

Department of State – Bureau of Counterterrorism

Program Office: Countering Violent Extremism Program
Funding Opportunity Title: NGO Technical Assistance for GCERF
Announcement Type: Request for Applications (RFA)
Funding Opportunity Number: S-LMAQM- RFA-CT-14-002
Deadline for Applications: August 11, 2014

ELIGIBILITY

The successful applicant may be a domestic or international public or private academic institution, non-governmental organization, or not-for-profit entity. The Department of State encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. Government to apply under this announcement. Community non-governmental organizations are encouraged to apply.

PLEASE NOTE: CT urges potential applicants to register immediately with www.sam.gov and Grants.gov. Applicants are advised that it can take up to one week to complete **SAM** registration *before* it is possible to start registering for Grants.gov. Subsequently, it may take up to one week to register with Grants.gov (i.e., to obtain a username and password), for a total time to register of up to two weeks.

Cost Sharing or Matching

Department of State strongly encourages, but does not require, cost sharing to be identified in applications to this announcement.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk:
For assistance with www.grantsolutions.gov accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact Customer Support at help@grantsolutions.gov or call 1-866-577-0771 (toll charges for international callers) or 1-202-401-5282. Customer Support is available 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday, except federal holidays.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Albar Sheikh – SheikhAA@state.gov.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT), Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program, is pleased to announce a full and open competition for grant awards through this Request for Applications (RFA). The CVE Program's main goal is to deny terrorism new recruits by reducing sympathy and support for violent extremism. The CVE Program carries out this goal along three lines of effort: engaging communities most at-risk of recruitment and radicalization including providing positive alternatives to such populations; countering violent extremist narratives and messaging; and building partner-nation and civil-society capacity to counter violent extremism.

CT invites not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions to submit applications to develop and manage capacity-building assistance to local, community-based organizations implementing CVE-focused projects in countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria and Pakistan. Work would focus on such things as building organizations' capacity to draft effective grant proposals, creating budgets, and reporting measurable results as part of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund's (GCERF) mission to build stronger, more resilient local communities in areas at-risk of violent extremism. GCERF is the first global effort to harness the skills, capabilities, and resources of both the public and private sectors to support local, community-based projects aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremism. Further detail on this and the GCERF is in the "Background" section and under the header of "Funding Priorities".

CT intends to award via a cooperative agreement approximately \$562,000 for these activities, contingent upon the availability of funds. The Department of State may choose to make more or less awards deemed in the best interest the United States Government. The Department of State has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with funded applications or awards. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State and is contingent upon the availability of funds.

II. BACKGROUND

Transnational terrorism threatens the United States, its allies and interests, and the international community. Countering this international threat requires sound policies, concerted U.S. Government effort, and international cooperation.

The Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) develops and implements civilian counterterrorism strategies, policies, operations, and programs to disrupt the networks that support terrorism. CT helps to lead U.S. counterterrorism diplomacy and seeks to strengthen homeland security, counter violent extremism, including discrediting radical messaging, and build the capacity of partner nations to deal effectively with terrorism. One example of a multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder capacity building initiative that CT has helped to develop is the GCERF.

GCERF was announced in September 2013, as the first global effort to harness the skills, capabilities, and resources of both the public and private sectors to support local, community-based projects on education, vocational training, civic engagement, media and women's advocacy aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremism. GCERF emphasizes a

bottom-up, country-led approach that will allow non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sub-national government organizations/agencies in countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria and Pakistan, to apply for GCERF grants to fund these projects that specifically target populations at-risk of radicalization and recruitment to terrorism.

GCERF is in its development stage, and will be officially established as a foundation in Geneva, Switzerland, in the fall of 2014. It is currently composed of a small and modestly-resourced Secretariat that will run its outreach and coordination operations, with oversight from a multi-stakeholder Governing Board. GCERF will engage locally through Country Committee Mechanisms (CCMs) composed of governments, public and private sector representatives, to better direct funds to local and national priorities, as well as to local organizations with innovative project ideas that may have the greatest impact at the community level, but have had difficulty navigating application processes or attracting the necessary funding. Part of the interim Secretariat's and CCM's role will be to identify those local organizations that could benefit from capacity-building assistance and to coordinate that assistance as part of GCERF's mission to build stronger, more resilient local communities in areas at-risk of violent extremism.

