

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

Funding Opportunity Title: International Women’s Film Festivals
Announcement Type: Grant
Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-18-AW-002-SCA-03122018
Deadline for Applications: May 14, 2018 (11:59 p.m., U.S. Eastern Time)
Award Ceiling: \$250,000
CFDA Number: 19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for
Afghanistan and Pakistan
Program Office: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul,
Afghanistan

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or international 1-606-545-5035.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Karen Brown**, Grants Management Officer, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at KabulPASProposals@state.gov (*preferred method of communication*).

IMPORTANT SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All application materials must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Application materials submitted via other means such as email will **not** be accepted.

Registration at several different sites is required to be able to submit an application via www.grants.gov. The entire registration process can require **up to five weeks** for the registration to be validated and confirmed. **Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the application deadline.**

Thorough instructions on the application process are available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html> (for the DUNS number application, NCAGE number application, and registration with SAM) and at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> (for registration with www.grants.gov as an Authorized Organization Representative). For questions relating to Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or international 1-606-545-5035. Please note, KabulPASProposals@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov, DUNS, NGAGE, or SAM. Please refer to the contact information for these organizations/processes provided in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, is pleased to announce an open competition for eligible organizations to submit applications to carry out two annual international women's film festivals. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Executive Summary

Based on funding availability, the proposed grant will support two annual international women's film festivals featuring films from Afghanistan and around the world. To qualify for submission, films should address women's lives and the issues confronting them, or their producers or directors should be women. The proposed festivals will provide talented Afghan professionals in cinema with an opportunity to engage with their international counterparts, celebrate and elevate women's roles and representation in film, mobilize public opinion regarding violations of women's rights, and provide a platform for young filmmakers to share their stories of Afghanistan with an international audience. The festivals will provide an artistic platform for the presentation of work by and about women and will include panel discussions with actors and directors, workshops, and cultural performances.

PAS intends to issue an award for a period of 24 months (base period) with an option for one additional 12-month period (option period one).

Background

Under Taliban rule, cinemas across Afghanistan were attacked, and many films were burned. The Taliban forbade the viewing of television and films, and cinemas across the country were abandoned and fell into a state of disrepair. While Afghan cinema has slowly begun to re-emerge, cinemas remain male-dominated spaces, where the majority of movies shown are Bollywood films from Pakistan or India. There are very few public cinemas where women or young children can enjoy a movie free of harassment. Moreover, Afghan women working professionally in filmmaking face major institutional hurdles, including social stigma and censorship.

Goals

The goals of this project are to:

1. **Advocate and promote women's empowerment** through two annual film festivals and a complementary workshop series.
2. **Strengthen ties between Afghan filmmakers and their global counterparts** through exchanges of information, experiences, and expertise.
3. **Promote economic growth and development** by strengthening local capacity of Afghan filmmakers through skills development and training.

Objectives

1. **Manage film festivals:** The grantee will be responsible for all logistical aspects of organizing and managing two annual international women's film festivals, including:
 - Identifying for two consecutive years an annual cohort of 25-50 film submissions from around the world

- To qualify for submission, films should address women’s lives and the issues confronting them, or their producers or directors should be women.
- Selected films should include a range of short to feature-length films.
- Securing appropriate venues
- Providing all required audio-visual support
- Ensuring a minimum viewership of 2,000 guests

2. **Develop a workshop series:** The grantee will be responsible for all logistical and technical aspects of conducting a series of professional workshops and panel discussions to complement each of the two annual film festivals. Responsibilities include:

- Securing workshop venues, trainers, and participants
- Providing all required audio-visual support
- Identifying and securing qualified trainers and providing all logistics for them, including travel and accommodation

The subject of the workshops and discussions might include but are not limited to:

- The future of the film industry in Afghanistan
- The art of filmmaking for social change
- Ethical challenges in documentary filmmaking
- Filmmaking craft (directing, cinematography, editing)
- The business of making films

3. **Manage a *grand finale* film screening and award ceremony:** For each annual film festival, the grantee will be responsible for organizing an event in which the short-listed films will be screened and judged. The grantee will be responsible for:

- Organizing a judging panel and securing the attendance of at least one high-profile judge who is active in or supportive of women’s issues
- Identifying and securing an emcee
- Providing stage, seating, lights, and all necessary audio-visual equipment
- Providing prizes for the winning filmmaking teams
- Coordinating with PAS for media coverage of the event

4. **Develop a traditional media and/or social media plan for amplification and advertisement of the program activities and outcomes:** The grantee should submit a media plan to amplify the project.

