Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for Applications

Updated: August 2016

PLEASE REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT WHEN PREPARING AN APPLICATION.

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SECTION I: Eligibility

A. Eligibility Requirements

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) welcomes applications in response to DRL Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) from:
- U.S.-based and foreign-based non-profit organizations/non-government organizations (NGO)
- Public international organizations;
- Private, public, or state institutions of higher education; and
- For-profit organizations or businesses.

DRL's preference is to work with **non-profit entities**; however, there may be occasions when a for-profit entity is best suited.

For-profit entities should be aware that their applications may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process, and that the Department of State generally prohibits profit under its assistance awards to for-profit or commercial organizations. 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 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Project income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the program's total allowable costs in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

Applicants must have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with thematic or in-country partners, entities and relevant stakeholders, including private sector partners and NGOs, and have **demonstrable experience** in administering successful, and preferably similar, projects. DRL encourages applications from foreign-based NGOs headquartered in the geographic regions/countries relevant to the applicable solicitation. DRL reserves the right to request additional background information on applicants who do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards, and these applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.

Applicants may **form consortia** and submit a combined proposal. However, one organization should be designated as the lead applicant with the other members as sub-award partners.

DRL is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. DRL welcomes applications irrespective of an applicant's race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status. DRL strongly encourages applications from organizations working with the most at risk and vulnerable communities, including women, youths, persons with disabilities, members of ethnic or religious minority groups, and LGBTI persons.

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility requirement.

B. <u>System for Award Management (SAM.gov)</u>

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the **System for Award Management (SAM)** is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB 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.

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as DUNS, and an active registration with the SAM before submitting an application. **DRL may <u>not</u> review applications from or make awards to applicants that have not completed all applicable UEI and SAM requirements**. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

Note: The process of obtaining a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.

- If you are **based in the United States** or pay employees within the United States, prior to registering in SAM you will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code.

- If you are based **outside of the United States** and do not pay employees within the United States, you do not need an EIN from the IRS. However, you will need a NATO CAGE (NCAGE) code before you can have an active registration in SAM.

All organizations must also continue to maintain active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by a Federal award agency. SAM requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DRL is ready to make an award, DRL may determine that the applicant is unqualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

For further guidance on the registration process, please see the SAM.gov Registration Guide on DRL's website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm. Please refer to 2 CFR 25.200 for additional information.

An exemption from these requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant is a foreign organization located outside of the United States without a UEI and the Department determines that acquiring one is impractical given the geographic location; or

- If an applicant's identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.

* Organizations requesting exemption from SAM.gov, NCAGE, and UEI requirements should email the point of contact in the solicitation. *If establishing your SAM.gov account as private rather than public view, please notify DRL at the time of submission.*

Note: Foreign organizations will be required to register with the NATO Support Agency (NSPA) to receive a NCAGE code in order to register in SAM. NSPA will forward your registration request to the applicable National Codification Bureau (NCB) if your organization is located in a NATO or Tier 2 Sponsored Non-NATO Nation. As of March 2016, NATO nations included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States of America; and Tier 2 nations included Australia, Austria, Brazil, Finland, Israel, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Serbia, and Singapore.

*NSPA and/or the appropriate NCB forwards all NCAGE code information to all Allied Committee 135 (AC/135) nations, which as of March 2016 also included Afghanistan, Argentina, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Montenegro, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, and the United Arab Emirates. **All organizations are strongly advised to take this into consideration when assessing whether registration may result in possible endangerment.***

C. <u>**Eligible Applications**</u>

Technically eligible applications are those that:

- Arrive electronically via GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov by the designated due date and time noted in the NOFO. If reasonable accommodations are granted for persons with disabilities or for security reasons, applications must still be received by DRL by the designated due date and time noted in the NOFO;

- Are in English and all costs are in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided. For any documents provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version. (Please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents);

- Heed all instructions contained in the NOFO and PSI, including length and completeness of application; and,

- Do not violate any of the guidelines stated in the NOFO and the PSI.

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all of the documents submitted in the grant application package are complete, accurate, and current. **DRL strongly encourages all applicants, especially foreign or first-time applicants, to submit applications before the designated due date to ensure that the application has been received and is complete**.

D. Format Requirements

To be considered, all application documents should adhere to the below formatting guidelines:

- All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper (U.S. letter size); and,
- All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10 point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

E. Application Requirements

Complete applications must include the following:

1) Completed and signed **SF-424**, **SF-424A**, and **SF-424B** forms. Please see SF-424 instructions below in Section 2A.

2) If your organization engages in lobbying the U.S. government or Congress, or pays for another entity to lobby on your behalf, the **SF-LLL** "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" form is also required (only if applicable). Please see SF-LLL guidance in Section 2B.

3) **Cover Page** (not to exceed one [1] page, preferably in Microsoft Word) that includes a table with the project title, target country/countries, project synopsis, and name and contact information for the application's main point of contact. Please see *Cover Page* section 2C below for a template and more details.

4) **Executive Summary** (not to exceed one [1] page, preferably in Microsoft Word) that outlines project goals, objectives, activities, etc.

5) **Table of Contents** (not to exceed one [1] page, preferably in Microsoft Word) listing all documents and attachments, with page numbers.

6) **Proposal Narrative** (not to exceed ten [10] pages, preferably in Microsoft Word). Please note the ten page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Cover Page, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to combine multiple documents in a single Word Document or PDF (i.e., Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file). Please see *Proposal Narrative Guidelines* in section 2D below for more details.

7) **Budget** (preferably as an Excel workbook) that includes three [3] columns containing the request to DRL, any cost sharing contribution, and the total budget. A summary budget should also be included using the OMB-approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample) in a separate tab. Costs must be in U.S. dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for subgrantees should be included in additional tabs within the Excel workbook (if available at the time of submission). Please see *Budget Guidelines* section 2E below for more information.

8) **Budget Narrative** (preferably as a Word Document) that includes substantive explanations and justifications for each line-item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. Please see *Budget Guidelines* section 2E below for more information.

9) Your organization's most recent A-133 **audit** (if applicable), F Audit, or standard audit. Please see *Audit* section 2F below for more information.

