

United States Department of State
Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Fostering Human Rights-Centered Internet Governance

This is the announcement of funding opportunity number SFOP0009543

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.108

Type of Solicitation: Open Competition

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM EST on 30, MAY 2023

Total Funding Ceiling: \$987,650.00

Anticipated Number of Awards: 1

Type of Award: Grant

Period of Performance: 24 to 36 months

Anticipated Time to Award, Pending Availability of Funds: September 2023

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A.1 Summary

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) announces an open competition for organizations interested in submitting applications to carry out the “*Fostering Human Rights-Centered Internet Governance*” program to empower women and youth voices and promote gender equity and equality in digital and cyber policymaking, consistent with the United States’ efforts to promote inclusive, rights-respecting, multi-stakeholder models of internet governance. The authority for this funding opportunity is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA).

Priority Region: The program must take place in at least two or more of the following SCA countries: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The applicant may propose to include all countries listed or focus on a small subset of countries within the priority region.

A.2 Background

There is a growing global concern over the rising misuse of digital technologies and surveillance. Freedom House reports that global internet freedom has declined for the 12th consecutive year.¹ Such technologies and surveillance have the capacity to increase human rights abuses and thwart technology’s ability to support global communication, connectivity, and knowledge-sharing, and can impede democracy. Too often, cyber intrusion, surveillance, and other technologies are misused to stifle political dissent; harass human rights defenders; intimidate

¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2022/countering-authoritarian-overhaul-internet>

vulnerable populations; discourage whistle-blowers; chill free expression; target political opponents, journalists, and lawyers; or interfere arbitrarily or unlawfully with privacy.

Digital transformation is steadily progressing across South Asia. Governments are advancing new laws, policies, and approaches to use and develop digital technologies that will greatly shape the provision of digital services and influence the social and economic well-being of citizens. As a signatory to the Declaration for the Future of the Internet² and chair of the Freedom Online Coalition³ for 2023, the United States is committed to advancing human rights-based approaches to digital technologies that protect fundamental freedoms online, promote the free flow of information, and foster multi-stakeholder models of internet governance. Civil society organizations play a critical role in the multi-stakeholder policy-making process in internet governance and are necessary stakeholders in making governments more accountable, accessible, and transparent.

To ensure that digital policies advance technologies that support democratic values and inclusive development, women and youth-led organizations need to have an active role in shaping internet governance and digital issues. In South Asia, women experience some of the world's largest digital gender gaps, where deeply entrenched gender biases still restrict women and girls' access to online opportunities. Currently, women in South Asia are 41 percent less likely than men to use mobile internet, compared with 16 percent across all Low Middle-Income Countries.⁴ UNICEF reports twice as many boys as girls have Internet access in Nepal, while four times as many do in Pakistan.⁵ Furthermore, women and youth are often excluded from participating in policy discussions on digital and cyber issues that could have a meaningful impact on their social and economic well-being. Inclusive policy setting is the only way to ensure their voices and perspectives are included in new national policies and implementation plans.

The U.S. Department of State seeks to partner with civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders that can implement programs using innovative approaches to empower women and youth voices and promote gender equity and equality in digital and cyber policymaking consistent with U.S. efforts to promote inclusive, rights-respecting, multi-stakeholder models of internet governance.

A.3. Program Goal

SCA's goal is to increase youth and women's inclusion and participation in key policy debates around internet governance issues, such as content regulation, privacy, access, and freedom of expression. This program will build the organizational, technical, and policy development capacity of local and/or regional youth- and women-led civil society organizations and activists to engage directly and regularly with governments and private sector actors to promote

² <https://www.state.gov/declaration-for-the-future-of-the-internet>

³ <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-assumes-the-2023-chairship-of-the-freedom-online-coalition/>

⁴ https://www.gsma.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2022.pdf?utm_source=website&utm_medium=download-button&utm_campaign=gender-gap-2022

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/4201/file/UNICEF%20South%20Asia%20Gender%20Counts%20Report.pdf>

inclusive, rights-respecting practices and ensure accountability for protecting human rights obligations across the digital ecosystem—both within the scope of Internet governance as well as laws, policies, and regulations that relate to the real-world impacts of digital information and communications technologies. Interventions should also strengthen and integrate localized digital security and safety practices throughout all activities to ensure women- and youth-led civil society actors and other vulnerable groups can better protect themselves from digital repression. The digital safety and security practices within scope of this project should be concerned with protecting end-users and individuals from targeted hacking, destruction, disruption, or confiscation of devices, online accounts, data, or services to monitor, silence, and repress members of civil society.