5. **Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan:** The grantee should develop a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan for all components of the project. Plans should include details on obtaining participant feedback and outcomes.

6. **Develop a clear plan for managing event security:** The plan should describe the measures the recipient will implement to ensure the safety and security of

event participants. The plan should include contingency planning in the event of security threats.

Proposals should include:

- A detailed implementation plan for carrying out the objectives outlined above. This plan must include a proposed calendar detailing a timeline of screenings, workshops, and locations that shows a thorough understanding of the project’s objectives and also indicates specifics such as proposed partner institutions
- A detailed monitoring and evaluation plan, including methodology, indicators, and how activities and events will be recorded
- A detailed plan for managing event security, including detailed contingency planning

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base period, plus one additional option period. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base period program, with the understanding that the program design, duration, and number of beneficiaries would be similar when/if the subsequent option period is exercised. PAS will conduct a performance evaluation/review to determine if an option period will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of the option period.

The safety and security of all participants and activities under this project are the sole responsibility of the award recipient. Due to the changing nature of security in Afghanistan, PAS requires all applicants to include in their proposal a security plan to accompany appropriate programmatic elements within their proposal. Security packages may include, but are not limited to, secure transportation, lodging, and emergency evacuation for personnel living or working in Afghanistan. Reasonable costs for necessary security are allowable expenses and may be included in the proposed budget. If a security company is engaged and funded under the award, it must be registered by the government of Afghanistan to operate in Afghanistan. Additionally, applicants should submit their organizational policy for working within high-risk environments, which should include security operational procedures.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Number of Awards Anticipated: 1

Anticipated Award Amount:

Base Period: The floor for the base period is set at \$150,000. The ceiling for the base period is set at \$250,000.

Option Period One: The floor for option period one is set at \$75,000. The ceiling for option period one is set at \$125,000.

Funding Type: This project will be funded by Economic Support Funds, authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act, and is subject to the statutory limitations of such funding.

Anticipated Performance Period:

Base Period: 24 months

Option Period One: 12 months

Anticipated Program Start Date: July 2018

Potential for Option Years: Yes. PAS will entertain an application for continuation of the program beyond the initial base period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State. PAS intends to award a grant for a period of 24 months (base period) with an option for one additional 12-month period (option period one). PAS will notify the recipient of its intention to exercise or not to exercise the option period approximately 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current award period after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance.

Anticipated Funding Instrument Type: Grant

This NOFO is soliciting applications for the specific project outlined in Section A. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects will not be considered under this NOFO.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligibility is open to all types of applicants except for individuals. Please refer to Section D for funding restrictions. Organizations may sub-award/contract with other entities, but only one entity may be the prime recipient of the award. When sub-awarding/contracting with other entities, the responsibilities of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal.

Cost Sharing

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this funding opportunity.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must have a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet.
- Applicants must have a NATO CAGE/NCAGE.
- Applicants must have and maintain an active [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application under consideration by a federal awarding agency. Note that SAM registration must be renewed annually. The U.S. Department of State may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. The Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use this determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.
- Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in SAM is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

- There is no limit on the number of applications an entity may submit for this NOFO.
- Previous federal award recipients that are not/were not in compliance with the terms of the award, including the financial and program reporting requirements, are not eligible for an award under this NOFO. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure it is in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and Office of Management and Budget guidance and requirements.
- 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 organization and its principle personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by the Department as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at <https://ramportal.state.gov> or via email to RAM@state.gov. Questions about 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 your proposal.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO document and any amendments can be found at www.grants.gov and <https://af.usembassy.gov/embassy/kabul/sections-offices/pdprp/>. If you require special accommodation to access any information contained in this announcement, please contact Karen Brown at KabulPASProposals@state.gov (preferred method of communication), +93 (0) 700 10 3812, or 1-301-490-1042 x3812.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Applications that fail to furnish all information or comply with the stated requirements will not be considered for an award.

