

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.500

**Tomorrow's Leaders Undergraduate and Graduate Recruitment
(TLR) Program**

Opportunity Number: SFOP0008464

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	December 3, 2021
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	January 7, 2022
Application Deadline:	February 4, 2022
Expected Date of Notification:	March 11, 2022
Federal Agency Contact:	NEA-Grants@state.gov

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the recruitment of prospective students for the Tomorrow's Leaders Undergraduate (TLU) and Tomorrow's Leaders Graduate (TLG) program. The Tomorrow's Leaders (TL) program is a leadership development program that provides scholarships for students from countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to attend American, nonprofit, independent higher education institutions based in the MENA region, and accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized regional accreditation body.

TL is an innovative leadership training opportunity that aims to build a cadre of professional leaders who are civic-minded, intellectually capable, and professionally skilled to become the community, business, and civic leaders of the future. This project fulfills Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) strategic framework objectives to: a) provide socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals with opportunities to build the leadership skills necessary to effectively engage with civil society, the private sector, and/or government actors; and b) increase workforce employability and improve access to higher-value opportunities through demand-driven professional training and targeted and localized job placement, primarily in the private sector. This project contributes to Bureau Goal 3 in the Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa by promoting inclusive economic growth and socioeconomic development.

All applications must be submitted in English. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal and should refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in Section VIII while drafting all materials.

Eligible Countries and Territories

Eligible applicants include U.S.-based nonprofits or foreign-based nongovernmental organizations with experience in the MENA region. This does not include institutions of higher education.

Successful applicants will use innovative and cost-effective approaches to meet the needs and opportunities of students in the MENA region. Program participants are expected to come from countries throughout the MENA region.

Background Information about NEA/AC

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Federal assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the MENA region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists, and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

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APPENDICES *(Posted with NOFO)*

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APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

APPENDIX 4— LOE Table Template

APPENDIX 5—Results Monitoring Plan (RMP)

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

NEA/AC announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Tomorrow's Leaders Recruitment (TLR) project, part of the TL program, a leadership development program that provides scholarships to qualified, diverse, underserved students from MENA countries to attend American, nonprofit, independent higher education institutions based in the MENA region and accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized regional accreditation body.

The TL program provides scholarships for students at the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Lebanese American University (LAU), the American University in Cairo (AUC), and any additional qualifying American universities that NEA/AC may add to the program. The primary objective of the TL program is to build a cadre of leaders who are civic-minded, intellectually capable, and professionally skilled, to become the community, business, and civic leaders of the future. The program intends to nurture leadership skills and the spirit of civic engagement and volunteerism among participating university-aged students at U.S.-accredited institutions. Eligible students include candidates who represent the region's cultural, religious, and geographic diversity. They should come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and be able to gain admission to a U.S.-accredited university in the MENA region, but unable to afford the cost.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Demographic projections reveal that the MENA region's youth population (up to 24 years old) will surge by about 10 million between 2015 and 2030. This expansion in the youth population will create increased demand for educational services at all levels and will place pressure on existing educational institutions to advance the potential of the region. MENA youth are also set to face growing challenges accessing employment. Starting in 2018, MEPI began to transform the TL program to develop the skills of the region's growing youth population and to better align with MEPI's evidence-based and results-oriented approach to prepare participants for future changes.

Progressively raising education rates in the region across a diverse cross-section of the MENA population can positively contribute to medium-term stability. Expanding opportunities for underrepresented or economically disadvantaged students to continue development in their fields, including expanding education and obtaining substantial advanced practical experience, will further students' capacity to be community, business, and civic leaders and successfully compete at a regional level. Generally, higher education increases job opportunities with higher salaries, offers intellectual stimulation, increases potential contributions to society, and provides the skills and ability to pursue a meaningful career in a competitive global market.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

Recruitment is an important part of the TL program. The selected implementer coordinates and handles all of the recruitment and nomination of student candidates in their individual countries, drawing on their knowledge of and experience with youth.

The TL program advances U.S. foreign policy goals including using foreign assistance to engage underserved communities across the region to contribute to building more diverse, equitable, and inclusive societies and to help people throughout the Middle East to realize their aspirations. The program aims to create a cadre of professionals who work collaboratively across differences in gender, ethnicity, religion, political views, and socioeconomic status. The program provides socioeconomically underserved students from the MENA region with opportunities to build leadership skills and effectively engage with civil society, the private sector, and/or government actors; the program should maintain a gender balanced cohort. Although financial need is the major factor in determining economically disadvantaged applicants, the applicant should look at additional factors such as: gender, minority status, the specific location of participants as well as the size of their communities, , and whether they have a disability as part of this equation. The outreach for the program should focus on promoting the program in rural areas (less than 5,000 inhabitants) and reaching underprivileged communities and individuals who seek economic empowerment and sociopolitical inclusion. Therefore identifying, tracking, and reporting these variables is important to ensure that our programs successfully reach out to underprivileged communities and individuals and help advance their economic empowerment and sociopolitical inclusion.

