



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

**Number:** USAID/Egypt 268-10-022  
**Title:** University Student Assistance Program (USAP)

**Issuance Date:** April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
**Application Submission Date:** June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 2:00 pm Cairo Local Time

**Deadline for Questions:** May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 2:00 pm Cairo Local Time

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of USAID/Lebanon, the Regional Procurement Office of USAID/Egypt is seeking Assistance Applications from US non-governmental entities to implement the program description explained below.

The federal grant process is now web-enabled. This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and may be amended. As the Request for Application (RFA) may be amended, potential applicants should regularly check the site to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this RFA.

Only **electronic** applications will be considered received. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all required information in its application, including the requirements found in any attachments to this Grants.gov opportunity.

This RFA consists of this cover letter plus the following Sections:

- Section I - Funding Opportunity Description
- Section II - Award information
- Section III - Eligibility Information
- Section IV - Application and Submission Information
- Section V - Application Review Information
- Section VI - Award and Administration Information
- Section VII - Agency Contacts
- Section VIII - Other Information

Each section is provided as an attachment except for the two which are provided below:

**SECTION VII. AGENCY CONTACTS:** Please send all questions or comments concerning this funding opportunity to the following **e-mail address:** [usap@usaid.gov](mailto:usap@usaid.gov).

**SECTION VIII. OTHER INFORMATION:** USAID retains the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this RFA thoroughly to understand the type of program sought and the application submission and evaluation process.

Sincerely,

Harvey Eichenfield  
Agreement Officer

## **SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **Authorizing Legislation:**

This is a discretionary Grant opportunity to be competed and awarded pursuant to the authority of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, and the applicable sections of USAID regulation 22CFR226.

### **Program Eligibility Requirements:**

Type of entities which may apply is described in Section III.

### **How the Award will be Administered:**

For US organizations, USAID Regulation 22 CFR 226, OMB Circulars, and USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Students will be applicable. Further information including the referenced documents may be obtained via our agency website [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) directly or via links in USAID Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 303: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>. Copies may also be obtained from the listed agency points of contact for this RFA.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

The following program description indicates the range of activities that might be involved and the goals of this activity which the successful applicant will be expected to meet.

**USAID/Lebanon**

**USAP Program  
University Student Assistance Program**

## **Section 1: INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of USAP is to provide undergraduate scholarships for promising students with high financial need at American educational institutions and other higher education institutions in Lebanon that promote tolerance, gender and social equality, and critical thinking. This program will build on the lessons learned and best practices of previous scholarship programs.

## **Section 2: BACKGROUND**

The Lebanese education system is roughly 50% private with a private education subsector that spans a wide range in terms of quality and cost. Overall, the quality of private education is higher than public education, with the gap decreasing in the secondary stage and then increasing tremendously at the higher education stage. This results in increased gaps between the more economically advantaged youth and their poorer counterparts who cannot afford quality private education. This is also reflected in significant differences in graduates' employment potential for more productive and profitable jobs.

The purpose of this higher education program is to provide scholarships for promising undergraduate students in Lebanon with high financial need, including at American educational institutions and other higher education institutions in Lebanon that promote tolerance, gender and social equality, and critical thinking. Within this context, USAID/Lebanon's past scholarship programs and now this current program aim to address this gap and develop the potential of the economically disadvantaged to contribute to the development of Lebanon. In addition, selected students will be offered scholarships under this revised program for the entire period of their undergraduate studies at a university in Lebanon, assuming they maintain minimum grade requirements. This will ensure continuity and the ability to monitor progress and ultimate graduation rates and results under this revised program.

The program will provide scholarships through an open and competitive process. Students will be selected based on need and merit. Participating institutions will be required to demonstrate students selected have high financial need; expand diversity of scholarship students to include all 26 districts with a minimum including at least one male and one female student per district proposed by institutions seeking scholarship support; and ensure that each scholarship student and parent have been properly vetted through all regulatory requirements prior to scholarship award being made.

### **Section 3: TITLE**

University Student Assistance Program (USAP).

