



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYCSER)

UNDER EXISTING

YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement

APS No.: 7200AA20APS00007

PLEASE NOTE: This is an addendum to an existing announcement. All interested organizations should carefully review both the YP2LA addendum AND the full announcement, which can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=325906>. Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in the YP2LA Addendum.

This activity is authorized in accordance with Part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Through the Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYCSER) addendum to the FY 2020 YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement (APS) No. 7200AA20APS00007, USAID/Nicaragua seeks to have empowered and resilient youth and their communities equipped to advocate for and address their own interests and security. USAID seeks targeted support for vulnerable youth from select municipalities of Nicaragua, namely Managua, Masaya, Bilwi and Waspm. NYCSER sees Nicaragua's youth as a priority population that can be supported to advance their knowledge, civic life and employment for their own development and that of their communities. The NYCSER activity goal is consistent with the Agency's vision for youth and the journey to self-reliance whereby an *"intentional, age-appropriate, and gender-transformative programming will be one of the best ways to affect norms that can foster a culture of self-reliance, accountability, entrepreneurship and good governance."*¹

¹ USAID. *Integrating Youth into the CDCS*, YouthCorps, 2019

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Nicaragua anticipates supporting one (1) new award of up to \$20 million (\$17 million base with additional \$3 million optional) over the course of five (5) years.

Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the FY 2020 YP2 APS apply (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=325906>).

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the NYCSEER activity is to empower youth and their communities to be resilient and equipped to advocate for and address their own interests and security needs in the context of Nicaragua's peculiar socio-political instability and discrimination.

USAID seeks to support an award to achieve this purpose to be further developed through co-creation and in consultation with USAID. Concept notes should reflect the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach² and identify and address new and impactful interventions with high relevance to the international development community across the spectrum of humanitarian to development contexts.

USAID encourages the successful partner to address and build on the current youth demographic trends, and the results and lessons learned from previous USAID-funded activities. In addition, USAID encourages Applicants to leverage work being supported by other donors and stakeholders, as well as other USAID-funded activities.

Interventions may be implemented across the full range of contexts in which USAID works, including stable, crisis-affected, conflict-affected, and early recovery contexts. This addendum may transition to some of the previously described scenarios as currently the country is experiencing an unstable socio-political environment with youth being the main target of state-sponsored violence and a decrease in basic freedoms of assembly and expression.

USAID prioritizes learning and adaptive management. It strongly emphasizes synthesis and dissemination of findings and results from the research and learning activities. USAID also encourages the Applicant to include channels for ongoing analysis of results that can be used by worldwide partners in planning future needs in a range of contexts. These channels may also serve to share best practices and lessons learned that will inform future youth programming.

USAID encourages approaches that leverage the existing platforms of YouthPower and

² <https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development>

YouthLead, as well as relevant YouthPower communities of practice and other networks such as Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) and Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). The NYCSEER awardee is encouraged, when appropriate, to collaborate with other awards that fall under the YouthPower 2 APS umbrella and other USAID Washington-based and country-level mechanisms.

In publishing the NYCSEER addendum, **USAID/Nicaragua is soliciting concept notes from interested organizations according to the review attributes listed below.**

II. BACKGROUND

Global Context

More than 90 percent of youth live in developing countries, many of whom reside in countries where USAID works in both stable, and fragile, conflict-affected contexts. Educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged youth drive economic growth, resilience, peace and stability, democracy, improved health outcomes, and prosperity. However, when youth are not effectively engaged and their unique needs are not addressed, violence, unrest, and irregular migration can follow, resulting in untapped potential for a country's growth and development. USAID's vision is for young people to be empowered to advance their own livelihoods and help solve their country's development challenges.

Globally, youth face a number of development challenges such as:

- 20 percent of all youth in the developing world are not in education, training, or employment;³
- 65 percent of the population is under age 35 while only six percent of political representatives are under 35;⁴
- During conflict, weakened institutions, poverty and financial hardship leave adolescent girls vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and violence (including risky livelihoods). [Women's Refugee Commission, 2014), <http://bit.ly/1J666EM>]
- Literacy among youth is rising, but young women lag behind [UNESCO Institute for Statistics global databases, 2018].

While youth face enormous challenges, they nevertheless represent the opportunity of today and tomorrow—as educators and innovators, entrepreneurs and investors, health professionals and

³ Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Employment. pp. 2. <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/YouthStatsEmploymentpdf.pdf>. Accessed 2, May 2019.

⁴ Thompson, Maggie. "A Generation without Representation: How Young People are Severely Underrepresented among Legislators." *Generation Progress*., pp. 2. <https://genprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/09/27093134/A-Generation-Without-Representation-Report-2018.pdf>. Accessed 2, May 2019.

scientists, politicians and peacemakers. This makes it doubly important to invest in them now—making it possible for future generations to not only survive but also thrive, and so that countries that invest in their youth can realize the vitally important ‘demographic dividend’⁵ these youth represent.⁶

USAID Missions and Operating Units have become more deliberate in prioritizing youth engagement and integration in their Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), strategic plans and activities. USAID’s efforts focus on context-specific interventions that advance youth priorities in partner countries. USAID recognizes the importance of building and supporting young people’s potential by providing them with the skills, assets, and competencies to be productive citizens in their country’s journey to self-reliance. By deliberately working across sectors and engaging youth as active participants in their own development, USAID seeks to address common risk factors and empower youth to be the leaders of today and tomorrow.

