awards will be made on a rolling basis, subject to funding availability.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

The Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) is pleased to announce this APS, which serves as an intake mechanism for SOIs that advance U.S. policy priorities in Syria. This APS provides a streamlined process for NEA/AC to solicit, review, and fund proposals as funding becomes available. This APS outlines NEA/AC's funding priorities and strategic themes, and the procedures for submitting. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- For-profit organizations, such as corporations and commercial firms
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

All applicants must have the capacity to operate in Syria and ability to obtain necessary registrations and permits

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required. While cost share or matching is not required, it may be favorably considered as part of the merit review process. Opportunities for cost sharing and matching may be discussed during negotiation and/or consultative program design (aka "co-design"), if applicable. Per 2 CFR §200.306, items that are proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR §200, Subpart E—Costs Principles.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

Organizations are not required to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) in order to submit SOIs in phase 1. However, all organizations must have a UEI issued via SAM.gov, as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov, before they submit a full application in phase 2. Please see Section E for more information.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov and/or that has a current debt to the U.S. government is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR,1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR,1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

Additionally, no entity or person listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their applications.

C. Program Description

Following President Trump's May 2025 call to "give Syria a chance at greatness," the United States prioritizes efforts to help U.S. companies serve as preferred partners for commercial opportunities in the country's economic recovery. There are significant opportunities to deploy U.S. expertise and technology to address the considerable challenges Syria faces, including widespread destruction of critical infrastructure, high rates of poverty and unemployment, conflict-related displacements and intercommunal tensions, limited government capacity, weak public financial management, and the need for legal and regulatory reform to attract foreign investment and private enterprise. U.S. businesses have competitive advantages in sectors including energy, digital connectivity, emerging technologies (particularly AI and telecommunications), 5G infrastructure, and agriculture. U.S.-supported projects can address challenges in these areas while simultaneously building Syrian capacity, creating local employment, and strengthening economic resilience.

This APS seeks SOIs that use foreign assistance as a tool of statecraft to advance U.S. economic, security, and diplomatic objectives while delivering measurable development benefits for Syrians. Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Help create an enabling environment for commerce and expand access for U.S. companies in strategic sectors;
- Catalyze market-driven recovery that aligns with Syrian needs and U.S. private sector advantages;
- Facilitate technology transfer and adoption of U.S. technological standards and frameworks that enhance Syrian competitiveness and interoperability, and
- Successful SOIs will demonstrate how proposed programming would address Syrian needs for international assistance while generating reciprocal benefits for U.S. interests – expanding American exports and investment, building Syrian institutional and market resilience, and displacing the influence of U.S. competitors and adversaries by establishing American companies as Syria's preferred long-term partners.

Out of Scope Program Activities: Activities that are not typically funded include but are not limited to:

a. Projects focused on public diplomacy or U.S. government public messaging (separate funding may be available through the embassy)
b. Projects that support individual political parties or attempt to advance a particular political agenda;
c. U.S.-based activities, study tours, scholarships, or exchange projects;
d. Initiatives directed towards a diaspora community;
e. Projects that have a predominant academic or basic research focus;

f. Social welfare projects that purely provide service-delivery or humanitarian assistance;
g. Costs incurred to complete activities begun with other funds;
h. Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
i. Medical and psychological research or clinical studies using human subjects;
j. Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
k. Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

1. ***Goals and Objectives***

Syria country problem statement: Decades of deprivation and conflict under the Assad regime continue to hinder Syria's transition to open markets, effective institutions, and substantive transitional justice. Yet for the first time in decades, following the departure of the Assad regime, the Syrian government has expressed a genuine openness to partnership with the United States on trade, investment, and institutional reform. The U.S. government seeks to foster transparent market practices and standards that open space for U.S. business engagement; accelerate sectoral recovery in digital connectivity, energy, and agriculture; strengthen counterterrorism cooperation; and advance internal and regional stability; to address social tensions. Accordingly, new U.S.-funded projects may address multiple fields, including but not limited to:

- **Removing Barriers to Entry for U.S. Companies:** Improve the commercial enabling environment in Syria to support U.S. private sector entry in telecommunications, IT, fiber, 5G, energy, and other digital and physical infrastructure. Projects may involve the Syrian government as a partner to strengthen the commercial regulatory environment through initiatives to modernize procurement and contract laws, strengthen the tendering process, and promote regulatory and technical standards that enhance interoperability and U.S. competitiveness. Implementers should work directly with U.S. companies to identify market-entry barriers and coordinate with Syrian counterparts to address them. Funding may support feasibility studies and risk-mitigation tools that make major fiber and 5G projects viable for U.S. investors and exporters, positioning U.S. technology and companies as preferred partners.

  Estimated Award Ceiling: $5.5M
  Specific eligibility requirements: Capacity to operate in Syria and ability to obtain necessary registrations and permits.

- **Agriculture System Recovery - Enhancing Future Markets for U.S. Agricultural Innovation:** Facilitate the re-entry of U.S. agricultural technology and seed providers into the Syrian market by rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure, improving water-use efficiency, and strengthening import and distribution channels for U.S. agricultural goods. Projects should prioritize key system strengthening efforts, which might include rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure, strengthening of market pathways, and restoration of agricultural livelihoods. Projects should strengthen Syria's food security and expand U.S. commercial presence by prioritizing U.S. firms, agricultural equipment, and seed varieties.

Estimated Award Ceiling: $3M
Specific eligibility requirements: Capacity to operate in Syria and ability to obtain necessary registrations and permits.

- **Foster Returnee Business Recovery:** Support economic recovery in conflict-affected communities by providing financing and technical assistance to returnees and businesses active in communities recovering from conflict. Projects should increase access to finance in ways that build lasting relationships between returnees and financial institutions through lending and banking services suitable to returnees' needs. Additionally, projects may consider favorable lending terms to encourage business activity in conflict areas. Projects should use Syria's formal financial institutions to the maximal extent practicable. Projects should reinforce, inter alia, the implementation of local integration agreements by restoring livelihoods, jump-starting local economic activity, and enabling community rebuilding. Projects should prioritize high social impact investments such as shelter rehabilitation to facilitate safe, voluntary returns. Activities may draw on Syrian diaspora technical and engineering expertise to maximize impact and expand U.S. linkages.

  Estimated Award Ceiling: $1.5M
  Specific eligibility requirements: Capacity to operate in Syria and ability to obtain necessary registrations and permits.

Applicants may submit SOIs that fit any of the above funding tiers.

Country priorities: 1) Promote investment and remove barriers for U.S. commercial engagement; and 2) Support a stable, unified Syria,

Geographic/Thematic focus: This APS is for programming in and/or for Syria. Commercial enabling environment across governorates, regulatory and standards reform, market access in digital connectivity, IT and energy sectors; agricultural recovery, agrotechnology, water and infrastructure rehabilitation, local economic revitalization, small business recovery, northeast integration, and mitigating sectarian conflict including in southern Syria.

2. ***Substantial Involvement***

Applicants submitting SOIs should be aware that if their SOIs result in cooperative agreement awards, NEA/AC will have substantial involvement which may include (but are not limited) to the following:

- Joint Programmatic Decisions: The Department of State and the recipient collaborate on key programmatic decisions. This can include (but is not limited to) reviewing work plans; determining when certain phases of the project can start; and final method of delivery or implementation.

- Technical Assistance and Direction: The Department of State provides ongoing technical assistance, guidance, and direction integral to the project's execution, which if not followed, would undermine the goals and objectives of the award or otherwise make the award unsuccessful.