### **Section 4: GOAL**

The ultimate goal of this program is to support democratic and economic development in Lebanon by training a cadre of young professionals in various academic fields; this will be achieved by providing high quality undergraduate education to a number of promising Lebanese students with high financial need. Specifically, the program should provide full tuition awards that include all relevant expenses such as housing, books, and stipends to promising students of both genders with high financial need from across the 26 districts in Lebanon. Continuation of full tuition awards are based on students maintaining their eligibility by remaining in good standing and maintaining a grade point average that does not drop below the equivalent of an American higher education grade average of a "C" or "2.0". Students will be expected to be full time and to complete their undergraduate degree within the academic time frame of their respective programs, including one year of English language training (if needed).

### **Section 5: LINK TO USAID'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

This program will support USAID/Lebanon's Assistance Objective (AO) #3: Student Achievement Improved, as it expands access to quality higher education for students

across Lebanon. The program will further support Intermediate Result 3.3: Increase people's access to education programs with USAID assistance.

The program has a significant role in reaffirming U.S. commitment to support the improvement of Lebanon's human capital. It directly supports three current strategic objectives regarding improved student achievement, the ability to counter extremism through education and enhanced economic opportunities. The program contributes to increasing student and public support for a university education which promotes ideals such as tolerance and freedom of expression, improvements in critical thinking skills throughout all areas of study, which represents an important contribution in an environment which has traditionally encouraged rote learning and social conformity.

## **Section 6: OBJECTIVE**

Through USAP, USAID/Lebanon intends to provide undergraduate scholarships for promising students with high financial need at American educational institutions and other higher education institutions in Lebanon that promote tolerance, gender and social equality, and critical thinking. This can help break the cycle of poverty, develop a more functional democracy, and sustain a more competitive, open economy in Lebanon.

The objective of USAP is to provide participants with a solid training in academic fields that is practically oriented and prepares them to technically contribute to and undertake leadership positions in their respective fields. These contributions, in turn, will foster a new generation of young Lebanese who will be able to contribute to democratic and economic development in their chosen fields.

Through academic courses and career development counseling, students will be supported throughout the period of their scholarship. This support will help them gain leadership skills and other skills necessary for their becoming leaders in their society (e.g., conferences, community service activities). Ideally the program should include post-degree follow-on activities. Applicants should propose the number of students but must at a minimum propose one male and one female student from each of the 26 districts in Lebanon. Up to one year of full time English language training for scholarship students should also be provided if needed. Applicants will establish overall gender targets.

This combination of academic, leadership, and networking skills will help produce a new generation of young Lebanese who will be able to contribute to democratic and economic development in their chosen fields. These scholarship opportunities will assist Lebanon's growing and active youth population better prepare and plan for the future.

## **Section 7: PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING**

USAID anticipates making up to five awards to cover student scholarships through graduation, based on the average of four years to complete one's undergraduate studies, in addition to one year of English language training (if needed). Funds are expected to be

available to support full five years scholarships, in addition to one of year English Language (if needed), to students with high financial need under this program.

The scholarship shall be awarded to students of high financial need at the time of their entrance to university until their graduation, provided their grade average does not drop below the equivalent of the American higher education grade of a "C" or "2.0" during their academic pursuit. Furthermore such selected students must remain in good standing at their university.

The performance period for this program is estimated to begin in September 2010 and be completed no later than August 2016.

## Section 8: TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### I. Program Management

Scholarships are for study at universities only located in Lebanon. Applicants will be responsible for:

- Ensuring selection of students for the academic year that starts fall 2011-2012 according to financial eligibility criteria set in this RFA,
- Vetting<sup>1</sup> students and their parents to ensure that the USAP program benefits are not being provided, even inadvertently, to terrorists or their supporters, including people or

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<sup>1</sup> The kind of required vetting is as per AAPD 04-14, Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing E.O. 13224, page 6:

*The following steps may enable the Recipient to comply with its obligations under paragraph 1:*

*a. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will verify that the individual or entity does not (i) appear on the master list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons, which list is maintained by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and is available online at OFAC's website:*

*<http://www.treas.gov/offices/eotffc/ofac/sdn/t11sdn.pdf>, or (ii) is not included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID to the Student.*

*b. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient also will verify that the individual or entity has not been designated by the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the "1267 Committee") [individuals and entities linked to the Taliban, Usama bin Laden, or the Al Qaida Organization]. To determine whether there has been a published designation of an individual or entity by the 1267 Committee, the Recipient should refer to the consolidated list available online at the Committee's website: <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>.*

*c. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will consider all information about that individual or entity of which it is aware and all public information that is reasonably available to it or of which it should be aware.*

*d. The Recipient also will implement reasonable monitoring and oversight procedures to safeguard against assistance being diverted to support terrorist activity.*

organizations who are not specifically designated by the USG as terrorists but who may nevertheless be linked to terrorist activities,

- Arranging orientation programs, conducting enrichment activities,
- Providing career counseling,
- Carefully monitoring participants to help ensure that participants complete their programs in a timely manner within their area of studies, and
- Providing the technical and financial information for all scholarships and the overall program as called for and specified in this RFA.

