

**Department of State Consulate of the United States in Karachi, Pakistan
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

Program Office: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Consulate General Karachi

Funding Opportunity Title: Promoting a Culture of Inclusion and Research

Announcement Type: Grant

Funding Opportunity Number: SCAISB-21-AW-007-01262021

Deadline for Applications: March 29, 2021 (12:00 a.m. U.S. Eastern time)

CFDA Number: 19.501 - Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

CONTACT INFORMATION

1. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
2. For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact the Mission Pakistan Public Affairs Grants Management Team at PakistanGrants@state.gov.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All application materials must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Applications materials submitted via other means such as email will **not** be accepted.

Authorization to submit proposals through www.Grants.gov is a multi-step process that requires prior successful registration with four separate sites: [DUNS](#), [NCAGE](#), [SAM](#), and www.Grants.gov. **Please begin the registration process with each one immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the NOFO application deadline.** The entire registration process can require **up to six weeks** for the registration to be validated and confirmed. See *Section D: Submission Requirements* for further details.

Due to the volume of applicants and inquiries, Public Affairs Section (PAS) does not accept letters of intent, concept papers, or requests for meetings or phone calls prior to application.

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Executive Summary

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Consulate in Karachi is pleased to announce an open competition seeking proposals for a grant, contingent on funding, to establish a University Partnership Consortium between one or more accredited, four-year Historically Black College or University (HBCU) and University of Sindh and/or Shah Abdul Latif University. Accredited four-year HBCUs meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), PAS seeks proposals that will strengthen the research capacity and advance a culture of research at these Pakistani institutions, while promoting minority inclusion and establishing an international linkage for follow-on collaboration. Proposals should address how activities will impart greater understanding of contemporary research issues, improve research methods, and facilitate faculty development.

Proposals have a funding floor of \$30,000 and a funding ceiling of \$100,000 for a project of up to an 18-month duration.

Background

According to a needs assessment conducted by the U.S. Consulate in Karachi among universities in Sindh province, there is increasing demand to improve research capability in Pakistan's higher education sector. According to respondents, Pakistan's current research capabilities have held public sector universities back in terms of quality publishing and academic development. Among the most pressing needs of Pakistani universities is to overcome limited research capacity. According to 2015 data from the Pakistan Higher Education Commission (HEC), only 21 percent of full-time faculty at Pakistani universities held a PhD, while some universities did not have any professors who held doctoral qualifications.¹ Meanwhile, the research produced by academics and scholars has been under increased scrutiny. The push by public sector universities to increase their standings in international rankings by encouraging a proliferation of publishing has resulted in numerous cases of plagiarism, fabricated research, and the closing of more than 100 doctoral programs over quality concerns.²

While assistant, associate, and full-time professors must have earned a PhD, entry-level lecturers in most academic disciplines can teach with just a master's degree. Since higher education institutions rely heavily on non-tenured lecturers, the percentage of teaching staff with PhDs is consequently low. Similarly, Pakistan's public sector institutions are underfunded and under resourced. As of 2017, Pakistan spent only 2.9 percent of its GDP on education—far below the government's official target of 4 percent. Given Pakistan's economic situation that figure is unlikely to rise.

¹ <https://hec.gov.pk/english/universities/Pages/AJK/University-wise-Full-time-faculty.aspx>

² <https://propakistani.pk/2017/09/15/hec-shuts-110-phd-programs-due-lack-quality/>
<https://dailymtimes.com.pk/689642/university-reforms-in-pakistan/>

HBCUs are well-placed to inspire and serve as models for University of Sindh and Shah Abdul Latif University, two of the largest and most developed universities in one of Pakistan's most culturally diverse regions. Sindh province is home to large numbers of minority Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Sidi, and Hazara groups, and its universities, much like HBCUs in the United States, are called on to serve the needs of minority students. Similarly, HBCUs serve as models in terms of overcoming the historical challenge of being under-resourced while maintaining a legacy of producing successful professionals. In the United States, HBCUs play a critical role in equipping minority students to enter top graduate programs. HBCUs were the undergraduate home to 75 percent of all Black Ph.D.'s, 85 percent of all Black doctors, and the majority of Black professionals. HBCU faculty and researchers are increasingly attaining top rankings as research institutions despite institutional hurdles.³

About the Partnering Institutions:

University of Sindh is a non-profit public university located in Jamshoro, Sindh with seven branch campuses. University of Sindh confers pre-bachelor's degrees (i.e. certificates, diplomas, associate, or foundation), bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, doctorate degrees in arts, humanities, social science, business, and science and technology. The admission rate range is 20-30 percent, making this Pakistani higher education institution very selective. International students are welcome to apply for enrollment. University of Sindh also provides several academic and non-academic facilities and services to students including a library, housing, sports facilities, financial aid and/or scholarships, study abroad and exchange programs, online courses, and distance learning opportunities, as well as administrative services.