Applicants must set forth accurate and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the U.S. government is prescribed in 18 U.S.C.1001.

Applicants must 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 Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
- All materials are submitted in one of the following formats: .xls, .xlsx, .doc, .docx, .pdf, or .jpeg. Other file types will likely not be reviewed.
- File attachment names are in a format acceptable in Grants.gov. Grants.gov does not accept all UTF-8 special characters in file attachment names. Please note the file name restrictions at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Applicants are required to include the following documents and information:

1. Mandatory application forms

- **SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance – Organizations** available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>
- **SF424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs** available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. See Annex 1, Guidelines for Budget Submissions, for further information.
- **SF424B Assurances for Non-Construction Programs** available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>

2. Summary Page: 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 (30 pages maximum): The proposal should contain sufficient information, such that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant plans 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 program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization Applying:** A description of past and present operations showing ability to carry out the program, including information on previous grants from the U.S. Embassy, U.S. government agencies, and other donors.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed.
- **Program 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.
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities, how they will be implemented, and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Program 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 Program Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** At a minimum the Project Director position will be designated key personnel for this project. Applicants may propose other positions as key personnel that

they consider to be key to the project's success. Names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. Communicate what proportion of their time will be devoted to this program.

- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) 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?

The M&E plan is a systematic and objective approach or process for monitoring project performance toward its objectives over time. The plan must consist of indicators with baselines and targets, means for tracking critical assumptions, plans for managing the data collection process, and regular collection of data. The indicators in the plan should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-framed). Applicants must include a detailed M&E plan for the base period and should also describe how the plan would change/be updated should the option periods be exercised.

The M&E plan for this project must include the following:

- Number of participants at each workshop
- Number of viewers of each film, as well as festival totals
- Survey of workshop participants to assess workshop quality and effectiveness
- Qualitative assessments from participants in both workshops and screenings regarding the overall program
- Detailed analysis of traditional and social media coverage of and reactions to the festival, with a particular focus on themes of women's rights in Afghanistan, including responses from media outlets, government officials, and civil society leaders

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include additional indicators they determine will assess project impact.

- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan to ensure that the project benefits will continue to be realized on a long-term basis after the conclusion of the period of performance of the award.

4. Detailed Line-Item Budget: Applications will not be considered complete unless they include budgets that respond to the NOFO guidelines. Complete budgets must include detailed line items outlining specific cost requirements for proposed activities. Applicants must adhere to the regulations found in [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). 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 30 and Part 31.

Applicants must include in their submission a detailed line-item budget for the base period and a budget category summary budget for the option period. Upon request, the recipient will be expected to present a detailed line-item budget for the option period.

Applications must include a detailed line-item budget (in Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet format) that delineates funds requested from the Embassy and cost-share (see below for more information on budget format). Costs must be in U.S. dollars. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. See Annex 1 for a description of the types of costs that should be included in each category.

Additional Budget Considerations

- Applicants are advised that the Department of State will utilize Afghanistan's National Technical Assistance (NTA) scale to determine if salaries proposed in an applicant's budget are reasonable. Please refer to this website <http://www.budgetmof.gov.af/index.php/en/nta/about-nta> for information and guidance on the NTA.
- Please note the audit requirements for Department of State awards in the Standard Terms and Conditions <https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm> and 2 CFR 200, Subpart F – Audit Requirements. The cost of the required audits may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award OR included in the organization's established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.
- Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). A copy of the NICRA should be provided with the proposal package. If sub-grantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA, and it should also be submitted with the proposal package. Information on how to obtain a NICRA rate is listed in Section G. **If a non-profit organization does not have a NICRA and the proposal budget has a line item for indirect cost charges, those indirect charges may not exceed 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs.** The 10% maximum does not apply to for-profit entities. For-profit entities that do not have a NICRA but do have a formally established General and Administrative (G&A) rate may apply the G&A rate. For-profit entities that do not have a formally established G&A rate should allocate indirect costs to the appropriate direct cost category.
- Grant funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.