The minimum required logistical activities from the applicants include the following:

- Selection of participants using the eligibility criteria in this Program Description.
- Vetting students and their parents before providing the scholarships to ensure that the USAP program benefits are not being provided, even inadvertently, to terrorists or their supporters, including people or organizations who are not specifically designated by the USG but who may nevertheless be linked to terrorist activities.
- The implementing partner's vetting strategy shall also require all students who are the individual scholarship students to sign anti-terrorist certifications.
- Procedures in place if the implementing partners becomes aware that USAP benefits are being provided, even inadvertently, to terrorists or their supporters, including people or organizations who are not specifically designated by the USG but who may nevertheless be linked to terrorist activities.
- Monitoring participants to ensure that the requirements of the academic programs are being met for successful completion of the entire university program in a timely manner.
- Assuring that all relevant expenses such as housing, books and stipend are covered within the scholarship.
- Ensuring that all participant data is accurately entered into TraiNet for all training / education, and submitting a print-out of all data after the student has been selected for a scholarship to the AOTR for review. (TraiNet database is USAID's official training data repository. It collects data on all USAID-funded long- and short-term training participants.)

## **II. Recruitment Process**

The applicant will make an announcement of the scholarship through leading Lebanese newspapers. This announcement should detail what information is required in applications and where applications should be sent. Applicants are strongly encouraged to propose other cost-effective means to ensure that the undergraduate scholarship announcement is distributed as broadly as possible throughout the country and to ensure that the announcement indeed reaches students with high financial need. Applicants will also ensure that the announcement reaches both male and female potential students as equally as possible.

## **III. Screening and Selection Process**

The applicant should describe how it will convene a special screening committee to carry out a first screening of applicants based on a scoring matrix. The committee

should nominate at least 10 potential students from each district from which candidates will be selected, 5 males and 5 females, and should contact them for testing and interviews. Nominations should be fair, competitive, and transparent processes and should be based on the following criteria:

- Students with high financial need. It is important to stress that this is a firm, absolute requirement for selection. At a minimum, this criterion will be defined as students attending regular public schools through the high school level. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to suggest expanded criteria for financial hardship and provide other ways to objectively be able to apply such criteria.
- Acceptance as a full time student from the university to which they applied (getting accepted after passing the entrance exams of the solicited university).
- At least a score of 12 out of 20 in the Lebanese Bacculaureate official exam (Lebanese High School exam).
- Effective written communication skills as evaluated by the applicant university.
- Demonstrated past performance of community service and community activities by the potential scholarship student.
- Potential for further leadership development.
- Adequate verbal and written knowledge of the English language. Note that this program anticipates providing up to, but no more than, one year of English language training to scholarship students prior to their beginning university studies. As a result, applicants are encouraged to suggest a way to further specify this criterion - i.e. to strike a balance in reaching talented students with genuine financial hardship while also identifying students who could reach a desired level of English proficiency within 12 months if needed. Applicants are also encouraged to identify innovative and cost effective means of providing English language training as needed.
- Gender balance
- Distribution across the 26 districts of Lebanon.
- Implementing partner will present their strategy for vetting their students who are the proposed individual scholarship students and the parents of such students against publicly available databases and sources to ensure that the USAP program benefits are not being provided, even inadvertently, to terrorists or their supporters, including people or organizations who are not specifically designated by the USG but who may nevertheless be linked to terrorist activities. These sources include but are not limited to – the Terrorism Exclusion List (“TEL”) (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/2002/15222.htm>), UN’s 1267 Committee List on Al-Qaida and the Taliban and Associated Individuals and Entities) (<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/consolists.html>), the Specially Designated Nationals List which is administered by the Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control, press reports, and NGO or international organization reporting.