University of Sindh has expressed particular interest in research collaboration related to the following areas, though would also welcome proposals in other areas.

Information and Communication Technology
Media Sciences
English Language and Applied Linguistics
Biochemistry, Bio-technology and Food Sciences
Teacher Education and Training

Shah Abdul Latif University is a non-profit public higher-education institution located in Khairpur, Sindh. This institution also has a branch campus in Shikarpur. Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) is a large coeducational Pakistani higher education institution with more than 10,000 students. SALU offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees such as bachelor's degrees in arts, humanities, social science, business, and science and technology.

SALU has expressed particular interest in research collaboration related to the following areas, though would also welcome proposals in other areas.

³ <https://www.blackengineer.com/article/carnegie-classification-adds-two-more-hbcus-in-2018/>
<https://hbculifestyle.com/top-research-universities-hbcu/>

International Relations
Political Science
Economics
Archeology and Heritage
Mathematics

Review of Past Projects:

In August 2020, PAS established the Parallel Pandemic Project between George Mason University (GMU) and University of Karachi (KU). The project strengthened academic ties through virtual workshops, lectures, joint research, and articles on effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. KU and GMU hold regular virtual workshops contrasting how COVID-19 is being addressed in Pakistan and the United States. Each research team discussed topics such as COVID-19's effects on a host of issues such as food security, media, and education, and will publish joint research on outcomes for best practices and readouts for future pandemics.

Project Goal

This funding opportunity seeks to strengthen the research capacity of institutions in Pakistan (University of Sindh and/or Shah Abdul Latif University), develop stronger U.S. – Pakistan educational ties, and promote minority inclusion.

Audiences

The primary audience for this project will be 20-30 administrators and faculty at the selected public sector universities in Pakistan. Indirectly, more than 40,000 students will benefit from improved research capacity and publishing and improved inclusion of minorities.

Project Objectives

This program seeks to strengthen the research capacity of institutions in Pakistan and to enhance the academic, research, and knowledge exchange environment for faculty in Pakistani universities. The program will also promote understanding of American history and culture through exposure to the role of HBCUs in serving minority populations in the United States.

Program proposals may address, but are not limited to: the development and implementation of faculty and student exchange programs, collaborative research, academic collaboration, virtual teaching of research methods, exchange of resource materials and publications of mutual interest, and professional development for faculty, and curriculum development and/or revision.

Applicants are invited to discuss institutional goals that would be supported by these activities. Proposals should explain in detail how project activities will enable participants to achieve specific changes at the cooperating institutions. Proposals should outline well-reasoned strategies designed to meet specific objectives at each participating U.S. and foreign department or institution. In most cases, a proposal to pursue a limited number of related thematic objectives at each institution will be stronger and more coherent than a proposal addressing unrelated objectives. For example, proposals may outline new research specializations or methodologies; new or revised curricula;

and new programs for outreach to educators, professional groups, or the general public. Proposals should explain in substantial detail strategies to promote research development.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity does not support academic degree programs for faculty, staff, or students.

In addition to demonstrating how the applicant institution can assist its partner to meet institutional goals, proposals should also explain how this cooperation will enable the U.S. institution to address its own needs. Accordingly, applicants are encouraged to describe the needs and deficiencies as well as the capabilities and strengths of the U.S. department and institution, and how each institution will contribute to, and benefit from, the achievement of project objectives. Proposals must realistically assess institutional capacities and contain compelling objectives that address institutional needs and justify a request for support.

The means of achieving these objectives is purposefully broad to encourage the submission of innovative proposals tailored to the international education and research goals of both institutions. This NOFO does not support academic degree programs for faculty, staff, or students. The timeframe for achieving the objectives must be clearly outlined in the proposal funding request. The project implementation period should be eighteen months. All proposals should describe how the activities and materials developed could be replicated and used at other universities in Pakistan.