5. Budget Justification Narrative: The purpose of the budget justification narrative is to supplement the information provided in the budget spreadsheet by justifying how the budget cost elements are necessary to implement project objectives and accomplish the project goals. The budget justification narrative is a tool to help PAS staff fully understand the budgetary needs of the applicant and is an opportunity to provide descriptive information about the requested costs beyond the constraints of the budget template. Together, the detailed budget spreadsheet, the budget justification narrative, and the SF-424A should provide a complete financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed project plan and should be directly relatable to the specific project components described in the applicant's proposal.

6. Required Attachments:

- 1-page CV or resume for each key personnel proposed for the program. For this program, the Program Director is considered key personnel. If an individual for this position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description identifying the qualifications and skills required for the position in lieu of a resume. Applicants should also include CVs for any additional positions they propose designating as key personnel.
- Letters of intent from program partners (including sub-recipients and contractors) describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a .pdf file.
- Security plan
- Organizational policy for working in high-risk environments

Please note:

- Other items NOT required for submission but which may be requested if your application is selected to move forward in the review process include:
 - Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
 - Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
 - Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas
 - Completion of a pre-award organizational information sheet to determine what financial controls and standard operating procedures an organization uses to procure goods and services, hire staff and track time and attendance, pay for grant-related travel, and identify other financial transactions that may be necessary to undertake the activities in your application
 - The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.
- Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English. Budgets should be submitted in U.S. dollars, and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Submission Dates and Times

Application Deadline: All applications must be received by **May 14, 2018**, at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, officials will utilize the time stamp provided by Grants.gov. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above, their applications will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Question Deadline: For questions on this solicitation, please contact Karen Brown, Grants Management Officer, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at: KabulPASProposals@state.gov. Questions must be received on or before **April 5, 2018**, at 11:59 p.m., U.S. Eastern Time. Applicants should not expect an email response to questions, as

questions received before the deadline will be answered in a question and answer document and posted at <http://www.grants.gov> and <https://af.usembassy.gov/embassy/kabul/sections-offices/pdprp/>.

Submission Process

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic delivery via www.grants.gov

PAS is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. **PAS requires applicants to submit their applications electronically through Grants.gov. Applications submitted via any other means such as email will not be accepted.**

To submit an application via Grants.gov, applicants must have

1. A valid DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=81407B1F03F2BDB123DD47D19158B75F>. Instructions on obtaining a DUNS number can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>.
2. A NATO CAGE/NCAGE. If your organization does not have a CAGE/NCAGE, visit <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx> to start the process. For more information on NATO CAGE/NCAGE, see <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>.
 - For NCAGE help from within the United States, call 1-888-227-2423.
 - For NCAGE help from outside the United States, call 1-269-961-7766.
 - Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems with obtaining an NCAGE code.
3. An active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application under consideration by a federal awarding agency. For information on how to register with SAM, see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html> and <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx#show-video-popup>. Note that SAM registration must be renewed annually.
4. A Grants.gov account. Instructions on how to register for a Grants.gov account can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>.

The registration process can take up to five weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not affect your ability to meet required submission deadlines.

Grants.gov has a full set of instructions on how to apply for opportunities on its website at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

Grants.gov does not accept all UTF-8 special characters in file attachment names. Please note the file name restrictions at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package 24-48 hours prior to the submission deadline to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that disrupt the initial application submission.

Grants.gov provides customer support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and via email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact Karen Brown in PAS at kabulpasproposals@state.gov. Please note, PAS cannot assist with questions on or technical issues with www.grants.gov. Applicants experiencing issues with Grants.gov should contact the Grants.gov Help Desk.

Timely receipt requirements and proof of timely submission

All applications must be received by the deadline communicated in this NOFO. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicants should print this receipt and save it as proof of timely submission.

When PAS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt to the email address of the Authorized Organization Representative. Proof of timely submission shall be the date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding.

