

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Support to American-Style Higher Education in Iraq

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0006412

Questions & Answers

1. It is our understanding that in the past funding under similar awards has gone directly to universities in Iraq. Could you please confirm that U.S.-based universities are eligible to apply if they are working in partnership with an “American-Style institutions of Higher Education” in Iraq?
 - a. **Answer:** Any American Style Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are eligible to apply for this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The proposal must support American-Style IHE in Iraq to achieve the goals and objectives of the NOFO.
2. On pages 5 and 6, the NOFO states that exchanges, including faculty exchanges, are a suggested way to increase university partnerships. However, on page 7 the NOFO lists “exchange activities with other countries or territories” as unallowable activities. Can you please provide clarification?
 - a. **Answer:** Proposals should address ways to enhance partnerships with U.S. and regional IHE with American-style IHE in Iraq for the purposes of research, exchange, and curriculum and pedagogic development, to include faculty exchanges. Exchange activities with other countries or territories outside of the scope of the NOFO will not be accepted. In addition, broad exchange programs are not comparable to the objectives outlined in the NOFO, and will not be accepted.
3. We are aware of only two active universities in Iraq that may be described as “American-style institutions of Higher Education”: the American University in Iraq – Suleimaniya, and American University in Iraq – Kurdistan. Can you please clarify whether these are the only such institutions from NEA’s perspective, and therefore the only two universities in Iraq eligible for support?
 - a. **Answer:** NEA is not in a position to comment on Institutions of Higher Education that are registered with the Government of Iraq.
4. Is it preferable that the main applicant to be the US University to submit the proposal or one of the Iraqi University should apply? Or this doesn’t matter?
 - a. **Answer:** Any American Style IHE are eligible to apply for this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The proposal must support American-Style IHE in Iraq to achieve the goals and objectives of the NOFO.
5. We are applying for the "Support to American-Style Higher Education in Iraq" grant, but I need some information from you for the SF-424. Specifically, Items 10-13, which are "completed for you". My problem is that I cannot access the form through SAMS or Grants.gov, so I have been told by the ILMS Help Desk to download the form and just fill it in and upload it to SAMS. Would you be so kind to give me the info for those items so I can fill it in on the form? Please advise and thank you in advance for your help.
 - a. **Answer:** Applicants are required to submit applications through SAMS-Domestic, as outlined in the NOFO. The SF 424 family of forms are auto-generated in SAMS Domestic as part of the application process. Manually generated and completed SF-424 family of

forms will not be accepted. Please be sure to have the appropriate SAMS Domestic registrations and permissions in order to submit an application through SAMS Domestic.

6. A faculty member at our university is interested in applying to the following Funding Announcement. However, when I try to create a grants.gov workspace I receive an Error Message: ALERT: No open Opportunity Package found. Is this opportunity still open? How would we apply?
 - a. **Answer:** All applicants are required to apply only through SAMS Domestic per the requirements of the NOFO. Applications cannot be submitted through Grants.gov.
7. According to the NOFO, to be eligible to apply, an institution must be “an American style Institution of Higher Education that is non-state sponsored.” However, I see nothing in the NOFO that would preclude American-style universities outside Iraq (either U.S. universities or American-style universities within the MENA region such as the American University of Beirut or The American University in Cairo) from applying to work with an American-style university in Iraq on any of the allowed strengthening activities. Am I correct that such partnerships would be allowed and welcomed?
 - a. **Answer:** Any American Style IHE are eligible to apply for this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The proposal must support American-Style IHE in Iraq to achieve the goals and objectives of the NOFO.
8. Also, I see nothing in the NOFO that would preclude an American-style university outside Iraq from applying to work with state-supported institutions in Iraq to make them more “American”. In fact, as I read the language, it appears to me that the NOFO may be encouraging the latter since it states that (a) the total funds available are \$10 million, (b) no single grant is likely to exceed \$5 million, and (c) three grants are contemplated by NEA. Based upon these statements in the NOFO, I draw this conclusion because so far as I am aware there are at most two institutions of higher education in Iraq that could possibly qualify as American-style. Would an American or American-style university outside Iraq in fact comply with the terms of the NOFO were it to apply to work with one or more Iraqi state-supported institutions in this way?
 - a. **Answer:** In the NOFO, Section C Project Design, state that “This solicitation invites applications in support of American-style higher education in Iraq.” The NOFO further defines American style higher education in section E Definitions. The intent of this solicitation is to support American style IHE that are non-state sponsored, and is not intended to make other IHE in Iraq more “American”.
9. Finally, although the NOFO indicates that an institution may make only one application for a grant, is it permissible (i.e., would NEA be open to the possibility) for two separate institutions to be awarded separate grants, both of which would be for the purpose of strengthening the same American-style Iraqi institution? For example, could an American-style institution in Iraq apply for a grant for itself, and a U.S. university or MENA-based American-style university also apply for a grant to strengthen that same American-style Iraqi institution, with the outcome that both these applicants would be awarded separate grants to support the same institution? Would such an outcome comply with the terms of the NOFO?
 - a. **Answer:** Multiple applications that support a single American style Institution of Higher Education will be considered. However, multiple awards with duplicative efforts will not be issued.

10. With reduced staff capabilities due to COVID 19, will the deadline for submissions be extended?
- a. **Answer:** Yes. The deadline for application submissions is being extend to April 30, 2020.