10) **Logic Model** (not to exceed two [2] pages, preferably in Microsoft Word). Please see *Logic Model* section 2G below for more information.

11) **Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative** (not to exceed two [2] pages). Please see *Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative* section 2H below for more information.

12) **Monitoring and Evaluation Performance Indicator Table** (not to exceed four [4] pages in Microsoft Word). Please see *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan* section 2H below for more information.

13) **Risk Analysis** (not to exceed one [1] page, preferably in Microsoft Word). Please see *Risk Analysis* section 2I below for more information.

14) **Key Personnel** (not to exceed one [1] page, preferably as a Word Document): Please include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.

15) **Timeline** (not to exceed one [1] page): The timeline of the overall proposal should include activities, evaluation efforts, and program closeout.

F. **Additional Application Documents**

Strong applications will also contain the following:
- Individual Letters of Support and/or Memorandum of Understanding Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the project implementation (e.g. from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

Please refer to the application checklist and sample templates when submitting your application: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm. The sample templates provided on the DRL website are suggested, but not mandatory.

DRL reserves the right to request additional documents not included in this PSI. Additionally, to ensure that all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the DRL Panel will review from the first page of each section up to the page limit and no further.

Note: If ultimately provided with a notification of intent to make a Federal award, applicants typically have two to three weeks to provide additional information and documents requested in the notification of intent. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent.

Additional Information Requested
Successful applicants must submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award will include:

- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file. (Please see *Budget Guidelines* section below for more information).
- Written responses and revised application documents addressing conditions and recommendations from the DRL Review Panel;
- Completion of the Department's Financial Management Survey, if receiving DRL funding for the first time;
- Submission of required documents to register in the Payment Management System managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, if receiving DRL funding for the first time (unless an exemption is provided);
- Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award.

SECTION II: guidelines for application components

A. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Regulations

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities.

The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipients under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made as part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

B. SF-424 Forms

Organizations must fill out, sign, and submit SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B forms as directed on GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov. **Please note that all communications regarding the application will be directed to the points of contact identified in the SF-424 forms**.

I. SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance: Please refer to the following guidelines as you fill out the SF-424 form.

1. Type of Submission: Application
2. Type of Application: New
3. Date Received: Leave blank. This will be automatically assigned.
4. Applicant Identifier: Leave blank
5. a. Federal Entity Identifier: Leave blank
   b. Federal Award Identifier: Leave blank
6. Date Received by State: Leave blank. This will be automatically assigned
7. State Application Identifier: Leave blank. This will be automatically assigned
8. a. Enter the legal name of the applicant organization. Do NOT list abbreviations or acronyms unless they are part of the organization's legal name.
   b. Employer/Taxpayer ID Number: Non-U.S. organizations enter 44-4444444 (no dash)
   c. Enter organizational UEI number (Unique Entity Identifier).
   d. Enter the address of the applicant
   e. Enter the name of the primary organizational unit (and department or division, if applicable) that will undertake the assistance activity, if applicable.
   f. Enter the name, title, and all contact information of the person to be contacted on all matters involving this application.
9. Select an applicant type (type of organization)
10. Enter: Department of State
11. The CFDA number is normally 19.345. However, please see the NOFO if another CFDA number should be used instead.

12. Enter the Funding Opportunity Number and title. This number will already be entered on electronic applications.
13. Enter the Competition Identification Number and title. This number will already be entered on electronic applications.
14. Areas Affected by Project: List the country or countries where project activities will take place in alphabetical order. For projects that will take place in more than one region enter "Global"
15. Enter the title of your proposed program (if necessary, delete pre-printed wording)
16. a. Congressional districts of Applicant and Program: If based in the U.S. please enter congressional district; if unknown or a foreign applicant, please enter "90"
    b. For congressional district of program, please enter "90"
17. Please refer to the NOFO for the estimated start date and enter your projected end date
18. a. Enter the amount requested for the project described in the proposal under "Federal"
    b. Enter any cost-share under "Applicant". Otherwise, use zeros.
19. Enter "c"
20. Select the appropriate box. If you answer "yes" to this question you will be required to provide an explanation.
21. Enter the name, title, and all contact information of the individual authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant organization.

II. SF-424A Budget Information: Please review the detailed instructions below BEFORE completing this form online.

Please note: the person who signs the 424A must have legal authority to do so on behalf of the organization.

Section A -- Budget Summary

Row 1:
  1a. This should be auto-populated as "DRL Grants Serviced by AQM." However, if it does not then please insert "DRL Grants Serviced by AQM"
  1b. This should auto-populate. If not, please see the NOFO for the CFDA number.
  1c. Leave blank.
  1d. Leave blank.
  1e. Enter the amount of federal funds you are requesting for this project
  1f. Enter the amount of any other funds you will receive towards this project
  1g. Enter the total cost of this project

Rows 2, 3, and 4 should be left blank.

Section B – Budget Categories

Enter total project costs in each category in Column 1. Columns 2, 3, and 4 should be left blank. In Column 5, the form should automatically show the sum.

6a-h. Enter the amount for each object class category (Include cost share).

6i. Enter the sum of 6a-6h

6j. Enter any indirect charges

6k. Enter the sum of 6i and 6j

7. Enter any program income that will be earned as a result of the project. If there is none, leave this section blank.

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

Only complete this section if your project includes applicant cost share or funds from other sources. (Cost share is not required)

8a. Under Grant Program enter: "DRL Grants Serviced by AQM"

8b. Enter your cost share amount

8c. Enter the amount of any other funding sources for this project

8d. Leave blank

8e. Enter the total amount for all non-federal resources (the form should automatically show this sum)

Rows 9, 10, and 11 should be left blank.

Section D – Forecasted Cash Needs

13. In the first column enter the amount of federal funds you are requesting for this project. This amount should equal the amount in Section A 1e.

14. In the first column enter the amount of any other funds you will receive towards this project. This amount should equal the amount in Section A 1f.

15. In the first column enter the sum of 13 and 14 (the form should automatically show this sum). This amount should equal the amount in Section A 1g.

Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project

Rows 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 should be left blank.

Section F – Other Budget Information

21. Enter: Direct Charges **–** Leave Blank

22. Enter: Indirect Charges – If Indirect Charges are shown in Section B 6, enter the type of Indirect Rate used (Provisional, Predetermined, Final, or Fixed)

23. Enter any comments

III. SF-424B Assurances- Non Construction Programs: Please complete the highlighted fields and ensure the document is signed by an Authorized Official. The Authorized Official is generally the grant signatory at the organization or business.

IV. SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable): The filing of an SF-LLL form is required for each payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any Federal agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered Federal action.

C. Cover Page

Applicants must submit a cover page (not to exceed one [1] page) that includes a table with the following information:

Program Title	
Target Country/Countries	
Program Synopsis (3 sentences maximum)	
Program Length	
Total Amount of Funding Requested (In USD)	
Name and Contact Information for the project's main point of contact. (This should be the same individual in 8f of the SF-424)	

D. Executive Summary

An executive summary (not to exceed one [1] page, preferably in Microsoft Word) should provide brief overview of the proposal narrative outlining, program goals, objectives, activities, and intended results.

E. Proposal Narrative Guidelines

Applicants must submit a proposal narrative (not to exceed ten [10] pages). A proposal narrative should:
- Fully explain the program's **goals, objectives, and activities**.
  - Objectives should be ambitious, yet measureable, results-focused, and achievable in a reasonable time frame.

- o Activities should be clearly developed and detailed, and the narrative should clearly articulate how the proposed activities contribute to objectives and overall project goal.
- Outline the applicant's **organizational capacity** to implement the proposed program,
- Outline in detail the program approach, **sustainability, potential impact, and complementarity to ongoing efforts**.
- Identify **target areas** for activities, identify target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders, and identify local partners as appropriate, among other pertinent details. If partners are included, the narrative should clearly describe the division of labor between the direct applicant and partners.
- Describe how **at-risk and vulnerable populations**, including persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons, women, youth, and members of religious and ethnic minority groups, will be included in the program.

Applicants are encouraged to document lessons learned from past projects or their work in similar contexts, to include both failures and successes. This information can be used to make the case for how the applicant would realistically address the challenges and limitations that would likely arise in implementing the program.

The proposal narrative should expand upon the risk analysis to provide greater context, operational or programmatic security concerns, and a contingency plan for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan.

F. <u>Budget Guidelines</u>

Applications will not be considered complete unless they include a budget that responds to the solicitation guidelines.

Complete budgets will include:
1) **Summary budget**
2) **Detailed line-item budget**
3) **Subgrantee budgets (if applicable)**
4) **Corresponding Budget Narrative**

All organizations, including those not offering any cost-sharing (not a requirement), should submit a detailed line-time budget, formatted to include three columns:
1) DRL funding request,
2) Cost-share offered, and
3) Total project funding.

Please note: Grantees under DRL-funded programs are responsible for complying with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for program participants.

Before grants are awarded, DRL reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of DRL and availability of funds.

Summary Budget

The summary budget is a synopsis of the detailed line-item budget and must be organized with three columns (DRL Request, Cost Share, and Total Budget) according the OMB cost categories.

Please include in the summary budget header the applicant organization's name, program title, and duration of the program. The summary budget should be included as a tab along with the detailed line-item budget.

For a template summary budget please see the Resources page under "Budget Guidance for Applicants - New Award Budget Sample" on DRL's website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

Detailed Line-item Budget

The detailed line-item budget should outline specific cost requirements for proposed activities and must be organized according to the OMB cost categories. The detailed line-item budget should be included as a tab along with the summary budget.

For a template detailed line-item budget, please see the Resources page under "Budget Guidance for Applicants - New Award Budget Sample" on DRL's website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

Cost Categories

Budgets should be arranged according to the cost categories below and should clearly delineate cost-share.

A. **Personnel** – In general, employees receiving benefits from the applicant organization are considered staff. Consultants hired to assist with the project who do not receive benefits should be included under Contractual. Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. Each staff member's salary calculation should include the annual/base salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to the program (e.g., Administrative Director: $30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $30,000/12 = $2,500 x 25% x 8.5 months = $5,312). This can be in the budget narrative if preferred.

B. **Fringe Benefits** – Benefit costs should be listed separately from salary costs with an explanation of how benefits are computed for each category of employee (specify type and rate).

C. **Travel** – Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the non-Federal entity. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or

mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the non-Federal entity's non-federally-funded activities and in accordance with non-Federal entity's written travel reimbursement policies. For additional information, please see 2 CFR 200.474. Staff and participant travel, may include the following categories:

- *International airfare*

- *Domestic airfare*

- *Per diem/maintenance*: Rates of maximum allowances for U.S. and foreign travel are available on the Resources page on DRL's website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

- *Lodging and Subsistence*: Costs incurred while traveling, including costs of lodging, other subsistence, and incidental expenses, must be considered reasonable and otherwise allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by the non-Federal entity in its regular operations as the result of the non-Federal entity's written travel policy.

- *Visa fees and immunizations* associated with program travel must be included in the budget.

Note: In the absence of an acceptable, written non-Federal entity policy regarding travel costs, the rates and amounts established under 5 U.S.C. 5701-11, ("Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances"), or by the Administrator of General Services, or by the President (or his or her designee) pursuant to any provisions of such subchapter must apply to travel under Federal awards (48 CFR 31.205-46(a)).

Please explain differences in fares among travelers on the same routes (e.g., project staff member traveling for three weeks whose fare is higher than that of staff member traveling for four months). Please note that all travel, where applicable, must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. For more information see DRL's website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

D. **Equipment** – Equipment is defined as having a per-unit cost of $5,000 or more and a service life of more than one year. If the item meets these criteria, all federal procurement policies and procedures must be followed. If an item does not meet these criteria, it should be considered a supply. Please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental in the budget narrative.

E. **Supplies** – List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, printing, and office supplies (for

example, Printing: $50/month x 50% = $25/month x 12 months).

