

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

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.500

Tomorrow's Leaders Gender Scholars (TLS) Program

Opportunity Number: SFOP0009622

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	April 3, 2023
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	April 17, 2023
Application Deadline:	May 10, 2023
Expected Date of Notification:	June 21, 2023
Federal Agency Contact:	NEA-Grants@state.gov

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support students to advance and deepen their engagement in gender studies under the Tomorrow's Leaders undergraduate program. This opportunity will provide financial assistance to students who are enrolled full-time (12 credits minimum) to increase their participation in gender studies (for up to two semesters). Eligible students include individuals who represent the region's cultural, religious, and geographic diversity who are currently enrolled in certain higher educational institutions based in Egypt and Lebanon (American-style, independent, not-for-profit, and accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-sanctioned regional institution) and demonstrate financial need in accordance with university's policies. **Eligible universities must have institutional accreditation and maintain this accreditation throughout the course of the project. Eligible universities must include proof of accreditation in its annexes.** Furthermore, this project aims to advance the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act of 2017 and the Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund (GEEA) by contributing to efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict by increasing women's participation in negotiation and mediation processes.

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

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

Eligible Countries and Territories

In this announcement, we seek to support projects in Egypt and Lebanon. Benefitting students may be from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan,

Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, and West Bank and Gaza. Please note: Applications that focus on activities in countries and territories other than those listed will NOT be considered.

Background Information about NEA/AC

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Federal assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. NEA/AC works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs. NEA/AC is committed to advancing equity and support for minority and marginalized populations in the MENA region. All programs should consider strategies for expanding the pool of individuals/organizations/beneficiaries to afford opportunities for as diverse and inclusive a population as is feasible to bring perspectives based on religion, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, national origin, and age to implementation of the program.

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APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to enhance and expand gender training opportunities for students from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This project aims to advance the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, by contributing to efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict by increasing women's participation in negotiation and mediation processes. The Tomorrow's Leaders Gender Scholar (TLS) program enables students to increase their knowledge, capacity, and willingness to act in accordance with the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (WPS) which aims to promote the meaningful inclusion of women in processes to prevent, mitigate, resolve, and recover from deadly conflict or disaster, and the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) which advances economic security for women and girls by increasing their access to resources, services, and leadership opportunities and by addressing the barriers that limit their ability to participate fully in the economy. Eligible students are currently enrolled, academically qualified, and demonstrate financial need in accordance with university's policies. Benefitting students may be from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, and West Bank and Gaza.

The primary objective of the Tomorrow's Leaders program, of which TLS is a component, is to build a cadre of leaders who are civic-minded, well-educated, and professionally skilled to become the community, business, and national leaders of the future. The program intends to nurture leadership skills and the spirit of civic engagement and volunteerism among participating students at U.S.-accredited institutions in Egypt and Lebanon.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to a 2014 analysis by the American Association of University Professors, integration of gender studies in higher education increases the attention given to social, political, and economic interests and outcomes; promotes understanding of personal and social values, and intellectual

merit; provides resources for women in the STEM pipeline to have broader impact; promotes leadership and mentoring to benefit the campus community; identifies institutional problems involving equity and recommend solutions; and helps institutions retain and advance women and improve institutional reputations. Gender studies students frequently develop skills that cut across a variety of fields (business, finance, public policy, literature, etc.), magnifying the impact of these benefits beyond participating students. The promotion of gender equity and inclusion in higher education encourages participation of women in education and the workforce which is strongly linked to economic growth.

NEA seeks to expand opportunities to incorporate gender studies in the teaching and research of various fields of study at the undergraduate level. Successful applicants shall identify gender-focused courses in which undergraduate students can enroll to fulfill this requirement.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful application will result in:

1. Improved capacity of higher-education institutions to streamline gender in curriculum design in an effort to build a culture of inclusiveness.
2. Increased student knowledge and awareness of women's contributions to preventing, mitigating, and resolving conflict, which should be reflected in their white papers.
3. Increased student knowledge of gender mainstreaming and gender disparities, as well as to develop their skills to advocate for policy reforms that prioritize inclusivity to promote an enabling environment for women's success in the workforce, leadership positions, and policy-making arenas.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

The Tomorrow's Leaders Gender Scholar (TLS) program enables students to increase their knowledge, empathy, and willingness to act in accordance

with the WPS and the GEEA initiatives. ***Applicants must address the following requirements in their application:***

