

Request for Applications Announcement

Reinforcing a democratic, secure, and prosperous Panama

Public Opportunity Title: Reinforcing a democratic, secure, and prosperous Panama
Announcement Type: Request for Applications – New Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Public Opportunity Number: S-PM070-14-GR-501
CFDA: 19.700
Funding Amount: \$1,300,000

Issuance Date: March 24, 2014
Deadline for Questions: April 30, 2014 at 11:30 p.m. Panama time (GMT-5)
Deadline for Applications: May 18, 2014 at 11:30 p.m. Panama time (GMT-5)

Program Office: U.S. Embassy Panama
Grant Program: Central America Regional Security Initiative
Assistance Type: Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Eligibility Category: U.S. or overseas-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), U.S. or overseas-based private institutions of higher education, public international organizations

Est. Project Start Date: October 1, 2014
Est. Project End Date: Variable
Notional Award Ceiling: \$500,000
Notional Award Floor: \$150,000
Expected # Awards Funded: 3 to 5

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The U.S. Embassy in Panama is pleased to announce an open competition for grant awards through this Request for Applications (RFA) and invites public international organizations, U.S. and foreign nonprofit organizations, and U.S. and foreign accredited institutions of higher education to submit proposals for activities in Panama to strengthen civil society, democracy, the rule of law, government institutions, or provide opportunities for vulnerable youth in marginal communities. Contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of proposals, U.S. Embassy Panama intends to issue three to five awards in an amount not to exceed \$1,300,000 in total funding.

II. BACKGROUND

Through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) the U.S. Government provides broad-based security assistance to the region to respond to threats to citizen security. The desired objective of CARSI is to produce a safer and more secure region where criminal organizations no longer wield the power to destabilize governments or threaten national and regional security and public safety, as well as to prevent the entry and spread of illicit drugs, violence, and transnational threats to countries throughout the region and to the United States. The five goals of CARSI are:

1. Create safe streets for the citizens of the region;
2. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband within and among the nations of Central America;
3. Support the development of strong, capable and accountable Central American Governments;
4. Re-establish effective state presence and security in communities at risk; and
5. Foster enhanced levels of security and rule of law coordination and cooperation among the nations of the region.

The funds supporting this RFA are part of CARSI assistance in Panama and will focus on Goals 3 and 4.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Successful grant proposals will pursue objectives that reinforce a democratic, secure, and prosperous Panama by: 1) supporting the strengthening of civil society and democracy; 2) strengthening the rule of law and aiding the development of Panamanian government institutions; or 3) providing opportunities to underserved youth and marginalized communities. U.S. Embassy Panama encourages projects aiming to fulfill one or more of these three objectives to include the Darien and/or Guna Yala regions, or indigenous populations wherever appropriate. Projects must fulfill at least one sub-objective of the following RFA project objectives:

Objective 1: Civil Society and Democracy:

- a. Build civil society capacity to independently monitor government and quasi-government actions to increase accountability, promote transparency, and reduce corruption. Help civil society incorporate traditional media and social media elements as tools for sharing information, coordinating action, and promoting accountability in ways that make Panama more democratic, secure, and prosperous.
- b. Build and strengthen civil society organizational capacity to coordinate with the Government of Panama to form public-private and public-NGO partnerships in support of integrated approaches to citizen security. Civil society capacity-building should include development of specific practical skills, potentially including but not limited to: program design, program management, financial management, results-based management, performance monitoring and evaluation, logic models, report writing, internal/organizational management, or government liaison skills.

Objective 2: Rule of Law & Government Institutions:

- a. In partnership with the Panamanian government's juvenile corrections authority (*Instituto de Estudios Interdisciplinarios*), develop vocational and/or academic programs to provide skills to juvenile delinquents that will support their rehabilitation and social reinsertion. Programs should assist participants in securing employment at the completion of the program. Programs should target youth who have been released from detention, put on probation, or sentenced to other social re-education measures. Programs will be executed in collaboration with the juvenile corrections authority in support of its mandate to rehabilitate youth.
- b. In partnership with the Panamanian government's *Oficina de Seguridad Integral* (OSEGI), develop crime prevention pilot projects that promote citizen security. These projects should be scalable and intended to demonstrate the viability of a crime prevention approach so that the Government of Panama can later replicate and expand them as appropriate. Projects will be executed in collaboration with the *Oficina de Seguridad Integral*.