F. **Contractual**
- *Subgrants* – For each subgrant please provide a detailed line-item breakdown explaining specific services in a separate tab in the excel workbook. In the subgrant budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, travel, supplies, equipment, direct costs, and fringe benefits required of the direct applicant. If indirect costs are charged on a subgrant please include a NICRA. Please note that a subgrantee who receives equal to or more than $25,000 is required to have a UEI number. Please visit https://www.fsrs.gov/ or the Resources page on DRL's Website http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm for more information.

- *Fixed Amount Award (FAA)* of up to small purchase threshold may be executed with prior written approval from the Department's warranted Grants Officer, per 2 CFR 200.332. Per 2 CFR 200.201, fixed amount awards may be used if the project scope is specific and if adequate cost, historical, or unit pricing data is available to establish a fixed amount award based on a reasonable estimate of actual cost. Payments are based on meeting specific requirements of the award. Accountability is based on performance and results. At the completion of the fixed amount award, the organization must certify in writing that the project or activity was completed or the level of effort was expended. If the required level of activity or effort was not carried out, the amount of the fixed amount award must be adjusted.

  Please note: *Fixed Amount Award (FAA) must be stated in the budget and budget narrative at the time of application. Also, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that proposed subgrantees are eligible for U.S. government funding.*

- *Contractual/Consultant Fees* – For example lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or external evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x $150/day x 2 days).

  Please note: Organizations must adhere to their own documented procurement procedures, which must reflect applicable U.S. State, local, and tribal laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable U.S. Federal law and the standards identified in 2 CFR 200.318 through 2 CFR 200.326.

G. **Construction** – Due to the nature of DRL programs, construction costs are not allowable or applicable.

H. **Other Direct Costs** – These will vary depending on the nature of the project. The inclusion of each should be justified in the budget narrative. Single audit or 2 CFR 200 Subpart F audit costs can be included if they are not part of indirect cost. Only the portion

of the audit cost associated with this project can be included in the budget.

I. **Indirect Charges** – An organization with a NICRA should include a copy of the cost-rate agreement. Applicants should indicate in the proposal budget how the rate is applied (e.g. to direct administrative expenses, to all direct costs, to wages and salaries only, etc.) and if any of the rate will be cost-shared.

Per 2 CFR 200.414, any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200— States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. Per 2 CFR 200.68, MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition reimbursement, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs. The budget narrative should include what costs will be covered if using the 10% de minimis indirect rate.

As described in 2 CFR 200.403, factors affecting allowability of costs, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

Organizations not applying the de minimis rate of up to 10% of MTDC but are claiming indirect costs should have established NICRAs.

If the budget includes sub-awards, the recipient organization has the responsibility to honor an existing NICRA, negotiate an indirect rate, offer the 10% de minimis, or allow costs to be directly charged to the sub-award budget for each sub-award, per 2 CFR 200.331.iiiv.4. If an organization has an established NICRA the agreement should be submitted with the proposal package.

This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by program and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding. As such, and therefore it does not count against the submission page limitations. If your proposal includes subawards to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit the applicable NICRAs also as a PDF file (see *Budget Guidelines* below for more information on indirect cost rates). Organizations that do not have a NICRA per 2 CFR 200.414(f) can elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. The budget narrative should indicate what costs will be covered using the 10% de minimis rate.

J. **Cost Share –** Cost-sharing is the portion of program costs not borne by the Federal Government. While not a competitive element, DRL encourages but does not require cost-sharing, which may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs and offered by the applicant and/or in-country partners. Applicants should consider all types of cost-sharing, including in-kind and public-private partnerships. Examples include the use of office space owned by other entities; donated or borrowed supplies and equipment; (non-federal) sponsored travel costs; waived indirect costs; and project activities, translations, or consultations conducted by qualified volunteers. The values of offered cost-share should be reported in accordance with (the applicable cost principles outlined in) 2 CFR 200.306. *Other United States federal funding does not constitute cost-sharing*.

Explanation of contributions should be included, whether cash or in-kind. Assign a monetary value in U.S. dollars to each in-kind contribution. If the proposed project is a component of a larger program, identify other funding sources and the specific funding amount to be provided by those sources. In addition, it is recommended that the budget narrative address the overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including leveraging of institutional or other resources.

Please note: DRL programs do not require cost share, but if it is included the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, DRL's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

For information on Shared Cost Allocations, please reference 2 CFR 200.405
http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=c8ac158b49a23a38aa04b1ba0bb242ee&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML.

DRL does **not** pay for the following, under any circumstances:
- Costs incurred before or after the specified dates of the grant (unless prior approval is received by the Grants Officer);
- Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Explicitly religious activities, including those that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, prayer, or proselytization; and,
- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any associated costs are unallowable, except where specific costs that might otherwise be considered entertainment have a programmatic purpose and are authorized either in the approved budget for the Federal award or with prior written approval of the warranted Grants Officer.

Budget Narrative Guidelines

Applicants must submit a budget narrative (preferably in Microsoft Word format) to explain each line-item in the budget and how the amounts were derived, as well as the source and description of all proposed costs (and cost-share, if applicable).

The narrative should complement the budget rather than repeat information provided in the budget. For example, the narrative should provide details on the reasonability of costs, explain allocations, and tie expenses to program activities and/or objectives where appropriate. For ease of review, DRL requests that applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed line-item budget. Personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff, base salary, and percentage of time devoted to the project (level of effort).

Sources of all cost-share offered in the application should be identified and explained in the budget narrative. When organizations have made a reasonable, good-faith effort to obtain cost sharing or are pursuing avenues to cost share, DRL encourages applicants to note this in the proposal. Cost share is not required.

G. **Audit Guidelines**

The applicant's proposal may include the cost of an audit that:

1) Complies with the requirements of 2 CFR 200 Subpart F "Audit Requirements;"

2) Complies with the requirements of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement of Position (SOP) No. 92-9, "Audits of Not-for-Profit Organizations Receiving Federal Awards;"

3) Complies with AICPA Codification of Statements on Auditing Standards AU Section 551, "Reporting on Information Accompanying the Basic Financial Statements in Auditor-Submitted Documents," where applicable. When the U.S. Department of State is the largest direct source of Federal financial assistance (i.e., the cognizant Federal Agency) and indirect costs are charged to Federal grants, a supplemental schedule of indirect cost computation is required;

4) A non-Federal entity that expends $750,000 or more during the non-Federal entity's fiscal year in Federal awards must have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 CFR 200 subpart F.