All proposals should:

- Address how the project will contribute to one or more of the objectives listed above;
- Enumerate specific outputs and outcomes to be achieved by the end of the grant period, using the Monitoring & Evaluation Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) [Attachment 3];
- Describe involvement of American participants, expert/s, organization/s, or institution/s;
- Clearly specify the audiences to be reached and the geographic locations of program activities. Programs proposed in multiple locations should explain how that will be accomplished. The grantee must demonstrate capacity to implement activities with proposed locations and audiences;
- Describe how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect or be sustainable beyond the life of the grant;
- Include a traditional and/or social media plan for marketing or advertising program activities and outcomes;
- Demonstrate competency to manage all financial and oversight aspects of the project, including participant costs and transparent arrangements of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.

The Public Affairs Section will not support the following activities or expenses under this funding opportunity:

- The purchase of space or buildings in support of program activities;
- Development projects;
- Construction projects;
- Individual travel to conferences;
- Scholarships to support educational opportunities or study for individuals*;
- Completion of activities begun with other funds;
- Fundraising or fund development projects;
- Projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to an individual or single party in electoral campaigns;
- Political party or lobbying activities in support of political parties;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Cash prizes for competitions.

*Individuals interested in educational exchange or study opportunities in the United States should visit the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan website at: <http://www.usefpakistan.org/> for more information on available programs.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Award, Amount

The award floor is \$30,000; the award ceiling is \$100,000.

The Public Affairs Section of U.S. Consulate General Karachi reserves the right to award less or more than the amount of funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as they may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

Duration of Award

The duration of the award will be up to 18 months starting from August 2021 to February 2023.

Project and Budget Periods

Projects generally must be completed within the specified duration. The Public Affairs Section will consider applications for continuation awards funded under these awards on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

Cost Sharing

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this funding opportunity.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is open to international non-profit organizations. Organizations may sub-award or sub-contract with other entities, but only one **non-profit organization** can be the prime recipient of the award. Pakistan government entities are not eligible to apply. **For-profit entities are not eligible to be the prime recipient of an award under this NOFO.** When sub-awarding or sub-contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal. The **applicants must submit proof of their non-profit status with their proposal submission** (e.g. proof of 501(c) (3) status, Pakistan NGO license). Applications that do not include proof of non-profit status will not be considered for an award. Individuals are not eligible for an award under this NOFO. U.S.-based or registered organizations should provide proof of registration to operate in Pakistan or have a documented agreement with a partner organization registered to operate in Pakistan. Please refer to Section D for funding restrictions.

Other Eligibility Requirements

There is [insert applicable number] project(s) described in this NOFO. Organizations may not submit more than one proposal per project. Any organization that submits more than one proposal per project will be considered ineligible for funding.

To be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. Applicants must also have a valid registration on www.SAM.gov, and a valid NCAGE code. Please see Section D for information on how to obtain these registrations.

Previous federal award recipients who are not/were not in compliance with the terms of their financial and program reporting requirements are ineligible to apply. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they comply with all applicable terms, conditions, and Office of Management and Budget guidance and requirements. Those organizations found to be in non-compliance may be found ineligible for funding or designated high risk if selected for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Technical Requirements

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Please ensure:

1. The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
2. All documents are in English.
3. All budgets are in U.S. dollars.
4. All pages are numbered.
5. All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper.

6. All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
7. All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

When submitting a proposal, applicants are required to include the following documents and information from Sections 1–4 below, as applicable:

Section 1—Organization Information

- A. Application Summary Coversheet:** Applicants must complete and submit the form provided (Attachment 1).

- B. Applicant Organizational Information Sheet:** Applicants must complete and submit the form provided (Attachment 2). An authorized signature by the applicant must be provided on this form.

- C. Proof of Registration:** A copy of the organization’s registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Pakistan-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

Section 2—Technical Proposal

Applicants must submit a complete narrative proposal in a format of your choice. The proposal shall not exceed twelve (12) pages. Refer to the evaluation criteria in Section E below for further detail about what makes a strong proposal. All proposals must address the following areas:

- Organizational Description and Capacity
- Project Justification, Sustainability, and Impact
- Project Goals, Objectives and Activities
- Implementation Timeline
- Security (see note below)
- Monitoring and Evaluation (see note below)

Security

The safety and security of all participants and activities under this project are the sole responsibility of the award recipient. Due to the security climate in Pakistan, we require all proposals to include

a security package to accompany appropriate programmatic elements within their proposal. The security package must include but is not limited to: secure transportation; lodging, and emergency accountability and evacuation for any non-Pakistani personnel living or working in Pakistan, as well as a copy of your organization's security operational procedures for high-risk environments. Reasonable costs for necessary security are allowable expenses and should be included in the proposed budget. If a security company is engaged and funded under the award, it must be registered by the Government of Pakistan to operate in Pakistan. We require award recipients to notify the Public Affairs Section in advance when U.S. citizens are traveling to Pakistan.

