

**U.S. Embassy, Moscow**

**Public Affairs Section Request for Grant Proposals Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**(NOFO):** FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Application Deadline:** July 6, 2015

**Total Funding:** \$150,000, pending the availability of funds

**Funding Opportunity Number:** DOSRUS-15-GR-004

**Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.040

**Anticipated Award Date:** August 14, 2015

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2016

**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program

**Eligible Applicants:** Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC501(c)(3)

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow (PAS Moscow) invites proposals for a cooperative agreement to design and implement a new program to provide up-and-coming Russian journalists with an intensive professional exchange experience in American newsrooms, combined with cultural experiences that allow them to learn more about the United States in general. The grant recipient will be responsible for all program elements, including recruitment and selection of participants in cooperation with the United States Embassy in Moscow, securing visas, arranging travel, conducting a pre-departure orientation, organizing placements for the journalists in American newsrooms, monitoring participant progress, and ensuring their return to Russia.

**A.1. Additional Information:** The U.S. Embassy in Moscow expects to award a cooperative agreement of up to \$150,000 for the administration of the FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program. Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is Embassy Moscow's intention to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

As this will be a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow will have substantial involvement in this effort including participant selection, approval of the program structure and meeting content in the United States. For more information on the U.S. Government's role please see Section A.13.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

## **A.2. Funding Authority**

Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.” The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

## **A.3. Purpose and Program Description:**

The FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program (please note that the program can be renamed by applicants) will provide an American immersion experience for up-and-coming Russian journalists, in most cases during the early stages of their journalism careers and in all cases for participants with limited direct experience with the United States. This exchange opportunity will allow journalists to interact with their American media counterparts while improving their English, developing journalism skills, and expanding their knowledge of the United States through direct experience. Homestays with American families will enhance the experience and provide cultural activities and family support.

The FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program seeks to:

1. Strengthen people-to-people ties between the United States and Russia through a journalism exchange program and encourage participants to build long-term, self-sustaining relationships with American people, media counterparts, and communities.
2. Introduce Russian journalists to the United States through embedded professional experiences in American newsrooms, home-stays with American families, and a range of cultural activities with the intention that they will gain a better understanding of American society, history, culture and values.
3. Help Russian journalists develop their English and journalism skills.

## **A.4. Participants:**

For the purposes of this program, “participants” are defined as citizens of the Russian Federation selected through a merit-based, open competition to participate in the FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program. The ideal participants will be Russian journalists working in traditional or non-traditional media, relatively new to their careers, showing promise for continued career growth in journalism, and possessing limited direct

experience in the United States. Selected participants may possess varying levels of English proficiency; however participants **MUST** have sufficient English to work successfully while embedded in an American newsroom.

Applicants should maximize the number of participants at the given funding level. While cost-share is not mandatory, applicants who engage public and private partners for programming support, and employ other creative techniques to increase or stretch funding dollars will be deemed more competitive than those that do not under the Cost Effectiveness and Cost-Sharing review criterion.

#### **A.5. Program Activities:**

The program anticipates that selected participants will be placed for no less than two weeks in American newsrooms, where they will work alongside American reporters and further develop their journalism skills. Home stays with American families should be arranged to provide participants with family support and guidance as well as a first-hand view of American family life with all its diversity.

An orientation program that includes meetings in Washington, DC, with Department of State spokespeople is required, but applicants have considerable leeway in the majority of the program design (please see section A.9 below for more information on this requirement). Reviewers will be looking for program elements that enhance the participants' skills-acquisition and encourage participants to take full advantage of their exchange program experience.

#### **A.6. Partner Organizations**

Applicants must identify the U.S.-, Russian-, and foreign-based organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate to implement the Russian Journalist Exchange Program, and describe any previous cooperative activities. Having a brick and mortar presence in the Russian Federation is not required. However applicants that demonstrate institutional capacity in the Russian Federation whether through their own resources or through partnerships with other organizations or institutions will be given stronger consideration under the Institutional Capacity and Track Record criterion.

