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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**Embassy Of The United States Of America To Moldova**

**Public Affairs Section**

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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| **Opportunity Title:**  | Media Literacy |
| **Opportunity Number:**  | PAS-CHISINAU-FY20-05-ISPACE |
| **CFDA Number:**  | AEECA PD Programs |
| **CFDA Title:** | 19.900 |
| **Assistance Program:**  | Fortifying Moldova’s Information Space |
| **Announcement Type:** | Open Competition |
| **Announcement Date:** | February 24, 2020 |
| **Submission Deadline:** | March 25, 2020 18:00 |
| **Anticipated Award Date:**  | June 01, 2020 |
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**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Embassy announces an open competition for assistance awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for one or a series of programs in media literacy.

The objective of the project is to increase critical thinking towards mass media and social media among Moldovans. Critical thinking includes, among other skills, the ability to distinguish information from propaganda, to analyze media communication and to interact with social media in a mindful way.

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) invites non-profit/non-governmental organizations to submit proposals for projects to improve media literacy skills across the populations of Moldova.

Proposals should cover all types of media tools and channels – social interaction and social media as well as mass media. The target group is the general population of all of Moldova and should include Romanian and Russian speakers.

The Embassy invites applicants to identify and extend existing good practices or to test actions which do not duplicate activities undertaken by other entities.

Applications that focus on helping citizens to identify and discount false information related to pre-election campaigns and the 2020 elections in Moldova are encouraged.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES TO BE FUNDED**

Proposals should have clearly defined objectives to reach specific goals within the field of media literacy. They should propose an adequate mixture of tools and activities to achieve those objectives. These could include:

* Creation of multilingual on-line material and interactive tools to improve the capacities of citizens to acquire a critical understanding of the media and to interact with it;
* Awareness-raising and efficient dissemination of the material created by the project or other similar material/activities that can be adapted to the same purpose, in particular through networks that can act as multipliers;
* Efficient dissemination of best practices, for instance through workshops, on-line platforms and/or training programs;
* Campaigns aimed at helping citizens in all regions of Moldova to interact with media in a mindful way;
* Innovative activities that can develop citizens' ability to distinguish information from propaganda or otherwise develop capacity related to critical thinking towards the media;
* Activities with local communities or networks to tailor and make some of the above tools available.

The direct or indirect benefit of the project for the citizens will need to be demonstrated for all tools and activities.

Proposals should provide an assessment of its implementation risks and make suggestions about how to address them.

Proposals should also provide an assessment of and a plan for the sustainability of the action(s) after the end of the project.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

"Media literacy" is an umbrella expression that includes all technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow a citizen to access the media, to have a critical understanding of the media and to interact with it.

All these capacities allow a person to participate in the economic, social and cultural aspects of society as well as to play an active role in the democratic process. "Media" is to be understood in a broad way: including all kind of media (television, radio, press) provided through all kind of channels (traditional, internet, social media).

**1. Media literacy is intrinsic to a healthy democracy**

Democracy, by definition, requires the participation of a well-informed electorate. Citizens inform themselves through the media. Their relationship with the media needs to take place in a context of critical thinking. This furthermore requires certain knowledge of how the media works and how media messages are constructed. There is a tight connection between media literacy and democracy. Media literacy is a tool for citizens to acquire critical thinking and become active in a democratic society.

**2. Media literacy is a necessary response to a changing and increasingly complex media landscape**.

The change in the media landscape is brought about both by the digital revolution and by a change of behavior and attitude on the part of citizens. The digital revolution means ubiquitous mobile devices, connectivity everywhere, all the time and to almost everything, converging content and more content produced in innovative audiovisual formats. The digital revolution also changed people’s attitudes: they are not mere passive recipients of media content, but also content creators and media sources, for example through their involvement in social media. Moreover, people increasingly receive news through social media, rather than through traditional channels.

What is shared by people on social media can also become a source for the news. This proliferation of sources brings a lot of new information, opportunities and potential innovation but also requires critical thinking and verification tools. While some of the matters related to this complex environment can be dealt with through regulation, this needs to be complemented with measures that empower the user to be critical of his sources of information and of the media content. This is precisely what media literacy means.

**3. Media literacy is one of the building blocks used to tackle key societal issues**

Media literacy is one of the instruments that can be used to combat hate speech online, to fight radicalization, and is a tool to allow people to spot and defend themselves from political propaganda.

This funding opportunity is authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

**B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

The U.S. Embassy will consider awarding grants ranging from $25,000 to $75,000. Any requests outside of these limits will not be considered. Please read section C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION about requirements and criteria.

Total budget for the competition: $150,000

Assistance Instruments: *Grants* or *Fixed Amount Awards*

Maximum period of performance: 24 months

**C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

**1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility is limited to organizations officially registered and licensed in the Republic of Moldova and not affiliated with elected or appointed government or political party officials or their family members, nor affiliated with individuals or groups designated by U.S. officials for being involved with significant corruption or their family members. Organizations from outside the country may apply via a locally registered partner organization.

The Public Affairs Section reserves the right to request additional background information on applicants that do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards, and these applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.

Please note: The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to for-profit or commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The permissibility of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31, Cost Accounting Standards, and Part 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

Please note: No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM) is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities under an award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR Part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR Part 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM (www.sam.gov) to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

**2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors.

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**1. Address to Request Application Package**

All Application forms and formats required below are available for download on the Related Documents tab on Grants.gov opportunity page.

**2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

A complete application must contain the following mandatory elements:

* **Application Format** in MS Word format (available for download)
* **Detailed Budget in** MS Excel format (available for download)
* **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** (Free form)

Unsolicited attachments will not be read and should not be submitted for this award.

