



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Documenting Human Rights Abuses and Countering DPRK Propaganda

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State

Opportunity number: DFOP0019674

Application deadline: August 31, 2026 at 11:59pm (EST)

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U.S Department of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Documenting Human Rights Abuses and Countering DPRK Propaganda
Funding Opportunity Number	DFOP0019674
Announcement Type	Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	August 31, 2026 at 11:59pm (EST)
Assistance Listing Number	19.345
Length of performance period	18 to 36 months
Number of awards anticipated	2-3 awards (dependent on amounts)
Award amounts	awards may range from a minimum of \$750,000 to a maximum of \$2,250,000 (approximately)
Total available funding	\$2,960,039.00 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY25 Democracy Funds
Anticipated project start date	September 30, 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 36 months or less. 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 program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

Priority Region: Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) announces an open competition for organizations to document the DPRK's human rights abuses and counter regime influence operations globally. The program will challenge the DPRK's information monopoly by safely documenting real-time information on human rights conditions and other on-the-ground realities throughout the DPRK.

The DPRK maintains one of the world's most repressive information environments, creating a dual threat that this program is designed to address. First, the regime exercises total control over

domestic media and has criminalized access to outside information, deliberately masking severe human rights abuses from both its citizens and the international community. Second, the regime conducts sophisticated external influence operations that distort international events, vilify the United States and its allies, and manipulate global perceptions—particularly targeting youth audiences—by falsely attributing the country's internal suffering to U.S. policies and sanctions rather than regime governance.

By documenting vital information from inside the DPRK, the program will inform U.S. policymakers and drive international advocacy campaigns. Furthermore, it will leverage defector voices across modern digital platforms to inform global audiences—particularly youth demographics targeted by foreign propaganda—about the reality of the DPRK regime, reinforcing U.S. leadership in defending democratic principles and human rights. This program directly advances the 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS) to protect America from destructive propaganda and influence operations, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. It further supports DRL's commitment under the Department of State's FY 2026–2030 Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) to promote freedom of expression and access to information and ideas in highly restrictive settings.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- U.S.-based non-profit organizations/NGOs with or without 501(c)(3) status
- Private, public, or state institutions of higher education
- For-profit organizations or businesses
- Foreign-based non-profit organizations/nongovernment organizations (NGO)

Applicants should have, or be able to develop, active partnerships with thematic or local partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders, including private sector partners and NGOs. Applicants should also have proven experience in managing successful and preferably similar projects. DRL encourages applications from foreign-based NGOs located in the regions or countries relevant to this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

Applicants may form consortia to combine different expertise into one comprehensive proposal; applicants may also include subgrants to partners that would conduct activities that contribute to meeting the program's objectives. However, only one organization can be designated as the prime applicant, while the remaining organizations must be designated as partners or sub-awardees. The prime applicant must meet the eligibility criteria listed above. DRL may ask for more background information from applicants without previous federal grant experience, and these applicants might receive limited funding on a trial basis.

The Department of State does not allow for-profit or commercial organizations to make a profit from its assistance awards. Profit is defined as any amount more than allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs for commercial organizations is determined by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not required for this NOFO and will not improve competitive ranking of an application. Any budget items proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR 200, Subpart E—Cost Principles.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Primary applicants may submit one application in response to this NOFO.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

Background

The DPRK maintains one of the world's most restrictive information environments. The government exercises total control over all media outlets and has criminalized access to outside information and ideas. Authorities employ repressive laws and measures to preserve their monopoly on narratives about DPRK leadership, international affairs, and conditions within the country. This systemic denial of independent information is designed to deliberately mask severe domestic human rights conditions from both its own citizens and the international community.

While heavily restricting internal information, the regime simultaneously projects increasingly sophisticated propaganda outward. State-controlled apparatuses conduct external influence operations designed to deliberately distort international events, vilify the United States and its allies, and manipulate global perceptions of human rights conditions within the DPRK. These operations increasingly target international audiences, particularly global youth, seeking to foster favorable views of the Kim regime while falsely attributing the country's internal suffering to U.S. and allied policies or international sanctions, rather than the regime's own governance.