For more information on previous USAID efforts in PYD, please see [here](#) or refer to YP2 APS.

Nicaragua Context

April 18, 2018 was a socio-political turning point in recent Nicaraguan history. Drastic pension cuts for the elderly and inadequate state response to the encroachment of communal lands ignited what political analysts describe as many years of accumulated dissatisfaction toward an increasingly repressive and authoritarian rule across the country. While thousands, led by youth, took to the streets in peaceful protests reclaiming constitutional rights to dissent, freedom of speech and assembly, the government unleashed an unprecedented violent response. Protests took place across the country based on similar grievances. Populations in the historically impoverished and neglected Caribbean coast also protested to express their disgruntlement with the discriminatory policies and practices of the current government and the state-backed violence against indigenous populations due to land encroachment. In response to these protests, in both the Pacific and Caribbean coast regions, youth were the main target of state-sponsored violence. To date, Nicaragua continues to experience political unrest and social turmoil.

As a result of the 2018 crisis, violence against women has also been on the rise. According to the Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUNIDES) recent study⁷, due to the socio-political situation, women are now more vulnerable than two years ago as the discrimination, direct and structural violence (including digital violence increase of 73% since

⁵ Demographic dividend: accelerated economic growth that may result from a decline in a country’s birth and death rates and the subsequent change in the age structure of the population.

⁶ USAID. *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Democratic Opportunity.*, pp. 5. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf. Accessed 2, May 2019.

⁷ <https://funides.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Informe-socio-emocional-1.pdf>

April 2018) has increased significantly. With uncertainty around the home economy and employment, along with closing civic participation spaces, political persecution and prosecution are the main causes of mental stress affecting the well-being of Nicaraguans, particularly women. Additionally, intimate partner violence or domestic violence is rapidly increasing as the existing judicial framework lacks the necessary protective structure to persuade victims of reporting early cases of domestic violence. Women special commissions (Comisarias de la Mujer) were closed in 2015 and recently reopened in 2020 as a result of increased reported cases. Despite government underreporting, 57 femicides were registered in 2018, 63 in 2019, and to date through February 2020, approximately 84 femicides have been registered --which would represent a 47% increase from 2018.

Nicaraguan Youth

Various global studies, including the World Bank's World Development Report of 2018 using survey data from 30 countries repeatedly show that more-educated citizens are more likely to prefer a democratic political system.⁸ Education improves both cognitive and communication skills which enables individuals to actively participate in civil society and further foster democratic structures. However, Nicaraguan youth often lack the basic skills needed to actively participate in civic life, gain employment, and productively engage as citizens in their communities. According to a UNDP report titled "National Report on Human Development 2011: The young people building Nicaragua⁹," almost a million adolescents and young adults—close to half of the total population of young Nicaraguans—are considered disadvantaged in terms of education, health, employment, and living conditions. The average Nicaraguan has only around seven years of schooling and the drop-out rate for primary school students is 51.6%¹⁰. Furthermore, populations on the Caribbean Coast are even more excluded, with an average of only three years of schooling.¹¹ According to the International Labor Organization (ILO),¹² 30.5% of the Nicaraguan youth ages 15-24 are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or ni trabajan ni estudian (*ninis*), in Spanish, and 23.26% of *ninis* are female. Nevertheless, the UNDP report notes that “despite such challenges, more than 62 percent have high expectations in terms of development, progress, and basic freedoms.”

Youth have played a critical role in attaining foundational changes in Nicaragua, demonstrated by their leadership in spearheading national efforts for increased and improved state

⁸ https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-1096-1_ch1

⁹ https://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2011_nicaragua_human-development-report_SPA.pdf

¹⁰ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NIC>

¹¹ Voices of the South: Analysis of the situation of youth in the Southern Autonomous Region of the Caribbean Coast in Nicaragua: Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University and UNFPA, 2015. page 34

¹² <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/>

accountability. In fact, 56.1% of Nicaraguans in the age-range of 16-25 prefer a democracy.¹³ However, a vast majority of youth are still left at the margins, particularly the most vulnerable due to the lack of access to opportunities and gaps in service delivery. In terms of political participation, the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) reports show that the percentage of Nicaraguans turning out to vote in the last presidential elections decreased, from 80.1% in 2012 to 52.4% in 2019, this being the lowest in the region. The turn-out for voters aged 25 and below is even lower.¹⁴ However, higher levels of educational attainment, and higher incomes, are correlated with a higher interest in politics. Therefore, key gaps must be addressed for Nicaragua's youth in order for them to become agents of change in their communities and be actively engaged in the social, economic, and political development of the country. Through this addendum, USAID/Nicaragua seeks to support youth in targeted areas of Nicaragua to develop their full potential by ensuring their access to four core aspects of the Global Youth Index¹⁵: civic participation, political participation, education, and employment and opportunity.