U.S. citizens who travel to Pakistan are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) available at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. Enrollment enables citizens to receive security-related messages from the Embassy and makes it easier for us to locate you in an emergency. The Embassy also recommends that all travelers review the State Department's travel website at travel.state.gov for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Pakistan Country Specific Information.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Proposals must include a draft Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The M&E PMP should show how applicants intend to measure and demonstrate progress towards the project's objectives and goals. Attachment 3 of this funding opportunity contains a template that may be used to fulfill this requirement. While the grantee is free to create their own template, completing Attachment 3 will ensure a thorough PMP.

The selected applicant(s) will be required to submit an approved M&E PMP before an award is signed. The selected applicant will be required to work with PAS Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to ensure the M&E PMP achieves an expected level of expertise and meets PAS objectives.

The key components to the PMP are as follows:

- 1. Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative:** In narrative form, applicants should describe how they intend to monitor and evaluate the activities of their award and collect data that tracks award performance. In addition, the applicant should describe any M&E processes, including key personnel, management structure (where M&E fits into the overall program's staff structure), technology, and as well provide a brief budget narrative explaining any line item expenditures for M&E listed in the program's budget. This narrative is limited to two pages.
- 2. Theory of Change Diagram:** Applicants will be expected to submit either a Theory of Change diagram or an If-Then Statement that illustrates how project activities will lead to intended outcomes. Attachment 3 includes a suggested format for these requirements.

- 3. Monitoring and Evaluation Datasheet:** The applicant must include their proposed activities and their expected outputs and outcomes as well as the goals and objectives as written in the NOFO. The datasheet's purpose is to explicitly illustrate how a project's activities lead to tangible results (such as increased beneficiary skills, knowledge, or attitudes) that ultimately address a PAS objective. For more information, please see Attachment 3.1: Instructions.

Section 3—Budget

A. Budget and Budget Detail: Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided with the funding opportunity (Attachment 4). Line item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Personnel salaries should include the level of effort and the rate of pay, which should cover the percentage of time each staff member will dedicate to grant-based activities. If your organization is charging an indirect cost rate, you must apply it to the modified total budget costs (MTDC), refer to 2CFR§200.68. Budgets that are not in the provided format will not be considered. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

B. Audit Requirements: Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions <https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm> and 2CFR200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization's established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

C. Visa Fees: Include all visa application and related fees in your budget as applicable. Please note DS-2019s for post-funded programs must be submitted directly by the award recipient. If you anticipate your program will include the DS-2019 visa processing, your organization must be a registered Designated Sponsoring Organization. For more information go to: <https://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/become-a-sponsor/>

Section 4—Key Personnel and Project Partners

A. Key Personnel: A résumé, not to exceed one page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and Finance Officer, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a résumé.

B. Project Partners: Letters of support should be included for sub-recipients or other partners. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.

Section 5—Standard Form 424 Family

All submissions must include the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (Attachment 5) and the SF-424A Budget Information—Non-Construction (Attachment 5). These forms and the instructions for completing them are available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html> under the heading “SF-424 Family.” The SF-424B is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov or recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019 and completed the online representations and certifications. An authorized signature by the applicant must be provided on this form.

Please note:

1. Other items NOT required/requested for submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved for funding include:
 - a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
 - b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
 - c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization’s capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
2. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

Application Deadline

Applications may be submitted for consideration at any time before the closing date of this opportunity; however, all submission must be received by March 29, 2021 (12:00 a.m. U.S. Eastern Daylight Time). For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, officials will utilize the timestamp provided by Grants.gov.

This deadline is firm. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above, their application will not be considered for funding and will be considered ineligible.

Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit all application materials electronically through Grants.gov.

