

Department of State – U.S. Embassy, Kabul
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Program Office:	Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan
Funding Opportunity Title:	Afghan Diplomat Training Program
Announcement Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number:	SCAKAB-15-CA-003-SCA-03172015
Deadline for Applications	April 28, 2015 at 11:59 p.m. (U.S. Eastern Time)
CFDA Number:	19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Javier Pareja**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: KabulPASProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

Important Note:

All application materials must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Applications materials submitted via other means such as email will **not** be accepted. Thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. Please note: kabulpasproposals@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov, DUNS or SAMS. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations/processes listed in this NOFO. Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it may take two weeks or longer to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.**

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). PAS Kabul invites all eligible organizations to submit a proposal for this Afghan Diplomats Training Program.

Executive Summary

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan announces an open competition for an assistance award through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for a cooperative agreement to implement a two-week training program in the U.S. for up to twenty junior Afghan diplomats, (henceforth “the participants”) to take place no later than November 2015. The program will be one phase of a joint U.S.-Chinese training program for Afghan diplomats. The second phase may be sponsored by the Government of China and may take place in Beijing subsequent to the activities funded by this cooperative agreement.

To this end, twenty Afghan diplomats will participate in a two-week diplomacy training program in the U.S., centered in Washington, D.C., but possibly including some days in a second U.S. city. Since this is part of a cooperative effort between the U.S. and China to build capacity in the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a visit to the Chinese Embassy in Washington should be built into the program and Chinese diplomats should be invited to the opening and/or final sessions.

The program format will consist of presentations, discussions, practical exercises and role-plays at a conference-style facility in the Washington, D.C. area suitable for a group of this size and offering space for concurrent, small group activities. Competitive proposals will emphasize the development of the skills professional diplomats must master in their careers. Also included in the program will be site visits to the Department of State and other U.S. government agencies, the Embassies of Afghanistan and China, and other foreign policy stakeholders. Cultural and social events on certain weekday evenings and the weekend between the two training weeks are desirable supplements. The program schedule should also include participation in a social service activity alongside American volunteers.

PAS intends to award a cooperative agreement for a period of 12 months (base year) with options for two additional 12 month periods (option years one and two). Applicants should assume that there will be one Afghan Diplomat Training trip per year.

Background

The first Afghan Diplomats Training Program, held in Beijing and Washington, D.C., took place in December of 2012. Since then, this annual program has become a potent and high-profile

symbol of U.S.-Chinese cooperation towards helping Afghanistan become a secure, stable and prosperous country. This program often draws high-profile participation in its U.S. component. Past iterations have included welcoming remarks delivered by the U.S. Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as Ministers of the Embassy of the Peoples' Republic of China in the United States. This program also often draws significant national and international media coverage.

Goal

The goal of this program is to support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan in building the capacity of its staff, thereby enhancing its professionalism and ability to work cooperatively and effectively with the U.S. government and other countries, as well as NGOs, media houses, universities and research centers, businesses, and religious institutions that operate in the South and Central Asia region.

Objectives

The successful applicant will be responsible for:

1. Making logistical arrangements for twenty Afghan diplomats to travel to the U.S. for approximately two weeks. These arrangements will include international travel, per diem (lodging, meals, and incidental expenses), local U.S. transport and resource materials for the participants, U.S. consultant fees and other administrative expenses.
2. Providing, or arranging to provide, orientation and training focusing on diplomatic knowledge and practical skills so that, at the end of the program, the participants will have greater knowledge of the following:
 - a. Formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy, including the role of stakeholders within (Congress) and outside of government (NGOs, media houses, universities, research centers, businesses, religious institutions)
 - b. U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and South and Central Asia, and U.S.-Chinese relations
 - c. Economic statecraft
 - d. Strategic planning, budgeting and resource allocation
 - e. The role of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, including freedom of religion

And a practiced ability in:

- a. Approaches to bilateral and multilateral negotiations
- b. Styles of public engagement, including speaking and using social media
- c. Interaction with local, regional and international media