Undergraduate and Graduate Recruitment (in support of the TL Undergraduate and Graduate program): Recruit diverse, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and academically qualified students from MENA countries who possess the qualities necessary to become part of a cadre of civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled young leaders. Ensure that the students possess leadership potential and the spirit of civic engagement, volunteerism, and tolerance.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

The successful applicant for this NOFO should demonstrate the capacity to manage recruitment of students from participating countries across the MENA region. Recruitment includes publicizing scholarship opportunities via the internet, social media, and other relevant electronic media, in close coordination with NEA/AC and U.S. Embassies. The applicant will serve as the liaison with university partners to ensure application materials meet university standards and establish a mechanism for submission and review of program applications. The applicant will also develop recruitment guidelines, timelines, and benchmarks, as well as support registration and preparation for all standardized tests required for admissions.

Socioeconomic Status (SES): The applicant should propose a methodology to collect and analyze SES data in a timely fashion to serve three purposes: a) help MEPI make better decisions regarding selection of future awardees; b) develop a better understanding of the population that MEPI projects reach; and, c) share the diverse personal qualities of individual applicants. The SES measure should include key components to assess students' social, cultural, and economic capital. To provide a consistent, standardized measurement and collection approach to SES groups across different countries, the following elements should be included in the data collection process:

- Education
- Income
- Occupation (Occupation should be measured at a minimum by a set of two standardized questions: one question to collect occupation and one question to collect industry)
- Family size and relationships
- Social and cultural contexts

In addition, the SES measure should include an integrative qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection and analysis.

Data Capture and Visualization: Having timely access to basic information on demographics, socioeconomic status, and academic qualifications about potential applicants is key to the successful running of the TL program. The applicant must demonstrate how data capture and visualization will be managed in a centralized manner to enable NEA/AC to carry out evidence-based decision-making. This process should include survey development, data quality control, analysis, and dashboard development utilizing cutting edge technology that is cost effective. The data visualization should also include infographics. Solutions should be configured at least every six months to allow stakeholders to quickly adapt programming; as the program progresses, the applicant should be able to provide real-time information on application status so that NEA/AC can adapt programming activities. In addition, the applicant should demonstrate how the information system will include the following centralized components:

- A calendar where NEA/AC, Embassies, and other stakeholders can access details of all outreach and recruitment activities in each country, including scheduled dates and actual completion dates
- Interview panel dates for each country
- Dates for providing applications to posts and other partners
- Dates of any in-person outreach events, and other activities

At a minimum, the applicant will be required to conduct data analysis at the end of year one, if not earlier, as determined by NEA/AC, to review whether the program is meeting objectives (including socioeconomic status, geographic distribution, etc.), and make recommendations for recruitment modifications in future years. The successful applicant will also be required to respond satisfactorily to data calls from NEA/AC. The applicant should respond quickly and comprehensively to data, information, and analysis requests made by NEA/AC. It is anticipated that data calls would be requested at least monthly. Examples of data calls include requests for statistics on number of past applicants in a certain category, status of students, etc.

Content Design: The applicant should submit a marketing communication plan that is research-informed and utilizes cutting-edge tools that can be scaled across a variety of uses and deliverables. This plan should outline strategies on how key components of the program will be advertised to reach the targeted audience and how messaging will be aligned to each stakeholder. In addition, the applicant should develop promotional materials, utilizing high-definition audio and images and ensure the materials are available in English, Arabic, and French. The proposal should propose a method on how NEA/AC, Embassies, and other stakeholders will review and provide feedback/approval as needed. The marketing communication plan should be centralized and include creative direction, graphic design, brand design, web design and development,

motion graphics, and video editing. A sample of the marketing communication plan and promotional materials should be included as an attachment to the proposal.

It is strongly recommended the applicant partners with companies that specialize in data collection, visualization, and content creation.

Application System: The applicant must develop a web-based program application for prospective participants to apply to the scholarship. It is preferred for the application to also be available via a mobile application. The application information must then be easily accessed by NEA/AC, U.S. Embassy staff, university partners, and other approved stakeholders who wish to review student applications online.