Authorization to submit proposals through www.Grants.gov is a multi-step process that requires prior successful registration with four separate sites: [DUNS](#), [NCAGE](#), [SAM](#), and www.Grants.gov. Please begin the registration process with each one immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the NOFO application deadline. The entire registration process can require **up to six weeks** for the registration to be validated and confirmed. See *Section D: Submission Requirements* for further details.

Organizations must obtain the following:

- UEI (DUNS);
- NCAGE code;
- SAM registration,
- and AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) registration on www.Grants.gov.

Thorough instructions on the application process are available at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCA%20GE.pdf> for the DUNS number application, NCAGE number application, and registration with SAM and at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> for registration with www.grants.gov as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). For questions relating to [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), please call the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

Please note: Only www.grants.gov, DUNS, NCAGE, and SAM can assist with technical questions or problems applicants may experience during the registration process. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations listed in Section G of this NOFO and on the organization registration page of www.grants.gov.

Step 1:

Apply for an UEI (DUNS) and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously):

Step 1a:

UEI (DUNS) application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting

<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=81407B1F03F2BDB123DD47D19158B75F>.

<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

Step 1b:

NCAGE application: Application page here (but need to click magnifying glass and then scroll down to click new registration)

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCA%20GE.pdf>

For help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code. After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov/>

Step 2:

Once DUNS and NCAGE are obtained, continue to SAM registration. www.SAM.gov

Step 3:

Once SAM registration is confirmed, continue to Grants.gov organization registration <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> organizations must maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

Special Characters in Submissions

Grants.gov does not accept all UTF-8 special characters in file attachment names. Applicants are able to enter all special characters from the UTF-8 character set when submitting applications and information to Grants.gov. However, if the grantor's system is not yet compatible with these special characters, the grantor system may produce garbled or missing text in the application. As a result, the application may be rejected.

Review the application instructions provided by the award-making agency for their attachment restrictions. You should also review the instructions on the form you are completing.

If there are no special restrictions for file names identified by the agency or in the form, then the file name restrictions are as follows:

- Please limit file names to 50 or fewer characters
- Do not attach any documents with the same name. All attachments should have a unique name.
- Please use only the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Attachments that do not follow this rule may cause the entire application to be rejected or cause issues during processing.

Risk Analysis Management

To qualify for final consideration, certain applicants must undertake the Risk Analysis Management (RAM) vetting process by providing Risk Analysis Information (RAI) about their “key individuals” (i.e., individuals with the ability to control applicant organizations’ funds), including “key individuals” from selected sub-recipients. **Please note: these individuals could be different from the key personnel listed in the section 4 of required documents.** The purpose of vetting potential contractors and grantees is to reduce the risk that foreign assistance funding is provided to terrorists or their supporters. **Potential grantees will be notified separately if RAI is required.** Applicants submit key individuals’ RAI by completing the Risk Analysis Information Form, DS-4184, through the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>. The DS-4184 requests the following RAI for each key individual: Full Name; Aliases; Gender; Birth Place; Birthdate; Home/Work Addresses; Phone Numbers; Employer; Professional Title; Email Addresses; Skype ID (if included, email address is also required); Numbers from All Official IDs (e.g., passports, ID cards, etc.); Nationalities; and Social Security Number (if U.S. person). Questions about the DS-4184 form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting your proposal.

Given the volume of applications, review may take up to 90 days, and we are unable to individually confirm receipt of proposals.

Address to Request Application Package

This funding opportunity and any amendments can be found at www.Grants.gov (search by Opportunity Number). If you require special accommodation to access any information contained in this announcement, please contact Pakistan Grants Management Team at email: PakistanGrants@state.gov.

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Each technically eligible application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria detailed below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, 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. Applications will be reviewed based on their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail.

Past performance on grants awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other United States government, or international donor agencies may also be considered. The proposal submitted by your organization should comply with the requirements of 2 CFR 200 relevant to your organization and the activities of your proposal.

PAS reviews all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of Federal and Public Diplomacy regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Department’s Grants Division A/OPE.

All submissions are screened for technical eligibility. If a submission is missing any required forms/documents listed in section D, it will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the grants review committee.

Proposals will be approved based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, the priority needs of the Public Affairs Section, and availability of funding. A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all technically eligible proposals.