Proposals should describe:

- The applicant's proposed schedule and agenda for an approximately two-week training and study tour in the US

- The applicant's previous experience conducting short-term study or training tours in the US for foreign professionals
- Any personnel or partner organizations that will play a role in conducting training exercises or seminars, along with the qualifications of those personnel or organizations
- Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two option years are exercised. PAS will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if an option year will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

U.S. Government Role and Responsibilities

As a cooperative agreement, the Public Affairs Section of U.S. Embassy Kabul will have significant involvement in this effort. USG responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

- a. Approve all work plans and schedules.
- b. Provide the names and resumes of all Afghan participants in the program.
- c. Provide program guidance and input as appropriate.
- d. Coordinate issuance of DS -2019 forms
- e. Assist all Afghan visitors in the U.S. visa process.
- f. Conduct pre-departure briefings.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Award Type: Cooperative Agreement

Number of Awards Anticipated: One (1)

Anticipated Award Amount: The award floor for the base period and each option year is set at \$150,000. The award ceiling is set at \$250,000 for the base year and for each of the two option years.

Anticipated Award Period: Base Period: 1 year; Option Years: 2

Anticipated Start Date: As early as late May, 2015

Potential for Option Years: Yes. PAS intends to award a cooperative agreement for a period of 12 months (base year) with options for two additional 12 month periods (option years one and two). PAS will notify the recipient of its intention to exercise or not to exercise an option year approximately 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise option years will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

As a cooperative agreement the United States Government will have substantial involvement in this effort. For more information on the USG's role please see Section A. Program Description.

This NOFO is soliciting applications for the specific project outlined in Section A. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects will not be considered under this NOFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants

This project will be funded by an appropriation for Diplomatic and Consular Programs and authorized by the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 (as amended) and is subject to the statutory limitations of such funding.

Eligibility is open to all non-profit, non-governmental organizations. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, **non-profit, non-governmental entity** can be the prime recipient of the award. **For-profit entities are not eligible to be the prime recipient of an award under this NOFO.** When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal. Per Section D, **applicants must submit proof of their non-profit status with their proposal submission** (e.g. proof of 501(c)(3) status, Afghan NGO license). Applications that do not include proof of non-profit status will not be considered. Individuals are not eligible for an award under this NOFO. Please refer to Section D for funding restrictions.

Cost Sharing

Cost Sharing or Matching is not required for this funding opportunity.

Other Eligibility Requirements

1. There is no limit on the number of applications an entity may submit for this NOFO.
2. Previous federal award recipients who are not/were not in compliance with the terms of the award, including the financial and program reporting requirements, are ineligible to apply. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and Office of Management and Budget guidance and requirements.
3. Applicants are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. Applicants may be asked to submit information required by DS Form 4184, *Risk Analysis Information* (attached to this solicitation) about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via Email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants

Officer. Questions about the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting your proposal.

4. **Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM)** Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=81407B1F03F2BDB123DD47D19158B75F>. Organizations must also maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The U.S. Department of State may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements by the time the Department is ready to make an award. The Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use this determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO document and any amendments can be found at and www.grants.gov and <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/pdprp.html>. If you do not have access to a high-speed internet connection for downloading documents, you may contact Javier Pareja at KabulPASProposals@state.gov (preferred method of communication) or Phone +93 (0) 700 10 8540 or 1-301-490-1042 x8540.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Applications which fail to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will not be considered. Applicants must set forth accurate and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Applicants must ensure:

1. The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
2. All documents are in English
3. All budgets are in U.S. dollars
4. All pages are numbered
5. All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
6. All materials are submitted in one of the following formats: *.doc, *.docx, *.xls, *.xlsx, *.pdf, *.jpg, *.jpeg, *.odt, *.ods. No other file types will be reviewed.

When submitting a proposal, applicants are required to include the following documents and information:

Section 1 – Cover Sheet:

The coversheet is limited to one page in length. It must provide a summary of the project to be undertaken, the organization’s capacity to carry it out, expected timeline, and cost.