Do not archive/compress documents. The documents should be attached as individual files and sent in one email before the deadline. Do not send the application package more than once.

Please send the application electronically to moldovagrants@state.gov including the Funding opportunity Number and Name of the Organization in the subject of your email.

Example: PAS-CHISINAU-FY20-05-ISPACE Asociatia Moldova

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that proposals have been submitted on time to the specified email. The U.S. Embassy bears no responsibility for data errors during the transmission or conversion processes.

We encourage the applicants to use the downloadable application format. If Internet access is limited, please contact us to arrange an alternative way of receiving the application package.

Please use only Microsoft Word to fill out the Application format. If you do not have Microsoft Office software, feel free to use the computers at the America House (find address on the Embassy’s website) or any other public access center (e.g., Novateca’s nationwide library network, Internet cafés, etc.).

Please contact us (See Section G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)) if you experience technical problems or are unable to submit an electronic version of the application.

**3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)**

Successful applicants will be required to register in SAM.GOV (System for Award

Management) before an award can be made. You should consider starting the registration process early to avoid any delays if your grant is selected for funding.

**Be Aware:**

SAM.gov is a free government-managed website; applicants do not need to pay to have their organization registered. A/OPE receives frequent reports that recipients are contacted by organizations posing as SAM.gov and threatening to cut off registration unless a fee is paid for registration or renewal. These emails are not coming from SAM.gov.

Please read the available information before registering: [Useful Information for International Registrants:](https://sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/help/samInternationalUserGuide.jsf)

To register:

**Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number (**[**Click to Apply**](https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform)**)**

Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet.

**Step 2: Apply for an NCAGE number (**[**Click to Apply**](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx)**)**

[Instructions for the NCAGE application process](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf)

Phone:1-888-227-2423 (within the U.S.) or 1-269-961-7766 (outside of the U.S.)

Email: NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil

**Step 3: Register for SAM (**[**Click to Apply**](https://www.sam.gov/SAM/)**)**

After you have received your NCAGE Code, you may register in SAM. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Please do not contact the U.S. Embassy regarding the registration process.

**4. Submission Dates and Times**

Submission Deadline: March 25, 2020 18:00

**5. Intergovernmental review**

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and does not require Intergovernmental Review.

**6. Funding Restrictions**

The Grants Program cannot fund:

* Organizations with affiliation to elected officials, political parties, or religious groups;
* Humanitarian or charitable activities, including direct social services to populations;
* Fundraising campaigns;
* Career development;
* Political or partisan activities;
* Scientific research;
* Individual trips abroad;
* Trade activities;
* Health projects;
* Construction costs;
* Pre-award costs.

**7. Other Submission Requirements**

N/A

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

The Program will fund proposals that best address the Program’s themes and that reflect the values of the United States and the mandate of the Embassy of the United States of America. Successful proposals will contain accurate and well-developed implementation plans and clear explanations of how the project goals will be achieved.

Project selection is competitive.

**1. Criteria**

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** (25 points)

The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants** (25 points)

The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

**Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives** (15 points)

Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

**Budget** (10 points)

The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** (15 points)

Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

**Sustainability** (10 points)

Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

**2. Review and Selection Process**

The Program Review Committee is made up of heads of sections or their delegates of the U.S. Embassy in Moldova. The panel members have at least 10 working days to read the projects and then convene to review and discuss the project proposals and recommend selected projects for funding.

The selected awards of the committee are confirmed by the Front Office of the U.S. Embassy and submitted to the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC for final approval.

**F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**1. Federal Award Notices**

Applicants will be notified electronically about selection results. An email message will be sent to the email addresses included in the application (authorized representative and a carbon copy to the project contact person). Grants Program Staff might also contact the applicant to request additional information or to clarify certain aspects of the application documents; therefore, it is important to provide accurate contact information.

Unsuccessful program applicants will receive an email notification. Grants Program Staff can provide a signed rejection letter upon request; however, the Grants Program will not provide specific reasons for rejection.

Successful program applicants must sign a Notice of Award (grant agreement) before receiving the funds. The grant or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Notice of Federal Award signed by the grants officer is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

**No costs should be incurred by the applicant prior to signing a Notice of Award.**

**2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include: [2 CFR 200](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200.pdf), [2 CFR 600](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2015-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2015-title2-vol1-part600.pdf), and the [Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-01-2019508.pdf).

**3. Reporting**

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports in English. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

**(a) Program Reports:** U.S. Embassy Chisinau requires program reports describing and analyzing the results of activities undertaken during the validity period of the agreement. A program report is required within thirty (30) days following the end of each three-month period of performance during the validity period of the agreement. The final program report is due ninety (90) days following the end of the agreement. Monthly progress briefs may also be required.

**(b) Financial Reports:** Financial reports are required within thirty (30) days following the end of each calendar year quarter during the validity period of the agreement (January 30th, April 30th, July 30th, October 30th). The final financial report covering the entire period of the agreement is required within ninety (90) days after the expiration date of the agreement.

Reports reflecting expenditures should be completed in accordance with the Federal Financial Report SF-425 (click to download) and in accordance with other award specific requirements.

The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to contract certified auditors to conduct program and financial audits of the projects funded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

**G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

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

**Valeriu Turea**

Media and Grants Assistant

TureaVV@state.gov

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**H. OTHER INFORMATION**

**Disclaimer**

Organizations that submit applications in response to this announcement acknowledge and accept all of the requirements contained herein. This announcement serves as notice to select interested parties to have equal opportunity to submit project proposals for funding consideration. All submissions in response to this announcement are voluntary and do not obligate the Department of State to fund any proposal or proposal preparation costs.

Issuance of this Request for Proposals does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. If a proposal is selected for funding, 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 is at the total discretion of the Department of State.