Since 2010, USAID/Nicaragua has supported education and youth development programming by providing education, workforce-readiness and leadership training for those most at risk and underserved. Programming for vulnerable children and youth consists of an integrated approach that combines life-skills training, tracking and addressing risk factors and referrals services where needed in addition to educational opportunities. Parents and/or caregivers and the community at large have been key participants, along with the private sector in ensuring increased access to educational services, internships and jobs while keeping children and youth safe. Through its programs USAID have reached over 50,000 children and youth. The NYC SER activity should build on previous efforts, while modifying approaches based on the current situation and key lessons learned such as private sector engagement and grassroots participation.

Theory of Change

The illustrative **theory of change** for this activity is as follows:

If marginalized and vulnerable youth in target geographic areas have access to basic services and gain the necessary skills to be employed and positively engaged in society, **and** are empowered to be leaders and change-makers in their communities, **and If** communities are organized and engaged in a structured process for identifying, mapping, and planning coordinated services to address issues of youth development, community safety and *state intimidation*, **Then** targeted youth and their communities will likely be more resilient, and better able to address their security needs and advocate for themselves.

¹³ La juventud nicaragüense en la encrucijada política Barómetro de las Américas Nicaragua 2019. Vanderbilt University. Febrero, 2020.

¹⁴ Idid

¹⁵ The Commonwealth. Global Youth Development Index and Report. 2016

The purpose of Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYCSER) is to empower youth and their communities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to become resilient and better equipped to advocate for their own best interests and security in the current national context of social and political instability and discrimination, including by actively participating in their communities’ and nation’s decision-making. The new activity should promote positive youth development and address state-sponsored violence by providing the necessary tools to organize, plan, mobilize, and address these challenges. NYCSER should help to build the capabilities of youth and assist in creating access to opportunities for social engagement and change.

The goal, expected outcomes, and intermediate results are as follows:



III. PURPOSE

Under this addendum, USAID/Nicaragua aims to empower youth and their communities to acquire the education, skills, and resources needed to become resilient and equipped to advocate for their own best interests and security needs in context of Nicaragua’s peculiar socio-political instability and discrimination. The activity should promote positive youth development and address state-sponsored violence by providing the necessary tools and networks to organize, plan, and address these challenges.

The NYCSER activity advances USAID/Nicaragua’s CDCS¹⁶ and aims to contribute to USAID/Nicaragua’s Democracy and Governance Development Objective 1 (DO1) “Citizen’s Ability to Engage in Democratic Governance Increased” and Sub IR 1.1.2 Citizen participation and oversight increased and Sub IR 1.2.1 Capacity of key youth leaders enhanced. The NYCSER

¹⁶ <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1862/country-development%E2%80%A8-cooperation-strategy-2013-2017>

activity directly advances the outcomes of Education/Citizen Security DO2 “Safety and Competitiveness of At-Risk Children and Youth (C&Y) Improved.” In addition to IR 2.1 (Reading Performance Improved), IR 2.2 (Work Force and Life Skills Increased), and IR 2.3 (Community Engagement in Creating a Positive Environment for At-Risk C&Y Increased) under DO2, the activity should also contribute to DO1 by supporting the advocacy for increased democratic processes through leadership skills development for youth and community leaders and resilience, peacebuilding, and civic education programming.

This activity should be designed to address priorities set forth in the USAID Education Policy¹⁷, USAID’s Youth Policy¹⁸, USAID’s Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy¹⁹, Journey to Self-Reliance Policy Framework²⁰, USAID’s Private Sector Engagement Policy²¹, and the U.S. Government’s Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)²². USAID’s Education Policy reinforces the goals outlined in the U.S. Government Strategy for International Basic Education (FY 2019- 2023)²³. The activity should also respond to the Journey to Self-Reliance metrics, specifically in citizen capacity (which includes education quality), and inclusive development, by addressing social group equality and the economic gender gap. As stated in USAID’s Journey to Self-Reliance²⁴: *“Local solutions are not always government solutions. Particularly where commitment is lagging among government partners, we should look to civil society, the private sector, or sub-national authorities.”*

In 2008, the U.S. Government introduced the Central America Regional Security Initiative in order to reduce crime rates and improve security in Central America. The four pillars of CARSI are listed below. The NYC SER Activity should contribute directly to pillar A.

- A. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and between the nations of Central America.
- B. Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments.
- C. Re-establish effective state presence, services and security in communities at risk; and
- D. Foster enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats.

¹⁷ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/2018_Education_Policy_FINAL_WEB.pdf

¹⁸ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf

¹⁹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/GenderEqualityPolicy_0.pdf

²⁰ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/WEB_PF_Full_Report_FINAL_10Apr2019.pdf

²¹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/usaaid_psepolicy_final.pdf

²² <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/224013.pdf>

²³ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USG-Education-Strategy_FY2019-2023_Final_Web.pdf

²⁴ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Web_PF-MINI_BOOKLET_10APRIL2019.pdf

The following are key principles from USAID’s Policy Framework and Education Policy, to take into consideration when submitting concept notes:

- Prioritize country-focus and ownership (given the current socio-political environment, the Mission will need to tailor its approach to Journey to Self-Reliance to its particular context as for both legal and policy restrictions the USG does not provide assistance to the GON)
- Focus investments on measurably and sustainably improving outcomes
- Strengthen systems and develop capacity in local institutions and partners
- Work in partnership and leverage resources
- Drive decision-making and investments using evidence and data
- Promote equity and inclusion

IV. PROGRAMMATIC AND GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Nicaragua’s youth are demanding that their voices be heard. For youth to be civically-minded and active participants in their communities, and with potential elections looming as a form of citizen participation, they must be motivated, informed, and safe in civic spaces. NYCSEER should support youth to gain not only literacy and numeracy skills, but also life skills such as civic engagement and participation, so they become resilient and equipped to advocate for their interests and security needs. NYCSEER should promote safe spaces for youth, innovative approaches to addressing and holding the government accountable for state-sponsored violence, and psychosocial referrals as needed.

Target Groups

In April 2018, nationwide youth led the civic uprising against the government and thus these groups have become the main target of a diverse array of reprisals, including intimidation tactics and incarceration, from the police, paramilitaries and pro-government groups. For the most part, these youth were university students, but also included to a large extent *ninis*. Thus, NYCSEER should target youth vulnerable to violence, ages 14-29, especially victims of state violence and those that are not in education, employment, or training. NYCSEER should also target youth in the same age range (14-29) whose post-secondary studies were interrupted or have been unable to continue their education due to state retaliation. Priority should be given to youth who:

1. Have been victims of state-led violence whether in the form of threats, unwarranted incarceration, or physical violence
2. Have indirectly been affected by state-led violence (i.e. family members/neighborhood impacted)

3. Lack of equitable access to education services or low levels of schooling, historically marginalized populations (indigenous and afro-descendants), women, youth with disabilities, and youth living in rural areas

Given the continuation of the socio-political crisis that began in April 2018 and unpredictable operating context, new demands may arise that will require this activity to be capable of quickly responding to changing priorities. Therefore, USAID/Nicaragua is seeking concept notes that are scenario-based and can respond to emerging needs affecting youth, allowing for quick pivots to address urgent and unforeseen needs, such as those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the fluid Nicaragua and worldwide context, this activity must be designed to adjust and be shock responsive. This can include creative use of the \$3 million option in response to a sudden need or change in the environment to which NYCSEER may respond.

The activity should coordinate and collaborate among NGOs and other USAID programs operating in the same geographic areas and working with similar youth populations.

Geographic Focus

The NYCSEER activity will target youth in Managua, Masaya, Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas), and Waspmam. USAID/Nicaragua may further determine other geographical locations depending on resource availability. These locations have been chosen by the Mission using the criterion below:

- 1) **State violence.** The largest concentration of youth victims of state-sponsored violence either as a result of the April 2018 socio-political crisis or violence against indigenous populations.
- 2) **Education gaps.** Bilwi and Waspmam are among the country's most underdeveloped municipalities with high percentages of out-of-school youth and higher repetition rates. The same is for the rural municipalities of the Managua and Masaya departments.
- 3) **Gender-based violence (GBV).** The targeted municipalities and departments under this addendum also are among the country's highest according to indices of GBV.
- 4) **Historically marginalized populations.** The indigenous populations of Bilwi, Waspmam and Masaya, are those historically excluded from quality access to services such as health and education.

Expected Results and Interventions

Goal: Empowered, secure, and resilient youth and their communities that are equipped to advocate for and address their own interests

Outcome 1: Skilled and civically-engaged youth

Education and training improves both cognitive and communication skills which enables youth to actively participate in civic life, promote social change, and further foster democratic structures. USAID/Nicaragua encourages a positive youth development approach that builds the skills, assets, and agency of youth and provides safe spaces, opportunities, and an enabling environment for youth to address the political violence that impacts their communities.

Intermediate Result 1.1: Increased equitable access to knowledge and training opportunities

NYCSER targets youth vulnerable to violence, however they come from diverse backgrounds (i.e. historically marginalized populations, women, youth with disabilities, and youth living in rural areas) and have different educational attainment levels ranging from less than primary and secondary school completion to some higher education. Under this result, USAID/Nicaragua seeks to address the specific equity issues facing the different groups to level the playing field for youth vulnerable to violence to ensure they strengthen their assets by gaining the knowledge and skills to become productive and responsible citizens.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Provide access to youth-friendly knowledge, training, and life-skills development services, covering but not limited to literacy and numeracy, civic education and responsibility, and community security and protection.
- Provide inclusive training and employment support services to youth with disabilities
- Provide economic livelihoods training

Intermediate result 1.2: Youth participation in civic and economic life increased

One of the key objectives of USAID's positive youth development approach is to improve youth's agency - their ability to employ their assets, mainly skills and resources, and aspirations - and contribution. Under this result, USAID/Nicaragua seeks to provide youth the opportunities to become self-sufficient and civically involved through various channels to make positive changes in their communities' development.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Support youth leadership and mentoring programming, especially for youth with disabilities
- Conduct identification card and voter registration drives
- Provide entrepreneurship training and access to financial products

Outcome 2: Organized and engaged communities

Recognizing that youth development is a function of and interaction between complex environments and systems, programs can more effectively support youth by strengthening the communities they live in.