5) Program Specific Audits: 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 in accordance with 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. Reference : Department of State, Terms and Conditions

Audits of Foreign Non-Federal entity Organizations:

All Foreign organizations that expend $750,000 or more in a fiscal year in Federal awards must perform an independent, non-Federal entity-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 in accordance with 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.

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 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.

Note: For additional information on audits, see 2 CFR 200.500 *http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=28b77b5b8bf25ac92e2fdeb1635d79d6&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.f&rgn=div6*.

H. <u>Logic Model Guidelines</u>

A logic model is a useful tool to help "map" a project. It details planned activities, the immediate services or product of project activities (outputs), and the expected changes or benefits that occur after activities have been implemented (outcomes). Applicants can specify objectives, identify what resources (inputs) are needed, outline proposed activities (outputs) and beneficiaries, and illustrate how activities lead to expected results. The activities and expected outcomes documented within the logic model should be achievable within the level of funding and time-frame of the project.

When designing a program, applicants are strongly encouraged to start with a logic model, or other conceptual approaches (e.g. results chain, theory of change, systems map)—prior

to writing their program proposal narrative. Logic models, and alternative approaches, can be helpful when planning and designing programs. These tools can be used to visually depict or outline how and why a project will work—i.e. the rationale behind your project approach. Detailing how a program's planned activities lead to certain outcomes can often help applicants understand the assumptions within the approach. Detailing factors outside your control, such as policy shifts (i.e. external factors) within a logic model can identify areas that should be included within your program's risk analysis.

Applicants are also encouraged to work with partners or sub-grantees, in developing project logic models. This can provide diverse viewpoints throughout the project design process, which can help to identify issues in the initial program approach. A basic logic model should include:

- **Problem Statement**: What problems or issues does the program attempt to solve or address?

- **Needs**: The community need as identified by the organization.

- **Inputs**: Human and financial resources used for the project implementation.

- **Activities**: Actions taken or work performed through which inputs are mobilized to produce outputs.

- **Pathways**: Linkages that specify how activities of a project lead to the expected outputs, outcomes, and impact of a project through each step of the logic model. Applicants can illustrate pathways with arrows—human rights defenders are trained (output)→human rights defenders applies skills from training (outcome); or, by placing each step in different columns. Applicants can also include text identifying how they believe outputs lead to certain outcomes.

- **Expected Outputs**: Measures the direct or immediate product of a project activity (e.g. number of individuals trained). Outputs should be tangible, visible and measurable.

- **Expected Outcomes**: The short-term, medium-term, and longer-term changes that take place after project activities have been implemented. Outcomes reflect the changes or benefits from project activities (e.g. training participants apply skills in their work; legislators incorporate recommendations from civil society into laws or policies). The longer-term changes of a program, often called **impact**, are linked closely to the overall program goal(s). These can be seen as changes to the broader social, cultural, political or economic system. They could be as ambitious as reducing human rights violations in an authoritarian society, or it could be less ambitious, though equally important, such as adding greater female representation to a country's political parties. Longer-term change is generally not produced by one project, but through the work of many organizations and a series of initiatives over time.

- **Assumptions**: Hypotheses about factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of the project. This includes underlying beliefs about the project (how activities

lead to change), as well as stakeholders or beneficiaries (who need to be involved to support change).

- **External Factors**: Factors which are not explicitly in the control of the project but which can have an important effect on the intended outcomes and impact, such as government policies or changes in the political situation in the country.

Please note: While the logic model is represented in a linear trajectory, the relationship between factors may not always be unidirectional. Sometimes factors can mutually affect one another. Thus, the logic model should be viewed as a dynamic and evolving document, which should be re-evaluated and adjusted when conditions change. In essence, the logic model (and similar program planning approaches) describes assumptions on how program staff views their operating environment and how a program can support change.

More information about the logic model, including a sample model and template, can be found at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm. DRL's logic model template includes two versions: (1) logic model with general M&E terminology (inputs, outputs, outcomes); and (2) logic model in plain English.

I. <u>Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines</u>

A proposal should include both a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Narrative and an M&E Plan. When developing M&E components, **applicants should focus on utility**—whether the data collected and the analysis undertaken will be useful for project management and decision-making. As DRL programs often focus on difficult environments or sensitive topics, **applicants are strongly encouraged to assess the ethics behind their M&E processes.**

<u>Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative</u>
An M&E Narrative outlines how a project's M&E system will be carried out and by whom. It details how you will track your project's performance toward its objectives, over time.

Applicants should include the monitoring and evaluation process in their timeline. The M&E Narrative should include an explanation for each of the following components:

- **Overview:** Explain the M&E approach for this program, specifically how applicants will be monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the progress of program objectives and activities. Provide a clear description of the monitoring and evaluation approach and data collection strategies and tools to be employed (e.g., pre- and post-test surveys, interviews, focus groups). The description should include how the applicant will track and document whether activities occurred (outputs) and the results or changes caused by these activities (outcomes). The narrative should describe how the monitoring and evaluation approach will lead the applicant to better understand whether the project will achieve its intended outcomes, such as changes in the knowledge, attitudes or skills of project participants; benefits to individuals, communities, or networks; improvements in beneficiary organizations or institutions; and, changes in policy or legislation. Applicants should also describe what quality controls are in place to ensure the validity and reliability of data

being collected. Finally, applicants are encouraged to detail how results and findings will be utilized, such as how information could be used to adapt project activities or approaches, if necessary.

Note: While performance indicators can be helpful in tracking progress, applicants are also encouraged to think beyond metrics and explore alternative monitoring and evaluation approaches (e.g. qualitative data, case studies, storytelling approaches), if their project does not lend itself to quantitative measures or metrics cannot adequately capture the project outcomes.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Detail who will oversee and participate in M&E efforts, from data collection and analysis to reporting. If the project includes work with local partners or sub-partners, explain how M&E efforts will be coordinated amongst the organizations.