Note: Dual nationality U.S. citizens and Lebanese citizens are not eligible for this program.

Overall, the process should ensure and document that students clearly have high financial need and should evaluate each applicant's academic abilities as well as their potential for involvement in extracurricular and/or community service activities.

#### **IV. Criteria for Continuation of Scholarships**

The applicant must provide detail on the criteria for continuation of scholarships in addition to the following:

- a) student average should not drop below a GPA 2.00/C while fulfilling the requirements of their degree program;
- b) student attends orientation program; and
- c) student maintains progress towards graduation within the allowed timeframe.

Applicant should detail the process for applying the criteria which may include providing information on how often progress will be monitored and how failure to meet the criteria will be addressed.

#### **V. Scholarship Program Components**

USAID would like scholarship students to have an excellent academic experience but it is also critical for students to be well prepared through a sound orientation program; to have ongoing support and opportunities to practice leadership outside of the classroom; and to have career development counseling maximizing the students' ability to take advantage of their scholarship experience once they have graduated. Applicants should provide details on how they would organize and implement program components including the following illustrative examples:

##### a. Orientation Program

All scholarship students should be provided with a written confirmation of their scholarship as early as possible. New scholarship students should be provided with a multi-day orientation program that should include activities such as: orientation to the campus and relevant offices; an orientation to the city; a detailed review of the nature of their scholarship, a review of all program components, a presentation by USAID to familiarize students with the primary funder of their scholarship; and a career options orientation. Applicants should have clear, written rules regarding scholarship terms, e.g. course enrollment for double majors and minors, program requirements, and the ability to enroll in summer courses.

##### b. Academic Programs

Applicant should detail what academic programs are offered by the university in its proposal, including evidence of quality, critical thinking and how student aspirations could be met in the availability of a wide selection of majors. Applicants should include information on the range of academic offerings and academic programs that are in high demand in the job market. Universities should demonstrate their ability to provide scholarships to students in fields that directly link to current market demands so that graduates will more easily find employment. USAID/Lebanon fields of preference are:

engineering, computer science, mass media and journalism, education, nursing, business, environmental sciences, health and economics.

c. Student Support

Scholarship students should be provided with a variety of ongoing support to ensure that they are able to function and flourish in their new environment both academically and socially. For example, applicants should detail: who would be responsible for providing academic and social/cultural support; availability of extra curricular activities that students can participate in; basic academic preparation (e.g., library, research, note-taking, report-writing, and study skills); etc.

d. Leadership in Action

All students will be required to engage in some type of 'leadership in action' activities annually as part of the terms of their scholarships. This should include participation in university seminars, workshops and extra curricular activities. Ideally, students would be required to identify, initiate and implement a community development project in their home district in order to develop community development and leadership skills related to their areas of development interest as well as strengthen ties with their home district. However, there might also be a 'scaffolding' approach to this over the study years, e.g. starting with more basic information on development issues, needs assessment, project conceptualization, design, implementation and evaluation.

e. Career Development

The purpose of this scholarship program is not just to provide financial resources to a limited number of promising Lebanese students from high financial need backgrounds, but also to provide a configuration of academic and non-academic activities that will maximize the likelihood that these students will be able to apply the knowledge and skills that they have gained to address development issues in Lebanon as leaders in their society and to find gainful employment after graduation. In addition, USAID hopes that innovative approaches to this component area may also become useful and sustained practices in general for the academic institutions involved. In addition to career counseling, applicants are encouraged to be innovative in this area.

f. Follow-On Services

Follow-on support to participants after they complete their studies is critical to sustaining the benefits of training. This activity is not required, but applicants should consider the technical and cost effectiveness of supporting some type of follow on service(s) prior to graduation and/or for up to six months following graduation. Activities might include continuing career counseling services or the linking to peer communication mechanisms such as alumni associations.

g. English Language Training

Scholarship students should be eligible for up to one year of intensive English language training prior to beginning their academic courses. Applicants should provide detail on

how this would be provided, including initial screening, monitoring, final testing, and follow up.

## **VI. Housing**

Applicants should provide an explanation of how adequate housing (safe, efficient, and well-maintained) will be provided, including an explanation of how their proposed approach best achieves cost reasonableness and takes into consideration the cultural norms in Lebanon related to students living away from home.