The applicant must ensure student applications including related document uploads (except for Tawjihi scores) are complete by the time of the applicant's deadline for sharing applications with the universities. TOEFL, IELTS, and SAT scores will be uploaded as they become available. The online application should track socioeconomic and refugee status. The applicant is expected to review the application and provide recommendations for improvement on a yearly basis. It is also preferred that the applicant develops surveys to assess the usability of the application and analyzes the data in order to suggest improvements. In addition, the applicant should develop interview questions and a scoring rubric, to be updated annually.

Interview Process: NEA/AC will specify minimum recruitment and acceptance quotas for each participating country annually. The successful applicant must recruit at least four times as many qualified applicants as the number of scholarships and interview at least two applicants for each scholarship spot. Recruited participants should include a diverse gender-balanced cohort of socioeconomically disadvantaged students from across the MENA region; at least 50% of qualified applicants must be women. U.S. Embassy staff will participate in the interviews arranged by the successful applicant. Final selections of nominations are subject to NEA/AC and U.S. Embassy approval. Interviews should be recorded and made available via a secure online portal so that NEA/AC and university partners can view the interviews.

Pre-departure Orientation (PDO): The applicant will coordinate with NEA/AC and with the MENA universities to ensure students are adequately prepared before departure. The applicant should develop PDO activities virtually and/or in-person to ensure students receive information regarding packing lists, international travel, health insurance, transiting to college, culture shock, and a general overview of what to expect. The applicant will coordinate with the MENA universities on an on-going basis to review pre-departure information to ensure students are receiving necessary pre-departure information.

Medical Health Clearance Form: The applicant will coordinate with NEA/AC and MENA universities the establishment of a HIPAA-compatible process to certify medical and mental fitness for selected students. The proposal should include a process, timeline, and forms to NEA/AC based on industry standards and best practices and current knowledge of international students traveling in MENA-based universities.

Additional Student Support: The applicant might be required to arrange and pay for travel from home to the universities for students in conflict countries (Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and West Bank and Gaza). Travel for students from non-conflict countries will be arranged and paid by the universities.

Applicant must propose in detail how testing fees and other costs associated with applying to and traveling to the scholarship program will be handled given the students' socioeconomic status.

A successful project will result in the following:

Undergraduate Recruitment

1. Developing specific plans to recruit qualified candidates through a range of recruitment methods, including in-person events where possible, publication of information in press outlets, and online websites and social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, SMS, *etc.*, and other relevant online forms that must be attached to the application and include—
 - a. Written guidelines manual for the recruitment/selection process to NEA/AC for approval, which will be maintained/updated on an ongoing basis in consultation with NEA/AC and partner universities.
 - b. Country-by-country on-line recruitment plan to include recruitment of participants from other DOS English programs (ex: Access English, YES program, etc.) for NEA/AC and U.S. Embassies' approval.
 - c. Rubrics/guidelines for assessing socioeconomic status in each country.
 - d. Plan to demonstrate how refugees, individuals displaced by conflict, and others from conflict countries will be recruited and supported throughout the recruitment/selection process.
 - e. Plan for addressing gender parity in recruiting.
2. Coordinating with TLU implementing universities in selection of socioeconomically disadvantaged and geographically diverse student applicants who can succeed in completing undergraduate level degrees from American, nonprofit, higher education institutions based in the MENA region and accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized regional accreditation body.
3. Organizing kick-off call with TL university partners, participating embassies, and NEA/AC (to discuss best practices and lessons learned, review timeline, and collect information on the university's eligibility requirements).
4. Selecting participants and alternates willing and able to successfully complete their programs of study, including the ability to benefit from the following:
 - a. Receive professional mentoring.
 - b. Complete internships with civil society organizations, research institutes, businesses, and/or nongovernmental organizations.
 - c. Increase their understanding of how to be effective civic and/or business leaders.
 - d. Develop soft skills to compete in the workforce.
 - e. Complete a U.S.-based study abroad semester.
 - f. Develop awareness of gender issues in the MENA region and work to improve inclusive civic engagement with the goals of amplifying female voices,

encouraging female participation in political and economic life, and encourage women's participation in the workforce.