Additional Questions from the revised NOFO with the June 22, 2020, deadline for applications.

11. Our proposal was submitted before the previous deadline, but in light of revisions to the NOFO language that seemingly affect our submission, we need to revise our grant proposal. Can we simply submit an amendment or do we need to withdraw our previous proposal and resubmit it in its entirety?
- a. **Answer:** With the deadline for applications extended to June 22, 2020, revisions to submitted applications are permissible within SAMS Domestic. Please do not submit a second application.
12. On p. 2 of the NOFO, it says: In this announcement, we seek to support projects in Iraq. Successful applicants will use innovative and cost-effective approaches to meet the needs and opportunities of students in Iraq. Please note: applications that focus on activities in countries and territories other than those listed will NOT be considered. Furthermore, on p.7 it says the following costs are not allowed: Exchange activities with non-participant countries or territories. Does this mean that activities are not allowed that take Iraqis to a neighboring country within MENA for training activities so that U.S.-based partners who will be training Iraqi participants in person (not virtually) will not be violating the State Department's Level IV Travel Warning on Iraq? Or do such activities have to be done only within Iraq? Under the Travel Warning, this will apply to both the Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq?
- a. **Answer:** Proposals should address ways to enhance partnerships with U.S. and regional IHE with American-style IHE in Iraq for the purposes of research, exchange, and curriculum and pedagogic development, to include faculty exchanges. Exchange activities with other countries or territories outside of the scope of the NOFO will not be accepted. In addition, broad exchange programs are not comparable to the objectives outlined in the NOFO, and will not be accepted. The applicant is responsible for the security of their staff and take into consideration the Department's country travel advisories.
13. On p. 15, Section VII.A, it says: Commercial firms or for-profit entities are not eligible for an award through this announcement. Does this mean the awardee cannot contract with such firms using grant funds or simply that such firms are not eligible to apply in the first place?
- a. **Answer:** Commercial firms or for-profit entities are not eligible to submit an application under this NOFO. It is permissible for a recipient of an award to contract with commercial firms for allocable goods and services in an award.
14. Is it possible to submit the project through an American university (as a main partner) or this should be through and American-style IHE in Iraq, and what is preferred?
- a. **Answer:** An American IHE with the non-profit designation under IRS section 501(c)(3), either public or private, is eligible to apply under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The proposal must support American-Style IHE in Iraq to achieve the goals and objectives of the NOFO. The applicant must determine who the prime applicant will be in order to achieve the objectives and goal of the NOFO.

15. Is a public American University eligible to be the prime on the grant? I assume that US public universities would qualify as an American non-profit organization focused on education, but want to verify.
- Answer:** An American IHE with the non-profit designation under IRS section 501(c)(3), either public or private, is eligible to apply under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The proposal must support American-Style IHE in Iraq to achieve the goals and objectives of the NOFO.
16. What is your definition of a state-sponsored university in Iraq? Does that mean institutions that get no state money? Can we vet our Iraqi partners eligibility with you before we write the proposal? Do you have a list of non-state sponsored Iraq universities
- Answer:** NEA is not in a position to comment on Institutions of Higher Education that are registered with the Government of Iraq. NEA/AC does not determine the eligibility of an applicant prior to the submission of an application.
17. If an American institution is the prime, can the Iraqi partner be state sponsored? The NOFO seems to imply only that the Iraqi institution cannot be state-sponsored if they are the prime applicant? Is this an accurate interpretation of the eligibility? What is the reason that an Iraqi partner cannot be state sponsored?
- Answer:** In the NOFO, Section C Project Design, state that “This solicitation invites applications in support of American-style higher education in Iraq.” The NOFO further defines American style higher education in section E Definitions. The intent of this solicitation is to support American style IHE that are non-state sponsored, and is not intended to make other IHE in Iraq more “American”.
18. If the American university has a relationship or MOU with an Iraqi university, does the proposal have to focus on only that university or can activities be open to other institutions?
- Answer:** The proposal must support American-Style IHE in Iraq to achieve the goals and objectives of the NOFO.
19. If the American applicant has ongoing collaboration with an Iraqi university but not an MOU, how official does a letter of collaboration need to be? Can it be with the collaborating faculty or does it need to be from the University President or someone of a similar rank?
- Answer:** Any American applicant must demonstrate an established partnership with an American-style Institution of Higher Education in Iraq.
20. On your definition of an American style university... does the Iraqi partner need to have all or just some of these things implemented at their institution to be an eligible participant?
- In the NOFO, Section C Project Design, state that “This solicitation invites applications in support of American-style higher education in Iraq.” The NOFO further defines American style higher education in section E Definitions. The intent of this solicitation is to support American style IHE that are non-state sponsored, and is not intended to make other IHE in Iraq more “American”.
21. If the Iraqi institution has to be using an American style of higher education to be an eligible participant, wouldn't they already be where you want them to be? Shouldn't the focus be on institutions that don't yet have these parameters implemented? Or can we focus on institutions

that WANT to use an American style but don't have all parameters of your definition already implemented?

- a. **Answer:** In the NOFO, Section C Project Design, state that "This solicitation invites applications in support of American-style higher education in Iraq." The NOFO further defines American style higher education in section E Definitions. The intent of this solicitation is to support American style IHE that are non-state sponsored, and is not intended to make other IHE in Iraq more "American".