## **VII. Expected Outcomes**

At the end of this program, USAID would expect that:

- a. A gender balanced group of high financial need Lebanese students representing 26 districts will have been selected to receive full tuition scholarship.
- b. An initial orientation program and other support that will ensure a smooth adjustment into university life.
- c. All scholarship students will be actively involved in public service, the local community and leadership development activities, such as participation in seminars, extracurricular activities, service learning projects, or other creative ways of involving the students.
- d. At least 90% of the initial scholarship students will have remained in school and graduated within four years in addition to one year English language training (if needed).

## **VIII. Communications Strategy**

Applicants should pay careful attention to USAID branding requirements and should provide information on how these will be addressed as part of an overall communications strategy within the body of their proposal. Given the significant investment of U.S. taxpayer resources that this program represents, particularly on a per beneficiary basis, USAID seeks assurances not only that the requirements will be met, but that the spirit of the requirements will be met (i.e. that participating organizations and students will fully understand and have a genuine appreciation for USAID's contributions). Thus USAID will positively review proposals which include communications strategies that are innovative and robust (e.g. including public events and announcements at a variety of levels) but that is also honest in anticipating and addressing challenges.

## **IX. Performance Management Plan (PMP)**

Applicant should include a performance management plan as part of their technical proposal that includes both process and output level indicators (e.g. document reviews; interviews with students and faculty, etc.); a final plan will be due within 30 days of award. Applicant should propose both standard (based on the Foreign Assistance Operational Plan) and customized indicators.

The applicant shall develop a plan for monitoring, collecting, evaluating and reporting data which will be used to measure overall progress towards achieving the Assistance

Objective (AO) and compare project status over time {the Performance Management Plan (PMP)}. Within the PMP, the applicant will develop performance indicators and show how baseline measurements can be established to assess the impact of proposed interventions. Standard indicators and other customized indicators specific to the goals of this program are required. A final list of indicators will be confirmed after the award.

The PMP should: demonstrate how this management system will help to clarify and focus program objectives; serve as a forecasting and reporting tool; promote on-going discussions pertaining to program scope and direction; and aid in effective management decision-making. The PMP shall also include an explanation of how data and information will be collected, analyzed, and used for decision-making.

To support improved PMP, the University will be responsible for the following:

- Deciding on the required information to be collected for every participant in conjunction with the AOTR.
- Setting up regular reporting systems and identifying the students for routine reports in conjunction with the AOTR.

Other points important for the University to build into a performance management plan, include:

- Documenting training components. The applicant will keep detailed records for each participant on length of study, degree, special supplementary courses, and other activities relevant to USAP objectives.
- Developing a participant tracking system. The applicant needs to obtain a permanent e-mail address for each participant before graduation. Tracking systems should be closely linked with alumni follow-on activities.
- Setting up baseline measures. A set of demographic indicators (e.g., gender, age, geographic area, education or other status related to program objectives and contact information) should be collected for each participant prior to training.

In addition, higher education institutions should explain how they would establish a control group. The control group would be of highly qualified students from each district who were not selected for a scholarship (e.g. they may have been selected for an interview). Higher education institutions should assume that, at a minimum, they should track and compare where control group and scholarship beneficiary students find themselves at the end of this program period (and include this analysis in the final report), and submit up-to-date contact information in the final report so that an additional comparison could be done 5-10 years after graduation.

## **Section 9: BRANDING STRATEGY AND MARKING PLAN**

The Recipient will submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan that clearly outlines branding and marking issues associated with the program based on knowledge of the country. Refer to ADS 320, (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/>) specifically 320.3.2.2 and 320.3.2.3 for more information. The recipient will comply with the requirements of

the USAID "Graphic Standards Manual" available at [www.usaid.gov/branding](http://www.usaid.gov/branding), or any successor branding policy.

The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan must be submitted and approved before awarding these grants.