- **Data Security:** Given the sensitivities of DRL grants, describe the protocols in place to ensure the security of information being collected, including who has access to the information, both on- and offline. The privacy and security of beneficiaries and partners must be considered before any sensitive data is collected.

- **Internal or External Evaluation:** Explain if an external evaluation will be included in the project, or how the project will be systematically assessed in absence of one (if not already been outlined within the overview of the M&E approach). Evaluations, internal or external, should be systematic studies that use research methods to address specific questions about project performance. They should provide a valuable supplement to ongoing monitoring activities. Evaluation activities generally include baseline assessments, mid-term and final evaluations. However, the timing and approach of the evaluation should be based on the nature of the project, the complexity of the operating environment, and the frequency that project staff will use findings for project management purposes.

  If an internal or external project evaluation is planned, please include a brief description including the likely focus (process and/or outcome-focused), frequency of evaluation activities, and an estimate of resources required to conduct or manage the evaluation. Evaluation questions can also be included within this section. Key evaluation questions typically seek to answer whether programming approaches are efficient and effective, as well as appropriate to the operating or policy environment. Project evaluation costs are highly variable and should be considered on a project-by-project basis, considering the frequency of activities, rigor of evaluation methods, level of effort, and expertise of evaluation staff.

  Programs that are at least 24 months are encouraged to include an external evaluation, or specify how internal evaluation will meet the data collection and learning needs of program staff.

Note: Costs for external or internal evaluations must be built into the overall budget proposal and must be reasonable. If the M&E Narrative outlines that an evaluation has been planned, please ensure that this has been included within the budget (including projected costs for contractual and travel).

- **Consideration of Marginalized Populations:** Given DRL's commitment to supporting marginalized populations, applicants should explain how information about marginalized populations will be collected and included in the proposed program. At a minimum, data should be disaggregated by relevant social categories (e.g., sex, disability status, sexual orientation and gender identity, or ethnic or religious minority status). The applicant should also include separate indicators that specifically measure program outcomes on marginalized populations. The degree to which collecting sensitive demographic data may discourage or present a barrier to beneficiaries participating in activities, however, must be considered prior to collection of such data. Applicants should determine if such data can be collected, stored, and transmitted, given local context, without creating undue security risks to partners and beneficiaries; without undue invasion of privacy; and without presenting a barrier to beneficiary participation. Data security protocols appropriate for the local context must be established and followed.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The M&E plan should draw on the objectives, activities and expected changes from the logic model, and link those areas to indicators.

The M&E plan is generally structured as a table with output- and outcome-based indicators. It explains how data will be collected (**data collection methods**) to show that certain changes occurred. It outlines **baselines** (where your project is starting) and **quarterly targets** (what you would like to achieve) for each indicator.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Components

DRL includes the following categories within its sample M&E plan. *Many applicant organizations may include other categories, or format M&E plans differently, which is acceptable. This sample has been included for organizations that may not have established M&E processes.*

Indicators: Background and Types

Performance indicators are used to help projects understand if they are on track. As previously mentioned, performance indicators can be helpful, but they often only tell one part of the story. Applicants are also encouraged to think beyond metrics and explore alternative approaches if their project does not lend itself to quantitative measures, or if metrics cannot adequately capture project outcomes.

Performance indicators should be clearly defined, and are in many cases quantifiable. Qualitative indicators are encouraged if they provide a reliable means to measure a particular phenomenon

or attribute. A good guide for determining the quality of performance indicators is the acronym SMART – i.e., are the indicators: specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely.

Indicators can focus on (i) inputs / process (measures activities or the necessary components for an activity to occur—e.g. training curriculum developed), (ii) outputs (products and services delivered from project activities, and often stated as an amount—e.g. 100 civil society organization members trained in organizational fundraising, 60 radio programs produced), and (iii) outcomes (the specific results of a project, which are often measured as a degree of change—after receiving training on effective engagement in the political process, 40% of female participants ran for a seat in parliament).

Applicants should also track and disaggregate data of participants by sex, where applicable, and include indicators that capture gender sensitivity. Similarly, projects that address issues affecting other traditionally marginalized populations, such as persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons, and ethnic and religious minorities, should track and disaggregate data of participants by those target populations, where applicable and appropriate. Applicants should include indicators that measure support for issues affecting marginalized populations.

- **USG Standard Indicators (F-indicators)**: The Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance (F) requires all DRL grantees to report on standard indicators, within the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Category (formerly called Governing Justly and Democratically, GJD). Therefore, applicants should review the DRG Framework Indicators and include at least one relevant standard indicator in the proposal M&E plan. Standard foreign assistance (F) indicators and their disaggregates are "required-as-applicable."

  Most F indicators are focused on outputs and broad topics (e.g. the number of human rights defenders trained) to allow for aggregation across projects; thus, applicants should supplement these with their own **custom** output and outcome indicators. If you have questions concerning how data should be collected or reported, please consult with your Program Officer and/or a DRL M&E Specialist about the indicator's Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) and any instructions for how the indicator should be collected and reported. If none of the standard foreign assistance indicators are appropriate for a grant, please note that "standard foreign assistance indicators are not applicable to the grant" in the M&E Narrative. In cases where the security of the implementing partner or project beneficiaries may be comprised due to data collection, the following notation can be added—"standard foreign assistance indicators are not applicable to grant, due to security concerns with data collection/reporting". If these notations are included within the grant agreement, the requirement to include an F indicator can be waived. Information on and the list of standard indicators is provided at http://www.state.gov/f/indicators/. Please denote these indicators in the M&E plan with an asterisk and their indicator number."

