

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**Public Diplomacy  
Commercial Partnerships and  
Entrepreneurship Program**

SCA/Bishkek, Department of State

Opportunity number: STATE-BISHKEK-PDS-25-0004

Application deadline: Period 1: May 31, 2025; Period 2: July 15, 2025

## Table of Contents

A. BASIC INFORMATION .....	3
B. ELIGIBILITY .....	4
C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION .....	5
D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT .....	8
E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES .....	13
F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION .....	16
G. AWARD NOTICES .....	18
H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION .....	18
I. OTHER INFORMATION .....	20

**U.S Department of State**  
**SCA/ Embassy Bishkek, Public Diplomacy Section**  
**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**A. BASIC INFORMATION**

**1. Overview**

<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	U.S. Embassy Bishkek Public Diplomacy Commercial Partnerships and Entrepreneurship Program
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	STATE-BISHKEK-PDS-25-0004
<b>Deadline for Applications</b>	Period 1: May 31, 2025; 11:59 p.m. (23:59) Bishkek time Period 2: July 15, 2025; 11.59 p.m. (23:59) Bishkek time
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	19.040
<b>Length of performance period</b>	6-12 months
<b>Number of awards anticipated</b>	Up to three awards, depending on award sizes
<b>Award amounts</b>	Awards may range from a minimum of \$25,000 to a maximum of \$75,000 (approximately and pending funding availability)
<b>Type of Funding</b>	Fiscal Year 2025 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
<b>Anticipated project start date</b>	September-October 2025

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

**Project Performance Period:** Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less. The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.** The Public Diplomacy Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described under circumstances deemed to be in the best interest of the U.S. government, pending the availability of funds and approval of the designated grants officer.

## **2. Executive Summary**

The U.S. Embassy Bishkek Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition to implement a program to foster greater commercial ties between the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic by promoting economic growth and local employment. This program aims to support economic growth in the Kyrgyz Republic by creating market opportunities for U.S. businesses and investors, strengthening connections between U.S. and Kyrgyz businesses, encouraging a more informed Kyrgyzstani consumer base for U.S. products and business opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship skills and ecosystems, offering community-based employment and financial literacy programs to discourage outmigration, and promoting intellectual property (IP) protections.

By focusing on these priorities, the program will create more partnership opportunities for U.S. businesses and investors in the Kyrgyz market by building a workforce and business ecosystem more adept at working with American partners. Furthermore, the program will support the development of entrepreneurs, including women and youth, and increase their knowledge on American entrepreneurship best practices, including those related to e-commerce, safeguarding IP, business planning and pitching, and attracting venture capital. Ultimately, these efforts will result in a greater presence of U.S. companies and products in the Kyrgyz Republic, contributing to the overall stability and prosperity of both nations.

Please follow all of the instructions below.

## **B. ELIGIBILITY**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

The following non-profit organizations are eligible to apply:

- *Kyrgyz Republic-Registered:*
  - *Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations*
  - *Public and private educational institutions*
- *U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions, partnering with Kyrgyz Republic-registered organizations.*

For-profit entities, even those that may fall into the categories listed above, are **not** eligible to apply for this NOFO. Organizations may sub-contract with other entities, but only one, non-profit, non-governmental entity can be the prime recipient of the award. When sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in

the proposal. For more information on the difference between a sub-contract and sub-recipient, please refer to [2 CFR 200.331](#).

## **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

*Cost sharing or matching is not required for this funding opportunity.*

## **3. Other Eligibility Requirements**

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section E.3 for more information.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding under this funding opportunity.

Extra consideration will be given to programs that leverage American Spaces resources, USG program alumni, and/or existing USG programming in the Kyrgyz Republic.

## **4. This opportunity will not support:**

- Projects relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities; including direct social services such as medical, psychological, and/or humanitarian support
- Construction projects;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or programs
- Scientific research or surveys;
- Commercial projects;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
- Projects that duplicate existing projects; or
- Illegal activities

# **C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

## **1. Program Background, Goals, and Objectives**

### **Background**

Although the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic is growing, the country faces challenges generating sustainable job growth and productivity, exacerbated by limited opportunities for local entrepreneurs, insufficient workforce skills, and barriers to global market access. This contributes to insufficient employment opportunities for skilled workers, outmigration, and difficulty for U.S. companies to enter the Kyrgyz market. Furthermore, Kyrgyz entrepreneurs are often unable to secure intellectual property (IP) protection due to widespread trade of counterfeit products and an insufficient IP regulatory framework, which further disincentivizes U.S. companies from entering the market.

