**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
U.S. EMBASSY ZIMBABWE**

**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Academy for Women Entrepreneurs 2024

**Funding Opportunity Number:** AF-HAR-FY24-01

**Deadline for Applications**: December 15, 2023

**CFDA/Assistance Listing Number:** 19.022

**Total Amount Available:** $10,000 - $35,000

**THIS NOTICE IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING**

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Embassy Zimbabwe under the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to implement a new Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program in Zimbabwe. The Public Diplomacy Section invites proposals from non-profit organizations, civil society organizations, incubators, tech hubs, and U.S. government alumni organizations to design and implement an entrepreneurial program for women entrepreneurs to develop the skills, capabilities, and resources to fully participate in the private sector.

Participants of the AWE program will participate in facilitated in-person and virtual sessions with established Zimbabwean and U.S. entrepreneurs, alumni of U.S.-funded exchange programs, and other experts from different fields that enrich the AWE program. Proposals must integrate the online interactive [DreamBuilder](https://dreambuilder.org/) course and elements of a new online curriculum, the [Najafi 100 Million Learners Global Initiative](https://thunderbird.asu.edu/lifelong-learning/100-million-learners), on key topics in entrepreneurship and innovation as part of the proposal. The program may be held in several locations, run cohorts of up to 30 participants, and should have a strong American component, including U.S. experts as guest teachers or coaches, articulated in the proposed activities syllabus. Proposals must have follow-on entrepreneurship programing or engagement activities for AWE alumnae. Proposals that have site visits, seed funding, exchanges, pitch competitions, fairs, networking, or other creative engagement elements will be more competitive.

**Program Objectives:**

The proposals should meet the following objectives:

* Increase participants’ understanding of business planning, financial forecasting, marketing, and scaling up operations;
* Connect participants with U.S. based business experts and share U.S. models of running enterprises;
* Foster a network that support female entrepreneurs through peer-to-peer mentorship to help grow businesses and drive local partnerships; and
* Equip women entrepreneurs with skills and knowledge to build sustainable businesses.

Implementing partner proposals should have a detailed recruitment strategy for the target population, clearly specifying how the Embassy would be involved. The proposal should include ideas for follow-up activities with AWE alumni after program implementation to assess the impact of the program. Proposals with sustainability, business partnerships, and/or cost sharing built in will be more competitive. Budgets should be reasonable.

**Audience:**

The AWE program targets current or future women business owners in Zimbabwe. AWE participants must commit to complete the program, have proven computer skills, and have access to the Internet or a reliable data connection. Applicants are encouraged to develop programs for underrepresented populations, niche business sectors, or areas of potential growth.

**B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: Up to 12 months from date of award.

Number of awards anticipated: One award

Total available funding: *$10,000-35,000*

Anticipated program start date: May-June 2024

**Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative Agreement

The Public Diplomacy Section will be actively involved in the award implementation. U.S. Embassy staff will:

* Provide standardized branding materials and guidelines for AWE promotional content.
* Participate in AWE promotional activities on U.S. Embassy Zimbabwe social media platforms.
* Provide required Department-conducted AWE training and orientation for implementers/facilitators
* Approve participants, facilitator, and expert speakers’ recruitment strategy.
* Assist the implementing partner in identifying and contacting alumni of U.S. government exchange programs and other networks for potential speakers and trainers.
* Review and approve suggested program speaker schedule, topics, and scenarios.
* Collaborate with the implementing partner to assess the impact of the program through designing follow-up activity.
* Approve social media content and any other outreach promotional material to promote the AWE program to wider audiences.

**C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION**

1. Eligible Applicants

* Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks, civil society, and non-governmental organizations
* Business development organizations registered as non-profits
* United States government alumni organizations

1. Other Eligibility Requirements
   * To be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.4 for more information.
   * Adequately skilled and experienced staff to implement the program.
   * Well-equipped office space with adequate ICT equipment required to implement the program including reliable internet connection.

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**To Request Application Package**

Email [PublicDiplomacyGrants-ZIM@state.gov](mailto:PublicDiplomacyGrants-ZIM@state.gov); an automatic reply with the Application forms will be sent.

**Content and Form of Application Submission**

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.

Please ensure:

The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.

All documents are in English.

All budgets are in U.S. dollars.

