

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE U.S. EMBASSY NEW ZEALAND, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

Notice of Funding Opportunity

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: DIS AND MISINFORMATION AWARENESS IN SAMOA, COOK, AND NIUE

Funding Opportunity Title: DIS AND MISINFORMATION AWARENESS IN SAMOA, COOK, AND NIUE

Funding Opportunity Number: PAS-NEWZEALAND-2021-01

Deadline for Applications: 5PM, September 29, 2021.

CFDA Number: 19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs

Total Amount Available: Up to \$50,000

Maximum for Each Award: \$50,000

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy New Zealand Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce an open competition for organization interested in submitting proposals to conduct a survey resulting in a messaging campaign strategy for raising awareness of mis and disinformation in Samoa, Cook, and Niue.

As a Pacific nation, the United States has long been committed to working with partners in the region to ensure the dissemination of factual information that promotes human rights, the rule of law, free access to information, and freedom of the press.

Working in concert with partners in government, civil society, associations and/or institutions, Mission New Zealand seeks to raise awareness of disinformation as a global challenge we all share.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Goals of the training or program should include:

- Polling and/or focus groups to understand the level of awareness of mis and disinformation in Cook, Niue, and Samoa in general.
- Polling and/or focus groups to understand the best messaging strategies to raise awareness of mis and disinformation as a global challenge we share.
 - Including, but not limited to:
 - Which target audience groups are most vulnerable to mis and/or disinformation;
 - Which target audience groups are best placed to amplify messaging about mis and/or disinformation;
 - What kind of messaging on mis/disinformation would resonate in Cook, Niue, and Samoa respectively;

- and What messaging platforms are best suited for raising awareness of mis and disinformation.

Total Amount Available: Up to US\$50,000

Maximum for Each Award: US\$50,000.

Participants and Audiences:

PAS will only consider grants that are geared to local audiences.

The following types of projects are not eligible for funding:

- Projects relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities;
- Construction projects;
- Projects that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or projects
- Scientific research;
- Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization; or
- Projects seeking funds for personal use

Not-for-profit organizations or universities (see C. Eligibility Information) are invited to submit a proposal that describes how each of the following activities will be administered:

Authorizing legislation, type and year of funding:

Funding authority rests in the Smith-Mundt act. The source of funding is FY2021 Public Diplomacy Funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: Up to 24 months

Number of awards anticipated: Number of awards issued will be dependent on your requested amounts for funding

Award amounts: Awards may range from a minimum of \$500.00 to a maximum of \$50,000

Total available funding: up to \$50,000

Type of Funding: Fiscal Year 2021 Public Diplomacy Funding

Anticipated project start date: Between October 1, 2021 and March 2022

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

U.S. Embassy New Zealand anticipates having approximately \$50,000 USD in Fiscal Year 2021 Public Diplomacy funds available to support successful applications submitted in response to this NOFO, subject to the availability of funding.

U.S. Embassy New Zealand may issue one or more awards resulting from this NOFO to the applicant(s) whose application(s) conforming to this NOFO are the most responsive to the objectives set forth in this NOFO. 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, (d) accept alternate applications, and (e) 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.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

U.S. Embassy New Zealand welcomes applications from non-profit organizations/nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and private, public, or state institutions of higher education. For-profit entities are not eligible to apply.

C.2 Cost Sharing

Providing cost sharing is encouraged, but not a requirement for this NOFO. Inclusion of cost share in the budget does not result in additional points awarded during the review process.

C.3 Other

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM)(www.sam.gov) 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 Excluded Parties List System in SAM can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

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 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." If an organization's SOI is approved, a valid Unique Entity Identified (UEI) number, formerly referred to as a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number, and an active SAM.gov registration will need to be obtained before an organization is able to submit a full application. Individuals are not required to have a UEI (DUNS) number or be registered in SAM.gov.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applicants can find application forms, kits, or other materials needed to apply on www.grants.gov under the announcement title "DIS AND MISINFORMATION AWARENESS IN SAMOA, COOK, AND NIUE" funding opportunity number PAS-NEWZEALAND-2020-03. Please contact the point of contact listed in section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note: reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

For all application documents, please ensure:

1. All documents 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 (please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents. If any documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version);
2. All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
3. All documents are formatted to A4 paper; and,
4. 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.

Complete applications must include the following:

1. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B, as directed on Grants.gov; completed and signed SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities”(if applicable) (which can be found with the solicitation on Grants.gov); and your organization’s most recent audit (single program audit, if applicable, or standard audit).
2. Table of Contents (not to exceed one [1] page in Microsoft Word) that includes a page numbered contents page, including any attachments.
3. Executive Summary (not to exceed two [2] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:
 - a. Name and contact information for the project’s main point of contact;
 - b. The total amount of funding requested and project length;
 - c. A statement of work or synopsis of the project, including a concise breakdown of the project’s objectives, activities, and expected results; and,
 - d. A brief statement on how the project is innovative and will have a demonstrated impact.
4. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed ten [10] pages in Microsoft Word). Please note the ten-page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word or Adobe file, (i.e., Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file).
5. Detailed Line-Item Budget (in Microsoft Excel) that includes three [3] columns including the request to U.S. Embassy New Zealand, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see below for more information on budget format). A summary budget should also be included using the OMB approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample). Costs must be in U.S. dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-awardees should be included in additional tabs within the Excel workbook.
6. Budget Narrative (in Microsoft Word) 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. For ease of review, U.S. Embassy New Zealand recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed 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. The budget narrative should provide additional information that might not be readily apparent in the detailed-line item budget, not simply repeat what is represented numerically in the budget, i.e. salaries are for salaries or travel is for travel.
7. **Attachments:**
 - a. Information about the team of people who would execute the work, with descriptions of the experiences and skills of each and his/her role in the bidder’s organization and in the team

b. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

c. Timeline of the overall proposal. Components should include activities, evaluation efforts, and project closeout.

d. Additional optional attachments: Attachments may include further timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding/agreement, etc. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the project's implementation (eg from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

7. If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a .pdf file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by project and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding and therefore does not count against the submission page limitations. If your proposal involves subawards to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit the applicable NICRA also as a .pdf file. If your organization does not have a NICRA per 2 CFR 200. 414(f) the organization 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.