#### **A.7. Program Guidelines**

In a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The Embassy anticipates working closely with the award recipient to ensure that all program activities support the goals of the Russian Journalist Exchange Program, especially in regards to participant selection and design and execution of follow-on and alumni programming.

In addition, applicants must demonstrate capacity in the United States to secure effective and appropriate professional and host-family placements for the participants. Proposals that include letters of commitment from possible U.S. host organizations will be deemed more competitive under the Institutional Capacity and Track Record criterion.

#### **A.8. Recruitment and Selection of Participants**

The award recipient will administer a recruitment campaign to advertise the Russian Journalist Exchange Program, using social media and other web-based platforms, as appropriate. Working with the Embassy, online applications will also be distributed by the award recipient through established networks of teachers, students, and alumni of U.S. government exchanges. The recipient organization should work closely with the U.S. Embassy to ensure that outreach efforts are tailored to have the broadest and most effective reach within the Russian program environment. Every effort should be made to attract a large and diverse participant pool, including persons with disabilities, minorities, a balanced mix of male and female participants, etc. Recruitment and selection of candidates for the Russian Journalist Exchange Program is the responsibility of the award recipient in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy. It is required, however, that the award recipient maintain ongoing communication with and, as possible, the involvement of the Embassy's Public Affairs Section (PAS) during the interview, selection, and pre-departure phases of the program. The proposal should provide a clear outline of the recruitment and selection process and address the award recipient's plans for maintaining a close working relationship with PAS throughout the entire program cycle.

At a minimum, the participants of the Russian Journalist Exchange Program must:

- Be a citizen of the Russian Federation;
- Be living in the Russian Federation at the time of application;
- Be available to begin the Russian Journalist Exchange Program in the United States in time for the start of the program and participate until its conclusion;
- Be able to receive a U.S. I visa (for journalists);
- Have limited direct experience in the United States;
- Commit to returning to Russian Federation after completion of the program;
- Have a stated interest in learning more about the United States and developing their journalism and English-language skills.

The following individuals are NOT eligible to participate in the Russian Journalist Exchange Program:

- U.S. citizens and/or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. Government (e.g., U.S. Department of State, Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies or other U.S. Government agencies) in the past five years that was longer than three months.

### **A.9. Program Components**

The award recipient will design and implement a program for Russian participants that encompasses at least two weeks in a newsroom. Key program elements must include:

- An orientation in Washington, DC, that includes meetings with Department of State personnel;
- Placements with reputable American newsrooms that are committed to developing the participants' skills while ensuring they gain first-hand experience as a reporter in the United States;
- A homestay component;
- A plan for post-program participant engagement that includes an outline of any proposed follow-on activities or initiatives and an articulated plan for utilizing Department of State and other alumni tools and social media outlets to provide continued support to program alumni; and
- A program evaluation.

### **A.10. International Air Travel**

The award recipient must comply with all Federal regulations regarding the use of U.S. Government funds including the Fly America Act.

### **A.11. Projected Program Timeline**

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow envisions the approximate dates of the FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program to be as follows:

- September 2015 – December 2015: Recruitment and selection of Russian participants
- September 2015 – December 2015: Recruitment of U.S. newsrooms for professional placements
- January – March 2016: Recruitment of American host families.
- March – August 2016: Program in the United States

### **A.12. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Embassy recommends that proposals include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Embassy expects that the recipient organization will track participants and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, and changes in behavior or attitudes as a result of the program. The evaluation

plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. The evaluation plan should include a description of the proposed project's objectives, the anticipated project outcomes, and how and when outcomes will be measured (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "SMART" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable timeframe), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. Proposals also should show how project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

The monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

The Embassy encourages applicants to assess the following three levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience;
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding; and
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community.