Intermediate Result 2.1: Enhanced inclusion and participation of community members in decision-making processes

When youth are surrounded by an enabling environment that is inclusive and maximizes their assets and agency, they can thrive and become powerful agents for social change. Under this result, USAID/Nicaragua seeks to establish and strengthen mechanisms for local level decision-making that ensure the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth and traditionally underrepresented groups.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Support community-based discussions and initiatives to resolve local issues, especially related to security and safety
- Build on and expand existing faith or community-based groups that advocate for and promote youth participation in decision-making

Intermediate Result 2.2: Trust and social cohesion within communities strengthened to address state-sponsored violence

Youth vulnerable to violence suffer from a fragile social support system and live in a state of suspicion. Under this result, USAID/Nicaragua seeks to build community-level trust, peace, and security by strengthening social networks and providing youth opportunities to contribute and address violence in their communities.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Develop community-based capacities to identify and mobilize citizens for violence prevention
- Support grassroots groups to build awareness and consensus around measures for self-protection and reporting out on state violence

Implementation Considerations

- **Positive Youth Development (PYD):** The activity should use a PYD approach for ensuring effective youth development principles and practices. PYD is an intentional, holistic, age- and developmentally appropriate, gender-transformative and prosocial

approach to youth development. It promotes the building of assets of young people and communities and strengthens protective factors to achieve greater resilience and both short- and long-term desired youth outcomes. Interventions should be youth-led for youth.

- **Do No Harm Approach:** Understand the impact of aid and its interactions on the existing context and with its beneficiaries, with the goal to limit or prevent unintended negative consequences.
- **Conflict Sensitive:** Concept Note will integrate conflict sensitive approaches that include, an understanding of the conflict dynamics and contributing factors to violence and conflict, ongoing monitoring of how proposed interventions affect those dynamics, and the ability to reflect on the impact of interventions so as to ensure a flexible approach that results in course correction if activities are determined to exacerbate violence or conflict. rather than contribute to reconciliation, social cohesion and peace.
- **Geographic Priority:** The Concept Note should propose activities only for the following municipalities: Managua, Masaya, Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas), and Waspam. USAID/Nicaragua may further determine other geographical locations depending on resource availability.
- **Local Engagement:** The Concept Note should ensure the participation of local/national partners with experience in the area of interest of NYCSER.
- **Best practice and best fit:** The activity should build upon existing, promising practice models and curriculum, adapted to the current crisis context. Gender Integration: Applicants should highlight the capabilities to address gender gaps and empower females and illustrate how the organization or the activity is structured to ensure that gender disparities will be deliberately and adequately addressed in their programming.

References and Resources

Below are links to USAID/Nicaragua's youth-related references.

1. [Nicaragua Northern Autonomous Caribbean Coast Region Citizen Security Baseline Survey](#)
2. [Nicaragua Southern Autonomous Caribbean Coast Region Citizen Security Baseline Survey](#)
3. [Nicaragua youth assessment: assessment of security and crime prevention activities, with a focus on youth at risk, on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua](#)
4. [Nicaragua Youth Assessment](#)
5. [Reducing risk factors for youth on Nicaragua's southern Caribbean coast: an evaluation of FADCANIC's development model for at-risk youth](#)
6. [Nicaragua Rapid Education and Risk Assessment](#)
7. [2012 USAID Nicaragua Gender Analysis](#)
8. [2017 USAID Nicaragua Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis](#)

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

USAID has outlined the application process in Section D of this Addendum. Please see the YP2 APS for additional information.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

I. ESTIMATE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE AND NUMBER OF AWARDS CONTEMPLATED

This program is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. Issuance of this Addendum does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor do those commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of questions, comments, suggestions, concept notes, or an application. Applicants submit Concept Note applications at their own risk, and all preparation and submission costs are at their expense.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Nicaragua anticipates supporting one award of \$20 million (\$17 million base with additional \$3 million optional) over the life of the award(s). The optional \$3 million will be triggered based on availability of additional funds, the necessity to respond to unmet needs of youth and their communities before and/or after a democratic transition, and/or exemplary and consistent performance under the award. These funds could also be used to respond to any crisis situation directly affecting youth or the communities served by this activity and that have effects on their health, safety and overall well-being. USAID intends to issue one award but reserves the right to award more or fewer awards than this estimate and is not obligated to make any awards. All terms and conditions of the YP2 APS apply.

II. II.PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE FOR FEDERAL AWARD

The anticipated period of performance for awards made under the NYCSER Addendum to the YP2 APS is 5 years.

III. TYPE OF INSTRUMENT

USAID intends to issue a Cooperative Agreement resulting from this APS Addendum.

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

I. Eligibility Information

U.S. and non-U.S. public, private, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, as well as institutions of higher education (especially minority-serving institutions), public international organizations, and non-governmental organizations are eligible to submit a concept note. Further, the organization must be a legally recognized organizational entity in the country where it operates.

USAID values the participation of the U.S. higher education community in this activity. U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are key partners for developing solutions to development challenges, by serving as intellectual hubs for knowledge, research support, and innovation.