The U.S. Embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic aims to address these challenges through a comprehensive program focused on promoting economic growth by facilitating connections with U.S. businesses and expertise. Prior projects funded by the Embassy have targeted grassroots, localized aspects of economic development, such as social entrepreneurship, building digital marketing skills for tourism service providers and/or at-home businesses, and skills building for entrepreneurs in rural areas:

- **Social Entrepreneurship:** These initiatives have empowered local entrepreneurs to address social issues through hackathons that lead to the development of solutions and innovative business models, creating both economic and social value.
- **Small Business Growth in the Tourism Sector:** Efforts to promote tourism and draw attention to the importance of cultural heritage have boosted local economies by attracting visitors and creating jobs.
- **Rural Entrepreneurship Development:** Programs that have supported entrepreneurs outside of major cities and have provided them with the resources and networks needed to promote their services, bring their products to market, and sell them.

These programs demonstrated the need to provide targeted support to entrepreneurs to expand their business networks beyond the Kyrgyz Republic. Bringing in American expertise can help Kyrgyz entrepreneurs grow their businesses, use English-language e-commerce platforms to market products, and learn how to pitch business ideas for potential American investors.

### **Opportunity Description**

This NOFO will support economic growth by raising awareness of market opportunities for U.S. businesses and investors in the Kyrgyz Republic, strengthening connections between U.S. and Kyrgyz businesses, encouraging a more informed consumer base in the Kyrgyz Republic for U.S. products and business opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship skills and ecosystems, promoting intellectual property rights (IPR) protections, and offering community-based employment programs to discourage outmigration.

To achieve the goal of this NOFO, proposed program activities should demonstrate strong knowledge of U.S. commercial initiatives and leverage U.S. expertise and relevant U.S.-government supported trade and commercial initiatives. This can include partnerships with U.S. organizations, involvement of U.S. experts in the project, or collaboration with U.S. businesses or business associations. Proposals should clearly outline how U.S. ties will contribute to the achievement of the program's objectives and the overall impact on U.S. interests.

**Project Audience(s):** emerging entrepreneurs, startup founders, small business owners, potential buyers of U.S. goods, CEOs of larger businesses, industry leaders, policymakers, and government officials, lawyers, and academics involved in IPR.

- Gender: both female and male
- Geographic Location: Kyrgyz Republic
- Age Group: 18-45
- Level of Education: high-school diploma, bachelor's degree

**Project Goal:** Strengthen U.S.-Kyrgyz commercial ties through activities and trainings that build the skills of Kyrgyz entrepreneurs and open the Kyrgyz market for U.S. businesses and investors.

**Project Objectives:**

***Note – Below are example objectives that can be used to advance the project goal. Applicants should select no more than two objectives to address in their project proposal.***

**Objective 1:** Strengthen the capacity of at least 15 local enterprises to engage in successful partnerships and attract investment (e.g. business strategy and planning, financial management, operational efficiency, legal and regulatory compliance), resulting in at least 3 enterprises establishing formal partnership or investment agreements with U.S. businesses within 12 months.

**Objective 2:** Facilitate networking and collaboration between Kyrgyz and U.S. businesses by organizing a minimum of 5 business networking events, leading to at least 5 actionable U.S.-Kyrgyz joint ventures proposals or business plans submitted to stakeholders.

**Objective 3:** Increase consumer general awareness of U.S. goods and services by conducting a series of 15 consumer education workshops and media campaigns in the Kyrgyz Republic, resulting in at least 70% of participants demonstrating increased awareness and willingness to try U.S. products and services within one year.

**Objective 4:** Increase business and entrepreneurial skills of emerging entrepreneurs in the Kyrgyz Republic by conducting a series of 10 entrepreneurship training workshops and

mentorship program, resulting in at least 60% of participants starting or expanding their businesses within one year.

**Objective 5:** Increase knowledge and awareness of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protections by designing a series of 5 educational workshops and a related media campaign to promote the importance of IPR protections, reaching at least 1,000 individuals and resulting in at least 70% of participants demonstrating increased knowledge of the types and benefits of IPR within one year.

**Objective 6:** Increase local employability of returning and potential migrants by implementing 3 community development projects (e.g. vocational training) and job placement programs in remote, migration-prone areas of the Kyrgyz Republic, resulting in at least 50% of returning and potential migrants securing stable local employment within one year.

## **2. Substantial Involvement**

In case PDS determines a cooperative agreement is the most appropriate funding mechanism, the U.S. Embassy will have substantial involvement in the project planning and execution. Examples of substantial involvement include: 1) Approval of experts or speakers selected to lead portions of a training; 2) Approval of training curriculum to be used for workshops; 3) Involvement in the selection of participants or program venues; 4) Approval of promotional materials drafted for public dissemination, release to the media, and/or social media publication.