Section 2 – Technical Proposal:

A. Implementation Plan: The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project. Goals are general statements of intent; Objectives define a task to be accomplished. The applicant should describe in detail the steps which will be taken to achieve these goals. This description should include all components of the proposed project including, as needed, design, procurement, installation, and training. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how each of these project components directly relates to the project’s stated goals. The proposal should include information on organizational partners and preferred vendors. This section should also describe how success will be measured, and should propose specific performance indicators which can be used to track progress and determine the project’s success. This section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the timeline for carrying out the project’s major activities.

Applicants are recommended to present the following for each project component:

- An overview of the proposed project component and its respective activities.
- A description of how the project component supports the overall goal of the project.
- A detailed outline of the methodology that will be used to implement the proposed component.
- An analysis of anticipated implementation risks and challenges.
- A summary of expected outputs with their expected impact, using performance indicators that will be used to track progress towards the anticipated results.

The proposal should also describe the applicant’s sustainability plan and what measures will be taken to ensure that the benefits of the proposed project continue to be realized after the completion of award performance.

B. Organizational Description and Capability:

This section should detail the applicant’s capability to successfully carry out the project. It should include a clear description of the applicant’s management structure, experience working with foreign professionals on short-term study tours, experience with U.S. Government grants, and the organizational experience and background in Afghanistan related to the proposed activities. The applicant should explain how its previous experience has equipped it to carry out this project. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project. Resumes for Key Personnel should be included in Section 4 (Key Personnel Resumes).

C. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

Applications must include a monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E plan), sometimes also referred to as a performance monitoring or performance management plan. The M&E plan is a systematic and objective approach or process for monitoring project performance toward its objectives over time. The plan must consist of indicators with baselines and targets; means for tracking critical assumptions; plans for managing the data collection process; and regular collection of data. The indicators in the plan should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-framed). Applicants must include a detailed M&E plan for the base year and should also describe how the plan would change/be updated should the option years be exercised.

The M&E plan for this project must include the following:

- Indicator 1: Participant self-reported satisfaction with the program
- Indicator 2: Participant self-reported usefulness of trainings

Applicants are encouraged to include indicators they maintain that will assess project impact.

More information on M&E plans is located <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c35797.htm>.

Section 3 Budget:

A. Budget Detail:

Applications will not be considered complete unless they include budgets that respond to the solicitation guidelines. Complete budgets will include detailed line-items outlining specific cost requirements for proposed activities. Applicants must adhere to the regulations found in [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Applicants must include in their submission a detailed line item budget for the base year period and a budget category summary budget for each of the two option years. Upon request, the recipient will be expected to present a detailed line-item budget for the option year(s).

Detailed Line-Item Budget (in Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet format) that delineates funds requested from the Embassy and cost-share (see below for more information on budget format). Costs must be in U.S. Dollars. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The following provides a description of the types of costs to be included in each budget category.

a. Personnel – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. For clarity, please list the annual salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to the project. (e.g., Administrative

Director: \$30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $\$30,000/12 = \$2,500 \times 25\% \times 8.5 \text{ months} = \$5,312.$

b. Fringe Benefits - State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.

c. Travel - Staff and any participant travel

1) International Airfare

2) In-country Travel

3) Domestic Travel in the U.S., if any

4) Per diem/maintenance: Includes lodging, meals and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available from the following website:

http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates; however, institutions may use per diem rates lower than official government rates. Please explain differences in fares among travelers on the same routes. Please note that all travel, where applicable, must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.

d. Equipment – Please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

e. Supplies – The specifications and cost of each type of equipment proposed (e.g., desktop computer with pre-installed software) must be included in this section. List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the award) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: $\$50/\text{month} \times 50\% = \$25/\text{month} \times 12 \text{ months}$).

f. Contractual -

a) Sub-grants and sub-contracts. For each sub-grant/contract please provide a detailed line item breakdown explaining specific services. In the sub-grant budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment, direct costs, and fringe benefits required of the direct applicant.

b) Consultant Fees. For example lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., $2 \times \$150/\text{day} \times 2 \text{ days}$).

g. Construction – For this solicitation, construction costs are not applicable.

h. Other Direct Costs - these will vary depending on the nature of the project. The inclusion of each should be justified in the budget narrative.