For a more detailed explanation of definitions and DRL's expectations for the M&E plan, please review the **DRL Monitoring and Evaluation Guide** and **Sample Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**, found at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

J. Risk Analysis Guidelines

Risks are unavoidable – all projects inherently contain both internal and external risks. However, with proper identification and management, risks can be prepared for, minimized, or mitigated. The purpose of a Risk Analysis is to identify the internal and external risks associated with the proposed project in the application, rate the likelihood of the risks, rate the potential impact of the risks on the project, and identify actions that could help mitigate the risks. A Risk Analysis should not be considered a one-time exercise or a static document. DRL defers to organizations to conduct adequate risk analysis and remediation for all of its operations and advises that risk analysis and remediation occur throughout the life of a project and should result in revisions to risk analysis documents and processes as necessary. Applicants should include all assumptions and external factors identified in the logic model in the Risk Analysis. Applicants should rate the likelihood and potential impact of each risk as "High," "Medium," or "Low." Additional lines can be included in the risk analysis table as necessary.

The safety and security of recipients and beneficiaries are of utmost importance. DRL requires all recipients to conduct thorough risk assessments and take all actions necessary in accordance with those assessments to mitigate those risks.   DRL does not take responsibility for the risks incurred by any recipient.

More information about the Risk Analysis, please see 2 CFR 200.519.

For a template Risk Analysis please see the Resources page on DRL's website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm.

SECTION III: Proposal Submission Instructions

The U.S. Department of State requires that proposals be submitted electronically via www.grantsolutions.gov or www.grants.gov. Both systems require registration by the applicant.

GrantSolutions.gov is highly recommended for submission of all applications and is DRL's preferred choice for receiving applications.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will generally **not** be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable NOFO and these instructions.

DRL encourages organizations to **submit applications during normal business hours** (Monday – Friday, 9:00AM- 5:00PM Eastern Time). If an applicant experiences technical difficulties and has contacted the appropriate helpdesk but is not receiving timely assistance (e.g. if you have not received a response within 48 hours of contacting the helpdesk), you may contact the DRL point of contact listed in the NOFO. The point of contact may assist in contacting the appropriate helpdesk, but an applicant should also document their efforts in contacting the help desk. Applicants may also contact the DRL point of contact listed in the NOFO if experiencing technical issues with grants.gov or grantsolutions.gov that may result in a late submission.

Applicants experiencing technical difficulties should follow these three steps:
1) Contact the helpdesk for either Grants.gov or GrantSolutions immediately.
2) Document (including screenshots) technical issues AND efforts to contact the helpdesk.
3) If there are continued difficulties submitting documents, email all of the required documents to the DRL point of contact listed in the solicitation before the deadline.

Note: The Procurement Office will determine technical eligibility of all applications and allowability of acceptable proposal submissions.

A. GrantSolutions.gov Applications

All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications via **www.grantsolutions.gov**.

Applicants using GrantSolutions.gov for the first time should complete their "New Organization Registration" as soon as possible. This process must be completed before an application can be submitted. Registration with GrantSolutions.gov usually occurs directly after an applicant submits their registration. To register with GrantSolutions.gov, click "Login to GrantSolutions" and follow the "First Time Users" link to the "New Organization Registration Page." There are different ways to register your organization; click on the link that fits best.

Upon completion of a successful electronic application submission, the GrantSolutions system will provide the applicant with a confirmation page indicating the date and time (Eastern Time) of the electronic application submission as well as an official Application Number. This confirmation page will also provide a listing of all items that constitute the final application

submission. Please save this page for your records. Additionally you **must** save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered unless the DRL point of contact listed in the NOFO is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors caused by GrantSolutions.gov that is outside of the applicants' control and is the sole reason for a late submission.

Applicants should not expect a separate notification from DRL upon receiving their application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov in its entirety. DRL bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date, for system errors in either GrantSolutions or Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Additionally you **must** remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk:

For assistance with GrantSolutions.gov accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact Customer Support at **help@grantsolutions.gov** or call 1-866-577-0771 (toll charges for international callers) or 1-202-401-5282. Customer Support is available 8 AM – 5 PM EST, Monday – Friday, except federal holidays.

For a list of federal holidays visit:
https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/.

B. Grants.gov Applications

Applicants who do not submit applications via GrantSolutions.gov may submit via www.grants.gov. **It is DRL's preference that applications be submitted through GrantSolutions.gov.** The Grants.gov registration process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all registration steps are completed in a timely manner.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Additionally you **must** save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered unless the DRL point of contact listed in the NOFO is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors

caused by Grants.gov that is outside of the applicants' control and is the sole reason for a late submission.

Applicants should not expect a separate notification from DRL upon receiving their application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov. Applicants are required to document that the application has been received by GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov in its entirety. DRL bears no responsibility for disqualification that result from applicants not being registered before the due date, for system errors in either GrantSolutions or Grants.gov, or other errors in the application process. Additionally you **must** remember to save a screen shot of the checklist showing all documents submitted in case any document fails to upload successfully.

<u>Grants.gov Helpdesk</u>:
For assistance with Grants.gov, please call the Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or email **support@grants.gov**. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

SECTION IV: PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

DRL strives to ensure that each application receives a balanced evaluation by a DRL Review Panel. The Department's Office of Acquisitions Management (AQM) will determine technical eligibility for all applications. All technically eligible applications for a given solicitation are reviewed against the same seven criteria, which include quality of project idea, project planning/ability to achieve objectives, institutional record and capacity, inclusive programming, cost effectiveness, multiplier effect/sustainability, and project monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, the Panel will evaluate how the application addresses the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the priority needs of DRL overall. DRL may also take into consideration the balance of the current portfolio of active projects, including geographic or thematic diversity, if needed.

In most cases, the DRL Review Panel includes representatives from DRL, the appropriate Department of State regional bureau (to include feedback from U.S. embassies), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (to include feedback from USAID missions). In some cases, additional panelists may participate, including from other Department of State bureaus or offices, U.S. government departments, agencies, or boards, representatives from partner governments, or representatives from entities that are in a public-private partnership with DRL. At the end of the panel's discussion about an application, the Panel votes on recommending the application for approval by the DRL Assistant Secretary. If more applications are ultimately recommended for approval than DRL can fund, the Panel will rank the recommended applications in priority order for consideration by the DRL Assistant Secretary. The Grants Officer Representative (GOR) for the eventual award does not vote on the panel. All Panelists must sign non-disclosure agreements and conflicts of interest agreements.