## **D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT**

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

### **Content of Application**

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents are **required**:



## **1. Mandatory application forms**

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or [Grants - U.S. Embassy in The Kyrgyz Republic](#).
- SF-424 (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or [Grants - U.S. Embassy in The Kyrgyz Republic](#).
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or [Grants - U.S. Embassy in The Kyrgyz Republic](#) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)

## **2. Proposal (6 pages maximum)**

The proposal (Attachment 1) should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization Applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies as well as experience with and expertise in areas related to those described in the NOFO. You may use the attached Applicant Organization Information Survey form to provide this information (Attachment 3).
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Methods, Design, Activities, and Deliverables:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable. Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees (if applicable).
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** Proposals must include a draft Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The M&E PMP should show how

applicants intend to measure and demonstrate progress towards the project's objectives and goals. Attachment 4 of this funding opportunity (M&E Performance Monitoring Plan) contains a template that may be used to fulfill this requirement. While the grantee is free to create their own template, completing Attachment 4 will ensure a thorough PMP.

The key components to the PMP are as follows:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative:** In narrative form, applicants should describe how they intend to monitor and evaluate the activities of their award. In addition, the applicant should describe any M&E processes, including key personnel, management structure (where M&E fits into the overall program's staff structure), technology, and as well provide a brief budget narrative explaining any line-item expenditures for M&E listed in the program's budget. If the proposal is from a prior grantee, the proposal discusses how the grantee has adapted, improved or otherwise modified their approach based on learning from previous experience. This narrative is limited to two pages.
- **Theory of Change Diagram:** Applicants are expected to submit either a Theory of Change diagram or an If-Then Statement that illustrates how project activities will lead to intended outcomes. Attachment 4 includes a suggested format for these requirements.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Datasheet:** The applicant must include their proposed activities and their expected outputs and outcomes as well as the goals and objectives as written in the NOFO. The datasheet's purpose is to explicitly illustrate how a project's activities lead to tangible results (such as increased beneficiary skills, knowledge, or attitudes) that ultimately address a PDS objective. For more information, please see Attachment 5: Standard Indicators Sheet and Attachment 6: Instructions – M&E Performance Monitoring Plan.
- Expenses directly associated with monitoring and evaluation are considered allowable. The suggested template includes a space to list the portion of the total budget amount directly associated with monitoring and evaluation activities.

### **3. Budget Justification Narrative**

- **Detailed Budget** - Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the template provided with the funding opportunity but are not required to do so (Attachment 2). Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. 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. See Annex Section I for a description of the types of costs that should be included in each category. Personnel salaries should include the level of effort and the rate of pay, which should cover the percentage of time each staff member will dedicate to grant-based activities. If an organization is charging an indirect cost rate without a NICRA, it must apply it to the modified total budget costs (MTDC), refer to 2CFR§200.1. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

- **Budget Justification Narrative** – Applicants must submit a budget justification narrative to accompany the detailed line-item budget. The purpose of the budget justification narrative is to supplement the information provided in the detailed budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget justification narrative is a tool to help Embassy staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the requested costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the detailed budget spreadsheet, the budget justification narrative, and the SF-424A 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 proposal.

#### **Additional Budget Notes:**

- **Audit Requirements:** Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions <https://www.state.gov/m/a/o/e/index.htm> and 2CFR200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization’s established indirect costs in the award’s detailed budget.
- **Visa Fees:** Include all visa application and related fees in your budget as applicable. Please note DS-2019s for post-funded programs must be submitted directly by the award recipient. If you anticipate your program will include the DS-2019 visa processing, your organization must be a registered Designated Sponsoring Organization. For more information go to: <https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/become-a-sponsor/>

#### 4. Attachments

- **Key Personnel Resumes:** A résumé, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and Finance Officer, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). 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 résumé.
- **Letters of support from program partners:** Letters of support should be included for sub-recipients or other partners. 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. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.
- **Indirect Costs:** If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included in the application submission.
- **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 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Service determination letter, and non-U.S. organizations should provide evidence of non-profit status issued by a government entity).
- **Proof of Registration:** A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Kyrgyz Republic-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

Other items NOT required/requested with the application submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved to move forward in the review process include:

- a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
- b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
- c. 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
- d. Documentation that demonstrates the recipients' plan and/or policy to safeguard PII of participants and beneficiaries. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure protection of personally identifiable information (PII) and safeguard PII when collecting, maintaining, using and disseminating such information
- e. Information 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 identify other financial transactions that may be necessary to undertake the project activities
- f. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

## **E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES**

### **1. Address to Request Application Package**

Application forms required above are available at [Grants - U.S. Embassy in The Kyrgyz Republic, grants.gov](#).

### **2. Department of State Contacts**

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: [BishkekProjectProposals@state.gov](mailto:BishkekProjectProposals@state.gov).