Objectives:

1. Youth and women develop their understanding of digital policy development processes to advocate for inclusive policies and frameworks that address the impact of technologies on modern society – economic development, security, democracy, and human rights – in particular, policies that reduce and mitigate disparities online and offline that stem from or follow these impacts.
2. Increase capacity of youth- and women-led organizations to advocate and engage government decision makers and the private sector to develop and implement more inclusive and rights-respecting ICT, digital economy, and telecommunications policies.
3. Enhance digital safety and security for youth- and women-led organizations, as well as other vulnerable communities and individuals.

A.4 Activities

Possible program activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Skills Development and Capacity-Building:* Activities that strengthen the organizational, technical, and policy capacity of women and youth actors to monitor, advocate, and influence the government and private sector.
- *Public Campaigns and Advocacy:* Interventions could also include public information campaigns and action plans to help increase citizen awareness of and engagement with technology and human rights issues. Efforts may include elevating youth- and women-led civil society engagement with government and the private sector through established country-level, multi-stakeholder initiatives and platforms.
- *National and Regional Networks:* Activities that increase collaboration, dialogue, and learning through support for existing national or regional networks of youth- and women-led civil society actors working on digital rights and security issues to increase learning and information sharing.
- *Research and Development:* Activities may also focus on promoting youth- and women-centered approaches to build knowledge of and amplify youth and gender perspectives on local and/or regional digital rights issues affecting youth, women, and other

vulnerable populations. Activities aimed primarily at research should incorporate training or capacity-building for local civil society.

Applicants may propose to work directly with beneficiary civil society organizations, or in partnership with national organizations in some or all of the target countries. Proposals should support efforts that equally focus on women and youth. Program funds may be budgeted for all expenses related to these activities, including travel expenses for beneficiaries participating in workshops, seminars, brief internships or fellowships, or related opportunities, where appropriate.

A.5 Expected Outcomes:

All projects should aim to have progress that empowers women and youth voices and promote gender equity and equality in digital and cyber policymaking, consistent with the United States' efforts to promote inclusive, rights-respecting, multi-stakeholder models of internet governance

A.6 Indicators:

The performance indicators listed are Standard Foreign Assistance (F) Indicators that serve as a reasonable method for SCA to measure progress of implementation towards achieving expected outcomes. Applicants may use the following F-indicators or propose other standard indicators and/or custom indicators (indicators designed specifically for the project). However, please do not select more indicators than are necessary, and only select indicators that will be helpful in tracking activities and utilized for learning and making decisions about programming. A full list of F-indicators can be found in the Foreign Assistance Resource Library:

<https://www.state.gov/foreign-assistance-resource-library/>.

Indicator Number	Performance Indicators
DR.4.2-2	Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
GNDR-1	Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed or adopted with USG assistance designed to promote gender equality or non-discrimination against women or girls at the national or sub-national level
GNDR-8	Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations
YOUTH-2	Number of laws, policies or procedures adopted and implemented with USG assistance designed to promote youth participation at the regional, national or local level

A.8. Key Considerations

SCA strongly encourages inclusive and integrated program models that assess and address the barriers to access for individuals and groups based on their race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. Applicant should integrate locally informed approaches and local consultations with youth- and women-led organizations into program design.

Due to the regional scope and available funding, this project is not intended to provide sub-grants to selected beneficiary organizations. However, SCA prioritizes equitable partnership models and recognizes the critical importance of local leadership in designing inclusive and context-specific approaches to digital and cyber policymaking. As such, applicants are encouraged to propose innovative funding solutions using grant funds to enable / empower selected beneficiary organizations to carry out impactful small-scale projects and activities in support of their policy, advocacy, and awareness-raising priorities. In addition, the implementer may assist in connecting beneficiary civil society organizations (CSOs) with other potential funders and supporters.