Please note: U.S. Embassy New Zealand retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this NOFO. Additionally, to ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the U.S. Embassy New Zealand Review Panel will review the first page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further.

Additional information that successful applicants must submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

1. Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel;
2. 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.

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

Applicants must have an active registration in SAM (www.sam.gov) prior to submitting an application, must prove a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, formerly referred to as a DUNS number, and must continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by the U.S. government.

The Unique Entity Identifier (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.

SAM is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance.

Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in SAM.

SAM requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM and to also maintain its active registration in SAM.

No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities 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).

U.S. Embassy New Zealand may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time U.S. Embassy New Zealand is ready to make an award, U.S. Embassy New Zealand may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

All organizations applying for federal awards (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- Unique Identifier Number from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page here

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

For help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM by logging onto:

<https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

- Submission Dates and Times

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. NZT September 29, 2021 by email to publicaffairsusnz@state.gov with the subject line “Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation in New Zealand and the Pacific”, funding opportunity number PAS-NEWZEALAND-2021-03.

Submission via email will automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the U.S. Embassy New Zealand will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered unless the U.S. Embassy New Zealand point of contact listed in section G is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors outside of the applicants’ control and is the sole reason for a late submission. Applicants should not expect a notification upon U.S. Embassy New Zealand receiving their application.

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.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

U.S. Embassy New Zealand will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance.

Federal awards generally will not allow reimbursement of pre-Federal award costs; however, the grants officer may approve pre awards cost on a case by case basis. Generally, construction costs are not allowed under U.S. Embassy New Zealand awards.

D.6 Other

All application submissions must be emailed to publicaffairsusnz@state.gov.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that an application has been received in its entirety. U.S. Embassy New Zealand bears no responsibility for applications not received before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission.

Faxed and couriered documents will 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 solicitation and these instructions.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

Evaluators will judge each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications.

Quality of Project Idea

Applications should be responsive to the NOFO, appropriate in the regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the stated mission.

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. Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners have been identified, U.S. Embassy New Zealand 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. In particularly challenging operating environments, applications should include contingency plans for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan and address any operational or programmatic security concerns and how they will be addressed.

Institution's Record and Capacity

U.S. Embassy New Zealand will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of 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.

Cost Effectiveness

U.S. Embassy New Zealand 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 is not required and does not need to be included in the budget. Inclusion in the budget does not result in additional points awarded during the review process. Budgets however 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 its necessity, appropriateness, and its link to the project objectives.

Please note: If cost-share is included in the budget then 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, U.S. Embassy New Zealand's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

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. A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Complete applications will include a detailed plan (both a narrative and table) of how the project's progress and impact will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. Incorporating a well-designed monitoring and evaluation component into a project is one of the most efficient methods of documenting the progress and results (intended and unintended) of a project. Applications should demonstrate the capacity to provide objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes and engage in robust monitoring and assessment of project activities. The quality of the M&E plan will be judged on the narrative explaining how both monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, as well as who will be responsible for those related activities. For each performance indicator, the table should also include baselines and yearly 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.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

U.S. Embassy New Zealand will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will receive a letter electronically via email requesting that the applicant respond to panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the panel's conditions and recommendations, being registered in required systems, and completing and providing any

additional documentation requested by U.S. Embassy New Zealand. Final approval is also contingent on final review and approval by the Department of State's warranted grants officer. The notice of Federal award signed by the Department of State's warranted grants officers is the sole authorizing document. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via email to be counter-signed.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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 (for more information on these exceptions, see Chapters 5, Federal Assistance to Individuals, and 6, Federal Assistance to Foreign Public Entities Directive.) 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-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at <https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>.

F.3 Reporting

Applicants should be aware that U.S. Embassy New Zealand awards will require regular financial and progress reporting. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports. The progress reports must include a coversheet with information about the award, a narrative attachment as described below; and information about progress made on the Project Indicators, using a mutually agreed upon format approved by the grants officer.

Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Scope of Work (SOW) and in the Monitoring and Evaluation

(M&E) Statement. An assessment of the overall project's impact should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Explanation and evaluation of significant activities of the reporting period and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the M&E plan. In addition, attach the M&E plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators;
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;
- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the Recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and a corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why established goals were not met;

- Data for the required indicator(s) for the reporting period as well as aggregate data by fiscal year;
- Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.
- A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 90 days after the expiration of the award.

Please note: delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipient's ability to receive future U.S. government funds. U.S. Embassy New Zealand reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period.

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

For technical submission questions related to this solicitation, please contact Leslie Goodman at GoodmanLN@state.gov or Janine Burns at BurnsJ@state.gov, or Tracey Zemanek at ZemanekT@state.gov

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Applicants should be aware that U.S. Embassy New Zealand 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 U.S. Embassy New Zealand 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 this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any U.S. Embassy New Zealand representative. Explanatory information provided by U.S. Embassy New Zealand that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. U.S. Embassy New Zealand reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project evaluation requirements.

This NOFO will appear on www.grants.gov and the U.S. Mission New Zealand [website](#).