## **Section 10: COST SHARING**

Cost share refers to the resources an applicant contributes to the total cost of an agreement. It is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide innovative approaches to cost sharing and to provide detailed explanations in their proposals. In addition to USAID funds, applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from their own, private or local sources for the implementation of this program. Applicants are required to allocate U.S. Federal Government funding towards student scholarships and ancillary costs should be attributed to the cost share contribution. Illustrative examples for cost share include overhead, taxes, fees, general and administrative costs. Applicants should review 22 CFR 226.23 ([http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr\\_2001/aprqtr/pdf/22cfr226.23.pdf](http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2001/aprqtr/pdf/22cfr226.23.pdf)) in determining cost share contribution. Cost share will be considered as an element of cost effectiveness under USAID regulation 22 CFR 226 and of applicable USAID policy and procedure: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

Contributions can be either cash or in-kind and can include contributions from the NGO, local counterpart organizations and other donors (not other USG funding sources). Cost sharing contributions should be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110 - Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations which can be found at the following link <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a110/a110.html#23>. Information regarding the proposed cost share should be included in the SF 424 and the Budget as indicated on those documents. The cost sharing plan should be discussed in the Budget Notes to the extent necessary to determine its feasibility and realistic access to the sources and funds.

## **SECTION II AWARD INFORMATION**

### *Type of Award:*

USAID anticipates making up to five Grants for a five year period in addition to one year English Language (if needed) for the provision of scholarships to Lebanese students of high financial need. Proposals will be required to address transparency in the student selection processes and the need to provide reports and information that accounts for how the scholarship funds are used.

Program should be consistent with USAID policy contained in ADS Chapter 303 concerning non-governmental assistance activities: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

Estimated Start Date and Performance Period:

The performance period for this program is estimated to begin in September 2010 and be completed no later than August 2016.

**SECTION III ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

The program provides scholarships for students in Lebanon with high financial need, including at American educational institutions and other institutions that promote tolerance, gender and social equality, and critical thinking, through an open and competitive process. USAID encourages applications from potential new partners.

**SECTION IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Application:**

This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA.

**Submission:**

Applications shall be submitted electronically in two separate parts: (a) technical and (b) cost/business application. The application shall be prepared according to the structural format set forth below. Applications must be submitted directly to the Regional Procurement Office of USAID/Egypt to the following **mail box: [usap@usaid.gov](mailto:usap@usaid.gov)**

The due date and time for complete application submittals is as stated in the RFA cover letter, unless the RFA is amended to extend the deadline. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for award, unless the Agreement Officer determines all similarly late applications can be considered.

**Point of Contact:**

Harvey Eichenfield, the Agreement Officer: e-mail address: [heichenfield@usaid.gov](mailto:heichenfield@usaid.gov), telephone: 011-202-2522-6930

Sherine Gerguis, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist: e-mail address: [sgerguis@usaid.gov](mailto:sgerguis@usaid.gov), telephone: 011-202-2522-6925

**Application Preparation Guidelines:**

**(A) THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL FORMAT**

**THE TECHNICAL APPLICATION HAS A STRICT TWENTY (20) PAGE LIMIT**, excluding authorized attachments. Authorized attachments to the technical application which do not count against the page limitation consist of: cover letter and table of contents .

Applicants are advised that any pages exceeding this limit will not be considered for evaluation.

To facilitate the review of the application, the applicant must organize the narrative sections of their technical applications in the same order as the selection criteria in **Section V** of this RFA.

The applicant should include a detailed description of the technical approach; a work plan/timeline for year one; a management plan; a Performance Management Plan (PMP), and descriptions of relevant past experience.

Authorized attachments to the technical application which do not count against the page limitation consist of: Cover letter, table of contents, resumes/CVs and letters of commitment from organizational partners.

Also, the Applicant shall provide an illustration of how the work under the subject RFA will be coordinated with other donors.

## **(B) COST/BUSINESS APPLICATION FORMAT**

Cost/business sections of the application must be separate from the technical section. There is no page limitation to the cost/business submittal.

The cost/business portion of the application must consist of the following completed forms and requests for information which are available on the following web-site

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs
- SF-424B, Assurances – Non-construction Programs
- Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Applicant/Student as stated in ADS 303.3.8 and are available on the following web-site <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf> and in **Annex 1 and 2**.
- Other submission requirements for applications submitted in response to this RFA.

The following are amongst the Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Applicant/Student which are requested to be included with the application submittal:

- Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs;
- Restrictions on Lobbying;
- Certification Regarding Terrorist Funding
- Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

Other submission requirements for applications submitted in response to this RFA consist of:

- Detailed/itemized budget with budget narrative for each budget object class category, including explanation of how costs were estimated, for both the requested

USAID funding and proposed cost share amounts. Participant training should be budgeted in a separate line item.