- i. **Indirect Costs** - Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established NICRA. If sub-grantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA that is also submitted with the proposal package. **If your organization does not have a NICRA, and the proposal budget has a line item for indirect cost charges, those indirect charges may not exceed 10%.** Information how to obtain a NICRA rate is listed Section G.

B. Budget Narrative

The purpose of the budget narrative is to supplement the information provided in the budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget narrative is a tool to help the Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the budget narrative and budget spreadsheets should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's Implementation Plan. The description provided on the budget spreadsheets should be very brief.

Section 4 – Key Personnel Resumes – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.

Section 5 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424): The SF424 is the standard cover sheet for applications. This form can be found on-line at:
<https://statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/Forms.aspx>.

Section 6 - Application for Federal Assistance SF424A: The SF424A is a budget summary sheet for proposals. Please refer to page 9-11 for a description of budget categories. This form can be found on-line at: <https://statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/Forms.aspx>.

Section 7 - Proof of Non-profit Status – Documentation to demonstrate the applicant's non-profit status (e.g. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter, Afghan organizations should provide a copy of their NGO license).

Please note:

1. Other items NOT required/requested for submission, but which may be requested if your application is selected for funding include:
 - Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
 - Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
 - Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
 - Completion of a pre-award operational survey, to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures your organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and other financial transactions which may be necessary to undertake the activities in your application.
2. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.
3. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM). Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=81407B1F03F2BDB123DD47D19158B75F>. Organizations must also maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The U.S. Department of State may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements by the time the Department is ready to make an award. The Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use this determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Submission Dates and Times

Application Deadline: Applications may be submitted for consideration before the closing date of this opportunity, however, all submissions must be received by **April 28, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, officials will utilize the time-stamp provided by Grants.gov.

This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will not be considered for funding and will be considered ineligible.

Please note that review may take up to 90 days. Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Question Deadline: For questions on this NOFO please contact Javier Pareja, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at: KabulPASProposals@state.gov. Questions must be received on or before **April 1, 2015**, 11:59 p.m., U.S. Eastern Time. Answers to questions will be posted at <http://www.grants.gov> and <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/pdprp.html>.

All application materials must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov.

Applications materials submitted via other means such as email will **not** be accepted. Thorough instructions on the grants.gov application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. Please note: KabulPASProposals@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov, DUNS or SAMS. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations/processes listed in this NOFO.

Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it may take two weeks or longer to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with System for Award Management (SAM) www.SAM.gov; (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to www.grants.gov. **Please note that your SAM registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your SAM registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.**

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”.

Funding Restrictions

- 1. Construction:** This award does not allow for construction activities or costs.
- 2. Indirect Charges:** An organization with a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a cognizant (primary) federal government agency other than the U.S. Department of State should include a copy of the cost-rate agreement. Applicants should indicate in the proposal budget how the rate is applied and if any of the rate will be cost-shared. Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established NICRA. If subgrantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA that is also submitted with the proposal package. **If your organization does not have a NICRA, and the proposal budget has a line item for indirect cost charges, those indirect charges may not exceed 10%.** Information how to obtain a NICRA rate is listed Section G.

If you require special accommodation to access any information contained in this announcement, please contact Javier Pareja (KabulPASProposals@State.gov) and any necessary arrangements will be made.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Selection Criteria

Eligible applications submitted under this opportunity will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria detailed below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail.

Past performance on grant and cooperative agreements awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other United States government, or international donor agencies may also be considered.

PAS reviews all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of federal and Public Diplomacy regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Department's Grants Division.