Review criteria will include:

1. Project Justification, Sustainability, and Impact on U.S. Public Diplomacy Goals (30 points) – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in furthering the broader U.S. Public Diplomacy policy goals. The proposal contains a compelling justification that demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the environment in Pakistan and cites specific factors creating/influencing the need for the proposed project. The proposal has a sound theory of change to address the stated need. Elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect may include but is not limited to, plans to build lasting networks for direct and indirect beneficiaries, follow-on training and mentoring, and continued use of project deliverables. Sustainability may include demonstrating capacity-building results, a plan to generate revenue, or interest and support from the private sector.

2. Planning and Feasibility (25 points) – The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.

3. Organization's Record and Capacity (15 points) – The organization has expertise in the subject area and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations. Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate.

4. Cost-Effectiveness (20 points) – The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation (10 points) – Points for M&E will be awarded by considering three subset criteria within the narrative: (1) Technical M&E; (2) Program Design; and (3) Learning. Specifically, scoring will be based on the following:

Technical M&E: A submission will be considered technically sound if there is a complete and thorough draft submission of a M&E Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). This will include a list of proposed project activities, intended corresponding outputs and outcomes from those activities, appropriate indicators intended to demonstrate progress, a description of data collection methods, and a timeline for collecting such information. Use of the suggested template (Attachments 3 & 3.1) will satisfy these requirements. Funded projects will have their plans finalized during the negotiation phase, and monitoring plans may be subject to periodic updates throughout the life of the project.

Program Design: A submission will be considered well designed if the proposal identifies an appropriate target audience, addresses a significant problem, and presents a clear theory of change on how the program will address that problem. Whether through a logical framework, theory of change diagram, or a set of if-then statements, the proposal should state in some form “*If* these activities are completed, *then* these outcomes will result”. Further, if the project requires selecting participants, or beneficiaries, the proposal should articulate how the selection will be done in an equitable way.

Learning: A submission will satisfy the learning component by demonstrating an ability to adjust project activities based on new information. Does the design incorporate community or participant feedback to allow for adjustments? If the proposal is from a prior grantee, does the proposal discuss how the grantee has adapted, improved or otherwise modified their approach based on learning from previous experience/past performance? If this is a new grantee or new project, has the proposal demonstrated that the applicant used desk research, prior experience, or other evidence to directly inform program design?

Expenses directly associated with monitoring and evaluation are considered allowable. The suggested template includes a space to list the portion of the total budget amount directly associated with monitoring and evaluation activities.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices

The successful applicant will be notified via email that its proposal has been selected to move forward in the review process; this email IS NOT an authorization to begin performance. The Notice of Federal Award, signed by the grants officer (or equivalent), is the authorizing document. It shall 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 assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through email transmission. The recipient may only incur obligations against the award beginning on the start date outlined in the DS-1909 award document that has been signed by the Grants Officer. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all

proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award above the award ceiling.

Terms and Conditions

Recipients will be held to the applicable terms and conditions found at <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>. It is the Recipient's responsibility to ensure they comply with all applicable terms, conditions, and OMB guidance and requirements. Those organizations found to be in non-compliance may be found ineligible for funding or designated high risk.

2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

All applicants must adhere to the regulations found in [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

Branding Requirements

As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. **Note:** Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Evaluation

In line with the Department of State's Evaluation Policy, U.S. Embassy Islamabad's Public Affairs Section may include this award in its program evaluation efforts. When applicable and feasible, the Recipient shall cooperate with the Grants Officer (GO), Grants Officer Representative (GOR), and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist's requests to contribute data on specific performance measures and indicators; consider GO and GOR input on design and methodology of Recipient-led evaluation efforts; provide any evaluation reports produced under the award to the GO and GOR for review; incorporate the project into any third-party evaluations that PAS may initiate.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients are required to submit quarterly (calendar year) program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

First Quarter (January 1 – March 31): Report due by April 30

Second Quarter (April 1 – June 30): Report due by July 30

Third Quarter (July 1 – September 30): Report due by October 30

Fourth Quarter (October 1 – December 31): Report due by January 30

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

Awardees that are deemed to be high-risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high-risk designation has been removed.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government-provided equipment using the SF428 form.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions regarding the administrative and programmatic aspects of this funding opportunity may be directed to the Mission Pakistan Public Affairs Grants Management Team at PakistanGrants@state.gov. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Disclaimers

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

If a proposal is funded, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.

This NOFO is subject to funds availability. Awards may be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the United States Embassy in Islamabad by Department of State central budget authorities.

Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.