

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**Public Diplomacy
Science, Technology, Engineering, and
Mathematics (STEM) Program**

SCA/Bishkek, Department of State

Opportunity number: STATE-BISHKEK-PDS-25-0006

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

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

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	U.S. Embassy Bishkek Public Diplomacy Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Program
Funding Opportunity Number	STATE-BISHKEK-PDS-25-0006
Deadline for Applications	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
Assistance Listing Number	19.040
Length of performance period	6-12 months
Number of awards anticipated	Up to three awards, depending on award sizes
Award amounts	awards may range from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$50,000 (approximately, pending funding availability)
Type of Funding	Fiscal Year 2025 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	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 month 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 promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education and investment in the Kyrgyz Republic. Poor access to STEM educational resources, particularly in rural provinces, limits economic opportunity throughout the Kyrgyz Republic, contributing to brain drain and outmigration. For Kyrgyzstanis to harness STEM opportunities being developed in the United States, there is an urgent need to expand rural STEM educational opportunities, equip educators to teach STEM topics, attract STEM investment, and modernize the STEM education curriculum.

By focusing on these priorities, this program will prepare young Kyrgyzstani citizens for careers in STEM fields, create partnership opportunities for U.S. businesses and investors, and reduce outmigration by creating domestic economic opportunities. Finally, the program will establish the United States – the global leader in STEM innovation, education, and training – as the partner of choice for the Kyrgyz Republic as it opens new markets.

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
 - Individuals
- U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs), educational institutions, and individuals seeking funding to support cultural and/or educational program in the Kyrgyz Republic and 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 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. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

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;
- Illegal activities; or
- Equipment purchases beyond what is deemed necessary for the project

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Project Background, Goals, and Objectives

The Kyrgyz Republic faces significant economic challenges, including limited opportunities for local entrepreneurs, insufficient workforce skills, and barriers to global market access. These issues contribute to economic stagnation, outmigration, and underutilization of the country's potential. The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek aims to address these challenges through a comprehensive program focused on promoting STEM education and business partnerships.

Past projects funded by the Mission have targeted various STEM programs, such as workshops on teacher training, youth programming, and workshops for STEM innovators. Successful projects have included:

- **STEM Teacher Training:** These initiatives have equipped in-service secondary and university educators to use innovative, experiential teaching techniques based on U.S.-designed STEM curriculum.
- **Youth Programming:** Coding and robotics masterclasses; science fairs and Olympiads; and project-based hackathons help young people see the practical application of STEM concepts while solving community problems.
- **Workshops for STEM Innovators:** Sessions on pitching, venture capital, and angel investing connected Kyrgyzstani inventors and designers with U.S. backers, growing initial concepts into sustainable, profitable businesses.

These initiatives demonstrated the need for activities that transition STEM education from outdated forms of rote memorization to interactive instruction. Previous projects also highlight the need for stronger connections between U.S. and Kyrgyz organizations in the STEM space to transfer knowledge in this field to Kyrgyz students, educators, and entrepreneurs. American expertise can transform STEM instruction and programming in the Kyrgyz Republic to contribute to innovation and job growth in this emerging sector.

This NOFO will support STEM education and investment in the Kyrgyz Republic by:

- **Training Educators:** Offering STEM-specific trainings for teachers to improve their ability to deliver high-quality STEM education based on U.S. curriculum and/or modules.
- **Fostering Partnerships:** Encouraging collaboration between U.S. organizations, and Kyrgyz educational institutions to create lasting STEM initiatives.
- **Modernizing Curriculum:** Updating the STEM curriculum to reflect current global standards and industry needs, ensuring students are well-prepared for future careers and recognize the United States as the global leader in STEM innovation, education, and training.
- **Promoting Economic Opportunities:** Creating pathways for students to enter STEM fields, as well as pathways for Kyrgyz STEM innovators to secure U.S. support.

To achieve the goal of this NOFO, proposed program activities should demonstrate strong ties to U.S. expertise. This can include partnerships with U.S. organizations, the involvement of U.S. experts in the project, or collaboration with U.S. businesses. 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.

Applicants can also satisfy this requirement by incorporating prior U.S. Embassy-funded programming and/or resources into their proposals. Applicants may conduct a needs assessment as part of the proposal to identify gaps in STEM education and priority audiences for project activities.

Project Audience(s): The U.S. Embassy intends to reach multiple audiences through this program. Possible audiences include:

- In-service primary school and secondary school educators who teach chemistry, biology, information technology, mathematics, and other STEM subjects.
- Students aged 12-18 residing throughout the Kyrgyz Republic who have limited access to STEM instruction and educational resources.
- Pre-service STEM teachers preparing for careers in education at Kyrgyz universities.
- Kyrgyz university administrators and professors responsible for STEM curriculum and instruction.
- Kyrgyz science and technology innovators seeking U.S. partners and investment.

Project Goal: Improve opportunities for STEM education and employment in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Note: Below are some sample objectives that advance the project goal. Applicants should select no more than two objectives to address in their project proposal.

Objective 1: Increase professional and instructional skills of a minimum of 200 secondary educators through hands-on project-based STEM teaching practices, resulting in at least 80% of educators demonstrating the ability to implement at least one new instructional tool, technology, and/or methodology within six months of completing the training.

Objective 2: Increase student participation and achievement by launching a nationwide STEM competition for 250 primary and/or secondary school students, conducting regional events in each Oblast, culminating in a final competition that sends the winners to a U.S.-based international championship, and resulting in at least 60% of participants reporting a measurable improvement in STEM-problem solving skills.

Objective 3: In consultation with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Kyrgyz educational institutions, develop and pilot a Kyrgyz-language STEM curriculum – based on a U.S. model – for training science teachers on STEM instruction, resulting in at least 80% of pilot participants demonstrating an increase in STEM teaching effectiveness and confidence as a result of using the new curriculum.

Objective 4: Increase the capacity of 50-100 STEM innovators to pitch projects by organizing pitching workshops in the Kyrgyz Republic, culminating in a pitch-a-thon event with U.S. investors that selects three final projects for funding.

Objective 5: Increase STEM engagement in 25 secondary schools across the Kyrgyz Republic by coordinating a mobile U.S.-branded science and technology roadshow, resulting in at least 70% of students reporting an increased interest in STEM subjects and careers

2. Substantial Involvement

In case the Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) determines a cooperative agreement is the most appropriate funding mechanism, the U.S. Embassy may be more actively involved in the project execution and anticipate having moderate to substantial involvement once the award has been made. 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-424A (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 or Individual 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 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:

- **Awards to Individuals:** Please note the following budget guidelines for the Individual Award:
 - **Salary/Honoraria:** Only the award recipient may receive salary/honoraria from this funding mechanism. The Recipient must be the primary point of contact and manage all programmatic activities.
 - **Contractual Costs:** Additional individuals working on the award are only permissible through contracted services, as long as the services are not related to the core programmatic activities. Expenses for services such as accounting, legal support, social media management, website designer, etc., are allowable.
 - **Other Direct Costs:** Expenses related to securing venues, managing logistics, catering, etc. are allowable.
- **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-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.

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. Applicants opting to submit applications via email to 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 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 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
- iii. 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 Kyrgyz Republic Specific Information.