D. **Application Contents and Format**

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible and will not move forward to the Merit Panel Review (MRP). Contents of the SOI must include the following required information:

Table Listing of Critical Details:

I. Proposed Project Title
II. Name of the Organization
III. Target Benefiting Country or Countries
IV. Total Federal Share Requested
V. Total Cost Share (as applicable)
VI. Project Length
"Table Listing of Critical Details" does not count toward the 3-page narrative limit. Applicants may include this table as a cover page to their submission.

Project Design

a. **Issue/Challenge/Opportunity:** Briefly describe the problem(s), issue(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) the applicant is seeking to address.

b. **Proposed Solution/Activities:** Describe the approach and core activities to address the issue/challenge/opportunity.

    - **Anticipated Outcomes and Results:** Identify the specific outcomes and results the approach/activities seek to achieve and define "success." Outcomes and results should aim to foster self-reliance and ensure investments directly benefit American safety, strength, and prosperity. Therefore, outcomes and results should clearly demonstrate advancement towards the Department of State's America First priorities as outlined in the 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS), the Department's 2026-2030 Agency Strategic Plan (ASP), and the NEA Regional Strategic Brief (RSB) executive summary and framework (goals and objectives). The nature, scope, and sustainability of outcomes and results will be critical to assessing the costs and benefits – and determining whether the SOI will proceed to the next stage of the merit review process, expanded proposal submission.
    - **Theory of Change:** Articulate what changes need to occur to go from the current state or condition to achieving the stated goals and objectives. Write a statement linking existing conditions with desired changes; this will typically take the form of an "If ___, then ___because ____" statement. Consider existing evidence or sources that support the theory on why the desired change will happen. Some

examples of supporting evidence are research or literature reviews, previous program evaluations, and discussions with stakeholders or beneficiaries.

c. **List of Partner Roles and Responsibilities (if applicable):** Include a list of proposed applicant partners (private, public, NGO, etc.) to be considered as subrecipients (see 2 CFR 200.331 and 200.332). Identify each organization's name, point of contact, point of contact information (phone and email), federal share to be awarded by the pass-through entity, cost-share (if applicable), and a summary of proposed roles and responsibilities. Note: This should be a brief, preliminary characterization of roles and responsibilities that may evolve significantly during the subsequent phase.

d. **Resource Contributions and/or Cost Share from non-federal sources (if applicable):** Describe how proposed resources will contribute to the proposed activities and outcomes. This should be a preliminary description; actual resource contributions and applications may evolve significantly during the subsequent phase. Please reference 2 CFR 200.306(b) for guidance on what can be considered cost share.

The SOI is meant to convey initial ideas regarding a proposed project. As the negotiation and/or consultative program design (if applicable) process continues, the ideas and approaches may evolve as the applicant and the Department of State determine the most appropriate way to work together to address the problems, challenges, issues, and opportunities.

<u>Required Format of SOI Submission:</u> All documents must be written in English, and all costs must be presented in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided. (Please note that the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires English as the official language of all award documents.) If any document is provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version. All pages must be numbered. Additional requirements are as follows:

- All documents must be formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper
- All documents must be single-spaced, written in a minimum of 12-point Times New Roman Numeral font with 1-inch margins.
    - o The exception is captions and footnotes which may be 10-point Times New Roman Numeral font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.
- Submissions will only be reviewed up to the specified page limit and no further.
- Applicants may include relevant tables and charts either within the narrative or as annexes. For the purposes of this guidance, diagrams, conceptual frameworks, and other visual representations may be treated as charts and are therefore also excluded from the page limit. Given the nature of tables and charts, font sizes as small as 10-point are acceptable for these elements.
- Applicants may include annexes containing supporting tables, charts, or other visual materials. To ensure a fair and efficient review process, the Department will review up to four (4) annexes per submission, and each annex should be no more than one

(1) page. Annexes should be used to supplement, not replace, the narrative. Reviewers will primarily evaluate the up to three-page narrative submission in accordance with the APS review criteria.