This dual threat of systemic internal censorship and aggressive global influence operations requires a multifaceted approach to counter authoritarianism in one of the world's most closed societies. Overcoming these state-imposed barriers necessitates safely documenting the regime's human rights violations and abuses in real-time to impact global policy. Furthermore, it requires elevating credible, independent voices—particularly North Korean defectors—to actively counter state-sponsored propaganda on modern digital platforms and educate the global public

on documented realities of the regime.

Program Goal: Increase documentation of the DPRK's human rights violations and abuses in real-time and counter the DPRK's propaganda and foreign influence operations.

Objective 1: Increase the amount of real-time reporting on the DPRK's human rights abuses and violations and repressive policies.

Applicants should propose safe, proven strategies to establish or expand secure networks that document real-time data from within the DPRK. Illustrative activities may include:

- Develop and maintain secure, tested mechanisms for collecting documentation from sources inside the DPRK
- Develop secure protocols to cross-reference raw, real-time data from inside the DPRK against secondary sources to aggregate isolated data points into credible, evidence-based documentation that maps broader trends and patterns regarding:
 - Domestic human rights conditions
 - Political and economic shifts
 - State surveillance practices

All proposed activities must be led by or include significant consultation with the North Korean defector and escapee community. Such engagement could include leveraging existing defector networks to establish and maintain secure communication channels with sources inside the DPRK; partnering with defector-led organizations to safely manage the multi-directional flow of real-time documentation; and/or utilize multiple defector partner sources to verify and accurately contextualize the conditions documented on the ground. Proposals that do not include this requirement may be deemed technically ineligible.

Objective 2: Package and utilize documented information to inform policymakers and conduct international campaigns to counter DPRK propaganda.

Applicants should demonstrate the capacity to synthesize information obtained under Objective 1 into compelling, accessible formats, including English and Korean language products. This information should drive forward-leaning international campaigns that highlights the realities of the DPRK regime.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Produce analytical reports, rapid-response briefings, and accessible publications tailored for government stakeholders, in key languages including English and Korean.
- Design and execute international campaigns that utilize documentation to highlight ongoing human rights violations committed by the DPRK and counter the pro-regime propaganda narrative. Collaborate with research institutions, think tanks, media outlets, international press, social media influencers, and human rights NGOs to amplify the reach and impact of the real-time information.

Objective 3: Leverage defector voices and modern digital platforms to counter DPRK influence operations and educate global audiences.

The program should counter the DPRK's propaganda targeting international audiences, particularly youth, fostering favorable views of the regime and falsely blaming U.S. sanctions for the country's domestic hardships. Applicants should empower defectors to use online social media platforms to share documented realities on unique and culturally relevant platforms to directly counter foreign influence operations.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Provide subgrants and tailored technical training to defector content creators
- Create highly engaging, platform-native content (such as YouTube videos, reels, or other engaging formats) that counters specific DPRK propaganda
- Conduct targeted digital campaigns aimed at global youth and international demographics known to be vulnerable to authoritarian influence operations

Competitive proposals will:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the current internal operating environment in the DPRK and describe tested, secure measures to extract and disseminate information while mitigating risks under "Do No Harm" principles.
- Outline practical distribution strategies for packaged documentation to ensure real-time insights can effectively reach U.S. and international policymakers.
- Identify specific international demographics susceptible to state-sponsored DPRK propaganda and foreign influence operations.
- Demonstrate an ability to localize project activities by leveraging the expertise of North Korean human rights organizations, activists, and defector communities. Competitive proposals will prioritize awarding subgrants, sub-contracting, and empowering defector content creators, equipping them with the tools and skills to be the leading public voices in global advocacy campaigns.

U.S. Sanctions and Export Control Compliance

All activities funded under this NOFO must comply with U.S. sanctions regulations administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and U.S. export control laws administered by the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS). Applicants must demonstrate a clear understanding of these requirements and describe their compliance approach in their proposals.

2. Substantial Involvement

The award will be a cooperative agreement. The Department of State will be substantially involved in carrying out the following various aspects of this cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement may include but are not limited to:

- Active participation in shaping overall program strategy and approach; DRL will review and approve the annual workplan, security risk plan, and implementation timeline for these awards.

- Meet regularly (monthly, unless the GOR determines otherwise) to discuss progress towards program goals, implementation challenges and solutions.
- Review and input on the development and selection of radio or digital content to ensure alignment with U.S. foreign policy objectives and program goals
- Review and approve selection of sub-awardees, all proposed travel, and key personnel.