Applicants using dial-up connections should be aware that transmission should take some time before Grants.gov receives it. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission message. The Grants.gov Contact Center reports that some applicants abort the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application. Uploading and transmitting many files, particularly electronic forms with associated XML schemas, will take some time to be processed.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

Funding Restrictions

- **Construction:** This award does not allow for construction activities or costs.
- **Pre-award Costs:** Any costs incurred prior to the award start date in the Federal Notice of Award are incurred at the recipient's own risk. Approval of these costs requires authorization of the Grants Officer to be considered allowable, will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will only be authorized in extraordinary circumstances. Applicants should assume that any costs incurred before the start date on the Federal Notice of Award will not be authorized.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Selection Criteria

Applications submitted under this opportunity that comply with all the stated requirements and contain all the required elements will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria detailed below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project plan/approach and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Proposals will be selected for funding based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priority needs of PAS. Past performance on grants awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other U.S. government entities, or international donor agencies may also be considered.

PAS reviews all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with federal regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Department's Grants Division.

Selection criteria for this NOFO will include:

- 1. Quality and feasibility of the program idea (25 points):** The proposed project plan is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out; responds to the design outlined in the solicitation; and demonstrates originality. It is clearly and accurately written, substantive, and sufficiently detailed. The program plan adheres to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- 2. Ability to achieve program objectives (20 points):** Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and the program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. Objectives are reasonable and feasible. The application clearly demonstrates how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partner organizations are adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals.
- 3. Institution's record and capacity (20 points):** The application demonstrates that the organization has expertise in fields relevant to the program such as managing film

festivals and supporting women in the arts; has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds; has a solid and relevant institutional record, including successful programming; has responsible fiscal management involving complex budgets; and has the ability to comply with reporting requirements, especially for U.S. government grants. The application demonstrates experience in human resources and overseeing staffing. Past performance on grants awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other U.S. government entities, or international donor agencies may also be considered.

- 4. Monitoring and Evaluation (10 points):** The applicant describes its plan for monitoring and reporting project outcomes. The 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 application includes output and outcome indicators and effectively describes how and when those will be measured.
- 5. Cost-effectiveness (15 points):** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and supplies, are consistent with prevailing market rates in Afghanistan. All items are necessary, appropriate, and directly relatable to the project's goals and objectives. The budget justification narrative is detailed and clear. 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 sharing is not required. The Department of State will utilize the NTA scale to determine if salaries proposed in an applicant's budget are reasonable. Please refer to this website <http://www.budgetmof.gov.af/index.php/en/nta/about-nta> for information and guidance on the NTA.
- 6. Sustainability (10 points):** The application clearly communicates the applicant's strategy for ensuring that the project benefits will continue to be realized on a long-term basis after the conclusion of the period of performance of the award. The applicant presents a feasible approach to sustainability.

Review and Selection Process

It will take up to 90 days from the application deadline before an award or decline notice is sent from the Embassy to applicants. Due to the volume of proposals received, individual responses to requests for updates prior to the 90-day timeframe may not be returned until final review of proposals and issuance of an award is completed. PAS utilizes the following review and selection process:

After the NOFO closes, applications are reviewed for eligibility. Those applications found to be ineligible will be removed from the selection process. Applications found to be eligible will be forwarded to an Embassy review committee for consideration. An Embassy review committee will score eligible proposals based on the funding criteria provided in the NOFO. The top applicant(s) will go through additional vetting, risk assessments, and negotiations with a designated PAS representative. If and when the Grants Officer is satisfied, s/he will issue the award(s). Once a grant award(s) is made from this solicitation, those applicants whose proposals were not selected for funding will be notified via email. PAS will send such notifications to the

email address listed in box 8f of the applicant's SF424. Applicants should expect to be notified if their proposal has been selected for award within 90 days of the submission deadline.

Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIS)

For any federal award issued as a result of this NOFO, applicants are informed

- That the Department of State, prior to making a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313)
- That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM
- That the federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices: As described in Section E above, applicants selected to move forward in the review process will be notified via email to the address listed in Section 8f of the applicant's SF424; this email IS NOT an authorization to begin performance. The Grants Officer is the government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature through email transmission. The recipient may only incur obligations against the award beginning on the start date outlined in the DS-1909 award document that has been signed by the Grants Officer. See Section D for more information on pre-award costs.

