

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

# PAS Freetown Small Grants Program

AF/Freetown, Department of State

Opportunity number: 2025-FREETOWN-PDS-01

Application deadline: June 27, 2025

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**U.S Department of State  
U.S. Embassy Freetown  
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**A. Basic Information**

**1. Overview**

<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	PAS Freetown Small Grants Program
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	2025-Freetown-PDS-01
<b>Announcement Type</b>	Initial
<b>Deadline for Applications</b>	June 27, 5pm UTC (Sierra Leone Time)
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	19.040
<b>Length of performance period</b>	1 to 12 months
<b>Number of awards anticipated</b>	3 awards (dependent on amounts)
<b>Award amounts</b>	awards may range from a minimum of \$1500 to a maximum of \$10,000
<b>Total available funding</b>	\$30,000 pending availability of funds
<b>Type of Funding</b>	FY25 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds;
<b>Anticipated project start date</b>	<b>October 1, 2025</b>

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant

**Project Performance Period:** Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less.

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

**2. Executive Summary**

**Priority Region:** Sierra Leone

**Executive Summary**

This program awards small grants of up to \$10,000 to individuals, NGO's or educational institutions on a competitive basis to carry out projects in alignment with U.S. priorities. Each project should have a link to the United States through resources, expertise, curriculum, or cultural exchange. Each proposal must provide clear and realistic objectives, timetable and budget; demonstrate the sustainability of the project beyond funded activities; and include plans for monitoring and evaluation and outreach. All applicants must use the supplied template for their submissions. Activities must start after October 1, 2025, and be completed by September 30, 2026. Sample priorities are listed below in the Goals and Objectives Section. Submit all applications using attached templates to

## **B. Eligibility**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- Individuals
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

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

Cost sharing is not required; however, we may consider cost-share to break ties among applications with equivalent scores after evaluation against all other factors.

### **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. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

## **C. Program Description**

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

The purpose of this grant competition is to support grantees who are contributing to building the capacity of Sierra Leoneans in a way that strengthens connections with the United States and supports American priorities. The goal is not to support one-off activities but to jump start programs that move Sierra Leone away from assistance and help create potential partners for American institutions and businesses. These programs should build the skills and knowledge of participants so that they can begin to move forward without further assistance or create networks or develop resources that enable other Sierra Leoneans to move forward independently. Sample activities can include train-the-trainer programs, workshops, cultural exchanges with U.S. institutions, creation of informational resource

materials, network development, etc. All programs should incorporate a link to the United States through resources, expertise, curriculum, or cultural exchange.

We will prioritize projects focusing on the following themes:

Entrepreneurship, including Financial Literacy and Expanding Credit Access  
Academic Linkages  
Accountable and Transparent Governance  
Ending Discrimination and/or Violence against Women  
Combating Trafficking in Persons  
Fair Trade Promotion  
Protection of Intellectual Property Rights

Applicants should budget for all necessary expenses including venue rental, supplies, travel, honoraria etc.

## **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. Proposal (4 pages maximum)**

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You must use the attached template and provide all items below:

- Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives, connection to the United States, and anticipated impact.
- Introduction to the Organization or Individual 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.

- iii. **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and the need for the proposed program.
- iv. **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve in the long term. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- v. **Project Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- vi. **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.
- vii. **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- viii. **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?
- ix. **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- x. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe 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 meets the goals of the grant?
- xi. **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or, if applicable, the availability of other resources.

## **2. Mandatory application forms**

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals) at [Forms | Grants.gov](#)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at [Forms | Grants.gov](#)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at [Forms | Grants.gov](#) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in [Home | SAM.gov](#))

## **3. Budget Justification Narrative**

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use the attached excel file to list and describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information on what expenses belong in each category.

## **4. Attachments**

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program 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.

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

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

Application forms required above are available at: <https://sl.usembassy.gov/grant-opportunities/>, [Forms | Grants.gov](#)

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

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: [PASGrantsFreetown@state.gov](mailto:PASGrantsFreetown@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 and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

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

## 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 justification for 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 are due no later than *27 June 2025, 4:59pm, Sierra Leone Time (UTC)*

## 5. Funding Restrictions

- i. 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).

- ii. Certification Regarding Compliance with Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws

If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be **within the United States**, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
  - 2) It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.
- iii. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements

Applicants are advised that Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

## **6. Other Submission Requirements**

All application materials must be submitted by email to [PASGrantsFreetown@state.gov](mailto:PASGrantsFreetown@state.gov)

## **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 – 30 points:** The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The program supports American priorities.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 points:** The organization and its partners (if applicable) have expertise in the stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account. What grants has the organization received previously and were they completed successfully?

**Monitoring and evaluation plan – 10 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.

**Project Sustainability – 15 points:** Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

**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.

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

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications and rank them according to scores based on criteria above. The number of grants funded will depend on the availability of funds.

## **3. Risk Review**

### **i. Risk factors**

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

## **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.

**Unsuccessful applicants:** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by Aug 30, 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. Typically, grantees will complete a quarterly narrative report and financial report and provide a list of expenses when submitting an SF 270. At the conclusion of the project, awardees will need to submit a final narrative report and accounting of expenses.

**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.