Objective 3: Opportunities for Youth and Marginalized Communities

- a. Provide mentoring and skills training to marginalized populations with a focus on youth, women, or minority groups, focused on developing plans for the future, avoiding violence, and participating productively in society.
- b. Promote education (particularly English language training) for marginalized populations with a focus on youth, women, or minority groups in ways that provide future academic and employment opportunities.

- c. In collaboration with the Panamanian government's Darien Development Secretariat (SEPRODACAN) and other Government of Panama ministries, as appropriate, develop programs in areas such as small business development, craft production and marketing, tourism, and agriculture which enable the generation of income in marginalized communities, particularly in the Darien and comarcal areas.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Award Period: Variable. The U.S. Embassy in Panama anticipates that most awards would be between 12-24 months, but would consider award periods of up to four years for exceptional proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Award Amount: U.S. Embassy Panama expects to fund three to five proposals for a total program value not to exceed \$1,300,000 in U.S. Government funding, contingent upon the availability of funds. Submissions will be evaluated on the quality of the proposals but also on the capacity of the proposing organization to carry out the proposal, manage the funds received, contribute cost-sharing to a project from non-U.S. Government sources, and provide plans for possible sustainability of projects going forward after U.S. Government funding is finished and/or reduced. Although U.S. Embassy Panama is unlikely to fund proposals for less than \$150,000 or for more than \$500,000 in U.S. Government funding (total funding for projects can and should exceed the U.S. Government funding through cost-sharing), **the Embassy may make exceptions for especially compelling proposals.** The U.S. Embassy may also encourage applicants to change their requested funding level or partner with other organizations to submit joint proposals.

The proposals must address at least one of the specific points listed under the three Program Objectives. Organizations that submit applications in response to this announcement acknowledge and accept all of the requirements contained herein. This announcement serves as public notice to all interested parties to have equal opportunity to submit project proposals for funding consideration. All submissions in response to this announcement are voluntary and do not obligate the Department of State or U.S. Embassy Panama to fund any proposal or proposal preparation costs.

V. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

U.S. Embassy Panama urges prospective applicants to immediately confirm their organization has a current Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) number as well as a current Central Contractor Registration (www.sam.gov).

Application Submission Process: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their proposals electronically through Grants.gov or GrantSolutions.gov. 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. For questions relating to GrantSolutions.gov, please call the GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk at 1-866-577-0771 or email

help@grantsolutions.gov. For questions about this solicitation, contact **Aaron Singleterry**, Grants Coordinator, U.S. Embassy Panama, at SingleterryAM@state.gov.

Applications may also be submitted via email to SingleterryAM@state.gov. Emailed submissions must contain all required documents described in Sections 1 through 7 below as part of a single email message. Submissions split among multiple email messages will not be accepted.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before May 18, 2014, 11:30 p.m. Panama time (GMT-5). Applications submitted after 11:30 p.m. will be automatically rejected by the www.grants.gov and grantsolutions.gov systems and will be technically ineligible for consideration. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline. **Therefore, we strongly urge applicants to begin this process on www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov well in advance of the submission deadline.**

Instructions for Grants.gov: Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks 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 the System for Award Management (SAM) at 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.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via www.grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through www.grants.gov.

The www.grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the www.grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the “For Applicants” section of the website. U.S. Embassy Panama strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly www.grants.gov, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the www.grants.gov system.

Please refer to www.grants.gov for definitions of various “application statuses” and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from www.grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via www.grants.gov can take up to two business days. The Department of State will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

For further information regarding application submission procedures please contact www.grants.gov customer support at 1-800-518-4726 (available 24 hours a day, 7 hours a week) or via email at support@grants.gov.

Faxed or couriered documents will not be accepted as official submissions at any time.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that proposals have been received by www.grants.gov or SingleterryAM@state.gov in their entirety. U.S. Embassy Panama bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

VI. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Technical Requirements: Applicants must follow the RFA instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in this document. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFA. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed in 18 U.S.C.1001.

Applications may not exceed eight single-sided, double-spaced pages in 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. This requirement applies to Sections 2 through 6. This requirement excludes the required standard forms identified in Section 1 and also excludes the allowable appendices, which are identified in Section 7 below. All documents (excepting scanned attachments, which must be in .pdf format) must be Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel compatible, as applicable.