- g. After graduation, become members of the Department of State alumni community and the MEPI Alumni Connection in particular, which provides access to mentoring, networking, activities, and the MEPI Alumni Venture Fund.
5. Promoting the Tomorrow's Leaders Undergraduate program and the opportunity it presents for prospective undergraduate students online, as described above. This includes full support for prospective applicants who may reach out to ask questions.
6. Supporting prospective applicants with information about possible programs of study and minimum admissions requirements of the TLU implementing universities, including academic performance and credentials evaluations, standardized tests, minimum English language proficiency, how to complete required applications, *etc.*
7. Providing funds for costs of application fees, standardized exams, and other expenses affiliated with successful university applications.
8. Proposing and implementing a methodology to collect and analyze socioeconomic status.
9. Coordinating with TLU implementing universities to understand their programs of study and support admissions criteria.
10. Collecting and organizing information, official transcripts, and test scores from applicants to develop preliminary lists of scholarship recipients and waitlisted recipients. The information will also meet the needs of TLU implementing universities.
11. Conducting online interviews to include recording and saving video of the interview.
12. Facilitate counterterrorist vetting of all selected interviewees in compliance with Executive Order 13224.
13. Transmitting information about finalists and alternates (applications, supporting documentation, panelist evaluations and recorded interviews) to the universities to review and to make admissions decisions.
14. Following up with applicants to encourage quick responses to the universities and notify applicants who were not selected.
15. Developing a college preparatory and leadership workshop, as well as pre-departure orientation for all selected students.
16. Enrolling students in supplemental English language classes and providing clear instruction plans on the design of this deliverable.
17. Starting student recruitment in 2022 to enable students to be enrolled in 2023.

Graduate Recruitment

1. Developing specific plans to recruit qualified candidates through a range of recruitment methods, including in-person events where possible, publication of information in press outlets, and online websites and social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, SMS, *etc.*, and other relevant online forums that must be attached to the application and include—
 - a. Written guidelines manual for the recruitment/selection process to NEA/AC for approval, which will be maintained/updated on an ongoing basis in consultation with NEA/AC and partner universities.
 - b. Country-by-country on-line recruitment plan, for NEA/AC and U.S. Embassies approval.

- c. Rubrics/guidelines for assessing socioeconomic status in each country.
 - d. Plan to demonstrate how refugees, individuals displaced by conflict, and others from conflict countries will be recruited and supported throughout the recruitment/selection process.
 - e. Plan for addressing gender parity in recruiting.
2. Coordinating with TLG implementing universities in selection of socioeconomically disadvantaged and geographically diverse student applicants who can succeed in completing graduate-level degrees from American, nonprofit, higher education institutions based in the MENA region and accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized regional accreditation body.
3. Selecting participants and alternates willing and able to successfully complete their programs of study, including the ability to benefit from the following:
 - a. Receive professional mentoring.
 - b. Complete internships with civil society organizations, research institutes, businesses, and/or nongovernmental organizations.
 - c. Increase their understanding of how to be effective civic and/or business leaders.
 - d. Develop soft skills to compete in the workforce.
 - e. Develop awareness of gender issues in the MENA region and work to improve inclusive civic engagement with the goals of amplifying female voices, encouraging female participation in political and economic life, and encourage women's participation in the workforce.
 - f. After graduation, become engaged citizens of their country who participate and lead civic engagement and social entrepreneurial activities.
4. Supporting prospective applicants with information about possible programs of study and minimum admissions requirements of the TLG implementing universities, including academic performance and credentials evaluations, standardized tests, minimum English language proficiency, how to complete required applications, *etc.*
5. Providing funds for costs of application fees, standardized exams, and other expenses affiliated with successful university applications.
6. Proposing and implementing a methodology to collect and analyze socioeconomic status.
7. Coordinating with TLG implementing universities to understand their programs of study and support admissions criteria.
8. Collecting and organizing information, official transcripts, and test scores from applicants to develop preliminary lists of scholarship recipients and waitlisted recipients. The information will also meet the needs of TLG implementing universities.
9. Conducting online interviews to include recording and saving video of the interview.
10. Facilitating anti-terrorist vetting of all selected interviewees in compliance with Executive Order 13224.
11. Transmitting information about finalists and alternates (applications, supporting documentation, panelist evaluations and recorded interviews) to the universities to review and to make admissions decisions.
12. Following up with applicants to encourage quick responses to the universities and notify applicants who were not selected.
13. Conducting pre-departure orientations for participants to review the program goals and expectations.
14. Assist students in making airline ticket and visa arrangements as needed.

Note: Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal and should refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in [Section VIII](#) while drafting all materials.