Proposals should have a strong regional component, as appropriate.

A.9 Participants and Audiences:

The principal participants and target audiences for this project are the leaders, staff, and boards of directors (or similar) of youth- and women-led CSOs in the target countries. For this program, the target youth group should be between the ages of 18-30. Applicants' proposals should show evidence of working with these organizations and/or working with national organizations to identify and recruit these CSOs for participation in the project. Additional participants/audiences may include national and local government officials, civil preparedness staff, academics, and journalists. Applicants should indicate how including these additional audiences will support the project's principal goal of strengthening youth and women's voices in digital policy and programs.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Primary organizations can submit one application in response to the NOFO. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, and (d) waive irregularities in applications received.

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

The authority for this funding opportunity is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA).

To maximize the impact and sustainability of the award(s) that result from this NOFO, SCA retains the right to execute non-competitive continuation amendment(s). The total duration of any award, including potential non-competitive continuation amendments, shall not exceed 54 months, or four and a half years. Any non-competitive continuation is contingent on performance and **pending availability of funds**. A non-competitive continuation is not guaranteed, and the Department of State reserves the right to exercise or not to exercise this option.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

SCA welcomes applications from U.S.-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations with or without 501(c) (3) status of the U.S. tax code; foreign-based non-profit organizations/nongovernment organizations (NGO); Public International Organizations; private, public, or state institutions of higher education; and for-profit organizations or businesses.

Applications submitted by for-profit entities may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process. Additionally, the Department of State prohibits profit to for-profit or commercial organizations under its assistance awards. 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 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

Please see 2 CFR 200.307 for regulations regarding program income.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility factor or requirement for this NOFO and providing cost share will not result in a more favorable competitive ranking. Per 2 CFR §200.306, items that are proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR §200, Subpart E—Costs Principles.

C.3 Other

Applicants must have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships local in-country or regional partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders and have demonstrable experience in administering successful and preferably similar projects.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](https://www.sam.gov) (www.sam.gov) and/or 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 application.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms, kits, or other materials needed to apply on www.grants.gov and SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title "Fostering Human Rights-Centered Internet Governance," funding opportunity number SFOP0009543. Please contact the SCA point of contact listed in Section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note that reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

For all application documents, please ensure:

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

D.2.1 Application Requirements

Complete applications must include the following:

- 1) Completed and signed **SF-424**, **SF-424A**, and **SF-424B** forms.
- 2) Organizations that engage in lobbying the U.S. government, including Congress, or pay for another entity to lobby on their behalf, are also required to complete the **SF-LLL** “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” form (**only if applicable**).
- 3) **Cover Page/Executive Summary** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document) that includes a table with the organization name, project title, target country/countries, and name and contact information for the application’s main point of contact and brief section that clearly outlines the (1) the problem statement addressed by the project (2) research-based evidence justifying the applicant’s approach, and (3) quantifiable project outcomes and impacts.
- 4) **Proposal Narrative** (not to exceed ten (10) pages, preferably as a Word Document). Please note the ten-page limit **does not include** the Cover Page/Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, Audit, or NICRA. Applicants are encouraged to combine multiple documents into a single Word Document or PDF (i.e. Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file). The Narrative must include the following:
 - **Introduction to the Organization:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all relevant or similar type projects from previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
 - **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
 - **Program Goal:** The “goal(s)” describe the larger outcome intended
 - **Program Objectives:** The intermediate accomplishments and measurable targets to achieve a goal. Objectives of the program should be SMART:
 - **Specific:** Detailed and specifies what will be achieved
 - **Measurable:** have associated metrics or measurements of success
 - **Attainable:** appropriately challenging, objectives can be reasonably attained given the available resources
 - **Relevant:** align with the policy/program goal and appropriate within the country or beneficiary audience
 - **Time-Bound:** achievable within the timeframe of the program
 - **Program Activities:** Describe specific actions taken under Objective. All activities should be clearly developed and sufficiently explain the resource and time requirements (inputs) and things done or produced (outputs). Activities should detail: target areas, participant groups or selection criteria for participants; how relevant stakeholders will be engaged; actions taken by local partners as appropriate/relevant.

- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. Include ways program activities will ensure sustainability
- 5) **Risk Assessment** (not to exceed three (3) pages, preferably as a Word Document) that includes an assessment of known and potential risks to the success of the project or affecting the applicant's ability to carry out the project, including harm to the reputation or security of the applicant, its partners and sub-grantees, or its beneficiaries, and steps that will be taken to mitigate or counter the risks.
 - 6) **Budget** (preferably as an Excel workbook) that includes three (3) columns containing the request to SCA, any cost sharing contribution, and the total budget. A summary budget should also be included using the OMB-approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample) in a separate tab. Costs must be in U.S. Dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-grantees should be included as additional tabs within the Excel workbook (if available at the time of submission). Please see attached *Budget Guidelines for New Awards Jan 2023*
 - 7) **Budget Narrative** (preferably as a Word Document) Justify each line-item in the budget and explain how the amounts were derived, consistency with the applicants documented policies, as well as the source and description of all proposed costs (and cost-share, if applicable). The narrative should complement the budget rather than repeat information provided in the budget. For example, the narrative should provide details on the purpose of costs, reasonability of costs, cost price analysis, explain allocations, explain any yearly variances and tie expenses to program activities and/or objectives where appropriate. Sources of all cost-share offered in the application should be identified and explained in the budget narrative. See Tab 1 *Budget Guidelines for New Awards Jan 2023* for more information.
 - 8) **Logic Model** (preferably as a Word Document). Logic models, and alternative approaches, can be helpful when planning and designing programs. These tools can be used to visually depict or outline how and why a project will work—i.e. the rationale behind your project approach. Detailing how a program's planned activities lead to certain outcomes can often help applicants understand the assumptions within the approach. Detailing factors outside your control, such as policy shifts (i.e. external factors) within a logic model can identify areas that should be included within your program's risk analysis. It details planned activities, the immediate services or product of project activities (outputs), and the expected changes or benefits that occur after activities have been implemented (outcomes). Applicants should specify objectives, identify what resources (inputs) are needed, outline proposed activities (outputs) and beneficiaries, and illustrate how activities lead to expected results.
 - 9) **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative and Plan:**

- An M&E Narrative (maximum one page) outlines how a project's M&E system will be carried out and by whom. It details how you will track your project's performance toward its objectives, over time. Provide a clear description of the approach and data collection strategies and tools to be employed (e.g., pre- and post-test surveys, interviews, focus groups). The description should include how the applicant will track and document whether activities occurred (outputs) and the results or changes caused by these activities (outcomes). If the project includes work with local partners or sub-partners, explain how M&E efforts will be coordinated amongst these organizations. Explain if an external evaluation will be included. Evaluations, internal or external, should be systematic studies that use research methods to address specific questions about project performance. They should provide a valuable supplement to ongoing monitoring activities. Evaluation activities generally include baseline assessments, mid-term and final evaluations.
- The M&E plan should draw on the objectives, activities and expected changes from the logic model, and link those areas to indicators. The M&E plan is generally structured as a table with output- and outcome-based indicators. It explains how data will be collected (data collection methods) to show that certain changes occurred. It outlines baselines (where your project is starting) and quarterly targets (what you would like to achieve) for each indicator.

10) **Key Personnel** (not to exceed two (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document). This can represent staff within your organization or outside of your organization (subgrantee, consultants, contractors), carrying out administrative or technical responsibilities, who are integral to the success of the program. Include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Provides names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission. Limited to 3-5 individuals.

11) **Timeline** (not to exceed one (1) page, preferably as a Word Document or Excel Sheet). The timeline of the overall proposal should include activities, evaluation efforts, **and** program closeout. Sufficient time should be included to conduct and finalize internal/external evaluations and allow any sub-recipients time for final reporting.