Proposals will be selected for funding based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priority needs of PAS. Selection criteria for this NOFO will include:

1. Quality of the program idea and program planning (20 points): The proposed project should be well developed, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation and demonstrate originality. The project should have clear goals and objectives and metrics for determining whether the project goals were met. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive and with sufficient detail. The program plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above, and should reference the applicant's capacity to meet all needs specified in the NOFO.

2. Ability to achieve program objectives (25 points): Objectives should be reasonable and feasible. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Proposed personnel, institutional resources and partner organizations should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals.

3. Institution's record and capacity (25 points): The application should demonstrate an institutional record, including successful programming, responsible fiscal management involving complex budgets, and compliance with reporting requirements, especially for U.S. Government grants. The application should demonstrate experience in human resources and overseeing staffing.

4. Sustainability (10 points): Proposed project should address the applicant's strategy for ensuring that the project benefits will continue to be realized on a long-term basis after the conclusion of the period of performance of the award. Applicant should clearly address a feasible approach to the Sustainability Plan.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation (10 points): Applications should demonstrate the capacity for engaging in impact assessments and providing objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes. The applicant should describe its plan for monitoring and reporting project outcomes.

6. Cost-effectiveness (10 points): The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and supplies, should be consistent with prevailing market rates in Afghanistan. All other items should be necessary, appropriate, and directly relatable to the project's goals and objectives. Cost sharing is not required.

Review and Selection Process

It may take up to 90 days for applications to be reviewed before an award or decline notice is received from the embassy. Due to the volume of proposals received, individual responses to requests for updates prior to the anticipated award date of approximately May 1, 2015 may not be returned until final review and approval of proposals is completed. The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section utilizes the following review and selection process:

1. After the NOFO closes applications are reviewed for eligibility. Those applications found to be ineligible will be removed from the selection process. Those applications found to be eligible will be forwarded to an embassy review committee.
2. An Embassy review committee, made up of PAS and other embassy personnel, will score and comment on eligible proposals. At this stage potential requests for programmatic adjustments or conditions of an award may be suggested. The highest scoring proposal will be recommended for funding by the committee. If the funding opportunity allows for the selection of multiple awards, awards will be chosen based on rank score and the availability of funding.
3. The committee's recommendation is then forwarded to the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for review and approval. At this stage potential requests for programmatic adjustments or conditions of an award may be suggested.
4. Upon approval of the PAO, the proposal is then assigned to a Grants Officer Representative (GOR). The GOR will make contact with the applicant to discuss and negotiate any potential changes to the proposal.
5. The GOR then submits the draft Notice of Award and proposal to a Washington, D.C. Grants Officer for approval. Additional clarification or negotiations may take place as part of the Grant Officer's review. The Grants Officer is the only Government Official who may write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. No other individual throughout the selection process is allowed to commit funds or guarantee an award.
6. After approval from the Grants Officer, the GOR will provide a copy of the signed award and required documents to the applicant for counter-signature.
7. After an award(s) is made from this solicitation, those applicants whose proposals were not selected for funding will be notified.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified if their proposal has been selected for award within 90 days after the submission deadline. PAS Kabul will provide information at the point of notification about any modification to the proposal or plan of work that will be required to finalize the award.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices

As described in Section E above, the successful applicant will be notified via email that its proposal has been selected to move forward in the review process; this email IS NOT an authorization to begin performance. The notice of Federal award signed by the Grants Officer (or equivalent) is the authorizing document. It shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government Official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through email transmission. The recipient may only incur obligations against the award beginning on the start date outlined in the DS-1909 award document that has been signed by the Grants Officer. See Section E for more information on pre-award costs. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email. Please refer to the anticipated time to award information in Section E.

Terms and Conditions

Recipients will be held to the applicable terms and conditions found at <https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/TermsandConditions.aspx>.

It is the Recipient's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and OMB guidance and requirements. Those organizations found to be in non-compliance may be found ineligible for funding or designated high risk.

