

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Office of Middle East Partnership Initiative (NEA/PI)

Funding Opportunity Title: Leaders for Democracy Fellowship II
Announcement Type: New
Funding Opportunity Number: NEAPI-10-CA-025-MENA-061810
Funding Competition ID: LDF-2010
CFDA Number: 19.500

Date Opened: June 18, 2010

Due Date for Applications: 23:59:59 Eastern Standard Time (EST), July 30, 2010

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (NEA/PI) announces a request for applications (RFA) to advance political change and empower civil society in the Middle East and North Africa by providing emerging democracy activists with academic and skill-based training, as well as linkages with other activists across the region. With this announcement, NEA/PI seeks to expand its Leaders for Democracy Fellowship (LDF) project and continue support for cadres of professionals who have both a familiarity with the theoretical elements of democratic governance and systems as well as practical experience. In the past, LDF has facilitated networking of like-minded democracy, civil society, and human rights activist region-wide.

Interested applicants are encouraged to read this entire RFA as well as the attached full project guidance before submitting an application. Applicants may apply to host the U.S.-based project only, the Middle East and North Africa-based project only, or present a joint application which addresses both components.

LDF II – U.S. Component:

This project will provide one cohort of 20-25 mid-career democratic reform leaders between the ages of 25 and 40, from across the Middle East and North Africa, the opportunity to complete both academic coursework and a skill-building internship in a field of their choice at a college-level American public policy school. Applicants to this project must: 1) incorporate an academic component that supports the goals of the program at large; 2) identify, place, and monitor internships for each program participant; and 3) plan and execute all pre-project preparation, support administration, and alumni activities. Alumni responsibilities include but are not limited to networking new alumni with graduates of the first four cohorts (trained 2007-2010) with innovative virtual and in-person communication and meetings.

LDF II – Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Component:

This project will provide one cohort of 15-20 aspiring or emerging democratic reform leaders between the ages of 22 and 30, with training similar to the U.S. component but designed for participants with little or no experience in theoretical or practical comparative democratization. All aspects of the MENA component will be conducted in Arabic. Junior activists will train at a public policy host institution in the Middle East and North Africa and intern with organizations, ideally under the tutelage of more senior LDF alumni. Applicants to implement this component of the project must: 1) design an academic component that supports the goals of the program at large and is tailored to the needs and level of the participants; 2) identify, place, and monitor internships for each program participant; and 3) plan and execute all pre-project preparation, support administration, and alumni activities.

Background Information about MEPI: The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEPI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments. More information about MEPI can be found at: www.mepi.state.gov.

Electronic Link to Full Announcement: Go to <http://www.mepi.state.gov>, click on Funding and Project Opportunities, click on “Leaders for Democracy Fellowship II” link.

II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement

Anticipated Total Project Funding: Up to \$1,000,000 in Economic Support Funds

Anticipated number of Awards: One award to design and operate the U.S. component and manage a partnership with the MENA-based implementer running the MENA component.

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: \$300,000

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: \$1,000,000

NEA/PI reserves the right to award less than the funds described or more as NEA/PI may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Project and Budget Periods: Applicants may propose performance periods of up to two years. It is anticipated that approximately 60% of resources will fund the U.S. component, 25% of resources will fund the MENA component, and 15% of resources will fund alumni networking and development activities.

NEA/PI will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the applicants, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants to LDF II—U.S. component are accredited institutes of higher education that have schools of public policy. Eligible institutions must have demonstrated capacity and experience to: 1) design and offer all of the essential components of the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship project; 2) place and monitor Fellows' academic and internship components; and 3) to administer an Exchange Visitor (J visa) Program within full government regulation as set forth in 22 CFR 6Z.

Eligible applicants to the LDF II—MENA component are accredited public policy institutions in the Middle East and North Africa. Eligible institutions must have demonstrated capacity and experience to: 1) design and offer all of the essential components of the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship project; and 2) place and monitor Fellows' academic and internship components.

NEA/PI encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost-sharing from additional sources in support of this project. Applications should explain clearly other likely sources of funding and how the funds will be used. If these resources are not proposed, applicants should explain why not.

Additional Information on Eligibility: All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet Number to register with grants.gov and prior to funds disbursement. If your organization does not already have a DUNS number, please begin this process. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost on-line at www.dnb.com.

IV. Application Submission and Deadline

Application materials must be submitted online via www.grants.gov, and must include the following:

- 1) **Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF-424a, SF-424b).** Guidance for completing these forms is attached with this announcement.
- 2) **MEPI Application Cover Sheet—Executive Summary.** **NOTE:** The cover sheet, which includes a maximum two-page executive summary, can be found attached with this announcement. Its format can also be found by going to www.mepi.state.gov and clicking on Funding and Project Opportunities.
- 3) **Proposal Narrative.** The application narrative should: not exceed 25 pages; be in Times New Roman font, size 12, single-line spacing typed pages. The narrative will be rated on your description of objectives, project activities, and evaluation and performance indicators.

- 4) **Budget and Budget Justification (Narrative).** The budget and justification should not exceed 10 pages, and each page should be numbered sequentially. Guidance for preparing the budget and justification can be found by going to www.mepi.state.gov and clicking on Funding and Project Opportunities.

Additional guidance on preparing your submission may be found attached to this announcement. Any application that does not have all of the components above will not be considered for funding.

To meet the announcement deadline, submissions must be made before 23:59:59 Eastern Standard Time (EST) on July 30, 2010. Applicants are warned that Grants.gov requires a registration period of at least 10 days. Further, applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals far enough in advance of the deadline so that they can alert NEA/PI (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties they might encounter in submission and obtain and avail themselves of alternative submission procedures prior to the deadline.

