

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
U.S. MISSION VIETNAM  
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SECTION (PDS)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**(revised as of Jan. 24, 2025)**

Opportunity number: PDS-HAN-HCMC-FY25

Application deadline: March 2, 2025

## Contents

<b>A.</b>	<b>Basic Information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Eligibility.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>Program Description .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>Application Contents and Format.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>Submission Requirements and Deadlines.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>Application Review Information.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>G.</b>	<b>Award Notices.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>H.</b>	<b>Post-Award Requirements and Administration .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>I.</b>	<b>Other Information .....</b>	<b>18</b>

**U.S Department of State  
U.S. Mission Vietnam  
Public Diplomacy Section  
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**A. Basic Information**

**1. Overview**

<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	U.S. Mission Vietnam PDS NOFO
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	PDS-HAN-HCMC-FY25
<b>Announcement Type</b>	Initial announcement
<b>Deadline for Applications</b>	March 2, 2025   11:59 P.M. GMT +7
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	19.040
<b>Length of performance period</b>	Proposed program should ideally be planned for a period of 12 months but can be longer depending on the nature of the program
<b>Number of awards anticipated</b>	Dependent on amounts
<b>Award amounts</b>	Awards may range from a minimum of \$7,500 to a maximum of \$30,000
<b>Total available funding</b>	\$60,000, pending funding availability
<b>Type of Funding</b>	Funding authority rests primarily in Smith-Mundt FY2025 Public Diplomacy funding
<b>Anticipated project start date</b>	After March 27, 2025

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. An FAA can also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

**Project Performance Period:** Proposed program should ideally be planned for a period of 12 months but can be longer depending on the nature of the program.

The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a

determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

## ***2. Executive Summary***

**Priority Region:** Vietnam

### **Executive Summary**

The U.S. Mission to Vietnam's Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the Department of State is pleased to announce an open competition for organizations to submit proposals to carry-out activities that support the following priorities with Vietnamese audiences: enhance understanding of emerging technologies and related digital policies; teacher training for English as a second language across all areas of instruction; alumni engagement; and strengthen people-to-people ties as the U.S. and Vietnam mark thirty years of bilateral relations.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity outlines our funding priorities, strategic themes, and the procedures for submitting requests for funding. Please note that the agreement will be signed under a federal assistance award. The funding is not eligible for a service agreement.

Please carefully follow all instructions below.

## **B. Eligibility**

### ***1. Eligible Applicants***

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience;
- Not-for-profit or governmental educational institutions;
- Registered social enterprises; or
- Governmental institutions.

*Individuals, for-profit or commercial entities are **not eligible** to apply.*

## **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost sharing is not required.

## **3. Other Eligibility Requirements**

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for more information. Non-Vietnamese institutions should be able to execute their proposal in compliance with all applicable Vietnamese regulations.

## **C. Program Description**

### **1. Goals and Objectives**

Proposal submissions under this NOFO should advance at least one of the following goals.

**Enhance understanding of emerging technologies and related digital policies,** with a specific focus on leveraging case studies and simulations to explore best practices for application of emerging technologies and related regulation, incorporating perspectives from around the region and the world as well as multilateral institutions. Proposals should also consider economic and trade ramifications and relevant international laws. This includes initiatives to develop technical and soft skills and leadership-building of emerging leaders and entrepreneurs through participatory and interactive workshops on emerging technologies, digital policy, intellectual property rights, cybersecurity, business practices, digital trade, and fintech.

**Expand capacity of teachers and higher education officials to implement English as a second language of instruction across all areas of instruction,** particularly science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The U.S. Mission is prioritizing support for the Vietnam government's decision to make English the second language for the medium of instruction across all areas. Teacher training, curriculum development, and implementation design will be critical to the success of such an initiative.

**Foster the development of U.S. alumni networks across Vietnam** including around geographic, thematic, and professional development areas. There are

almost 8000 alumni of U.S. government programs across Vietnam and tens of thousands of graduates of U.S. higher education institutions. A core priority for the U.S. Mission is to support alumni engagement in ways that enable professional and personal development of alumni and activities that support shared bilateral goals.

**Strengthen People-to-People Ties in Celebration of the 30th Anniversary since the normalization of bilateral relations:** On July 11, 2025, the United States and Vietnam will celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations. This anniversary will be an important opportunity to honor our past and the visionary leadership on both sides that enabled us to address the legacy of war and rebuild mutual trust and understanding. January 2025 will mark the start of a yearlong anniversary celebration that will include events and activities hosted by partners in Vietnam and the United States. This includes proposals to connect U.S. and Vietnamese institutions and organizations to promote dialogue, awareness, and interest in the future trajectory of the bilateral relationship on topics that may range from workforce development, education, trade, cultural exchange, environmental protection, regional security, health, American and Vietnamese studies, and other shared priorities.

Potential applicants should propose detailed specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant (SMART) project objectives for their proposed programs. Potential applicants should develop outcome-based objectives that incorporate measurable outcome indicators and propose methods to measure them.

All proposals must engage Vietnamese audiences and include a U.S. element or connection with American expert(s), organization(s), or institution(s) in a specific field that will promote increased understanding of U.S. policy and perspectives. An organization can submit a single proposal to cover multiple programs on different thematic priorities at multiple locations.