- Applicants are encouraged to present information clearly and concisely within the 1-3 page narrative, using annexes only where they add value or clarity. Submissions that exceed these parameters may not be fully reviewed.

E. **Submission Requirements and Deadlines**

1. ***Address to Request Application Package***

Application forms and other materials necessary to apply are available in MyGrants.

2. ***Department of State Contacts***

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: nea-grants@state.gov. Please reference the APS Opportunity Number (DFOP0018862) in the email subject line.

Questions and Answers or FAQ will be posted and updated periodically on MyGrants and Grants.gov.

3. ***Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)***

Required Registrations

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have Unique Entity Identifiers (UEIs) and active registrations in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the duration of the period of performance of any federal award that results from this NOFO.

2 CFR 200 requires subrecipients to obtain UEIs. Please note the UEIs for subrecipients are not required at the time of application but will be required before awards are processed and/or directed to subrecipients.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Numbers (EINs) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and UEIs prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need EINs from the IRS but do need UEIs prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **<u>Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) codes to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.</u>** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain UEIs and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 2: Apply for NCAGE codes by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx
NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):
NCAGE Code Request Tool (nato.int)

Exemptions
An exemption from the UEI and SAM.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See 2 CFR 25.110 for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing justifications of their requests. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. ***Submission Dates and Times***

SOI will be accepted on MyGrants under the announcement title *Syria Program Statement*, funding opportunity number DFOP0018862.

SOI must be submitted by August 31, 2026, in order to be considered by the initial panel.

SOI submitted after August 31, 2026, will be reviewed on a rolling basis subject to the availability of funding.

5. ***Funding Restrictions***

a. 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.

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

c. The Leahy Law prohibits Department foreign assistance funds from supporting foreign security force units if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. Per 22 USC §2378d(a) (2017), "No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter [FOREIGN ASSISTANCE] or the Arms Export Control Act [22 USC 2751 et seq.] to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights." Restrictions may apply to any proposed assistance to police or other law enforcement. Among these, pursuant to section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), no assistance provided through this funding opportunity may be furnished to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country when there is credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. In accordance with the requirements of section 620M of the FAA, also known as the Leahy law, project beneficiaries or participants from a foreign government's security forces may need to be vetted by the Department before the provision of any assistance. If a proposed grant or cooperative agreement will provide assistance to foreign security forces or personnel, compliance with the Leahy Law is required.

d. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to UNRWA.

e. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). If your project involves the purchase or use of an UAS, see this link for requirements and information you must include in your application

f. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws: If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this Statement of Interest will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:
   - Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
   - It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

g. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements. Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:
   - Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

h. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan: Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds $500,000:
   - To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);
   - The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175(a) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).
   - That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any

subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on its website and at the workplace.

Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

i. Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA)
Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR Part 602, 603, and 604.
These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.
602: The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.
603: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.
604: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.
The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

6. *Other Submission Requirements*

All application materials must be submitted electronically through MyGrants. Applicants using MyGrants for the first time will need to register as a new organization. To register with MyGrants, navigate to https://MyGrants.servicenowservices.com and click "Create an Account" under "New User?" On the pop-up, select "Create a MyGrants Applicant/Grantee Account" and complete all required fields. Once finished, an email will be sent to verify the account creation followed by an Okta Account set-up, which will require the use of a smartphone for multi-factor authentication. If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of account creation, please contact the helpdesk at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the self-service online portal that can be accessed from **ILMS Self Service Portal**. Customer support is available 24/7.

F. Application Review Information

1. *Review Criteria*

Each submission will be evaluated and rated based on the following evaluation criteria:

Quality of Project Idea – 50 points: The proposal is responsive to program framework. The idea is communicated well and is feasible. Proposals that promote creative approaches to address program objectives are highly encouraged. The proposed timeline is reasonable.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants –35 points: The proposal demonstrates the organization's expertise and previous experience in administering programs and/or projects. If a local partner is identified in the proposal, a brief description of the partner's role and experience is included.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: The proposal clearly articulates proposed project activities and expected results towards achieving program objectives and goal(s).