DRL Review Panels may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of DRL funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss competing applications with applicants until the review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

For further information on the DRL grants process, please see the DRL website: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/index.htm.

A. Proposal Review Criteria

The Panel will evaluate each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications. Please use the below criteria as a reference but **do not structure your application according to the sub-sections**.

1) **Quality of Project Idea**
   Applications should be responsive to the program framework and policy objectives identified in the solicitation, appropriate in the country/regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to DRL's mission of promoting human rights and democracy. Projects should have the potential to have an immediate impact leading to long-term sustainable reforms, DRL prefers new approaches that do not duplicate efforts by other entities. This does not exclude from consideration projects that improve upon or expand existing successful projects in a new and complementary way. In countries where similar activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities and how these efforts will be coordinated. Proposals that promote creative approaches to recognized ongoing challenges are highly encouraged. *DRL strives to ensure the rights and uphold the dignity of the most vulnerable or at-risk populations. DRL prioritizes project proposals with inclusive approaches for advancing these rights.*

2) **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives**
   A strong application will include a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. A comprehensive monthly work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable, results-focused and achievable in a reasonable time frame. A complete application must include a logic model to demonstrate how the project activities will have an impact on its proposed objectives. The logic model should match the objectives, outcomes, key activities and outputs described in the narrative. Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners and build capacity as appropriate.

   If local partners have been identified, DRL strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Additionally, applicants should describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any local partners. If applicable, applications should identify target areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and the specific roles of sub-awardees, among other pertinent details.

   DRL recognizes that all programs have some level of risk due to the internal/external variables that have the potential to adversely affect a program. Risk management should address how the program design incorporates the identification, assessment, and management of key risk factors (included but not limited to: physical safety, cyber security, programmatic operating environment, and organizational structure. DRL will review the risk analysis based on the organization's ability to identify risks that could have an impact on the overall program as well as how the organization will manage these risks.

3) **Institution's Record and Capacity**
   DRL will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of

successful democracy and human rights programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives. Projects should have potential for continued funding beyond DRL resources.

4) **Inclusive Programming**
DRL strives to ensure its projects advance the rights and uphold the dignity of the most at risk and vulnerable populations, including women, youth, people with disabilities, members of racial and ethnic or religious minority groups, and LGBTI persons. To the extent possible, applicants should identify and address considerations to support these populations in all proposed project activities and objectives, and should provide specific means, measures, and corresponding targets to include them as appropriate. Applicants must provide strong justifications if unable to incorporate the most at risk and vulnerable populations within proposed project activities and objectives. Applications that do not include this will not be considered highly competitive in this category.

5) **Cost Effectiveness**
DRL strongly encourages applicants to clearly demonstrate project cost-effectiveness in their application, including examples of leveraging institutional and other resources. However, cost-sharing or other examples of leveraging other resources are not required. Inclusion of cost-sharing in the budget does not result in additional points awarded during the review process. Budgets should have low and/or reasonable overhead and administration costs, and applicants should provide clear explanations and justifications for these costs in relation to the work involved. All budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate necessity, appropriateness, and connection to the project objectives.

Please note: If cost-share is included in the budget, the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, DRL's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

6) **Multiplier Effect/Sustainability**
Applications should clearly delineate how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant (e.g. participants trained under a grant go on to train other people; workshop participants use skills from a workshop to enhance a national level election that affects the entire populace). A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project or garnering other donor support after DRL funding ceases.

7) **Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

Complete applications will include a detailed M&E Narrative and M&E plan, which detail how the project's progress will be monitored and evaluated. Incorporating well-designed monitoring and evaluation processes into a project is an efficient method for documenting the change (intended and unintended) that a project seeks. Applications should demonstrate the capacity to provide objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes.

The quality of the M&E sections will be judged on the narrative explaining how both monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, and who will be responsible for those related activities. Explain how an external evaluation will be incorporated into the project implementation plan or how the project will be systematically assessed in the absence of one. Please see the section on *Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative* above for more information on what is required in the narrative.

The output and outcome-based performance indicators should not only be separated by project objectives but also should match the objectives, outcomes, and outputs detailed in the logic model and proposal narrative. Performance indicators should be clearly defined (i.e., explained how the indicators will be measured and reported) either within the table or with a separate Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS). For each performance indicator, the table should also include baselines and quarterly and cumulative targets, data collection tools, data sources, types of data disaggregation, and frequency of monitoring and evaluation. There should also be metrics to capture how project activities target the most at-risk and vulnerable populations or addresses their concerns, where applicable. Please see the section on *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan* above for more information on what is required in the plan.

SECTION V: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DRL will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization.

Applicants should be aware that DRL understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that DRL cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

The information in DRL's NOFO and this PSI for Applications, as updated in August 2016, is binding and may not be modified by any DRL representative. Explanatory information provided by DRL that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of a NOFO and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. DRL reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project evaluation requirements.

The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, or (d) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is not under obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

DRL awards either a grant or cooperative agreement depending on the application's risk factor or the needs of the program, which is determined by the Grant Officer for applications that are successful. If it is determined to award a cooperative agreement, DRL expects to be substantially involved during the implementation of the cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement can include:

1) Approval of the Recipient's annual work plans, including: planned activities for the following year, travel plans, planned expenditures, event planning, and changes to any activity to be carried out under the cooperative agreement;
2) Approval of sub-award Recipients, concurrence on the substantive provisions of the sub-awards, and coordination with other cooperating agencies;
3) Other approvals that will be included in the award agreement.

A. Background Information on DRL and General DRL funding

DRL is the foreign policy lead within the U.S. government on promoting democracy and protecting human rights globally. DRL supports projects that uphold democratic principles,

support and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights, prevent atrocities, combat and prevent violent extremism, and build civil society around the world. DRL typically focuses its work in countries with egregious human rights violations, where democracy and human rights advocates are under pressure, and where governments are undemocratic or in transition.

Additional background information on DRL and its efforts can be found on www.state.gov/j/drl and www.humanrights.gov.