1. Eligible students are:
 - a. Currently enrolled in a four-year program at an American university in Egypt and/or Lebanon; and
 - b. Able to demonstrate financial need in accordance with university's policies; and
 - c. Academically qualified (*e.g.*, not on probation or enrolled in a major outside the scope of the Tomorrow's Leaders program); and
 - d. May be from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, and West Bank and Gaza.
2. Students will receive full tuition for each semester in which they enroll in one gender studies course, for up to two semesters (up to 18 credit hours per semester). Students must have a minimum of two remaining semesters to graduate. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA during the two semesters in which they enroll as TLS scholars. Applications must describe how the applicant will monitor and measure student academic and extracurricular progress in addition to overall wellbeing.
3. Students must participate in an additional activity or short-term project where students can promote and advocate for gender equality. The applicant must outline how they will support students in identifying these types of activities in their communities.
4. Students must write one paper each semester they are enrolled in the TLS program and complete pre- and post-tests to assess their awareness of gender issues and the value of WPS initiatives and relevance to their communities.
5. The applicant must outline the mentorship opportunities for TLS scholars on gender research and paper writing.
6. Students and faculty will collaborate to publish reflections from this opportunity in a blog, a special issue of *al-Raida*, or other journals.
7. Implementing partners must develop measures by which the change in students' attitudes towards gender issues is assessed.

8. Implementing partners will coordinate with the other universities in the region that participate in this initiative.

Integration into the Tomorrow's Leaders Program: The application must describe how the program will integrate TLS scholars into the larger TL community.

Plan for Annual Student Satisfaction Survey: To ensure student satisfaction and quality control, the applicant must administer an annual student satisfaction survey to assess the quality of the extracurricular trainings and the quality of the civic engagement courses.

- Surveys must be co-designed with NEA/AC and other program partners, and findings, including the raw data, must be shared with NEA/AC.
- A third party may be contracted, if approved in advance by NEA/AC, to administer this survey.

Calendar for Orientation, Closing Ceremony, Workshops, and Trainings: Applications must include a sample plan and calendar for any orientations, closing ceremonies, workshops, and trainings that are planned for the students each semester.

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

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;

- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

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

D. GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION INTEGRATION

NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address intersectional gender and inclusion considerations, ensuring that individuals of all genders and diverse backgrounds benefit from the support of the program, to the extent feasible, and that gender and inclusion awareness is a built-in component of project activities. This should be documented through gender and social inclusion analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender and inclusion gaps and propose activities to address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender and inclusion gaps will enhance the project's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programming should view the training video located here:

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

E. DEFINITIONS

The following are **definitions** of activities accepted under this announcement:

Diversity:

The term “diversity” means the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of a community.

Equity:

The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as ethnic minorities, and indigenous persons, members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Inclusion:

The term “inclusion” means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of persons of all backgrounds.

Accessibility:

The term “accessibility” means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can full and independently use them.

Underserved communities:

The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied the full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a Logic Model and a Theory of Change/Program Logic statement to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives, with particular attention to how your approach will reach individuals of diverse backgrounds relevant to your specific context. The logic model and Theory of Change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II. Applicants shall also provide an illustrative Results

Monitoring Plan (RMP) to describe how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives of the proposed project. This includes disaggregation of indicators relevant to the specific sub-populations you intend to serve. Please see Section VI below for more information.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC program and Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) teams to create a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) based on the proposed Logic Model to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators – which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project’s design – and assess the results of the project’s success in meeting expected outcomes.

All projects funded as a result of this NOFO will be required to complete a final evaluation of the project at the end of the period of performance with support from the NEA/AC M&E team. Selected applicants are required to have project information available for up to three years after the project closeout for the NEA/AC team to evaluate long-term outcomes.

Below is a list of U.S. Department of State standard development indicators for foreign assistance that are commonly used for measuring and reporting program results. Not all indicators below will be applicable to the proposed project, though the applicant is encouraged to use them where relevant in the development of the Logic Model and associated RMP. NEA/AC’s MEL team will work with the successful applicant on finalizing indicators as part of a RMP that will be utilized for the negotiated award.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:

Cooperative Agreement

Estimated Number of Awards:	3
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$15,000,000
Estimated Award Ceiling:	\$3,000,000
Estimated Award Floor:	\$1,000,000
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged; NOT Required
Estimated Length of Project Period:	12-24 Months

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately a total of \$3,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately three awards will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to **12-24 Months**, depending on the activities and countries proposed. The estimated start date for this project is August 1, 2023

NEA/AC reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

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

Incremental Funding

NEA/AC intends to provide up to \$15,000,000 in total funding over a five-year period. Funding for this award will be provided on an incremental basis subject to the availability of funds and successful performance. NEA/AC

reserves the right to change the funding amounts, period of performance, and terms of the Award as a result of U.S. Government requirements, Recipient performance, project results, and the availability of funds. The Recipient will be notified in writing should such changes occur.