Stocktaking and Management Meetings

Annual Stocktaking Sessions and Management Meeting: MEPI plans to host annual stocktaking sessions and management meetings with TL implementing institutions, as well as implementing organizations for study abroad and recruitment. Stocktaking sessions will include staff and leadership. Applicants should budget annually for up to five (5) participants to attend this in-person event for three days.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as standalone conferences and one-off round tables except as otherwise included in the requirements;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, *etc.*; and
- Entertainment costs (*e.g.*, receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours, *etc.*).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

D. GENDER INTEGRATION

NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address gender considerations, ensuring that both men and women benefit from support where applicable, and that gender awareness is a built-in component of project activities. This should be documented through gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the project's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programming should view the training video located here:

https://encompassworld.com/elearningfiles/DOS/DOS_Gender_Integration_E-Course/story_html5.html.

E. DEFINITIONS

N/A

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

The proposal should articulate a clear, measurable, relevant, and realistic set of objectives that the project aims to achieve over the lifetime of the award to objectively assess project success. Project objectives should be distinct from the application's proposed activities.

The application should also include an informed analysis of the specific problem the proposed project seeks to address, propose a strong idea to address the issues identified, and appraise the potential results that the project seeks to achieve. Applicants may provide a logic model or theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve or contribute to the stated objectives and explain the longer-term impact that is anticipated beyond the period of performance. A logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II. Please note these documents are *optional*. Please see Section VI below for more information.

Applicants are required to include a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) in their application. The purpose of the Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) is to describe how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives of the proposed project. The RMP may also include project-specific sub-objectives (i.e. project outcomes). Please see Appendix 5 for the RMP template.

The RMP will be judged based on the following elements:

- *Well-defined objectives*: Do the objectives provide a clear statement of what the project specifically plans to achieve? Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic (achievable), and time-bound. Objectives should be project specific and contribute towards the overall goals of the Tomorrow's Leaders Program and MEPI.
- *Well-defined qualitative and quantitative indicators*: Indicators should objectively measure project progress towards achieving the application's proposed objectives. To this end, applicants may include both output and outcome indicators. Indicators should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). Indicators must all contribute towards an objective measurement of progress towards achieving project objectives. Applicants should not include indicators that simply track progress towards project milestones, deliverables, or activities.
- *Data collection and analysis*: How (and how often) will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to show progress toward the project objectives? Data collection methods should be detailed and realistic.
- *Monitoring and reporting*: How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt to changes on the ground and maintain progress? Do you plan to conduct or manage any internal or external evaluations?

Applicants should consider including one or more of the following example objectives, depending on the proposed project:

- Undergraduate Recruitment (in support of the Tomorrow's Leaders Undergraduate program): Recruit diverse, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and academically qualified

high school students from Middle Eastern and North African countries who possess the qualities to become a cadre of civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled university students. Ensure that the students possess leadership potential and the spirit of civic engagement, volunteerism, and tolerance.

- Graduate Recruitment (in support of the Tomorrow's Leaders Graduate program): Recruit diverse, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and geographically varied students who demonstrate academic merits; leadership potential; civic engagement, volunteerism, and tolerance.

The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See Part VIII for more information). More information about preparing the RMP can be found in Appendix 5.

As part of the negotiation process, successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) teams to finalize their RMP (including adding standard indicators) based on their proposal in order to ensure the RMP meets the above-mentioned standards. The successful applicant(s) will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators listed in the RMP, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes. At the minimum, successful applicants will be required to submit quarterly reports against the RMP.

In addition to quarterly reports, all projects funded as a result of this NOFO will be required to complete a mid-term and final evaluation. The mid-term and final evaluation assess the period of performance to date for the project. Both the mid-term and final evaluations will have the technical support from the NEA/AC M&E team.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$5,000,000
Estimated Base Year Award Ceiling	\$1,000,000
Estimated Base Year Award Floor:	\$500,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged; NOT Required
Estimated Length of Project Period:	5 Years

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately 5,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately one (1) award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to one year depending on the activities and countries proposed. The estimated start date for this project is April 2022. NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

Non-Competing Continuation

Continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; grantee's progress in meeting grant requirements, including timely submission of required reports and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award; timely submission of a request for additional funding; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

Pending successful implementation of this project for the initial estimated length of time as indicated above and pending the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, NEA/AC may extend this grant for additional time, not to exceed a five (5) year total project period. Please note that this NOFO requires that applicants submit additional budget materials to plan for potential out-years of non-competing continuations. See Section VI Application and Submission Information for more details.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in assessing progress and identifying issues that might affect the success of the program;
- Collaboration in determining selection criteria for beneficiaries;
- Collaboration in determining corrective actions, when necessary;
- Approval of key personnel and any subsequent changes in the positions during the life of the award;
- Collaboration in the creation of any promotional content and training materials;

- Ensuring consistency in key personnel qualifications and job descriptions across all implementing partners and approving universities' selection criteria;
- Approval of annual program eligibility requirements;
- Approval over student selections; and
- Approval of security, risk mitigation, & contingency plans.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include—

- U.S. or foreign
 - Nonprofit organizations;
 - For-profit organizations;
 - Public international organizations; and
 - Small businesses with function and regional experience in MENA.