Under the NYC SER Addendum, USAID/Nicaragua strongly encourages a consortium approach that leverages the diverse, required technical expertise of a variety of partners needed to achieve the program objectives. Local organizations should take ownership and implement the central proposed interventions to the greatest extent possible. Concept Notes submitted under this Addendum should demonstrate a cross-sectoral approach to solving a pressing development challenge through a consortium of actors, to be led by one primary recipient of the award (Prime Recipient).²⁵

[END OF SECTION C]

²⁵ Consortia applications are welcomed under this Addendum; however, one eligible entity must still be identified as the Prime Recipient. The other consortia partners will serve as subawardees to the Prime Recipient (if the relationship is monetary in nature) or as thought partners/advisors to the Prime Recipient (if the relationship is non-monetary in nature). The Prime Recipient will be responsible for managing and coordinating its partners and is responsible for achieving the project goal and objectives

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

I. AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT

If a full application is awarded, the AO will appoint an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) at that time to provide technical and administrative oversight of the specific award.

The Agency will furnish promptly to all prospective applicants as an amendment to this Addendum any information concerning this Addendum given to a particular prospective Applicant, if that information is necessary in submitting applications, or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for NYCSEER will happen in four phases:

1. An open call for a brief (5-page) Concept Note;
2. Review of concept notes by USAID as outlined below;
3. Virtual co-creation discussion(s) with selected Concept Note(s), by invitation only; and
4. Submission and review of Full Application(s), by invitation only.

USAID/Nicaragua will be responsible for the review of Concept Notes and Full Applications and management of any subsequent award issued under this Addendum. Additional information about each phase of the Application and Review process is provided below.

Phase I: Concept Note Submission

All concept notes must be prepared and submitted in English using the provided template (see Attachment A) on www.grants.gov. Respondents are asked to download the template from grants.gov in Word format, provide their responses in that document, and email a PDF saved copy of the document to oaanicaragua@usaid.gov with the file name saved as: "Applicant Name/NYCSEER Concept Note" Concept notes must be five (5) pages or less, single-spaced with 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11 inch paper. Content above five pages will not be reviewed. Concept notes are due by 12 pm noon **Nicaragua time, on June 29, 2020** . Concept notes submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

After a concept note is received, USAID/Nicaragua reserves the right to request supplementary information or pose clarifying questions to any applicant. Requesting supplementary information

or posing clarifying questions to one applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all applicants, nor does it guarantee invitation to submit a full application.

USAID will host a Q&A period, where prospective applicants are invited to ask questions in writing only until **12 pm noon, Nicaragua time on June 11, 2020**. No further questions will be received after that date. Questions regarding the substance and objectives of the NYC SER Addendum should be directed to oaanicaragua@usaid.gov. One week after the closure of the Q&A submission period, USAID/Nicaragua will post written responses on [grants.gov](https://www.usaid.gov/grants).

Phase II: Concept Note Review

Concept notes will be reviewed based on the proposed approach, feasibility and alignment with the above-referenced purpose of the NYC SER addendum. Additionally, concepts should be consistent with USAID legal and policy restrictions, including those set forth in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) and in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

All terms and conditions of the FY 2020 YP2 APS apply.

USAID/Nicaragua anticipates notifying authors of concept notes within 15 calendar days of submission if USAID/Nicaragua wishes to engage in further discussions/co-creation, maintain the application in a pool for potential future engagement, or if USAID/Nicaragua will not pursue further collaboration under the NYC SER addendum based on the submitted concept note.

Phase III: Virtual Co-Creation Process

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Nicaragua will invite a subset of the most highly-qualified concept note applicants to engage each individually in a round of co-creation discussions with USAID/Nicaragua, lasting half a day to a full day. The aim of the co-creation phase is to discuss responses to USAID's clarifying questions on the concept note, further define proposed interventions, review the management approach, develop indicators, align timelines, and discuss budgets. Through discussions, both the applicant(s) and USAID/Nicaragua may identify additional resources, partners, or strategies necessary to successfully implement the activity. All proposed consortium partners should participate in the co-creation session. This process may involve extensive discussions with USAID/Washington, USAID Mission staff, or other experts, within or outside of USAID. Co-creation will happen virtually, through video conferences.

By applying to the NYC SER addendum, applicants give USAID/Nicaragua the right to share concept notes with appropriate external partners for the purposes of evaluation or co-creation. All parties privy to the contents of submitted concept notes, whether within or outside of USAID, will be required to keep contents in confidence. Additional information about the co-

creation process can be found in the “Co-Creation, Collaboration, and Communication under YP2 APS” section of the umbrella YP2 APS and through USAID’s Co-creation Toolkits.

Note: Communication with USAID/Nicaragua during the concept note/co-creation phase should NOT be interpreted as a commitment to funding or guaranteed request for a full application. Any expenses incurred by applicants during this time are solely the responsibility of the applicants, unless otherwise stated in writing by USAID/Nicaragua.

If USAID/Nicaragua decides to continue with the proposed activities following the co-creation phase, USAID/Nicaragua will request a full application from applicants, inclusive of all modifications, expansions, discussions, etc. resulting from the co-creation phase and will provide instructions in addition to the below standard requirements.