All pages are numbered and,

All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. **Mandatory application forms**

* **SF-424 *(Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance -individuals) \****
* **SF-424A** ***(Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) \****

*\* Only required from grantee after selection for funding.*

**2. Application (*6* pages maximum):**The application includes seven sections:

* **Program Information:** Summary of program data.
* **Executive Summary:** Program overview in five sentences or less.
* **Program Design:** A description of the cohort(s) and characteristics of the target audience. The section should specify target participants, logistics, location, recruitment, and selection processes, identify the U.S. and local partners and how they will support the AWE program. The proposed timelines should be included noting dates, locations and planned activities and events.
* **Alumni Engagement:** Describe how the program foster greater alumni engagement and how USG exchange alumni will be involved as mentors or partners. Include proposed activities specifically seeking to strengthen the local AWE community and sustain gains from previous AWE programs.
* **Communication and Outreach:** Describe the communications strategies for generating interactions with AWE gradates, social media presence, media outreach and any relevant communication ideas.
* **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Describe the monitoring and evaluation plan and how impact and results will be communicated to the Embassy, including the specific tools to be used.
* **Budget:** Please fill out the specific AWE budget template.

**3. Budget:** Proposals must include the budget line items tab and budget narrative tab.

**Guidelines for Budget Justification:** Describe how you arrived at the costs listed on the main budget tab.

**Programming/Personnel**: Describe the program costs. Staff wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program. Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor.

**Travel Costs:** Estimate the costs of transportation for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

**Lodging**: Justify any lodging requirements for program staff, consultants, or speakers.

**M&IE:** Describe the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) required for the program.

**Supplies, Materials and Equipment**: List and describe all the items and materials that are needed for the program. If an item cost more than $5,000 per unit a stronger justification is required along with a disposal plan.

**Other Costs**: Describe other costs associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

**Cost Sharing:** This refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

**Alcoholic Beverages:  Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.**

**4.** **Required Registrations:** Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations.  All are free of charge:

* [www.SAM.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sam.gov%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C8a179f425ec644553b0a08da0c446ace%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637835785239027166%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=1O%2BquRWkk5TWZ9R%2FzeWA%2BjVqSPwgts5FKs5lUXBCVGU%3D&reserved=0) registration which will generate a UEI

Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.”

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.  SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements.  OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance.  Under the law, it is mandatory to register in SAM.gov.

The UEI will be assigned when an organization registers or renews its registration in SAM.gov at [www.SAM.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sam.gov%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C8a179f425ec644553b0a08da0c446ace%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637835785239027166%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=1O%2BquRWkk5TWZ9R%2FzeWA%2BjVqSPwgts5FKs5lUXBCVGU%3D&reserved=0).  To access SAM.gov an organization is required to have a Login.gov account. Organization can create an account at [https://login.gov/](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flogin.gov%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C8a179f425ec644553b0a08da0c446ace%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637835785239027166%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=tZgLWndOJE4QfgsenOHTZxlAyGwD1%2FcsHk9zT0XqO9g%3D&reserved=0).   As a reminder, organizations need to renew its sam.gov registration annually.

[www.sam.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sam.gov%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C8a179f425ec644553b0a08da0c446ace%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637835785239027166%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=1O%2BquRWkk5TWZ9R%2FzeWA%2BjVqSPwgts5FKs5lUXBCVGU%3D&reserved=0#_blank) requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov.  It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov.

If an organization plans to issue a sub-contract or sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number).  Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.

If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application will be deemed **ineligible.**  All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. The latter are free of charge.

**5.** **Submission Dates and Times**

Applications are due no later than **December 15, 2023.** All application materials must be submitted by email to [PublicDiplomacyGrants-Zim@state.gov](mailto:PublicDiplomacyGrants-Zim@state.gov)

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

1. **Criteria:** Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Strength and Feasibility of Program Design**: The program idea is strong, well developed with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline (20 points).

**Degree of alumni engagement in programming:** A clear and strong participation of U.S. government exchanges alumni engagement in AWE programming including facilitators/expert speakers with a connection to the United States and application of U.S. business systems (20 points).

**Strength of communication, media, and outreach plans**: Proposals should spell out a clear, broad outreach plans, a detailed strategy for media and sharing the AWE story and program with stakeholders (20 points).

**Structure of monitoring and evaluation strategy:** Applicant demonstrates can measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured (20 points).

**Budget feasibility and budget narrative:** The budget justification is 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 (20 points).

1. **Review and Selection Process**

A Grant Review Committee will appraise all the eligible application for both technical and creative elements. Following local review, the U.S. Embassy will submit the proposal to the AWE office in Washington, DC for a second level review in January 2024. The office plans to make the decisions by March 2024.

**F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

* 1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

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

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.

* 1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

These include:

* [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.175&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.182&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.183&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2chapterVI.tpl)
* [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget’s guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

* [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
  + Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  + Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
  + Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
  + Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
  + Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
  1. Reporting

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=027fb85899500d580fc71df69d11573a&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML%20-%20ap2.1.200_1521.i#ap2.1.200_1521.xii).

**G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: [PublicDiplomacyGrants-ZIM@state.gov](mailto:PublicDiplomacyGrants-Zim@state.gov) .

The Embassy will host a virtual bidding conference on a date to be advised to answer questions from all potential applicants.