- Similar budget detail with narrative is requested for organizational partners teaming with the prime applicant.
- Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) negotiated between the applicant and a Federal agency (if available). If a NICRA is not available, the following is required: 1) Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID; 2) Projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart; 3) A copy of the organization's accounting manual.
- If program income (i.e., cost recovery or other revenues generated under the award) is anticipated, the estimated amount should be reflected in the budget, and the Budget Narrative should describe how the program income is proposed to be treated, i.e., additive, cost sharing, or deductive, or a combination thereof (See 22 CFR 226.24).

## SECTION V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### **Technical Evaluation Criteria and Sub-criteria:**

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this particular RFA. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Technical responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

#### **1. Technical Approach 55%**

- Proposal addresses all technical requirements, with particular attention to ensuring a sound and objective process for student selection (including addressing high financial need and gender); demonstrated relevance and quality of academic programs including for example, relevance of programs to professional/economic needs of Lebanon; and robust and innovative approaches to ongoing support, leadership in action, and career counseling components.
- Technical approaches are feasible and cost effective.
- Technical approach demonstrates understanding of likely technical challenges and how they can be effectively addressed. (e.g. students who fail to maintain the required GPA set in the RFA).
- Proposal addresses technical requirements including a clear system for vetting scholarship awardees (and family members who may provide direct support) as well as continued monitoring and follow up to ensure compliance of all USG regulations in this regard.

- Applicant provides evidence of promoting tolerance, gender and social equality, and critical thinking. This also applies to subrecipients if any are used to carry out the program.

## **2. Management 25 %**

- Management plan provides details on how effective and efficient communication and decision-making will be ensured between the higher education institutions staff and stakeholders including USAID.
- Management plan demonstrates an understanding of likely management challenges and how they will be effectively addressed.
- Staffing pattern is cost effective.

## **3. Past Experience 15%**

(a) Performance information will be used for both the responsibility determination and best value decision. USAID may use performance information obtained from other than the sources identified by the applicant. USAID will utilize existing databases of past performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided by the applicant and from other sources if and when the Agreements Officer finds the existing databases to be insufficient for evaluating an applicant's performance.

(b) If the performance information contains negative information on which the applicant has not previously been given an opportunity to comment, USAID will provide the applicant an opportunity to comment on it prior to its consideration in the evaluation, and any applicant's comment will be considered with the negative performance information.

(c) USAID will initially determine the relevance of similar performance information as a predictor of probable performance under the subject award. USAID may give more weight to performance information that is considered more relevant and/or more current. The applicant's performance information determined to be relevant will be evaluated in accordance with the elements below:

- Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets;
- Timeliness of performance, including adherence to schedules and other time-sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient completion of activities;
- Cost control, including forecasting costs as well as accuracy in financial reporting, ensuring that unnecessarily expensive technical assistance is not used when lower cost advisors are adequate, and pacing the expenditure of level of effort such that deliverables and outputs can be produced within budget.

## **4. Performance Management Plan (PMP) 10%**

- Performance Management Plan (PMP) addresses requested components.
- Performance Management Plan demonstrates commitment to timely and appropriate use of PMP data for quality and cost control.

## **5. Cost Evaluation**

The Cost Application will be evaluated for cost effectiveness, reasonableness and cost realism. Cost sharing contributions will be evaluated for cost realism.

### **Description of the Review and Selection Process:**

Application(s) which are deemed to offer the best overall value and meet USAID objectives will be selected for award. The Technical Evaluation Committee will evaluate the technical/programmatic merit of each application as measured against the evaluation factors.

Once an apparent successful applicant is identified, additional information and discussion may occur between the applicant and USAID Agreement Officer, before the Agreement Officer makes the final funding decision.

The recommendation or selection of an application for award does not in any way guarantee an award. The USAID Agreement Officer must be fully satisfied that the applicant has the capacity to adequately perform in accordance with standards established by USAID and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This issue of organizational capability is generally referred to as a pre-award "responsibility determination."