### **A.13. U.S. Embassy Responsibilities**

In a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow (and U.S. Consulates in Russia as applicable) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring.

U.S. Embassy Moscow activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

- Participate and approve guidance in the design, direction, and execution of all program activities;
- Approve and provide input on program timelines and agendas;
- Assist grantee to the extent needed with recruitment efforts;
- Approve partner organizations and U.S. host organizations;

- Involvement, to the extent possible, in the final selection of participants and approval of the final selection;
- Approve decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout the duration of program, including assisting with participant emergencies;
- Work with the award recipient to publicize the program through various outlets (such as PAS social media platforms and U.S. government alumni networks), including approving all program publicity, outreach efforts, and other materials; and
- Approval of monitoring and evaluation plans for the program.

#### **A.14. Award Recipient Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the award recipient are as follows:

- Develop a recruitment strategy that targets individuals meeting the eligibility criteria for the program and adheres to the goals for a merit-based open competition;
- Develop a transparent review process to evaluate applications for the Russian Journalist Exchange Program – the award recipient will work closely with the Embassy on the development and implementation of review criteria and keep the Embassy informed about its application and evaluation process;
- Provide pre-departure information (virtual or otherwise) for participants and conduct an orientation program, providing information and answering questions on programmatic issues, including, but not limited to, placements in media newsrooms and host families, program responsibilities and expectations, travel, accident and sickness benefits;
- Utilize social media and email to facilitate communication with newly selected finalists prior to their departure to the United States;
- Use awardee’s professional network to recruit potential U.S. newsrooms to host participants of the Russian Journalist Exchange Program;
- Create programmatic guidelines and materials for U.S. host newsrooms, including clearly outlining host roles and responsibilities;
- Arrange round-trip travel for participants from their home cities to Washington, DC, where the program should begin and end and to and from their newsroom placements;
- Arrange host family placements for participants in the United States with properly screened and briefed American families;
- Monitor participants, the performance of hosting institutions, and host family placements for the duration of the program;
- Evaluate the program and its impact on participants during their program and after they return to Russia;
- Manage financial aspects of the program and promptly report any irregularities in the budget or spending to the U.S. Embassy;

- Report programmatic, financial, and statistical information to the Embassy;
- Respond fully and promptly to requests for program information from the Embassy; and
- Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, especially, but not limited to, by submitting timely financial and program reports and executing proper budget oversight.

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2015 Russian Journalist Exchange Program

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY2015

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$150,000, pending the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** one

**Approximate Average Award:** \$150,000

**Floor of Award Range:** none

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$150,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** August 14, 2015

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2016

**Additional Information:** Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is Embassy Moscow's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

As this will be a cooperative agreement the U.S. Embassy in Moscow will have substantial involvement in this effort. For more information on the USG's role please see Section A.13. U.S. Embassy Responsibilities.

## **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **C.1. Eligible applicants:**

Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

### **C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:**

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, Embassy Moscow encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved

agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, the grantee must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as cost share contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal Government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the E CFR §200.306, Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Part 200, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, grant funding will be reduced in like proportion.

### **C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

a) The applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), located at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), prior to submitting an application. Applicants must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by an agency.

b) All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet 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](http://www.dnb.com).

c) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

d) Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation.

e) Indirect Costs: An organization with an audited indirect cost rate negotiated with a cognizant federal government agency other than U.S. Department of State should include a copy of the cost-rate agreement as an addendum to the budget. If the applicant currently has an assistance award from U.S. Department of State, the agreement does not need to be submitted unless the applicant has negotiated a new indirect cost rate with a cognizant agency other than U.S. Department during the past 12 months. An applicant must indicate in the proposal budget how the rate is applied. 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%.

f) Taxes: Successful applicants are responsible for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for project participants. Because of the complexity of current tax laws regarding scholarship and fellowship income, it is strongly recommended that grantees consult with tax counsel regarding such compliance.