Phase IV: Full Application

USAID/Nicaragua will only request full applications from applicants invited to continue in the application process. It is expected that full applications will expand upon their concept note and incorporate any discussions, ideas, plans, feedback or changes from USAID/Nicaragua and other partners discussed during the co-creation phase. **Note: USAID/Nicaragua’s Request for Application (RFA) should not be interpreted as a commitment of funds.**

Full Application submission procedures

Each applicant shall furnish the information required by this Addendum in electronic form to oaanicaragua@usaid.gov. Applications shall be submitted in electronic forms in two separate parts: (a) Technical Application, and (b) Cost/Business Application.

All electronic files containing Technical and Cost Applications must be clearly marked on the subject line with the following words "Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYCSER), APS No.7200AA20APS00007". Email applications must be submitted to: oaanicaragua@usaid.gov

For an application sent by multiple emails, please indicate in the subject line of the email whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of multiple emails (if more than one is sent) and of attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line which says: "[organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

USAID/Nicaragua preference is that the technical application and the cost application be submitted as single email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending them. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear. All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the RFA and the application format. No addition or modifications will be accepted after the submission date.

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were indeed sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

USAID will acknowledge receipt of all applications received through email notification confirming receipt.

Unnecessarily Elaborate Applications: Unnecessarily elaborated brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to the RFA are not desired and may be construed as an indication of the applicant's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate artwork, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

Authority to Obligate the Government: The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed agreement may be incurred before receipt of either an agreement signed by the Agreement Officer or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the Applicant shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the title page with the following legend:

“This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a grant is awarded to this Applicant as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting grant. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers} and, mark each sheet of data it wished to restrict with the following legend:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

Applicants should retain for their records one (1) copy of the application and all enclosures which accompany it.

A. Technical Application Format

General

The technical application will be the most important factor for consideration in selection for award of the proposed Cooperative Agreement. The technical application should be specific, complete and presented concisely. The application should demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program.

It is USAID policy that English shall be the control language of all awards documents. As a result, it is required that the applications be in English and typed on standard 8 1/2" x 11" paper (216mm by 297mm paper), single spaced, font type Times New Roman 12, with each page numbered consecutively.

The technical application shall include the following sections:

(i) Cover Page

The Cover Page should include the following:

- a. Program title;
- b. Request for Application reference number;
- c. Name of organization (s) applying for the agreement and with Unique Entity Identifier number
- d. Any partnerships; and
- e. Contact person, telephone number, fax number, address, and types name(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures.

(ii) Table of contents that follows the technical application format outlined herein.

Page Limitation.

The page length of the entire Technical Application shall NOT exceed 20 pages exclusive of Annexes and other pages not subject to the page limitation indicated below.

Therefore, technical applications must be organized as follows:

- I. Executive Summary (limited to 2 pages)
- II. Technical Approach (no more than 15 pages)
- III. Project management (limited to 3 pages)
- IV. Annexes - USAID will not review annexes that are not included below
 - A. Draft Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Plan (limited to 5 pages) (The MEL plan should include performance indicators and definitions, and proposed LOP targets. Applicants should also plan to conduct a baseline and endline assessment.)

- B. Resumes (key personnel) (limited to 2 pages per resume per person)
- C. Project Organizational Chart (limited to 1 page)
- D. Past Performance Information and Summary Chart with POC name, telephone number and email address (no limit)

Any pages that EXCEED 20 WILL NOT BE EVALUATED. Additional documentation not requested above will not be reviewed.

Required Certifications

Electronic copy of these certifications can be also found in the following link:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf> as of 5/18/2020

Past Performance Information

The Applicant must provide information on past performance in accordance with the format below. USAID may use performance information obtained from other than the sources identified by the Applicant/subrecipient. USAID may utilize existing databases of recipient performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided herein and contact the individual(s) indicated as well as others. 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.

Past Performance Information (PPI)

(To be completed by the applicant)

1. Award Number:
2. Contractor/Recipient (Name and Address):
3. Type of Award:
4. Complexity of Work: Difficult _____ Routine _____

<p>5. Description, location, and relevancy of work:</p>
<p>6. Dollar Value of Work : _____</p> <p>Status: Active _____</p> <p>Completed _____</p>
<p>7. Date of Award: _____</p> <p>Award Completion Date (including extensions): _____</p>
<p>8. Type and Extent of Subawards, if any:</p>
<p>9. POC Name, Telephone Number, and E-mail Address of the Awarding Contracting/Agreement Officer and/or the Contracting/Agreement Officer 's Representative (and other references as applicable):</p>

NOTE: USAID relies on the prime organization's review of partner/subrecipient institutions. However, if deemed necessary to ensure prudent use of USG funds, USAID may conduct its own past performance review of proposed partners/subrecipient institutions.

B. Cost Application

The Applicant must sign and submit the cost application standard form number SF-424 and SF-424A. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov

The proposed summary and detailed budget for the five-year activity should be submitted using the format as stated in the YP2 APS Budget Template Attachment B at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=325906>

The budget narrative should provide detailed information regarding the basis of estimate for each line item, including reference to sources used to substantiate the cost estimate (e.g. organization's policy, payroll document, and vendor quotes, etc.).

