



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Curriculum and University Partnerships (CUP)

Venezuela Affairs Unit, Department of State

Opportunity number: 2025VE-002 (A)

[AMENDED 6-5-2025]

Application deadline: July 1, 2025

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Notice of Funding Opportunity

**U.S. Department of State
Venezuela Affairs Unit (VAU)
Public Diplomacy Section (PDS)
Curriculum and University Partnership (CUP)**

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Curriculum and University Partnerships (CUP)
Funding Opportunity Number	2025VE-002
Announcement Type	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	July 1, 2025
Assistance Listing Number	19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs
Length of performance period	Up to 18 months
Number of awards anticipated	1 award (dependent on amounts)
Award amounts	Up to \$200,000 USD
Total available funding	Up to \$200,000 USD, pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY25 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	October 1, 2025

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Project Performance Period: Project should be completed in 18 months or less

Priority Region: Venezuela

This notice is subject to the availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

The Public Diplomacy section of the Venezuela Affairs Unit announces an open competition for U.S. Institutes of Higher Education (HEIs) or U.S. not-for-profit organizations to submit applications for the **Curriculum and University Partnerships (CUP)**.

We seek proposals that build the curriculum development capacity of faculty at Venezuelan academic institutions through collaborative online curriculum-design

partnerships that cultivate university partnerships between these institutions and their U.S. counterparts. Proposals should be submitted to VAUPublicEngagement@fan.gov by July 1, 2025.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following U.S. organizations are eligible to apply:

- Accredited U.S. public and/or private higher education institutions (consortia applications are eligible).
- Registered U.S. non-profit educational institutions and/or organizations with programming experience.

NOTE: Proposals that include Spanish-speaking staff and the ability to conduct sessions in Spanish will be prioritized.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is anticipated. Proposals that include cost-sharing will be assigned additional review points that will be used 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.

C. Program Description

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program will focus on building collaborative curriculum development opportunities at Venezuelan universities, building curriculum design capacity; connecting Venezuelan academics with their U.S. counterparts and catalyzing university partnerships.

This program supports the VAU's higher education engagement goals to expand partnerships between U.S. and Venezuelan higher education institutions. This approach acknowledges that fortifying existing links and promoting new U.S.-Venezuelan partnerships at the university level will make the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

We seek proposals that will utilize COIL¹ and other online collaboration tools to develop up to six new curricula projects at Venezuelan universities and establish the building blocks of international partnerships among program participants and their U.S. counterparts.

Theory of Change: *If universities in Venezuela increase their ability to collaborate and enhance their curriculum development capacity; and if these universities develop a campus-wide culture of international collaboration, then Venezuela will be better positioned to build comprehensive university partnerships with U.S. counterparts.*

Key Deliverables: The 18-month CUP grant seeks to accomplish the program's goals through the following deliverables:

Online Engagement and Mentoring Sessions on the main components of a successful university curriculum development process, including (but not limited to), 1) Needs Assessment; 2) Goal Setting; 3) Curriculum Design; 4) Implementation; and 5) Evaluation/Revision (as needed). In addition, these online sessions should include a wide range of topics that focus on how to foster a culture of learning and international collaboration, including:

- Value and importance of integrated and multi-disciplinary teaching and learning, including leadership support for a campus-wide strategic vision;
- Case studies of successful U.S. university curriculum development and implementation initiatives that led to achieving international standards, improved student outcomes and institutionalized support;
- International education and partnership strategies;
- Additional topics could include curricula review strategies, student/faculty/administration stakeholder engagement; private-sector/practitioner integrations, critical thinking/problem-solving capacities; and
- Other key areas that support this effort.

International Partnership Facilitation/Professional Networking Activities that support new academic collaborations and university partnerships (or enhance existing partnerships) between Venezuelan academic leaders and their U.S. counterparts. The grantee will recruit and introduce potential U.S. university counterparts to facilitate these curriculum partnerships. This will include working with the Venezuelan participants to shape and design their curriculum projects and develop their initial partnership strategies.

¹ **COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning)** refers to "online learning in an international setting, with interactive involvement of students and faculty from different international and intercultural backgrounds in and outside the classroom" (Leask, 2020:188). **Benefits of COIL:** International studies show that COIL has a relevant impact on the personal and academic development of participants and that it is valued by various stakeholders, including teachers, students, and employers. In addition, the involvement in COIL projects enables teachers to: establish or strengthen international partnerships, integrate innovative and challenging practices into their courses, convey an international dimension to learning, collaborate with peers, increase class dynamism, and improve student interest and satisfaction rates. (<https://collab-edu.com/hub/coil/p/whatiscoil>)

NOTE: Proposals that present a broad group of U.S. universities and innovative/creative online networking strategies efforts will be prioritized.

Curriculum Design through COIL will be implemented and mentored by the grantee through online support, regular consultations, and other professional oversight as appropriate.

In-Person Curriculum Workshop for up to 12 Venezuelan university academics and administrators from six Venezuelan universities and six U.S. counterparts. The grantee will organize a Colombia-based academic conference to build on the online capacity-building sessions and physically bring together international partners for each of the six curriculum projects. The workshop can include travel and participation costs for U.S. experts and collaborative partners to travel to Bogota, Colombia, for this program.

Implementation and Assessment support for program participants to guide the implementation of these curricula projects and the assessment and revision process as necessary.

NOTE: Spanish language capacity is not required, however, proposals that include key staff with bilingual capacities (Spanish/English) will be prioritized.

Program Participants

In partnership with the VAU Public Diplomacy section and local educational counterparts, the program will engage up to 12 academics and/or administrators (living and working in Venezuela) from up to six Venezuelan universities. Recruitment and selection will be jointly conducted by the grantee and the VAU. In consultation with the VAU, the number of participants in each program component may change depending on local conditions and budget considerations.

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)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) (note: the SF-424B is only required for 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 (10 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 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.
- **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 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 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 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 www.Grants.gov.

2. Department of State Contacts

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:

VAUPublicEngagement@fan.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 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 \(nato.int\)](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx)

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

Submission deadline is July 1, 2025. All application materials must be submitted by email to: VAUPublicEngagement@fan.gov

IMPORTANT: Please label your email submission “**CUP NOFO**” in the subject line.

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. Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border

None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

- iii. 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.

iv. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements

- Applicants are advised that institutions of higher learning (IHEs) must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:
 - 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.

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.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 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 – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget/Cost Share – 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. Cost-share contributions, both direct and in-kind, are clearly stated, measurable and tracked.

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.

Sustainability – 10 points: Program activities will continue to have a positive impact after the end of the program.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

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 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.

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.

Safety Protocols: Organizations that have their proposals for funding recommended for funding by the VAU grants review panel will be asked to submit safety protocol and procedures for addressing formal complaints of sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, sexual assault, stalking, misconduct, and retaliation during the life cycle of any Federal Assistance Award made under this notice. This plan must include addressing complaints against both project implementing staff and beneficiaries as well as how the plan will be presented to beneficiaries. Organizations will be asked to submit information on pre-employment screening mechanisms to prevent hiring of individuals with convictions or pending criminal charges, including mandatory screening for applicants with a history of rape, child sexual abuse, molestation, child pornography, and other related crimes.