Policy Objective: One of the CVE Program's primary objectives is to increase partner-nation (civil-society and government) CVE capacities, including multilateral and bilateral training and technical assistance to develop, implement, or augment existing local counter-radicalization and counter-recruitment efforts. In 2015, GCERF will begin providing grants primarily to local, community-based NGOs and subnational government organizations/agencies to implement projects designed to achieve measurable results, where possible, in CVE and strengthen community resilience against extremist agendas. These community-based projects can focus on education, vocational training, civic engagement, media, and women's advocacy as tools to counter violent extremism.

Funding Priorities: CT seeks applications in accordance with the priority areas of engagement detailed below.

- CT seeks applicants who have expertise working with local NGOs and civil society organizations, preferably in GCERF pilot countries, to build their capacity to prepare sound project proposals for the GCERF's early rounds of grant making.
- Applicants should note capacity-building strategies and training exercises that may include working with NGOs on project design, budget creation, and conducting monitoring and evaluation of projects.
- Applicants with experience training local NGOs in CVE themes such as conflict resolution, peace building, women and youth engagement, vocation, communications and stabilization project development efforts are strongly encouraged.
- Applications should highlight any relevant experience in the pilot countries.

III. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: 12 months

Award Amount: \$562,000 is anticipated to be available under this announcement.

Application Submission Process: All applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. (See note below about possible application through grantsolutions.gov for applicants who have valid DUNS and CCR registrations.) **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting www.dnb.com; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR) at www.ccr.gov; (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

Several of the steps in the www.grants.gov registration process can take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this solicitation to confirm or determine their registration status with www.grants.gov.

Interested organizations using www.grants.gov for the first time should register on the www.grants.gov site to create a new applicant account as soon as possible because this process must be completed before an application can be submitted. To register with www.grants.gov, follow the “Get registered” link. Organizations that have previously used www.grants.gov do not need to register again. If an organization that has previously used www.grants.gov is not able to access the system, please contact Customer Support for help in gaining access (see contact information below).

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

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

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

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

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted at any time. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in this document.

Grantsolutions: If your organization has/had a grantee business relationship with a grant program serviced by the Department of State, and you are applying as part of ongoing grantee related activities, please access Grantsolutions.gov. In order to apply electronically you must first have a Grantsolutions user account. If you are already an existing grantee, please login to Grantsolutions using your existing grantee username and password. If you do not remember your account information or have not been assigned a grantee account, please contact the Grantsolutions Help Desk at (866)577-0771 or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. Grantsolutions provides you the ability for existing grantee organizations to submit their entire application online.

Note: Successful applicants will be processed via www.grantsolutions.gov. The Department of State will provide award point of contact and signator access to www.grantsolutions.gov. In order to use this portal, please follow the instructions on www.grantsolutions.gov.

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

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that applications have been received by www.grants.gov in their entirety. The Department of State bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

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

Applications may not exceed **five** single-sided, double-spaced pages in 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. This requirement excludes the allowable appendices, which are identified in Section 5 below. Organizations are permitted to submit multiple concept papers. The proposal must consist of the following:

Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424, 424a)

The Narrative Proposal must include:

Section 2 - Abstract:

The abstract is limited to 300 words in length. It must provide a summary of the proposal.

Section 3 - Organizational Capability:

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, previous experience with related projects, and organizational experience and background in the countries as they relate to the proposed activities. Specifically, applicants should have a demonstrated ability to train NGOs in preparing sound proposals and other aspects of project-development training, such as project design, budget creation, and conducting monitoring and evaluation. Applicants should have a demonstrated experience in areas particularly related to CVE, such as conflict resolution, peace building, and stabilization. Applicants are encouraged to submit samples of their work, such as manuals used to train NGOs on the aforementioned topics. The recipient's training methods should be aligned with the GCERF's outreach strategy, grant making policies, practices, and procedures as developed by the interim Secretariat staff.