## **SECTION VI AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **Authority to Obligate the Government:**

The USAID Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Grant may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Grant or specific pre-award written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

### **USAID Disability Policy - Assistance (December 2004)**

(a) The objectives of the USAID Disability Policy are (1) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (2) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (3) to engage other U.S. Government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people

with disabilities; and (4) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities. The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website:  
[http://pdf.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/PDABQ631.pdf](http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PDABQ631.pdf).

(b) USAID therefore requires that the student not discriminate against people with disabilities in the implementation of USAID funded programs and that it make every effort to comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy in performing the program under this grant. To that end and to the extent it can accomplish this goal within the scope of the program objectives, the student should demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities.

**Deviations from Standard Provision:**

None are anticipated at this time.

**A description follows of anticipated Reporting Requirements to be included in the award:**

**Reporting Requirements:**

A. Annual Work plan:

The Recipient will prepare and submit for approval by USAID an annual work plan, which will include all activities managed and implemented by the Recipient. Each annual work plan will clearly indicate specific tasks and individual responsibilities for task completion. The work plan will serve as a reference point for quarterly and annual progress reports and will permit monitoring of the award performance and costs. It will also be one of the progress performance monitoring tools for USAID.

The annual work plan will establish the timeline for objectives that indicate progress towards the tasks that need to be performed to achieve objectives. It will specify activities on a critical path and show critical performance benchmarks for the responsible parties. The work plan will include a detailed budget with a pipeline analysis of costs incurred and projections of costs for the life of award(s) implementation plan for achieving program outputs.

The Recipient shall submit an annual work plan in draft to USAID/Lebanon no later than sixty days after signature of the award(s). USAID/Lebanon will approve the final work plan in writing once any outstanding issues are resolved. Amendments to the annual work plan may be proposed by the Recipient for approval by USAID/Lebanon.

B. Quarterly Progress Reports

Thirty days after the end of each calendar quarter, the Recipient shall submit to USAID/Lebanon a brief progress report. It will summarize progress in relation to agreed-upon benchmarks contained on the annual work plan. The report will specify any problems encountered and indicate resolutions or proposed corrective actions. The report will list activities proposed for the next quarter.

C. Accruals

USAID performs a quarterly accrual exercise at the end of each quarter; i.e. December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30. Awardees are required to submit four quarterly accrual expenditures reports 15 days before the end of a quarter per year. The Recipient must submit a spreadsheet showing cumulative disbursements and estimated (un-disbursed) accruals to the AOTR.

D. Quarterly Financial Reports

Thirty days after the end of each calendar quarter, the Recipient will submit to USAID/Lebanon a report on expenditures incurred during the report period and projected expenditures for the next quarter. This will report against the Award(s) line items.

E. Annual Progress Report

The July-September (last quarter in a fiscal year) Quarterly Progress Report in addition to the first three quarters will constitute the basis of the Annual Progress Report. It will be a comprehensive narrative report summarizing the previous year's activities and accomplishments using the annual work plan as a starting point and will serve as the tool by which USAID/Lebanon monitors the performance of the Recipient.

The report will include status of project activities and will summarize services delivered and progress towards achieving results identified in USAID's Program Areas. It will document both successes and failures of the interventions, and discuss reasons for shortcomings and recommend actions to overcome them. For each action, the Recipient will designate responsible parties and establish a timeframe for completion.

The Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report will be a stand-alone document, but will be included as an annex to the Annual Progress Report.

F. Recipient Exit Plan

Ninety days prior to the Award completion date, the Recipient will submit to USAID a detailed plan describing all actions to be completed to demobilize the Recipient's operations. The plan will designate dates for all actions. It will include an inventory of all commodities procured under the project and a plan for disposition of the same commodities.

G. Recipient Final Report

Ninety days after the Award completion date, the Recipient will submit a final report to the Project Officer which will summarize implementation progress of all tasks including achievements of strategic results, shortfalls, problems, recommended solutions, and Recipient's assessment of Award work completed. The report shall provide quantitative representation. Accomplishments will need to be documented by data and not anecdotal reporting for the analysis and conclusions must be submitted with the final report.

H. Project Materials:

The Recipient shall be required to submit copies to USAID/Lebanon of all materials developed under the project including but not limited to: course curricula and training materials, conference reports, and procedure and operating manuals. The materials to be submitted and the number of copies and language shall be identified in the Annual Workplans.