A good proposal may describe:

- Experience working in Panama and developing/implementing projects, especially as it relates to the program objectives.
- Experience in improving the capacity of local community-based organizations.
- Demographic statistics or other descriptive narrative that helps define the needs of target groups, particularly for marginalized communities
- Experience in developing media content and the ability to expand messaging capabilities to wider audience – media buys/opinion polls/surveys.
- Experience working with other institutions, either civil or government, especially experience involving inter-institutional collaboration.
- Ability to conduct workshops or other events, as appropriate.
- Training outlines for proposed programs, as appropriate.

Restrictions and Limitations: Please refer to U.S. Federal Grant Policy (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-12-26/pdf/2013-30465.pdf>) for additional limitations, and note that:

- Grant funds may not be used for building construction, major remodeling, or other similar projects.
- Grant funds may not be used for the purchase of vehicles, aircraft, or boats.
- Grant funds may not be used for entertainment, alcohol or excessive food costs. (Limited meals in the context of training are permitted)
- Per the Fly America Act, any purchase of airline tickets for travel originating or ending in the U.S. must use U.S.-flag carriers, even if they are more costly. Please budget appropriately.

Application Content: The proposal must consist of the following:

Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424, 424a, and 424b; CD-511):

These forms can be found on-line at www.grants.gov.

Section 2 - Abstract:

The abstract is limited to 300 words in length. It must provide a summary of the identified need, proposed activities, and expected results.

Section 3 - Project Design:

The applicant must demonstrate that the project strategy and design are likely to achieve the proposed results; that proposed activities and timeframes are reasonable and feasible. The proposal describes in detail how project activities will be accomplished, reasonably outlines the potential for the project to have a positive impact in the program area addressed. This section should include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's performance in reference to defined indicators (see below – Monitoring and Evaluation). Applicants are encouraged to include a logic framework (see below) as an optional appendix. (30 points)

Section 4 - Organizational Capability:

The organization has sufficient depth of experience and talent to provide technical assistance in the proposed program as described in this announcement. The U.S. Embassy will consider the past performance of prior grant recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applicants shall demonstrate an institutional record of successful programs, including responsible financial management and full compliance with all reporting requirements. Proposed personnel and institutional resources must be adequate, appropriate, and well qualified to achieve the project objectives. Roles and responsibilities of key staff must be provided. (20 points)

Section 5 – Ownership and Sustainability

The applicant describes how the project will be effective and contribute to improving or supporting the targeted program goal(s). Proposals will be evaluated on the reasonableness or likelihood of sustainable results that will endure beyond the term of the project and the effectiveness of project inputs. Proposals that include a strategy or plan will be evaluated on probability of local institutionalization, sustainability, reasonableness and innovation. (30 points)

Section 6 – Cost Effectiveness

Description of the cost effectiveness of the project, explaining how overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries, honoraria, and indirect costs, are kept as low as practicable. Highlight any cost sharing or donor coordination, including with Panamanian government institutions, as appropriate. (20 points)

Section 7 - Appendices:

Proposal submissions must include two appendices, with a third, optional appendix to be submitted at the discretion of the applicant. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- (a) **Budget (Required)** – a Microsoft Excel detailed line item 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. Any areas of funding that are currently known to go to a sub-recipient need to be listed as such. If available and applicable (only for U.S. organizations), please include a copy of the current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Template attached.
- (b) **Budget Narrative (Required)** – an explanation and justification for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, U.S. Embassy Panama recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed budget. Personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should communicate any information that might not be readily apparent in the budget, not simply repeat with words what is stated numerically in the budget. Template attached.
- (c) **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff, such as a Project Director. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a one-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.
- (d) **Logic Framework** – a “Logic Model” flowchart delineating the project’s activities, outputs, outcomes, and ultimate impact. The Logic Model diagram is a graphical depiction of the logical relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the program. A Logic Model is a useful tool for planning the project’s implementation and for designing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. Sample attached.
- (e) **Letters of Intent** – if local or government partners have been identified, letters of intent should be included with the application. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. Please note that these are not letters of support, and should only be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget. The individual letters cannot exceed one page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to five letters per concept paper. These letters are required for proposals targeting Program Objective 2, Rule of Law and Government Institutions.