2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

All applicants must adhere to the regulations found in [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Branding Requirements

As a condition of receipt of an award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. **Note:** Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Evaluation

In line with the Department of State's Evaluation Policy, the U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section may include this award in its program evaluation efforts. When applicable and feasible, the Recipient shall cooperate with the Grants Officer (GO) and Grants Officer Representative (GOR) requests to contribute data on specific performance measures and indicators; consider GO and GOR input on design and methodology of Recipient-led evaluation efforts; provide any evaluation reports produced under the award to the GO and GOR for review; incorporate the project into any third-party evaluations that PAS may initiate.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements Guidelines for Application Components -- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars

Starting December 26, 2014, OMB Uniform Guidance: Cost Principles, Audit, and Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, et al.) took effect. All applicants should be familiar with the Uniform Guidance and be aware that all awards made after December 26, 2014 will be made with terms and conditions subject to the Uniform Guidance. Applicants for funding should be developed in accordance with the Uniform Guidance. For a copy of the Uniform Guidance, please contact Government Publications or download from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-12-26/pdf/2013-30465.pdf>

Reporting Requirements:

1. Recipients are required to submit quarterly (calendar year) program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress (SF-PPR, narrative) and financial reports (SF 424 and a detailed financial expenditure report) are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.
 - First Quarter (January 1 – March 31): Report due by April 30
 - Second Quarter (April 1 – June 30): Report due by July 30
 - Third Quarter (July 1 – September 30): Report due by October 30
 - Fourth Quarter (October 1 – December 31): Report due by January 30

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

2. Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high risk designation has been removed.
3. The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.
4. Awardees are also required to comply with the following Special Provision for Performance in a Designated Combat Area and Future Contingency Operations (Currently Iraq and Afghanistan) (Revised August 2014)

Each federal assistance award within areas of combat operations or future contingency operation, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), over \$150,000 or providing for performance over 30 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational

Tracker (SPOT) system. Each federal assistance award shall be registered in SPOT before personnel deployment. The DoS SPOT Program Office can assist with entering awards in SPOT. Please send an email to AQMOps@state.gov for information. Information on how to register in SPOT and how to report the total number of recipient personnel deploying under each award will be contained in a Special Provision within each assistance award.

Recipients that do not utilize personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support can be entered through the SPOT aggregate functionality. Upon the award of a grant/and or cooperative agreement in a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), the Grants Officer or his/her designee will enter the following award information into SPOT to include (i) a brief description of the contract (to the extent consistent with security considerations); (ii) the total value of the contract; and (iii) whether the contract was awarded competitively. The Recipient should send updated deployment numbers for each award sent to the Grants Officer and his/her designee and the Department of State's SPOT program office on a quarterly basis as follows:

The Recipient is required to submit with the quarterly financial report submission information regarding the number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted under this award. This report is due 30 days after the calendar year quarter and 90 days after the award period end date and also should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov with the subject line "SPOT Quarterly Report -- Award Number". The following information shall be provided:

1. Total number of individuals receiving payment from the funds being granted:
 - a. Total Number U.S. Personnel Deployed:
 - b. Total Number Host Country Personnel:
 - c. Total Third Country Personnel Deployed:

These reports should be sent to AQMOps@state.gov. The SPOT program office will enter the numbers into SPOT.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; or require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. The Recipient organization will designate a SPOT administrator who will obtain a SPOT company administrator account. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register personnel in SPOT before deployment, or if already operational in the designated operational area, register personnel upon becoming an employee under the award and maintain current data in SPOT. Procedures on how to register in SPOT will be provided by the Grants Officer and his/her designee.

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

In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties. In a designated area of combat operations or future contingency operation, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, property of a Recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

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

Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to these policies and procedures are considered to be a material requirement of the award.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are reminded that only the Grants Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO, but shall advise the Grants Officer and the GOR of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

- For questions on the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Javier Pareja**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: KabulPASProposals@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)
Phone: Within Afghanistan: 0700107127, From the U.S.: 1-301-490-1042 x7127
- For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Disclaimers

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. 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. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

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

This NOFO is subject to funds availability. Awards may be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the United States Embassy in Kabul by Department of State central budget authorities.