Individual sub-awards proposed as part of the cost application should include the same cost element break-downs in their budget as applicable

QUESTIONS ON YP2 APS

Questions regarding the substance and terms of the YP2 APS umbrella should be directed to YP2APS@usaid.gov and the subject line “Question - YP2 APS Umbrella”.

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: INFORMATION ON THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

I. REVIEW OF CONCEPT NOTES

Once a Concept Note has been submitted in response to the NYCSER Addendum, USAID will conduct an initial review of the Concept Note using the criteria outlined in the Merit Review Criteria and Considerations section below.

The purpose of the initial review and related communication is to determine whether USAID wishes to engage in further discussions regarding the proposed approach and activities. The initial review and communication will result in one of two outcomes:

- A decision to forego further consideration of the approach proposed in the Concept Note;
- An invitation to engage in more in-depth and specific co-creation discussions aimed at further developing the proposed approach and determining whether to request a Full Application.

II. Merit Review and Full Application Criteria and Considerations

Concept notes and subsequent full applications to the Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient addendum will be assessed according to the following merit review criteria on an adjectival system (Marginal, Satisfactory, Good, Excellent).

Criterion 1 - Quality of Partnership and Collaboration Approach for Youth Engagement and Capacity Building

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities describes a commitment to equitable collaboration and deep partnership with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, including marginalized groups as defined by the reference to ADS 201 Additional Help (ADS 201saj), at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation; proposes appropriate, inclusive, equitable, and effective capacity building strategies for youth-serving and youth-led organizational partners; and demonstrate partner commitment to proposed collaboration(s), including a brief synopsis of how each partner will engage within the partnership.

NOTE: If a Concept Note/Full Application does not demonstrate strong/significant engagement and collaboration with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, the Concept Note/Full Application will be deemed ineligible.

Criterion 2 - Technical Merit Including PYD Approach and Alignment with USAID Programming Priorities

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects or activities aligns with relevant USAID Strategies and Policies, particularly the Youth in Development Policy and reflects youth's cross-sectoral needs; demonstrates relevant technical expertise, including PYD programming; and proposes effective approach(es) to achieving objectives/outcomes that are technically sound, well-defined, and achievable.

Criterion 3 - Sustainability of Anticipated Outcomes and Impact

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities demonstrates contribution to sustainable outcomes beyond the lifetime of the award; demonstrates engagement with the private sector and leverages new or existing resources; and proposes an evidence-informed plan for analyzing, synthesizing, and disseminating data and findings that will inform ongoing and future programming and contribute to sustainable outcomes and impact.

Criterion 4 - Conflict and Crisis Sensitivity

Extent to which the concept note demonstrates a solid approach to identifying conflict and crisis sensitivity and risks among the target population in the selected geographical areas and the quality of proposed approaches to address them including accurate and adequate description of the conflict and crisis context; discussion of known conflict and crisis sensitivity risks and how they will be handled; description of conflict and crisis sensitivity capacity supporting this activity (staffing, consultants, networks, etc.).

Note: More comprehensive information regarding the application and review processes (including concept note submission, co-creation, full application, and merit review stages) can be found in the umbrella YP2 APS, located [here](#). Applicants are advised to refer to both the umbrella APS and this addendum in preparing concept notes and full applications, as applicable.

III. Additional Considerations

Applicants should ensure that their concept note is aligned with USAID strategies, policies, and priorities, such as the [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#), [USAID Education Policy](#), [USG International Basic Education Strategy](#), [USG Global Water Strategy](#), [Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance](#), [USAID Global Health Research and Development Strategy](#), [President's Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\) 3.0](#), [Children in Adversity](#), [USG Global Food Security Strategy](#), [USG Feed the Future Initiative](#), and [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#).

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F: INFORMATION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL AWARDS

I. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

The USAID Agreement Officer (AO) is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are prohibited from charging or incurring costs to the proposed award prior to receipt of either a fully executed award or a specific, written authorization from the AO. USAID will administer awards in accordance with Parts 700 and 200 of Title 2 of the CFR, and Standard Provisions for U.S./non-U.S. organizations.

II. TYPE OF AWARD

USAID/Nicaragua anticipates the award of a Cooperative Agreement under the YP2 APS. The type of award and terms and conditions included therein in the YP2 depends upon the type of recipient organization, programmatic factors, and other due-diligence matters (including responsibility determinations.)

III. AWARD DISCRETION

USAID reserves the right to make, or not to make, awards through this NYCSER Addendum to the YP2 APS. The actual number of assistance awards, if any, under this NYCSER Addendum is subject to the availability of funds, the interests and requirements of USAID, and the viability of Concept Notes/Applications received.

IV. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND AWARD ADMINISTRATION

- ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/201.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 204 Environmental Procedures:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/204.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 205 - Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for U.S. organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf>

- ADS Chapter 318 Intellectual Property Rights:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/318.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 579 USAID Development Data:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/579.pdf>
- Grant and Contract Process: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process>
- USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-branding Guide:
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1869/USAID_GSM_03_05_2019.pdf

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

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[END OF NYC SER Addendum to APS No: 7200AA20APS00007]