VII. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all applications will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all applications. U.S. Embassy Panama will award grants to the applicant whose offer represents the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit, organizational capacity, sustainability, and cost. U.S. Embassy Panama may negotiate with prospective grantees and request modifications to or more details regarding project proposals or budgets prior to making an award decision.

Each application will be evaluated through a two-stage selection process comprised of two Technical Evaluation Panels. In the first stage, program staff will form Panels for each of the three Program Objectives. Each application will be evaluated initially by the Technical Evaluation Panel for its corresponding Program Objective. Applications that pass this initial panel will then be reviewed by a final Technical Evaluation Panel of U.S. Embassy Panama and other experts, as deemed appropriate. Both Panels will score the applications based on the criteria below. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFA.

- **Project Design (30 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do, how they will do it, and why it is significant. The proposed activities should exhibit substance, precision, and relevance to U.S. Embassy Panama's goals and objectives. Applicants should include a monitoring and evaluation plan that clearly outlines how the organization will measure project activities' effectiveness and demonstrate the logical alignment among objectives, activities, and results. The review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses an identified problem, relevance of the goals and objectives, feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the project will continue beyond the conclusion of the funding period.
- **Organizational Capability (20 points):** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to develop and implement programs in one or more of the areas of Civil Society and Democracy, Rule of Law and Government Institutions, or Opportunities for Youth and Marginalized Communities. Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals. The application must distinguish all key partners and organizations that will be involved.
- **Ownership, Innovation, and Sustainability (30 points):** Proposals should demonstrate the sustainability factor within their application and describe an appropriate plan. Proposals should focus on long-term institutional capacity-building, both within the Government of Panama and within Panamanian civil society.

- **Cost Effectiveness (20 points):** Overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries, honoraria, and indirect costs, should be kept as low as practicable. Cost sharing is encouraged.

VIII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Partnership with Government of Panama: To the maximum extent possible and appropriate, depending on program subject matter, selected applicants will be required to develop their programs in partnership with a counterpart agency in the Government of Panama. This requirement applies to all programs addressing Program Objective 2, Rule of Law and Government Institutions.

Award Notices: All grant agreements shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by a United States Department of State 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, mail, or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Choice of Award Type: The Grants Officer will evaluate the individual circumstances of successful applicants and their proposals and decide whether to award a Grant or a Cooperative Agreement. For awards made as Cooperative Agreements, U.S. Embassy Panama will exercise direct government oversight by collaborating in the design of the work plan, approving the project implementation timeline, identifying and approving priorities, and developing a logic framework to guide the project.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified within 60 days after the submission deadline. Applicants should be aware that there will be a delay between the time that applications are submitted and awards are made. Successful applicants can expect to receive their grant by September 30, 2014.

U.S. Embassy Panama may make award on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (but is not under obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the program activities, budget, monitoring and evaluation plan, or other aspects of an application.

Monitoring and Evaluation: U.S. Embassy Panama will exercise normal federal stewardship responsibilities during the implementation of programs. U.S. Embassy Panama involvement will include, but is not limited to: site visits, review and response to performance, technical or subject matter involvement, review of financial reports, and audit of programs to ensure that the objectives, terms, and conditions of a grant award are accomplished.

The final award package will include a detailed plan on how the project's impact and effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated throughout the course of the project. While U.S. Embassy Panama staff will advise selected applicants on the development and refinement of final monitoring and evaluation plans, applicants must address monitoring and evaluation in their proposals, as outlined above. As appropriate, Government of Panama counterpart agencies will provide additional oversight of the implementation of the project, which will serve as an additional source of monitoring and evaluation.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend on the following:

1. Setting objectives that are clear, specific, attainable, measurable, results-focused, and placed in a reasonable time frame;
2. Linking program activities to stated objectives;
3. Developing key performance indicators that measure realistic progress towards the objectives.

A performance indicator is an observable measurement related to the achievement of a stated objective. Two types of performance indicators are outputs and outcomes. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported.