## **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Embassy staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

### **D.1. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE**

Interested applicants may request the full text of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) via email to [GrantsRussia@state.gov](mailto:GrantsRussia@state.gov). The NOFO may also be found on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as well as the website of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow: <http://moscow.usembassy.gov/cooperation.html>. Applicants may also request a NOFO in writing to: Jeni Washeleski, U.S. Embassy Moscow, Public Affairs Section, Bolshoy Devyatinskiy Pereulok 8, Moscow 121099, Russian Federation.

### **D.2. CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

**Please follow all instructions below carefully. Failure 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:

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

## **D. 3. What to Include in Your Proposal**

### **D.3a. Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary should be one page in length and include: description of the type of participants, goals of the project, names of all partner organizations responsible for project implementation, proposed numbers of Russian participants, and approximate dates of the exchange program.

### **D.3b. Proposal Narrative**

In no more than 10, double-spaced pages, the proposal narrative should include/address all items specifically referenced in this NOFO and those items noted below:

- **Project Goals, Objectives, and Anticipated Outcomes:** Proposals should include a clear, succinct statement of project goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes that expand upon the goals of the Russian Journalist Exchange Program as stated in Section A of this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Objectives should be described in specific, measurable, and realistic terms that are achievable within the scope of the project, both in terms of time and funding.
- **Background Information on the applicant organization and partner organizations:** For each organization, the mission, date of establishment, relevant expertise working in the Russian Federation, past programmatic work, and ongoing programmatic work should be described. Previous awards from the Department of State since 2005, including both grants and cooperative agreements, should be listed by the Department's office or Embassy that awarded the grant (European Bureau, Public Affairs, International Visitors, Academic Exchanges, etc.), project name, countries, year, and amount. Proposals should describe previous collaboration with proposed partner organizations, as well as clearly delineate a division of responsibilities between all organizations that will be involved in the project.

### **D.3c. Budget**

Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget: Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- **Travel:** International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.
- **Visas:** There is a charge for I visas needed by participants in this program.

- Per Diem: For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal Per Diem Rates for individual U.S. cities. U.S. per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. The Embassy requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates.
- Room Rental: The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.
- Materials: Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials to support program activities, as needed.
- Supplies: Applicants may propose to use award funds to purchase supplies, but supply costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.
- Health and Travel Insurance: The award recipient will be responsible for working with the Embassy to ensure that Russian participants are enrolled in a health insurance program for the duration of the exchange. Cost for insurance premiums should be included in the proposal budget.
- In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes: Visa costs are an allowable expense under this program and should be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining an I visa for participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including travel for interviews, delivering or picking up passports, etc.
- Administrative Costs: Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs in accordance with federal regulations outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200, Subpart E “Cost Principles.” Proposals should show strong administrative cost-sharing contributions from the applicant, in-country partners, and other sources. Any proposed award recipient staff travel should NOT be included in the exchange participant numbers.
- Reasonable Accommodations: Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of participating individuals with disabilities.
- Web Technology: As appropriate, the applicant organization may budget for technology to support the broader program goals.

### **D.3d. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Proposals should describe in detail the applicant organization’s proposed approach to monitoring and evaluation of this project. For further guidance, please see Section A.12: “Program Monitoring and Evaluation.”

### **D.3e. Supplemental Materials:**

Letters of commitment and/or letters of support/interest from: 1) proposed partner organizations, and 2) proposed or past host organizations:

- Resumes (no more than one page in length) of proposed key staff at the applicant organization and all partner organizations that will be involved in the implementation of the project; and
- Draft program implementation materials such as the program announcement, program application, agenda for the orientation, and materials on any other key program elements.

### **D.3f. Application Forms for Federal Assistance (SF-424):**

The following forms are required and can be found online on Grants.gov. Please be sure to complete and sign each form.

- SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A: Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B: Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs (for U.S. applicants)

### **D.3g. Items Not Required**

Other items NOT required/requested for submission by July 6, 2015, 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; and
- Completion of a pre-award organizational information sheet, to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures an organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and other financial transactions that might be necessary to undertake the activities in your application.

The U.S. Embassy Moscow reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

### **D.4. UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIED AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)**

Applicants are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF-424 which is part of the formal application package.

All federal award applicants must also be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

#### **D.5. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES**

Applications must be submitted electronically via email to: [GrantsRussia@state.gov](mailto:GrantsRussia@state.gov)

All applications must be submitted on or before Monday, July 6, 2015, 6:00 p.m. Moscow Time. Emails that show a time stamp produced by the Department of State system as having been received after 6:00 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration.

**Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that might arise in advance of the deadline. U.S. Embassy Moscow strongly advises early submission of applications to ensure delivery prior to the stated deadline.

There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

#### **D.6. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW**

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

#### **D.7. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS**

**a) Indirect Charges:** An organization with a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a cognizant (primary) federal government agency 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 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) Pre-award Costs:** Any costs incurred prior to the award start date in the Federal Notice of Award are incurred at the recipient's own risk. Approval of these costs require pre-authorization of the Grants Officer to be considered allowable, will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will only be authorized in extraordinary circumstances. Applicants should assume that any costs incurred before the start date on the Federal Notice of Award will not be authorized.

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **E.1. CRITERIA**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank-ordered, and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation.

- Institutional Capacity: Applicant and partner organization clearly demonstrate their experience with the proposed subject matter and their ability to successfully implement the project.
- Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Project Plan should provide sufficient detail on program monitoring and evaluation during the project performance period, as well as demonstrate an understanding of potential risks and challenges associated with the project.
- Cost Effectiveness: Budget demonstrates efficient use of funds, appropriate to achieve project goals. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be consistent with project plans and activities.
- Completeness of Proposal: The proposal meets all of the outstanding technical and logistical criteria required in this cooperative agreement, addressing the objectives as noted in Section A.
- Budget and Narrative Justification: The budget and narrative justification are complete and reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The plan for services and related cost estimates is realistic and costs are allowable under the Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR).

### **E.2. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow will conduct the selection process for this award. All submissions will be reviewed first for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated in this NOFO. Eligible proposals will then be forwarded to a selection

committee made up of Embassy staff with media and exchange program experience, and will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Information Officer and/or Grants Officer of the U.S. Embassy Moscow. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Embassy's Grants Officer.

### **E.3 ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND FEDERAL AWARD DATES**

All applications must be submitted on or before Monday, July 6, 2015, 6:00 p.m. Moscow Time. Emails that show a time stamp produced by the Department of State system as having been received after 6:00 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. Applications must be submitted electronically via email to GrantsRussia@state.gov. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

The anticipated award date is August 14, 2015.

### **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

#### **F.1. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Embassy's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the Embassy program office coordinating this competition.

#### **F.2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB circular cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov) website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

### **F.3. REPORTING**

The award issued under this NOFO will require both program and financial reports on a frequency specified in the award agreement. The disbursement of funds may be tied to submission of these reports in a timely manner. All other details related to award administration will be specified in the award agreement. The point of contact for questions or issues related to the administration of the grant/cooperative agreement will be specified in the award agreement.

### **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

- a) For questions about this announcement, contact: Jeni Washeleski, U.S. Embassy Moscow, Public Affairs Section, Bolshoy Devyatinskiy Pereulok 8, Moscow 121099, Russian Federation; Tel: +7 (495) 728-5058; Email: [GrantsRussia@state.gov](mailto:GrantsRussia@state.gov)

All correspondence with the Embassy concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

- b) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- c) To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), contact Donald Hunter at [HunterDS@state.gov](mailto:HunterDS@state.gov).

### **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Embassy representative. Explanatory information provided by the Embassy that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government. The U.S. Embassy Moscow reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.