Please note that areas of substantial involvement will be negotiated with the applicant prior to award issuance.

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.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)

2. Summary Page (optional)

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. Proposal (15 pages maximum)

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies.

- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Resumes are not required at this time. Instead, provide only the selection criteria your program will apply throughout the grant period of performance when filling key positions.
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

4. *Budget Justification Narrative*

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

5. *Attachments*

- A line-item budget, expanding upon the summary categories found in the SF-424A. Subgrantee budgets, if known at time of submission, should also be included as tabs (please see template attached to NOFO).
- Key personnel position descriptions. Resumes are not required at this time. Instead, provide only the selection criteria your program will apply throughout the grant period of performance when filling key positions.
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

Successful applicant(s) may be required to submit the following documents prior to award. Please **do not** include any of these documents in your application.

Organizational Policies

- Personnel Policy

- Employee Handbook
 - Travel Policies
 - Procurement Policies
 - Sub-Award Manual
 - Sample Sub-Award Agreement (if applicable)
- Financial Management Policies/ SOP
- Completion of the Financial Management Survey

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/>.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: DRL-PRU-Solicitation@state.gov.

For assistance with MyGrants 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://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms>. 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.

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 a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration 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 entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing 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) and a UEI 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 an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoW) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoW foreign assistance funding opportunities.** 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 War. 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 DoW should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI 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 1: Apply for an NCAGE code 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 \(nato.int\)](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx)

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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-25/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-25/subpart-1/section-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 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.

4. *Submission Dates and Times*

Applications are due no later than August 31, 2026 at 11:59pm (EST)

5. *Funding Restrictions*

i. 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 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

ii. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

- 1) 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;
- 2) 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.

iii. 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:

- 1) 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.

iv. 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:

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- 1) 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).

- 2) 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 their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

v. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities

(a) *Definitions.*

American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>

FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.

Unmanned aircraft means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

Unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.

(b) *Prohibition.* Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

(1) delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;

3) Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and

(3) Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system.

c) *Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.* The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies, and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 ([41 U.S.C. 3901](#) note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].

vi. 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 www.Grants.gov or MyGrants. DRL is not responsible for disqualification due to applicants not being registered before the due date, system or technical errors in MyGrants or Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Applicants must save a screenshot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

DRL encourages organizations to **submit applications during normal business hours** (Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM ET). If an applicant experiences technical difficulties and has contacted the appropriate help desk but is not receiving timely assistance (e.g., no response within 48 hours), they may contact the DRL point of contact listed in the NOFO in Section E.2. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate help desk.

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The proposal does not include any activities contrary to any standing Executive Orders. For a full list, see <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants: The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account. If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Monitoring and evaluation plan: 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.

Sustainability: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

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 applications.

4. *Risk Review*

i. Risk factors

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

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 any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (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. Award Notices

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and countersignature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

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.

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by October 15, 2026 via MyGrants.

Payment Method:

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS).

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each PMS payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

H. 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:

- [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:
 - 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),
 - 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 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). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- 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 all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

2. *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.

The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for financial reports and must be submitted in PMS, and a copy of the report submitted in PMS then uploaded to the award file in MyGrants. Program reports uploaded to the award file in MyGrants must include a narrative as described below, as well as Program Indicators (or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer). Indicators will be reviewed and negotiated during the final stages of issuing an award on a program-by-program basis.

Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the program's progress on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Scope of Work (SOW) and in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Narrative. An assessment of the overall project's achievements

should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Relevant contextual information (limited)
- Explanation and evaluation of significant activities of the reporting period and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the approved Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan. In addition, attach the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators
- How relevant communities are being included in program activities
- Any qualitative impact or success stories from the project, when possible
- Copy of baseline, 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 agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments.
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and a corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities
- Reasons why established goals were not met
- Data for the required 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
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable

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

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](#).

3. 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](#).

While the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards requires that materials produced under a federal award be marked appropriately to acknowledge the support of the U.S. Department of State, the Department of State may determine that for the purposes of this award, the recipient would not be required to publicly display Department of State and/or U.S. government branding and marketing for materials produced under this award, nor insert the disclaimers required in the Standard Terms and Conditions. This will be confirmed by the Grants Officer at the award stage.

For more information, visit: <https://brand.america.gov/>

I. Other Information

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.