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

- [2 CFR 200](#), [2 CFR 600](#), Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

Monitoring and Evaluation: In line with the Department of State's Evaluation Policy, PAS may include this award in its program monitoring and evaluation efforts. When applicable and feasible, the recipient shall cooperate with Grants Officer (GO) and Grants Officer Representative (GOR) requests to contribute data on specific performance measures and indicators; consider GO and GOR input on design and methodology of recipient-led monitoring and evaluation efforts; provide any monitoring and evaluation reports produced under the award to the GO and GOR for review; and incorporate the project into any third-party monitoring evaluation efforts that PAS may initiate.

Reporting Requirements:

- Recipients are required to submit quarterly (calendar year) program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress (narrative) and financial reports (SF-425) are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.
 - First Quarter (January 1 – March 31): Report due by April 30
 - Second Quarter (April 1 – June 30): Report due by July 30
 - Third Quarter (July 1 – September 30): Report due by October 30
 - Fourth Quarter (October 1 – December 31): Report due by January 30All reports are to be submitted electronically.

- Awardees that are deemed to be high risk will be held to special award conditions. Due to the challenging operating environment in Afghanistan, awards issued under this NOFO will be designated high risk. At a minimum, the recipient will be required to submit quarterly detailed financial reports in addition to the reports outlined in point 1 above. These reports must provide a line-item breakdown of costs incurred or paid (consistent with the recipient's accounting method) on the project, including cost share; should compare the amount incurred or paid (consistent with the recipient's accounting method) on each line-item and budget category to the amounts in the approved budget; and communicate the balance remaining in each line item and budget category. Recipients may also be required, upon request of the GO or GOR, to provide electronic copies of receipts or other supporting documentation (e.g., timesheets, travel documents) for costs incurred. The government may withhold 10% of the U.S. government total of the award until final reports have been reviewed and approved by the GO. The recipient may be required to pay all salaries supported by the grant via electronic funds transfer. Other special award conditions may also be included if deemed appropriate by the Grants Officer.
- The awardee must provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government-provided equipment using the SF-428 form.
- Awardees are required to comply with the following **Special Provision for Performance in a Designated Combat Area:**

All recipient personnel deploying to areas of combat operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense under federal assistance awards over \$150,000 or performance over thirty (30) days must register in the Department of Defense-maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register in SPOT before deployment, or if already in the designated operational area, register upon becoming an employee under the assistance award and maintain current data in SPOT. Information on how to register in SPOT is available from your Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are not performing private security functions must account for personnel within the SPOT system anonymously through the use of the aggregate count functionality. This includes U.S. citizens, third-country nationals

(TCNs), and locally hired Iraqi or Afghan personnel, except as noted in the following paragraph.

Recipients utilizing personnel who are performing a private security function; are performing duties as a translator or interpreter; require access to U.S. facilities, services, or support; or desire consideration for refugee or special immigrant status under the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007 (subtitle C of title XII of Public Law 110–181) must be entered into SPOT individually with all required personal information. If a locally hired Iraqi or Afghan national falls into one of these categories, the recipient must enter all of the required identification data into SPOT.

When the recipient is ready to enter U.S. citizens, TCNs, and/or locally hired individuals using the “Aggregate Count” method, the recipient will notify the Grants Officer, who will contact the Department SPOT Program Manager (A/LM/AQM) to obtain the “Aggregate Count” template. The recipient will complete the “Aggregate Count” template and return it to the SPOT Program Manager, who will ensure that aggregate counts are loaded into SPOT. The recipient’s SPOT Administrator is responsible for updating the aggregate locally hired national count on a quarterly basis by providing updated information via the “Aggregate Count” template to the GO/GOR for each award, who will forward to the Department SPOT Program Manager for SPOT entry.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

In a designated area of combat operations, the term PSC includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, or property of a recipient or sub-recipient at any level or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipients of federal assistance awards are advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the GOR. Any exclusion to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the GOR. Recipients of federal assistance awards are also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time in response to changing circumstances.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to these policies and procedures are considered to be a material requirement of their award.

