

**U.S. Embassy Baghdad
Public Affairs Section**

Request for Proposals: **Access to Information Law Training Workshops for the Media Community and KRG Officials**

Funding Opportunity: DOS-Baghdad-PD-2015- 01
Type: Grant

CFDA: 19.021

Opening Date: February 3, 2015
Closing Date: March 3, 2015

SUMMARY

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad invites eligible organizations to submit proposals to develop and implement a series of training workshops for journalists and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) officials at the ministerial press office or equivalent level who are serving in positions responsible for implementation of the Access to Information law, or Law n. 11. The workshops will provide direct training for a minimum of 60 editors and journalists and 30 public officials (no more than fifteen per workshop). The number of participants addressed in a given workshop and the total number of workshops is flexible, but program participants will be representative of the governorates of the IKR, and workshops should be held in at least two cities. The goals of the program are to provide training in the Access to Information law; convene the media community and public officials to discuss and develop a shared vision for full implementation of the law; produce a report containing recommendations/best practices for public institutions to support access to information; conduct a public event to publicize the progress made in the workshops; and evaluate the impact of the workshops to include reconvening the participants six months later for a feedback and evaluation session.

Proposals must include elements of all these requirements as part of the workshop series program. Workshop instruction and mediation must be provided in Kurdish. Proposals must demonstrate that the organization has experience in the following areas:

- Recruitment of appropriate trainers, panelists, and moderators;
- Recruitment of participants, including government officials, and management of registration;
- Professional development for journalists and editors on how to access information with professional journalistic tools: interviewing, researching, multi-sourced journalism, international ethics and professional journalism standards in researching and reporting;
- Professional development for government officials working in press offices, to include training on theoretical knowledge and practical skills on how to interact with the media (interviews, press releases, press conferences); how to set up or improve their institution's

media policy (accurate and updated websites, public information documentation, setting up of spokesmen services, availability of archives and data);

- Facilitation of ongoing engagement between participants, by social media and other means;
- Evaluation and reporting of program outputs and outcomes.

The workshops should be scheduled during times that are convenient to participants' work schedules. Proposals should include a virtual or online element designed to facilitate ongoing communication between participants, during and after the workshop series. Participants should receive certificates after the successful completion of the trainings.

Eligibility: Applicants must

- Be a U.S. non-profit organization meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c) (3); an internationally based non-profit organization and/or academic institution;
- Have demonstrated experience administering education and training programs for the media and for public officials who interact with the media; and
- Have the capacity to operate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; alternatively, either have or develop active partnerships with organization(s) operating in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet Number (DUNS) and a CCR (CAGE) number prior to funds disbursement. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or requesting online at www.dnb.com.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Law Number 11, guaranteeing the right of citizens of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) to access information through government offices, was passed in September of 2013. This law and the right to access information should have a positive impact on the Kurdish media sector, contributing to a more professional press corps able to base its reporting on reliable sources. While the law has been assessed as relatively progressive by international NGOs and welcomed as a generally positive development by IKR media and public, the law has yet to be fully implemented. Kurdish Regional Government ministries have implemented the law at various levels – some establishing new press offices, others still operating with no action to implement the law. Journalists also have not fully exercised the law. Open and informed discussion of this legislation between the media community and public officials is needed to move the implementation of the Access to Information Law forward. Both journalists and public officials have expressed commitment and desire to fully implement the law. Both the media community and public officials (at the ministerial press office or equivalent level) would benefit from training in the law and the opportunity to discuss and develop shared visions for its full implementation.

The goal of Access to Information Law Training Workshops for the Media Community and KRG Officials is to promote and support the free flow of information in the Iraqi Kurdistan

Region by improving the understanding and implementation of the Access to Information law, based on the objectives and guidelines above. This program would build ties between the media community and KRG officials, refresh and build the professionalism of the media in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region up to international standards of ethics in reporting, and provide to KRG officials tools to best handle media and information. Specific objectives include:

- To introduce the Access to Information law (Law n. 11) to media professionals and public officials
- To promote a debate between media professionals and public officials on access to information under Law n.11
- To improve public officials' skills in communicating with media
- To present a report recommending ways public institutions can improve their media policy in order to run professional press offices that fully implement the Access to Information law
- To improve skills of journalists on how to access information using the Access to Information law
- To improve journalists' ethical and professional standards in reporting

In consultation with Embassy staff, the awardee will:

- Develop and produce training materials for the program's activities;
- Manage all logistical elements of the program, including procuring safe and comfortable venues for workshops and public events, hiring workshop leaders, and recruiting participants, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy and its constituent posts in northern Iraq. The awardee is responsible for all logistical elements that may arise, to include travel costs for workshop leaders, etc.;
- Compile statistics and supply three quarterly reports and a complete final report to the Embassy on program activities and the status of implementation of program of work;
- Issue certificates of completion to each participant at the conclusion of respective trainings;
- Conduct pre-training and post-training evaluations/assessments with the participants and instructors and provide the results to the Embassy;
- Provide the U.S. Mission in Iraq with copies of all materials used in the program;
- Provide all equipment needed to conduct the program, including multi-media equipment and training materials; and
- Adhere to all branding rules required for receiving U.S. funding.

Anticipated Timeline:

Month 1-2: Develop training program materials and identify trainers; in coordination with the U.S. Mission in Iraq, conduct outreach to public officials and publicize the workshops to recruit participants.

Month 3-4: Conduct Workshops.

Month 4: First Quarterly Report for February-April 2015 activities due.

Month 5-6: Conduct Workshops and final, public event publicizing the results of the workshops (Ramadan will likely fall from mid-June 2015 to mid-July 2015).

Month 7: Second Quarterly Report for May - July 2015 activities due.

Month 7-8: Facilitate and monitor communication within the new, online community of workshop participants.

Month 9: Third Quarterly Report for August - October 2015 activities due.

Month 11: Reconvene selected participants for an evaluation of workshop results

Month 12: Final Narrative and Financial Report due.

Guidelines:

It is anticipated that the award period will begin on or about March 15, 2015 and conclude February 29, 2016. During the award period, the awardee, in consultation with the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad or its constituent posts, will be expected to carry out all aspects of program planning, development, recruitment, implementation, etc. Applicants should propose a specific timeline, but exact timing may be altered through mutual agreement between the Embassy and the award recipient.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Applicant organizations must demonstrate the capacity to manage the physical aspects of the program, including the provision of safe and comfortable workshop space and equipment, coordination of registration, and recruitment of workshop leaders. They must demonstrate the capacity to develop a program, deliver training, prepare evaluations, and compile required reports. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to work in English and Kurdish and to carry out programs in the IKR.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applications must be prepared and submitted using the Public Diplomacy Grants Program Application form, available on www.grants.gov or by request from baghdadpdgrants@state.gov.

Please submit questions and completed applications to ErbilPublicAffairs@state.gov

It is anticipated that up to \$100,000 could be available for this award, however, more cost-effective proposals would be considered favorably. Cost-sharing is strongly recommended. Cost sharing can take the form of both allowable direct and indirect costs. For accountability, the recipient must maintain records to support all costs claimed as part of the cost-share agreement. Such records are subject to audit. Please refer to OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 – Cost Sharing and Matching.

All sections of the applications must be completed. In addition to information about project personnel as requested on the application form, please provide complete resumes for key personnel, such as Project Director.

The deadline for receipt of applications is March 3, 2015. The Embassy reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and/or participant numbers

in accordance with the needs of the program, the availability of funds, and concurrence of the applicant.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Embassy Public Diplomacy Grants Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals received in response this RFP:

Implementation Plan: Proposals should address the goals of the Access to Information Law Training Workshops for the Media Community and KRG Officials as outlined in this solicitation. Proposals will be evaluated for originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the training goals. They will be evaluated for the potential for long-term impact and sustainability in developing a strong professional media community in the IKR.

Organizational Capacity: The Grants Committee will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Institutions with a proven track record in implementing training and engagement programs for the media community and public officials in Iraq will be given special consideration. The appropriateness of the selected personnel and of any partner organizations will be considered as part of organizational capacity.

Budget: Costs should be reasonable and realistic in relation to the project activities. Applicants are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible so that the committee may determine the extent to which the request represents an efficient use of USG resources. The budget should be consistent with the program narrative description of the project and should reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by OMB Circular A-122. Proposals that include cost-sharing and/or funding from other organizations/donors are encouraged.

NOTIFICATION

Applicants can expect to be notified of the status of their application within thirty (30) days of the submission deadline. Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the United States Government. It does not commit the USG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. The USG reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad 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 Embassy.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please contact the U.S. Embassy Baghdad at ErbilPublicAffairs@state.gov.