Section 4 – Project Implementation Plan:

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project. The proposed activities should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. This section should also describe how success will be measured via performance (output as well as outcome) indicators. Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

Section 5 – Appendices:

- **Staffing Plan:**
 - **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff, such as a Project Manager/Senior Training Specialist. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a one-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.
 - **Letters of Intent** – if local partners have been identified, letters of intent should be included with the application. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The letters must also stress the need to maintain discretion with regard to funding sources. Please note that these are not letters of support, and should only be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget.

The individual letters cannot exceed one page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to five letters per concept paper.

- **Budget (Required):** a line item budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. Any areas of funding that are currently known to go to a sub-recipient need to be listed as such. Budgets with overhead fees under 20% of overall programming costs are encouraged. See attached budget template.
- **Budget Narrative (Required):** Provide an explanation to accompany the line item budget that describes the basis of the cost estimate and other pertinent information. The budget narrative should not exceed three pages, 12 font single space with one inch margins.

IV. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all applications will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all applications.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFA.

- **Organizational Capability (40 points):** Applications should demonstrate the ability to develop and implement programs in the areas outlined in this RFA. Previous experience designing and implementing similar programs in GCERF pilot countries, in particular, is highly desirable, and should be detailed and documented in the application. Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives.
- **Project Goals/Implementation Plan (30 points):** Applicants must describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The goals and objectives must be explicitly relevant to the funding priorities described within this RFA. The proposed activities must directly relate to meeting the goals and objectives described within this RFA; applicants will provide illustrative CVE indicators. Applicants are encouraged to focus on addressing breadth of coverage in proposed capacity building activities across GCERF pilot countries to meet the goals and objectives of the project. The review panel will evaluate the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the problem statement, relevance of the goals and objectives, feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion. How an applicant could leverage other U.S. Government or other donor-country-funded efforts that are CVE-relevant are strongly encouraged.
- **Appendices (30 points):**
 - **Staffing Plan:**

recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and program activities.

Award Notices: CT will play an active role in project direction and oversight throughout the design and implementation phases, as well as in monitoring and evaluation. All agreements will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided via the Grantsolutions system. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Award Date: Subject to the availability of funding, CT anticipates awarding a Cooperative Agreement in the fourth quarter of FY 2014 (according the U.S. government fiscal year calendar).

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

Reporting Requirements: The recipient will be required to submit quarterly progress reports through the grantsolutions.gov system and quarterly financial reports through the Payment Management System. Other reporting may become necessary due to the operational capabilities of the region; this includes frequent, in-country consultations and briefings with relevant Embassy CVE points of contact. Additional reporting requirements include project updates over the phone or in-person meetings as requested by CT and consultations with the GCERF's NGO Liaison as needed or requested by CT. The recipient will be required to coordinate and collaborate with the GCERF interim secretariat staff working on developing the GCERF's outreach strategy, grant making policies, practices, and procedures. The recipient's training methods should be aligned with the GCERF staff's requirements. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

Measures, Monitoring and Evaluation: Recipients must submit within 30 days of award notification a results-based work plan with significant input from CT. The work plan will describe the measures proposed by the recipient to capture and demonstrate progress towards achieving the objectives of the proposed project.

The work plan should include the following elements:

- *Realistic project objectives.* What results are achievable during the period of the grant?
- *A mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators.* How and what will you measure to show the project's results based on outcomes (impact) as well as outputs (raw numbers)?
- *Data collection and analysis.* How will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to show progress toward the project objectives? Identify data sources.
- *Monitoring and reporting.* How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt to changes on the ground and maintain progress?

The recipient will draw on various sources to construct a relevant baseline against which to measure outputs and outcomes, and ultimately to measure the effectiveness of its trainings.