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Part B* below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Part C, Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

A.2. Local Partners

A partnership is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations or individuals that defines substantive, collaborative roles for each of the partners in planning and implementing a project. IF proposing partners, applicants must provide the following in their submission:

- Describe how the partner(s) will contribute to the objectives of the project;
- Detail how the partner(s) has been involved in the project design at the proposal stage;
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, project evaluation, and project sustainability relative to the lead applicant's;
- Provide a description of the organization (including a link to its website) as well as specific examples of its experience working in the proposed content area(s);
- Explain how the applicant organization will provide programmatic oversight and support to the partner(s); and

- Provide a letter of intent or letter of agreement from the prospective partner(s) detailing how they will collaborate with the applicant organization on the proposed project.

In addition, applicants who propose working with sub-grant(s), must describe in both the program and budget narratives how the sub-grant(s) will be managed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure compliance with project objectives and Federal regulations.

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the United States, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

UEI Number

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

- Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.
- Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located.
- Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC) (https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic_manual.html), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. Government-wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

Further, each applicant must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding. To keep an active SAM.gov account, an applicant must renew it at least once each year. **If an organization's account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

- Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

- Log In to complete authentication and create an account. On the My SAM page, select *Entity Registrations* from the sub-navigation menu and select *Register New Entity*.

Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (U.S. Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM Quick Start Guide for Grant Registration: (https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **12 - 15 business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 866-606-8220 (U.S.) or +1-334-206-7828 (international).

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Cost-Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is not an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may submit only one application. Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b)

Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding. The SF-424B is only required for those applicants who a) have not registered in SAM.gov or b) have not recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 20, 2020.

If an organization has an active registration in SAM.gov that was either created or updated **on or after 2/20/2020**, then the applicant does **NOT** need to submit the SF-424B because their registration or recertification will have included the necessary information.

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3. NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlined below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Application Evaluation Criteria section of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.

Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 25 pages**. The following should be included in the narrative:

- a) Description of how students will be recruited.
- b) Table of contents and calendar for student outreach, proposed online presentations, and group advising sessions. Proposed activities should include a brief description.
- c) Plan for an annual student satisfaction survey.
- d) A plan to increase communication and coordination with TL implementing universities and other partners. This plan should include an annual staking session and management meeting in a TBD MENA location.
- e) Plan for addressing gender parity in recruiting.
- f) Country by country recruitment plan (may be an attachment that does not count toward the page limit). Rubrics/guidelines for assessing socioeconomic status in each country (to be included as attachments that do not count against the page limit)

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission:

Applicants must provide the following four elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- LOE Table
- Budget Narrative

A detailed budget for 12 months is required as well as a notional budget for four additional out (option) years, with each option period being one year. Each of the three option periods should be their own detailed tab within the budget.

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, "...key professional and supervisory personnel; *i.e.*, the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award." The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above.

NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Results Monitoring Plan

A Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of Co proposed project. Please see the "II. Measurement of Results" above for further guidance. The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated. More information about preparing this RMP can be found in Appendix 5. NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample (Appendix 5). If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The RMP should be submitted as a separate document and has no page limit.

Project Timeline

Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model/Theory of Change. This section **may not exceed 2 pages**.

Job Descriptions/Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions

For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.
- OR**
2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

NEA/AC intends to designate the following positions as key personnel:

- Full-time program manager
- Data and analysis manager
- Communication and marketing manager
- Project coordinator
- Program coordinator in each participating country, if applicable

NOTE: If an applicant is proposing sub-grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub-grantee must also be included**. This section of the application **may not exceed 5 pages**.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than a 10% de minimis rate must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10-page limit for this section of the application. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

1. **Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent**: Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.

2. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
3. **Sustainability Plan:** The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in **Appendix 3**. Sustainability Plans may not exceed **2 pages**.
4. **Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary:** This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks, and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. This section **may not exceed 5 pages**.
5. **Logic Model/Theory of Change:** A logic model or theory of change demonstrates how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. This section **may not exceed 3 pages**.