The resulting award will use an incremental funding mechanism and will only fund the first increment in the initial award. Up to \$3,000,000 is available for the first increment of funding (ceiling amount). It is estimated that the first increment will provide funding for the initial 12 months of the award (anticipated: August 1, 2023 to September 1, 2024), and the second increment will provide funding for an additional 12 months (anticipated: August 1, 2024 to September 1, 2025) for a one-year period of performance. The second increment of funding is contingent upon the availability of funds and will be awarded at NEA/AC's discretion.

Special instructions regarding incremental funding:

Please provide a complete proposal that includes total project funding. The proposal narrative and budget should clearly specify the activities, budget breakdown, and timeframes for each funding increment. Additionally, the applicant should ensure that the project is severable after the completion of the first increment. The proposal should clearly demonstrate the value delivered at the end of the first increment which could stand on its own merits should funding for a second increment be unavailable.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

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

NEA/AC Responsibilities

- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;

- Collaboration in assessing progress and identifying issues that might affect the success of the program;
- Collaboration in determining selection criteria for beneficiaries;
- Collaboration in determining corrective actions, when necessary;
- Approval of key personnel and any subsequent changes in the positions during the life of the award;
- Review of all syllabi;
- Approval of annual program eligibility requirements;
- Approval of student selections;
- Facilitation and coordination with the U.S. Embassies as needed.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

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

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

Eligible American universities in Egypt and Lebanon must have institutional accreditation and maintain this accreditation throughout the course of the project. Eligible universities must include in its annexes proof of accreditation.

Eligible applicants include only those organizations that received an invitation to apply to this announcement. **Any organization that did not receive an invitation to apply will be deemed ineligible and will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.**

NEA/AC is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

NEA/AC strongly encourages applications from organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region. International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners may be among the elements of evaluation for this competition.

A.1. Prime Applicant

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

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Have demonstrable previous experience working with inclusive and diverse populations. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Demonstrate the ability to advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) through a project team inclusive of individuals from the MENA with previous experience managing Tomorrow's Leaders Program in the region reflected at all levels of project management.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.

A.2. Local Partners

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. **In particular, NEA/AC strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations**

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

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

UEI Number

All applicants must have a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number.

On and after April 4, 2022, entities can register in SAM.gov and will be assigned their Unique Entity ID (SAM) within SAM.gov. Entities will no longer obtain or use a UEI (DUNS) for entity registration or reporting.

System for Award Management (SAM)

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

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

To create a new SAM account, go to <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account. The CAGE code will be issued by SAM.gov. Overseas entities must request a NCAGE code at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/request-new-cage>.

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

Note: Obtaining an active SAM.gov registration may take **12 - 15 business days** to complete the process of creating an account in the system.

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Cost-Sharing or Matching

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

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

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may

submit only one application [describe any other parameters to how many and how applicants can submit to the opportunity – e.g., each priority area and applicants must identify which priority area the application addresses]. Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

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

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424 and SF424a)

Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding.

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

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 15 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission

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

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, “...key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award.” The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic Statement

Applicants shall provide a Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic statement to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated

objectives, with particular attention to how your approach will reach individuals of diverse backgrounds relevant to your specific context. A Theory of Change/Program Logic statement describes how and why a program is expected to achieve its stated outcomes using if-then-because language. If submitted, findings from the Gender & Inclusion Analysis (see A.2. Optional Documents) should be clearly addressed in the program design and Logic Model. The Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2. NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

Results Monitoring Plan (RMP)

Applicants shall provide an illustrative Results Monitoring Plan (RMP). The RMP can be generated using the template in Appendix III. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The RMP shall be submitted as a **separate document and has no page limit.**

Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis

The gender and social inclusion analysis (not to exceed three (3) pages, preferably as a Word Document) provides a concise analysis of relevant gender norms, equity and equality for underserved communities and marginalized populations, power relations, and conflict dynamics in target countries. Potential domains of analysis include institutional practices and barriers, cultural norms, gender roles, access to and control over assets and resources, and patterns of decision-making. Applicants should briefly explain how they have integrated findings from their analysis into project design and/or other proposal documents, including a plan for regularly reviewing and updating the gender and social inclusion analysis with local partners/beneficiaries, and making any necessary adjustments to program implementation.

Project Timeline

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

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions

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

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.

OR

2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

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

3. TL Executive Director
4. TLS Academic Director
5. Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator
6. Gender Coordinator

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

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

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

A.2. Optional Documents

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

1. **Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent:** Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.
2. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
3. **Sustainability Plan:** The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in **Appendix 3**. Sustainability Plans may not exceed **2 pages**.
4. **Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary:** This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security

and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. This section **may not exceed 5 pages**.

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

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

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

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

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using SAMS Domestic. Applications will **NOT** be accepted from grants.gov. SAMS Domestic requires that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in Section V. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). Please allow sufficient time for entering the

application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.