Outputs are products and services delivered from the program activities, often stated as an amount. Output data show the scope or size of project activities, such as the number of participants trained. **Outcomes** represent the specific, realistic results of a project and are usually measured as an extent of change. Outcomes may include progress toward expected program objectives or other results of the program. For example, a program's objective could be to increase convictions in cases that have DNA evidence presented. One outcome of the program would be that after receiving training on DNA analysis and presentation in a courtroom, prosecutors successfully use that evidence to prosecute five cases to conviction.

Activities, outputs, and outcomes should be diagrammed into a "Logic Model" flowchart that clearly shows how individual activities support specific outputs and how those outputs lead to desired outcomes. The logic model diagram is a graphical depiction of the logical relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the program. It is a conceptual planning tool that will help the program maintain a strategic focus on its desired impact. A sample is attached for reference.

Applicants' monitoring and evaluation plans must include certain standard indicators, although applicants are encouraged to include additional custom indicators tailored to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific projects. U.S. Embassy Panama staff will provide additional guidance on these standard indicators to selected applicants during the negotiation phase prior to award. The following standard indicators **must** be included as defined for each Program Objective:

- Applications targeting Program Objective 1:
 - F Standard Indicator 2.4.1-9: Number of Civil Society Organizations aided through the project that are engaged in advocacy interventions. Advocacy should be understood as a means for individuals, constituencies, or organizations to

shape public agendas, change public policies, and influence other processes that impact their lives.

- F Standard Indicator 3.3.2-15: Number of organizations and/or service delivery systems strengthened who serve vulnerable populations
- Applications targeting Program Objective 2 or 3:
 - F Standard Indicator 3.3.2-8: Number of vulnerable people or at-risk youth benefitting from the project.
 - F Standard Indicator 3.3.2-15: Number of organizations and/or service delivery systems strengthened who serve vulnerable populations

Applicants should include a clear description of the methodology and data collection strategies/tools to be employed (e.g. pre- and post-surveys, interviews, focus groups). Organizations should be able to track participant training responses, including changes in attitudes, information learned, and effects of the program on participant institutions. Recipients will be required to provide reports with an analysis and summary of their findings, both quantitative and qualitative, in their regular program reports to U.S. Embassy Panama.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period, which aligns to the quarters of the calendar year. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

IX. DISCLAIMER

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. Issuance of any Federal Assistance Award as a result of this RFA is contingent upon the availability of funds. U.S. Embassy Panama reserves the right to award more or less funding than stated herein or make no awards as might be determined to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

The information contained in this RFA is authoritative and may not be modified by any Embassy representative. Explanatory information provided by the Embassy that contradicts this RFA will not be binding on the Embassy. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State and U.S. Embassy Panama have 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 and U.S. Embassy Panama.

X. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to public international organizations, U.S. or overseas-based accredited institutions of higher learning, and U.S. or overseas-based non-profit or non-governmental organizations.

Current recipients of international program funding are eligible for additional funding under the terms of this RFA.

The Department encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. Government to apply under this announcement. Community non-governmental organizations are encouraged to apply. New applicants must have a demonstrated ability to develop and implement a program. A demonstrated understanding of the political, cultural, and institutional environment in Panama will be considered favorably.

PLEASE NOTE: We strongly encourage applicants to access immediately www.grants.gov as indicated in the instructions above in order to obtain a username and password. It may take up to a week to register with www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov. Please see the section entitled “APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION” for further information.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing, and it will not be a separate evaluation component for proposals. However, this would affect the overall cost effectiveness of a proposal and U.S. Embassy Panama encourages organizations to identify cost sharing in their activities.

Indirect Cost Rate

A U.S. organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) negotiated with a cognizant federal government agency other than the U.S. Department of State must 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 must have an established NICRA. In determining appropriate cost share, U.S. organizations should be aware that their overall cost effectiveness will be compared against Panamanian and foreign organizations claiming zero indirect costs.

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For questions relating to GrantSolutions.gov, please call the GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk at 1-866-577-0771 or email help@grantsolutions.gov.
- C) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Aaron Singleterry - SingleterryAM@state.gov.

Responses to individual questions during the submission period will be compiled and periodically added to the Grants.gov solicitation posting as an FAQ. The FAQ will *not* be updated after April 30, 2014. Once the RFA submission period has passed, U.S. Government officials – including those in the Department of State and at embassies/missions overseas – cannot discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.