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in Section VI above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using SAMS Domestic. Applications will **NOT** be accepted from grants.gov. SAMS Domestic requires that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as

detailed in Section V. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to <https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>, and click the “create an account” hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled “User Registration Request;” complete the online form and click the “Submit” button. Users will receive an activation email entitled “Verify Your Grants Account Registration;” click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on February 4, 2022 There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. AWARDS TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS OR FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of

the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

B. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (*Program-specific Audit* means an audit of one Federal award program. *Single Audit* means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693136.pdf>.

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

C. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE FEDERAL FUNDING REGULATIONS AND DOS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-01-2019508.pdf>) and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (25 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to achieve program objectives.
- The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders such as U.S. embassies, local ministries of education, *etc.*, and identifies local partners if applicable.
- The applicant explains how participants will be selected (*e.g.*, criteria for selection, selection process).
- The applicant articulates potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.
- M&E: The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them.

Project Design (45 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- Responsiveness to NOFO: Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- Project Management: Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation, and closing.
- Methodology to measure socioeconomic status.
- Innovative approach to online recruitment.
- *Results Monitoring Plan (RMP)*: Application demonstrates the capacity for monitoring and evaluating project activities. Application provides a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan that includes an overall approach to M&E.
- The RMP indicators measure realistic/feasible project impact (outcomes) rather than just outputs. The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward MEPI goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- Monitoring and evaluation methods proposed are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based (SMART), and applicable to the stated goals and objectives given the context of the operating environment. Applicants may consult the illustrative template in the annex of this solicitation for more details on best practices in presenting their M&E plan.

Organizational Capacity and Staffing (30 points)

- The applicant has a designated administrative director who demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.

- The applicant has pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (*e.g.*, language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project—whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer—demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- The applicant allocates special funds dedicated to the professional development of all staff working on the project.
- The applicant allocates incentives for staff to support the Tomorrow’s Leaders program and propose creative and innovative improvements. The applicant demonstrates experience (*e.g.*, has previously work and/or has established contacts/partners; prior performance) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (*e.g.*, recruitment of socioeconomically disadvantaged students).

Budget & Budget Narrative (Accept/Revise) At least 5% of budget allocated to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.

- Budget estimates are reasonable and sufficient for meeting student needs.
- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed to include attending the annual stocktaking and management meeting. The program recruitment partner covers the first tickets for students to travel to campus for students from conflict countries only. The program recruitment partner also provides students from all countries with travel per diem for travel days for their first time traveling to campus.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Section VI. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be technically eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel will be evaluated by U.S. Government and nongovernmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Section VIII. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how proposals support the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, its submission was put forward for review.

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by July 30, 2021 Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. The QFRs provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report *immediately* when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

Success Story Reporting: The Recipient is required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report. A template will be provided by NEA/AC for this purpose. Success stories must be emailed to MEPI@state.gov.

Tomorrow's Leaders program implementers are required to submit to NEA/AC their plans and procedures for student safety.

Detailed Work Plan: Approval of a detailed work plan, to be submitted at least annually and updated more frequently as needed. The work plan will be in a format agreed with NEA/AC and may be an online shared document.

Coordination of Recruitment and Student Study Abroad Programming: Successful applicants will be required to promptly share information and otherwise closely coordinate Tomorrow's Leaders recruitment with NEA/AC's implementers.

Prior to commencing any activities for Egypt and Lebanon, the Recipient must first submit to NEA/AC a risk mitigation and security plan that details the applicant's strategy for ensuring the safety of staff, any sub-recipients, and beneficiaries. The Recipient shall include information on any related insurance that may be needed. The plan should also cover student safety, security, and wellness. The plan must outline applicable policies, procedures, and mitigation strategy and also include statistical and anecdotal reporting on related issues. This may be required for other countries prior to commencing activities as well, depending on the countries included in the applicant's proposal.

The Recipient must submit a branding and marking plan to NEA/AC for approval within 30 days of award, using an agreed-upon template.

The Recipient must promptly (within 48 hours) report to NEA/AC student emergencies that come to its attention, including but not limited to student travel difficulties, and health or safety issues. Other incidents to report include student violations of law or other serious instances of student misbehavior. An initial report may be by phone if email is not possible, to be followed up in writing within a reasonable number of business days using an incident reporting template provided by NEA/AC.