SAMS Domestic

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

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

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

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on May 10, 2023 There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. AWARDS TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS OR FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

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

B. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

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

acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693136.pdf>

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

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

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

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (30 points)

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

- **Impact and Effectiveness:** The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results.
- **Timeframe:** The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- **Beneficiaries:** The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- **Milestones:** The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):** The applicant explains how monitoring, evaluation and learning activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them. Ideally, the applicant will have an embedded team member specialized in MEL that can offer regular program updates to NEA/AC and assist with adjusting the project in response.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning:** The applicant includes a final evaluation of the project at the completion of the award.

Project Design (40 points)

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

- **Responsiveness to NOFO:** Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- **Rationale:** To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- **Project Management:** Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation and closing.
- **Partnerships and Buy-ins:** The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies any local partners.

- **Feasibility:** The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- **Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process:** The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- **Duplication:** The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking, or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- **Contingency Plan:** The applicant articulates programming assumptions and potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- **Division of Labor:** The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- **Marginalized Populations:** The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.
- **Gender and Inclusion Considerations:** The applicant includes gender and inclusion analysis in the project narrative that identifies relevant gender and inclusion gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender and inclusion gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives and how the project will benefit individuals of all genders and diverse backgrounds.
- **Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic Statement:** The applicant details how the proposed Logic Model and Theory of Change/Program Logic statement clearly links project activities, outputs, and outcomes to objectives. If applicable, findings from the Gender and Inclusion Analysis are clearly addressed within the program design.
- **Results Monitoring Plan (RMP):** The applicant details how they intend to monitor project progress towards outputs, outcomes, and objectives. Indicators include relevant disaggregation to monitor program implementation for diverse populations.

- Program Logic: Is it theoretically sound? Do all elements of the logic model fit together showing plausible pathways to achieving project outcomes? Have all the key assumptions been identified and their potential influences described? Are the risks to implementation (external factors) fully accounted for and described?

Organizational Capacity (20 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., local government skills training).
- The applicant demonstrates experience working equitably with individuals of all genders and diverse backgrounds.
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed, in the proposed content area, and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project – whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer – demonstrating that the project will be sufficiently staffed but will avoid redundancy or duplication of effort.

- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.
- The applicant convincingly details how it will incorporate Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles in its approach to staffing.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

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

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by June 21, 2023 Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by

an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

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

Maktabat: Recipients will be required to submit to MEPI all materials developed under awards for the training of participants. These documents (including but not limited to manuals, curriculums, videos, websites, and presentations used in workshops or distributed to participants) will be considered for inclusion in the Maktabat MEPI website: <http://maktabatmepi.org>. The Recipient should make every effort to submit

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

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

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

D. APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

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

Applicants proposing activities benefiting individuals from the **West Bank/Gaza** are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. Applicants may be asked to submit information about their company and its

principal personnel. Vetting information may also be required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted via email. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting, may be grounds for rejecting an application for award.

Applicants proposing activities benefiting individuals from Syria are advised that successful passing of vetting to evaluate the risk that funds may benefit terrorists or their supporters is a condition of award. The Recipient and any sub-recipient will ensure that all activities covered under this agreement conform to Executive Order 13224, the Supplemental Appropriations of 2006, and other statutory and regulatory limitations on the provision of support or assistance to prohibited entities and individuals. In particular, the Recipient will take all necessary steps, including but not limited to the vetting of sub-recipient organizations and relevant entities and individuals, to ensure compliance with all statutes and regulations.

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

The Recipient will submit the DS Form 4184 Risk Analysis Information to the Risk Analysis and Management (RAM) Office providing information on key individuals as defined by form DS-4184 and for each key staff member or program personnel in the Recipient's organization, all sub-awards identified by DOS as presenting a risk of terrorist financing as well as appropriate beneficiaries as described in the official vetting guidance provided as part of this award. All individuals meeting these specifications, whether previously vetted or not, must be submitted. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer RAM usually requests the vetting information, via emails

to the Authorizing Official, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov>, via email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer. Questions regarding the form may be emailed to RAM@state.gov. Forms must be submitted no later than five business days after RAM provides the Authorizing Official (identified by the Grants Officer) with a username and password for the secure portal.

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

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

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

N/A

F. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity.

Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the

sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC when negotiating an award.

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to follow MEPI social media guidelines for any and all online presences related to the project. Grantees will be expected to tag @USMEPI in all social media posts and utilize the official hashtag #MEPI for any social media posts in Arabic or English. Grantees will be expected to highlight MEPI online and share as many MEPI stories as possible, including demonstrating how each MEPI programs strive to achieve its assistance objectives of participatory governance and economic reform.

G. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

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

H. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

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

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

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

Grants Management Specialist

Gina Riad

nea-grants@state.gov

All questions and a notification of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by **April 17, 2023** at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

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

The intent to apply will be binding.

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to <https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

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

XI. DISCLAIMER

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