There will be no grace period and any application not received by 23:59:59 on July 30, 2010 will not be considered for funding.

V. Review and Selection Process

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposal and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Proposals will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

Innovation and Approach –The applicant clearly describes how its proposal will address the requested program and articulates an innovative strategy or plan. Proposals suggest a feasible approach to promoting democratic reform in the MENA region.

The applicant may volunteer or be requested to provide information on the total range of projects currently being conducted and supported (or to be initiated), some of which may be outside the scope of this RFA. The approach will be evaluated in terms of expediency and feasibility in the regional and country context. (20 points)

Results or Benefits – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results and the organization must demonstrate that it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward MEPI goals. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referenced in the endnotes/footnotes. The demographic data and participant/beneficiary information illustrate reasonably the impact to be achieved within a maximum two-year timeframe. (25 points)

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise and demonstrates the ability to engage and work together with local and regional networks. Where partners are described, the applicant details the rationale for the consortia, each partner’s respective role, and how the coalition will enhance the progress towards achieving MEPI goals. The organization demonstrates a high level of regional and/or country expertise. Staff, including volunteers, are well qualified and described. (35 points)

Budget and Budget Justification - The detailed budget includes a breakout of any funding sources identified in Block 15 of the SF-424. Calculations are provided with line item detail for each budget object class identified on the Budget Information form (SF 424a). The budget narrative provides details of calculations including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.

The budget and narrative justification are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and the plan for services is realistic. The budget documents the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of all proposed costs. Adequate travel to and within the Middle East and North Africa is proposed. The application documents any efforts to secure other funding sources, including volunteers and cost-sharing. (20 points)

VI. Award Administration

A. Award Notices: Successful applicants will be issued a Financial Assistance Award document, which sets forth the amount of funds granted; the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant; the budget period for which initial support will be given; the non-Federal share to be provided (if applicable); and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The Financial Assistance Award will be signed by a warranted Department of State Grant Officer and the award package will be transmitted electronically.

B. Administration and National Policy Requirements. Those applicants selected under this RFA will receive an award containing terms and conditions prescribed by the Department of State under U.S. law and regulation:

22 CFR –Parts 137 & 145

48 CFR – Part 31

Public Law 106-107

Public Law 111-117

C. USG Substantial Involvement. Representatives from the U.S. Department of State will review all agendas, participant lists, and materials for all program components and participate in selected parts of the project as deemed appropriate.

D. Vetting Procedures: Award recipients are required to ensure that all award activities conform to Executive Order 13224, the Supplemental Appropriations of 2006, and other statutory and regulatory limitations on the provision of support or assistance to prohibited entities and individuals. In particular, the award recipient will be required to take all necessary steps, including but not limited to the vetting of beneficiaries, to ensure compliance with all

statutes and regulations.

E. Programmatic Reporting Requirements. NEA/PI utilizes a Results-Oriented Management (ROM) approach to maximize award performance. MEPI project officers will work with award recipients to create two key ROM tools: the award Workplan and the award Results Monitoring Plan (RMP). The Workplan establishes target dates for all award activities. The RMP establishes the award's *intended outcome* (overarching goal to which the project will contribute without being solely responsible for its achievement); the award's *objectives* (specific results for which the implementer is held accountable); and *performance indicators* to measure progress towards achieving objectives. Indicators are to be direct, objective, adequate and practical for the scope and timeframe of the award. To ensure clarity, the RMP also requires implementers to define key terms used in the indicators and to specify a baseline, target, and data source for their measurement.

NEA/PI provides implementers with interactive database access to an on-line quarterly report template. Award recipients will be required to use the NEA/PI Online Performance Reporting System (DS-4127 – OMB clearance expires July 31, 2011) during the award period to report against the agreed upon workplan and performance indicators. All data collected by the award recipient, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years, and provided to NEA/PI upon request.

Following each calendar quarter, implementers have 30 days to submit a quarterly report on-line. These reports will summarize major achievements of the quarter; indicate the actual implementation date of all planned activities (or a request to modify the target date); and report data against indicators. A narrative analysis of workplan progress and results is also part of the template.

In an effort to maximize results, the grants management team will review each quarterly report and discuss progress and implementation issues with implementers. A final report covering the results achieved will be due 90 days after the end of the award performance period.

F. Financial Reporting Requirements. After each calendar quarter, implementers will have 30 days to submit a Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425). The FFR SF-425 has 2 major components: (1) Cash Management Report and (2) Financial Status Reports. A final financial report will be due 90 days after the end of the award performance period.

G. Acknowledgement: Recipient organizations must ensure that the U.S. Department of State, through the Middle East Partnership Initiative, is acknowledged as the program sponsor in all program-related communications. All official communications, paper or electronic, must include the full program name and the MEPI logo. NEA/PI must approve all publicity and advertising materials before they are published.

All products and services developed or produced as a result of an approved award must clearly acknowledge the Middle East Partnership Initiative support. The recipient should plan for Internet connectivity with the MEPI web site, where relevant. The U.S. Government retains the right to royalty-free use of all materials developed through U.S.-funded programs.

H. Participant/Alumni Requirements. NEA/PI established the MEPI Alumni Network to provide ongoing engagement, dialogue and advancement of participants after they have completed MEPI-sponsored programs. Program participants are invited to join the alumni network, although participation is neither mandatory nor automatic. In order to be sure all alumni are given the opportunity to join the network, MEPI encourages all award recipients to direct their program participants to the MEPI Alumni Network website at <https://mepialumni.state.gov>. There participants can choose to become a part of a community of approximately 5,000 MEPI alumni who are regularly invited to conferences, workshops and other professional and civil society strengthening opportunities.