12) **Gender and Inclusion Analysis** (not to exceed two (2) pages, preferably as a Word Document) that provides a concise analysis of relevant gender norms, equity and equality for underserved communities and marginalized populations, power relations, and conflict dynamics in target countries. Potential domains of analysis include institutional practices and barriers, cultural norms, gender roles, access to and control over assets and resources, and patterns of decision-making. Applicants should briefly explain how they have integrated findings from their analysis into project design and/or other proposal documents, including a plan for regularly reviewing and updating the gender and inclusion analysis with local partners/beneficiaries, and making any necessary adjustments to program implementation.

13) **Contingency Plan** (not to exceed three (3) pages, preferably as a Word Document) for proposed activities should the originally planned activities not be able to be implemented. The Contingency Plan should be submitted as an additional annex. Applicants should demonstrate consideration of the risks identified in the submitted risk assessment and include specific alternative activities or locations as part of the Contingency Plan. Any proposed “plan” must comply with 2CFR200.433 – Contingency provisions. Plans must not include unallocable or unallowable expenses and must not result in a larger Total Award Value than the identified as the “competition ceiling.” SCA requires prior approval by the Grants Officer of the “plan” before any activities can take place, or costs can be incurred against the “plan.”

14) **PSEA Policy** (preferably as a Word Document) SCA has a zero tolerance for inaction regarding allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) occurring in relation to a federal award, and advocates for a survivor-centered approach to addressing such misconduct. If the applicant has a written policy regarding the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in its workplace and programming, it should be included as an attachment. If no such corporate policy currently exists, the applicant should describe the measures it will take to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in this project.

15) **Attachments:**

- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner, if applicable/pre-identified
- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for project activities

Applications that do not include the elements listed above will be deemed technically ineligible. To ensure that all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the review panel will review from the first page of each section up to the page limit and no further.

D.2.2 Additional Information Requested For Those Receiving Notification of Intent

Successful applicants must submit, after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award:

- Written responses and revised application documents addressing conditions and recommendations from the review panel;
- A copy of the applicant’s latest NICRA as a PDF file, if the applicant has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget;
- A completed copy of the Department’s Financial Management Survey, if receiving USG funding for the first time;

- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, if receiving SCA funding for the first time (unless an exemption is provided);
- Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award;
- Applicants who submit their applications through Grants.gov will be required to create a SAMs Domestic account in order to accept the final award. Accounts must be logged into the system every 60 days in order to maintain an active account.
- A PDF file copy of your organization's most recent single audit is required, if your organization meets the threshold as defined in 2 CFR 200 Subpart F. If your organization has not had a recent single audit (within your organization's previous 3 fiscal years), you must submit your organization's most recent independent financial audit.

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

All prime organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as DUNS, and an active registration with the SAM.gov **before submitting an application**. SCA may **not** review applications from or make awards to applicants that have not completed all applicable UEI and SAM.gov requirements. 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.

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

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

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). A Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code and a UEI number are issued through SAM.gov. Once received continue with the remainder of the SAM.gov registration.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS
- Organizations based outside of the United States and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS, but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov. **Please note that as of December 2022, 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 a NATO CAGE (NCAGE).**

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- NCAGE/CAGE code (if applicable)
- www.SAM.gov UEI and registration

If you are an organization based outside the U.S. and plan to do business with the Department of Defense:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE number

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/home>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete registration. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

If you are an organization based outside the U.S. and DO NOT plan to do business with the Department of Defense:

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

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

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

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

https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0016380&sys_kb_id=194695221bfe4d983565ed3ce54bcbbb&spa=1 **Please** note, guidance on SAM.gov and the

guidance on GSA's website about requirement for registering in SAM.gov is subject to change

and currently being updated. Applicants should review the website frequently for the most up-to-date guidance.

The attached “AQM Guidance for NCAGE-SAM.gov for Grant Applicants as of Dec 2022” is a compilation of resources gathered by AQM. Any content shown from SAM.gov is not owned by the Department of State. This guidance and instruction are to the best of our knowledge based at the time of posting this solicitation. Where guidance in these attachments differs from the SAM.gov website, SAM.gov prevails and the applicant is encouraged to seek and document clarity provided by the SAM.gov helpdesk.