Maktabat: Recipients will be required to submit to MEPI all materials developed under awards for the training of participants. These documents (including but not limited to manuals, curriculums, videos, websites, and presentations used in workshops or distributed to participants)

will be considered for inclusion in the Maktabat MEPI website: <http://maktabatmepi.org>. The Recipient should make every effort to submit training materials as they are developed and used rather than waiting until the end of the award. The materials can be submitted in English, French, and/or Arabic. The Recipient can submit materials to the Maktabat MEPI website: www.maktabatmepi.org. The Recipient is asked to add a link to the Maktabat website on the Recipient's website if feasible.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Successful applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/AC to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) business days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

Applicants are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. Applicants may be asked to submit information required by DS Form 4184, Risk Analysis Information about their company and its principal personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via Email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions on the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting an application for award.

For the lifetime of this cooperative agreement, no funds from Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) or other prohibited groups will be used to finance activities or organizations associated with this cooperative agreement, including but not limited to advertising, program performance/support, *etc.* To ensure that all individuals and entities associated with this program are eligible, the recipient must check the System for Award management (SAM) (www.SAM.gov).

The Recipient will submit the DS Form 4184 Risk Analysis Information to the Risk Analysis and Management (RAM) Office providing information on key individuals as defined by form DS-4184 and for each key staff member or program personnel in the Recipient's organization, all sub-awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing as well as appropriate beneficiaries as described in the official vetting guidance provided as part of this award. All individuals meeting these specifications, whether previously vetted or not, must be submitted. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer RAM usually requests the vetting information, via emails to the Authorizing Official, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions regarding the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Forms must be

submitted no later than five business days after RAM provides the Authorizing Official (identified by the Grants Officer) with a username and password for the secure portal.

Only individuals, sub-recipients and beneficiaries who have successfully passed vetting may receive assistance or participate in this award. Individuals refusing to provide vetting data—or who provide false data—will not be eligible to receive assistance. Individuals who do not successfully pass vetting will not be eligible to receive assistance. Vetting must be completed 10 business days prior to an activity and may not occur retroactively.

The government shall vet these personnel changes and reserves the right to terminate assistance awards for convenience based on vetting results. For activities lasting more than one year, in accordance with the vetting policy, the Recipient will resubmit the DS Form 4184.

E. SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA (SPOT) REQUIREMENTS

Applicants proposing activities in **Iraq** are required to adhere to the following:

All recipient personnel deploying to an area of combat operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense under federal assistance over \$150,000 or performance over 30 days must register in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register in SPOT before deployment, or if already in the designated operational area, register upon becoming an employee under the assistance award and maintain current data in SPOT. Information on how to register in SPOT is available from your Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative. Recipients utilizing personnel who are not performing private security functions must account for personnel within the SPOT system anonymously through the use of the aggregate count functionality. This includes U.S. Citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN), and Locally-hired Iraqi personnel except as noted in the following paragraph.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; are performing duties as a translator or interpreter; require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support; or desire consideration for refugee or special immigrant status under the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007 (subtitle C of title XII of Public Law 110–181 must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. If a locally-hired Iraqi falls into one of these categories, the recipient must enter all of the required identification data into SPOT.

When the Recipient is ready to enter U.S. Citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN), and/or locally-hired individuals using the Aggregate Count method, the Recipient will notify the Grants Officer who will contact the Department SPOT Program Manager (A/LM/AQM) to obtain the “Aggregate Count” template. The Recipient will complete the “Aggregate Count” template and return to the SPOT Program Manager who will ensure that aggregate counts are loaded into SPOT.

The Recipient’s SPOT Administrator is responsible for updating the aggregate locally hired national count on a quarterly basis by providing updated information via the “Aggregate Count”

template to the GO/GOR for each award who will forward to the Department SPOT Program Manager for SPOT entry.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to these policies and procedures are considered to be a material requirement of their award. Recipients of federal assistance awards are reminded that only the Grants Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO, but shall advise the Grants Officer and the GOR of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

F. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, *etc.* In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to follow MEPI social media guidelines for any and all online presences related to the project. Grantees will be expected to tag @USMEPI in all social media posts and utilize the official hashtag #MEPI for any social media posts in Arabic or English. Grantees will be expected to highlight MEPI online and share

as many MEPI stories as possible, including demonstrating how each MEPI programs strive to achieve its assistance objectives of participatory governance and economic reform.

G. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Section V. B. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

H. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsrs.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Grants Officer
Karen McKenna
nea-grants@state.gov

All questions and a notification of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by January 7, 2022 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

The intent to apply is a notification to the Bureau of Near East Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination via email expressing the intent to submit a proposal under this announcement. The notification does not require any specific format or template.

The intent to apply is optional and will not be binding.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using grants.gov to submit an application, contact the grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

Grants.gov Contact Center
(800) 518-4726
support@Grants.gov

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

<https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.