2. *Indirect Costs*

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

3. *Review and Selection Process*

A review committee will evaluate all eligible SOI applications.

<u>Process Overview and Timing:</u>

All SOI submitted will be reviewed according to a multi-step review process, including:

- Minimum Responsiveness Review
- Merit Review Panel (MRP) Evaluation
- Internal clearance and selection decision-making

<u>Phase 1- SOI Review and Selection:</u>

All minimally responsive SOI will be reviewed against the criteria listed above by a MRP. There may be multiple MRPs to review SOI based on country, or region, as appropriate. SOI are reviewed individually against the criteria and not against competing SOI. Additionally, the MRP will evaluate whether each SOI meets the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and NEA/AC's overall priority needs. For a fair review, all panelists will review the first page of the SOI up to the page limit and no further. The MRP may provide feedback in the form of conditions and/or recommendations on SOI to enhance proposed projects, which must be addressed by the organizations, as possible, in the full application and/or co-design process. To ensure effective use of limited NEA/AC funds, conditions and recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

NEA/AC reserves the right to make a final determination regarding all funding matters, pending funding availability.

The panel is responsible for reviewing each SOI and recommending one of the following actions:

1. SOI is not recommended for continued review – The concept is not responsive to the APS or the concept does not meet overall priority needs or foreign policy.
2. SOI is recommended for continued review through consultative program design prior to recommendation for funding and submission of phase 2. The concept meets a key (or emerging) priority or foreign policy goals that would benefit from Department of State input.
3. SOI is recommended for funding and submission of phase 2 - The concept outlines a well-tested approach that is ready to move to full application. A request for full application with detail instructions will be issued to the applicant.

*Note that individual responses will not be provided to applicants for SOI that are not recommended to proceed to Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Request for full applications

Applicants that have moved either directly to phase 2 or subsequent to consultative program design, will be directed to an announcement available via MyGrants to submit a full application based on their approved concept. A full application typically includes but is not limited to the following:

- SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B (if applicable)
- Cover Page/Executive Summary
- Proposal Narrative
- Budget Narrative
- Logic Model
- Results Monitoring Plan (RMP)
- Key Personnel
- Timeline
- Attachments, (if applicable)

Detailed instructions regarding the full application submission process will be provided to those applicants that move to phase 2. The timing of full application review and award issuance will depend on a range of factors, including:

- Complexity of proposed programs
- Availability of funding
- Completion of required reviews and approvals

General Guidance

The Department of State is committed to conducting a fair, transparent, and efficient review process. At the same time, applicants should anticipate that the full process (from SOI submission to potential award) may take several months. Organizations are encouraged to plan accordingly and monitor official communications for updates.

4. ***Risk Review***

i. Risk factors – must include

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

a. Financial stability
b. Management systems and standards
c. History of performance
d. Audit reports and findings
e. Ability to effectively implement requirements
f. If there are any program specific risk factors that will be considered, describe them here.

ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The federal awarding agency, prior to making a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

G. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. ***Administrative and National Policy Requirements***

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
    - o Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
    - o Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
    - o Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
    - o Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

- 2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT

- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION

- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)

- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY

- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Recipients must comply with Executive Orders as applicable. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: https://www.federalregister.gov/

2. *Syria Vetting Procedures*

It is the legal responsibility of a recipient and any sub-recipient to ensure that all activities covered under an award issued under this APS 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.

This award is required to comply with Department of State policy guidance on Terrorist Financing Risk Mitigation through Counterterrorism Namecheck Vetting. 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. 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 project.

3. ***Reporting***

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports and a Quarterly Financial Report via MyGrants. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance, indicate the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement, and 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 project faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet project targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

4. ***Branding and Marking***

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System. Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual 10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions.
For more information, visit: https://brand.america.gov/