D.3.1 Exemptions

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

- Recipient is a foreign organization receiving an award that will be performed outside the United States valued at less than \$25,000, if the Grants Officer deems it to be impractical for the entity to obtain a UEI or register in SAM.gov.
- The recipient is an overseas school and does not currently have a UEI number.
- The award relates to a classified or national security matter.
- The recipient’s identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or the beneficiary being served by the recipient.
- There are exigent circumstances that prohibit the recipient from receiving a UEI and completing SAM registration prior to receiving the award. These circumstances are identified in the justification below and the recipient will be required to register within 30 days of the award date in accordance with 2 CFR 25.

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

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), on **30, MAY, 2023 on <https://www.grants.gov/> or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>) under the announcement title “Fostering Human Rights-Centered Internet Governance,” funding opportunity number SFOP0009543.**

Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered. Known system errors caused by Grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.service-now.com>) that are outside of the applicant’s control will be reviewed

on a case by case basis. Applicants should not expect a notification upon SCA receiving their application.

D.5 Funding Limitations, Restrictions, and other Considerations

SCA will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. Please refer the link for Foreign Terrorist Organizations: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

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.

The Central Government of Sri Lanka is ineligible to receive foreign assistance pursuant to section 7044(e)(2) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2022 (FY 2022 SFOAA), which restricts (with limited exceptions) assistance for the central government unless the Secretary of State certifies to the Committees on Appropriations regarding certain actions taken by the Government of Sri Lanka. The certification has not been submitted to Congress for FY 2022. Although the Central Government of Sri Lanka is ineligible to receive foreign assistance, beneficiaries working in Sri Lanka are eligible to receive funding under this opportunity.

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

D.6 Other Submission Requirements

All application submissions must be made electronically via www.grants.gov or SAMS Domestic (<https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>). Both systems require registration by the applying organization. Please note that the Grants.gov registration process can take ten (10) business days or longer, even if all registration steps are completed in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov in its entirety. SCA bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date, for system errors in either SAMS Domestic or Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Additionally, applicants must save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable NOFO and these instructions.

SCA encourages organizations to **submit applications during normal business hours** (Monday – Friday, 9:00AM-5:00PM Eastern Standard Time (EST)). If an applicant experiences technical difficulties and has contacted the appropriate helpdesk but is not receiving timely assistance (e.g. if you have not received a response within 48 hours of contacting the helpdesk), you may contact the SCA point of contact listed in the NOFO in Section G. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk.

Note: The Grants Officer will determine technical eligibility of all applications.

SAMS Domestic Applications:

Applicants using SAMS Domestic for the first time should complete their “New Organization Registration.” To register with SAMS Domestic, click “Login to <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com>” and follow the “create an account” link.

Please note that establishing an account in SAMS Domestic may require the use of smartphone for multi-factor authentication (MFA). If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of creating an account, please contact the helpdesk and request instructions on MFA for Windows PC.

Organizations must remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

SAMS Domestic Help Desk:

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international

callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

Grants.gov Applications:

Applicants who do not submit applications via SAMS Domestic may submit via www.grants.gov.

Please be advised that completing all the necessary registration steps for obtaining a username and password from Grants.gov **can take ten (10) business days or longer**.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Additionally, organizations **must** remember to save a screenshot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Grants.gov Helpdesk:

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

See <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/federal-holidays/> for a list of federal holidays.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Proposal Review Criteria

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

Quality and Program Design – 20 points: The program idea is well developed and responsive to the policy and program objective of the NOFO. The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement. The application clearly defines the problem; its causes; stakeholders; and existing research/data; the approach taken to solve the problem; realistic milestones to indicate progress. Applicant demonstrates the importance of locally informed approaches and use of local consultations with youth- and women-led organizations to inform program activities.

Organizational Capacity – 20 points: The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful projects in the content area proposed. The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed

country/territory/region. The organization has expertise in its stated field and has adequate staffing to manage the proposed project. Applicant should demonstrate a strong understanding of the characteristics of effective multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the role that the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and standards bodies play in shaping digital and cybersecurity legislation and policies. The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous grant or sub-award).