**Participants and Audiences:**

Programs may include the following participants and audiences. Successful proposals will demonstrate an understanding of audience needs to achieve a specific outcome. Applicants should be as specific as possible in their proposals

about their program's primary audience. The term "general public" is not an adequate description of the targeted audience.

- Academic institutions;
- Business leaders and entrepreneurs;
- Community leaders;
- Cultural institutions;
- Journalists, media organizations;
- Social and new media users;
- Social Enterprises;
- Emerging leaders;
- Local Government Offices and Ministries;
- Young professionals;
- Students and youth.

**The following types of programs are not eligible for funding:**

- Programs relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities;
- Construction programs;
- Programs that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or programs;
- Scientific research;
- Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization; or
- Programs that duplicate existing programs.

***2. Substantial Involvement***

Some examples of substantial involvement include, but are not limited to:

- Active collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award.
- Review and approval of one stage of work before another can begin.
- Joint preparation or presentation of results with the recipient.
- Involvement in the selection of participants or program venues.
- Specific programmatic oversight in the award, beyond normal monitoring.

The following are not considered areas of substantial involvement:

- Approval of key personnel.
- Approval of the recipient's budget or plan of work prior to the award.
- Standard oversight, monitoring, and administration of Federal awards.
- Actions to correct recipient performance or administrative deficiencies identified during the implementation of the award.

#### **D. Application Contents and Format**

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

#### **Content of Application**

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
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, 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, PDF, 163 KB) or
- [SF-424A](#) (Budget Information, PDF, 322 KB) – please follow [instructions](#) (PDF, 181 KB) to complete this form
- [SF-424B](#) (Assurances for Non-Construction programs, PDF, 89 KB) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)



## ***2. Summary Page (optional)***

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

## ***3. Proposal (five pages maximum)***

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The "goals" describe what the program is intended to achieve. The "objectives" refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time frame of the grant, how will the

activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?

- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

#### **4. Budget Justification Narrative**

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

#### **5. Attachments**

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities with program partners, for instance.
- Documentations that the organization is a registered entity.

### **E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines**

#### **1. Address to Request Application Package**

Application forms required above are available to access at Grants.gov or here: [Grant Documents](#).

#### **2. Department of State Contacts**

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

#### **3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)**

##### **Required Registrations**

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A 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. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.***

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at [www.fsd.gov](http://www.fsd.gov) using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

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

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](#)

## **Exemptions**

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](#) for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

## **4. Submission Dates and Times**

Applications may be submitted for consideration at any time before the closing date of March 2, 2025 at 11:59 P.M. GMT+7. No applications will be accepted after that date.

## **5. Funding Restrictions**

Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency

(UNRWA).

## **6. Other Submission Requirements**

In order to ensure your application is received for consideration, please do the following:

- Complete the form here: [PDS NOFO 2025](#) **AND**
- Email [VietnamPASGrants@state.gov](mailto:VietnamPASGrants@state.gov) with your completed proposal for application submission.

Receipt of the application will be acknowledged within two business days.

## **F. Application Review Information**

### **1. Review Criteria**

Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points:** The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline and engaging activities likely to be of interest/benefit to the target audience.

**Creativity and Sustainability - 15 points:** The program idea takes a novel approach to advancing a priority and program results are likely to have a lasting and positive impact after the program ends. To make this assessment, reviewers will consider whether the USG has funded similar activities in Vietnam and what the results were, whether the grantee has conducted similar activities and related outcomes, and whether other donors have supported similar activities with the grantee.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 15 points:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

**Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 20 points:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. Grantee demonstrates understanding of target audience and overall problem set as well as the Vietnam context.

**Budget – 10 points:** 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.

**Monitoring and evaluation plan – 15 points:** Applicant demonstrates it is able to 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.

## ***2. Review and Selection Process***

The U.S. Mission Vietnam strives to ensure that each application receives a balanced evaluation by two separate panels. A Technical Grants Review Panel will evaluate all applications to assess eligibility. This panel will determine the eligibility of each submitted proposal to ensure its applications are technically eligible for this NOFO and are reviewed against following criteria.

A second Grants Review Panel will then evaluate all technically eligible applications. The Grants Review Panel will evaluate how the application addresses the NOFO request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the overall priority needs of the Embassy. The Grants Review Panel will also review the proposal against the same six criteria:

- Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea
- Creativity and Sustainability
- Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants
- Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives
- Budget
- Monitoring and evaluation plan

The Grants Review Panel may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed program, which the applicant must address before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of the funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and program activities.

### **3. Risk Review**

#### **i. Risk factors – must include**

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance
- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements
- f. If there are any program specific risk factors that will be considered, describe them here.

#### **ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov**

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

### **G. Award Notices**

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing

document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the 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.

If approved for funding, it is important to note that the recipient understands that they bear the legal and sole responsibility for any tax liability they may incur and for obtaining all permissions and approvals relevant to carrying out the grant

**Unsuccessful applicants:** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by March 27, 2025 via email.

**Payment Method:**

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer.

## **H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**

### ***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:

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](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
  - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - 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 pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

## **2. Reporting**

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

**Foreign Assistance Data Review:** As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

### **I. Other Information**

#### **Guidelines for Budget Justification**

**Personnel and Fringe Benefits:** Describe the 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.

**Travel:** Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

**Equipment:** Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$10,000 per unit.

**Supplies:** List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

**Contractual:** Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

**Other Direct Costs:** Describe other costs directly 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.

**Indirect Costs:** These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

“Cost Sharing” 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.