Recipients of federal assistance awards are reminded that only the Grants Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO but shall advise the Grants Officer and the GOR of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

- For questions on the requirements of this solicitation, contact Karen Brown, Grants Management Officer, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: KabulPASProposals@state.gov (*preferred method of communication*)
Phone: within Afghanistan: 0700107127; from the United States: 1-301-490-1042 x3812. Note: PAS cannot assist with technical issues with Grants.gov.
- To inquire about the process for obtaining a NICRA, contact AQM-NICRA@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Disclaimers

The federal government is not obligated to make any federal award as a result of this announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government; neither 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. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling and the right to make an award below the floor outlined in this NOFO. PAS reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the application deadline.

If a proposal is funded, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance, including exercising option periods, is at the total discretion of the Department of State.

The issuance of an award under this NOFO is subject to funds availability. Awards may be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul by Department of State central budget authorities.

Applicants should be familiar with the U.S. Department of State's guidance on travel to Afghanistan, available at <http://travel.state.gov>.

ANNEX 1 BUDGET CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

The following provides a description of the types of costs to be included in each budget category.

- **Personnel** – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. For clarity, please list the annual salary of each position, percentage of time, and number of months devoted to the project (e.g., Administrative Director: \$30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $\$30,000/12 = \$2,500 \times 25\% \times 8.5 \text{ months} = \$5,312$).

Applicants are advised that the Department of State will utilize the National Technical Assistance (NTA) scale to determine if salaries proposed in an applicant's budget are reasonable. Please refer to this website

<http://www.budgetmof.gov.af/index.php/en/nta/about-nta> for information and guidance on the NTA.

- **Fringe Benefits** – State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee – specify type and rate.
- **Travel** – Staff and any participant travel
 - International Airfare – list the route, number of trips, and cost per ticket.
 - In-country Travel – list the route and indicate the means of transportation, number of trips, and cost per trip.
 - Travel in the United States, if any – list the route and indicate the means of transportation, number of trips, and cost per trip.
 - Per diem: Includes lodging, meals, and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available from the following website: http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates; however, institutions may use per diem rates lower than official government rates.

Please note that all travel, where applicable, must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.

- **Equipment** – Please include equipment required, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.
- **Supplies** – The specifications and cost of each type of supply proposed (e.g., desktop computer with pre-installed software) must be included in this section. List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the award) for office supplies (e.g., office paper and ink: $\$50/\text{month} \times 50\% = \$25/\text{month} \times 12 \text{ months}$).
- **Contractual** –

- **Sub-awards and contracts** – For each sub-grant/contract, please provide a detailed line-item breakdown for specific services. In the sub-grant/contract budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment, direct costs, fringe benefits, and indirect costs as required of the direct applicant.
 - **Consultant Fees** – For example, lecture fees and honoraria for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x \$150/day x 2 days).
- **Construction** – For this solicitation, construction costs are not applicable.
 - **Other Direct Costs** – Other costs directly associated with the program that do not fit in the other categories. For instance, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained. These will vary depending on the nature of the project, and the inclusion of each should be justified in the budget justification narrative. Examples may include photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, or printing (e.g., Telephone: \$50/month x 50% = \$25/month x 12 months).
 - **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. Organizations claiming indirect costs should have an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). A copy of the NICRA should be provided with the proposal package. If sub-grantees are claiming indirect costs, they should have an established NICRA, and it should also be submitted with the proposal package. Information on how to obtain a NICRA rate is listed in Section G. **If a non-profit organization does not have a NICRA, and the proposal budget has a line item for indirect cost charges, those indirect charges may not exceed 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs.** The 10% maximum does not apply to for-profit entities. For-profit entities that do not have a NICRA but do have a formally established General and Administrative (G&A) rate may apply the G&A rate. For-profit entities that do not have a formally established G&A rate should allocate indirect costs into the appropriate direct cost category.