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 20 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation. The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and/or identifies local partners. Program logic is sound showing plausible pathways to achieve project outcomes. Key assumptions and risks have been identified and their potential influences described. The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.

Budget & Budget Narrative – 10 points: The budget justification is detailed, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and provide detail of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, labor in-put and responsibilities, procurement practice and policy information, and other similar quantitative detail

Monitoring & Evaluation/Sustainability – 20 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured and who will be responsible for them. The applicant clearly details how activities will result in benefits that will continue beyond the funding period.

Support of Equity and Underserved Communities – 10 points: Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation. Proposals should clearly explain how the program will interact with youth- and women-led organizations in both urban and rural settings, as appropriate, and with organizations representing minority or marginalized communities.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

The Department of State is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in section C and have

submitted all required documents outlined in section D. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

All applications that are deemed eligible will proceed to the Merit Review Panel consisting of U.S. government subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. SCA reserves the right to request the assistance of non-US government Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if appropriate to the solicitation. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in E.1, of this part. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory. Panel Reviewers may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award.

Final selection authority resides with SCA's senior level official. Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets the Department of State's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

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

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

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

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

Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

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

- Proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative or a designate to terrorist organization or narcotics trafficker, including elected members of government, will NOT be considered. This provision must be included in any sub-awards/sub-contracts issued under this award.
- U.S. Applicant organizations must demonstrate adherence to equal opportunity employment practices and commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.
- Applicants under DOS-funded projects are responsible for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for project participants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

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

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the review panel's conditions and recommendations; being registered in required systems; and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by SCA or the Grants Officer. Final approval is also contingent on Congressional Notification requirements being met and final review and approval by the Department's warranted Grants Officer.

The notice of Federal award signed by the Department's warranted Grants Officers is the sole authorizing document. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via SAMS Domestic to be electronically counter-signed in the system.

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS). Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis. Instructions for requesting payments are available at: <https://pms.psc.gov/>.

Advance payments must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the Recipient in carrying out the purpose of this award. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the Recipient for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy and Legal Requirements

SCA requires all recipients of foreign assistance funding to comply with all applicable Department and Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to the following: The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities. The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.

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

- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)

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:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),

- Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
- Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
- Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
- Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

In accordance with the [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program advances equity with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. The proposal should also demonstrate how the program will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

The support of underserved communities will be part of the review criteria for this opportunity. Therefore, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

Additional requirements may be included depending on the content of the program.

F.3 Reporting

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report. Applicants should be aware that SCA awards will require that all reports (financial and progress) are uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic on a quarterly basis. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports and must be submitted in PMS, as well as a copy from PMS then uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic. The progress reports uploaded to the grant file in SAMS Domestic must include a narrative as described below and Project Indicators (or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer).

Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project's progress in achieving the overarching goal and should be compiled according to the objectives, activities, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Logic Model and in the Monitoring &

Evaluation Narrative. Explain and evaluate how activities reflect progress toward expected outcome and outcomes towards achieving objectives. Include progress towards meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the M&E Plan. In addition, attach the M&E Plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators; An assessment of the overall project's impact should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should also include the following:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;
- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why activities have not been conducted or deliverables were not met in accordance with the timeline;
- Data for the required F Framework indicator(s) for the quarter as well as aggregate data by fiscal year;
- Program Indicators or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer;
- Proposed activities for the next quarter; and,
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

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](#).

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.

A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 120 days after the expiration of the award.

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

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

For technical submission questions related to this NOFO, please contact SCA-STA-ProgramOfficersOnly-dl@state.gov. **All emails must include the Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line.**

For assistance with SAMS Domestic accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact the ILMS help desk by phone at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the Self Service online portal that can be accessed from <https://afsism.service-now.com/ilms/home>. Customer support is available 24/7.

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

For a list of federal holidays visit:

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

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

H. OTHER INFORMATION

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

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any SCA representative. Explanatory information provided by SCA that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

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