### **3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)**

**Required Registration:** All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.***

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

## Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](#) for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

**Please note:** Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.”

## 4. Submission Dates and Times

**Submission Deadline:** All applications must be received by **Period 1: May 31, 2025, at 11:59 p.m., Bishkek time, or by Period 2: July 15, 2025, at 11:59 p.m., Bishkek time.** For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, PDS will utilize the timestamp 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 be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

**Submission Method A:** Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: [bishkekprojectproposals@state.gov](mailto:bishkekprojectproposals@state.gov). Applicants opting to submit applications via email to [bishkekprojectproposals@state.gov](mailto:bishkekprojectproposals@state.gov) **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

**Submission Method B:** Submitting all application materials through Grants.gov. For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at grants.gov. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or go to <https://www.grants.gov/support.html>. Please note that [bishkekprojectproposals@state.gov](mailto:bishkekprojectproposals@state.gov) is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov.

## 5. Funding Restrictions

- i. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

- ii. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws: None of the funds awarded under this agreement may be used for any initiatives or programs, or any activities that do not comply with Executive Order 14173 titled Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.
  - a. By signing the SF-424 or SF-424I Application for Federal Assistance, the Applicant certifies the following:
    - i. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
    - ii. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws.
- iii. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements: Applicants are advised that U.S. institutions of higher education must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:
 

Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.
- iv. Pre-Award Costs: Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.
- v. Construction: Any award made as a result of this NOFO will not allow for construction activities or costs.
- vi. Direct Social Services: Costs that cover and provide direct social services, such as welfare, charity, health or economic relief, are unallowable. Medical assistance, such as costs to include medical professionals, including but not limited to doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists to participate in the project activities are not allowed.

## **6. Other Submission Requirements: Copyrights and Proprietary Information**

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.

Applicants must acquire all required registrations and rights in the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic. Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S. and the Kyrgyz Republic requirements described above.

## F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### 1. *Review Criteria*

Criteria: Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria enumerated below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** – 25 points: The program idea should be innovative and well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants** – 20 points:
  - The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills, and human resources to implement the project.
  - The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue that the project will address.
  - The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
  - Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations.
  - Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate
- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives** – 15 points: The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Budget** – 10 points: The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to accurately determine expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.



- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - 10 points: There is a complete and thorough draft submission of a M&E Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). This will include a list of proposed project activities, corresponding milestone, output, and outcome indicators, a description of data collection methods, and a timeline for collecting such information. The proposal presents a clear theory of change on how the program will address that problem. Use of the suggested template (Attachment 4) will satisfy these requirements. Funded projects will have their plans finalized during the negotiation phase, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the life of the project.
- **Sustainability** – 10 points: The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability or advancement of project goals after the end of project activity.
- **American Leadership** – 10 points: The project leverages U.S. experts, partnerships with U.S. companies, American Spaces, USG program alumni, U.S. resources, American technologies, and/or existing USG programming in the Kyrgyz Republic.

## **2. Review and Selection Process**

- a. Acknowledgement of receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.
- b. Review. All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. **If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed above in [Section D. Application Contents and Format](#), it will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the grants review committee.** A technical review panel will review eligible proposals based upon the criteria noted in this NOFO.
- c. Follow up notification. Applicants will generally be notified within 120 days after the NOFO deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

## **3. Risk Review**

- i. Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:
  - a. Financial stability
  - b. Management systems and standards
  - c. History of performance
  - d. Audit reports and findings
  - e. Ability to effectively implement project requirements

ii. High Risk Designation

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk based on the above risk factors will be held to special award conditions. At a minimum, the recipient and/or project designated as High Risk will be required to submit monthly narrative reports and/or quarterly detailed financial reports. Recipients may also be required, upon request of the Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative, to provide electronic copies of receipts or other supporting documentation (e.g., timesheets, travel documents) for costs incurred. The Grants Officer may withhold 10% of the award amount until final reports have been reviewed and approved by the GO. The recipient may be required to pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer. Other special award conditions may also be included if deemed appropriate by the Grants Officer.

## **G. AWARD NOTICES**

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

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

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

### **Payment Method:**

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer and Grants Officer Representative.

## **H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION**

## **1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(2 CFR\)](#), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
  - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
  - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

## **2. Reporting**

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted. **Note:** most recipients will be required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. The quarterly progress report should include an up-to-date copy of the PMP datasheet. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 120 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

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.

**Foreign Assistance Data Review:** As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

## **I. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Guidelines for Budget Justification**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Alcoholic Beverages:** Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages and other entertainment related expenses.

## **STEP Enrollment**

U.S. citizens who travel to the Kyrgyz Republic are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) available at:

<https://step.state.gov/step/>. Enrollment enables citizens to receive security-related messages from the Embassy and makes it easier for us to locate you in an emergency. The Embassy also recommends that all travelers review the State Department's [travel website at travel.state.gov](#) for the [Travel Warnings](#), Travel Alerts, and the Kyrgyz Republic Specific Information.