



USAID DISP Annual Program Statement

Issuance Date: January 15, 2024,
Closing Date: December 31, 2024

This Annual Program Statement (APS) announces opportunities for individuals and organizations to apply for a grant under contract (GUC) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship Program (DISP). Eligible applicants include higher education institutions (HEIs), non-government organizations, and other individuals/entities who support basic education and higher education initiatives in and around Burma.

This solicitation can be viewed and downloaded in full at usaiddisp.com. Addendums to this solicitation may be issued and will be posted on the same website. The link to the application is also available on usaiddisp.com.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with multiple deadlines, as specified further in this APS. For inquiries, please email grants@usaiddisp.com.

Note: Issuance of this Notice does not constitute a binding commitment on the part of DISP to issue further solicitations, make an award, nor does it commit DISP to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any applications.

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I. Program Overview

USAID/Burma’s higher education (HE) programming advances United States Government (USG) strategic objectives to promote inclusive democracy and economic growth by educating, equipping, and preparing Burma’s next generation of leaders.

The five-year USAID DISP activity, which was launched in August 2023, directly aims to further that goal by supporting current and future community leaders of Burma, particularly those from vulnerable groups, to gain access to quality learning opportunities. This will be achieved via multi-modalities that strengthen the HE and overall education landscape, including Grants under Contract (GUCs).

Through DISP, participants of all backgrounds will earn higher education degrees, receive professional certifications, and/or gain access to contextualized curricula through short- and long-term training in Burma and throughout select countries in the region (Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand).

DISP exclusively supports activities with non-governmental, civil society, private HEIs, Regional Public HEIs and/or other private educational entities (organizations outside of Burma will include both public and private institutions). It does not support or work through state-controlled entities inside Burma.

II. APS Purpose & Activities

Purpose

Through this 2024 APS, DISP is calling for applications from higher education institutions (HEIs), local civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting basic education and higher education in Burma and the surrounding region. The call is also open to individuals who support education services in and around Burma or conduct research on topics related to the Burma education system.

Within this context, DISP strongly encourages and will prioritize applications from partnership consortiums comprised of Burmese CSOs/CBOs/NGOs and U.S./E.U./Australian HEIs who are providing/will expand interventions in basic education and higher education.

Additionally, it should be noted that 60% of DISP GUC funding has been earmarked for basic education. Accordingly, applications that support basic education interventions or a combination of basic education and higher education interventions will be prioritized. As seen below in the list of illustrative activities, basic education is comprised of primary education, secondary education, workforce development, and capacity building interventions that support teachers, administrators, counselors, and youth workers.



Illustrative Activities

Below is an illustrative but non-exhaustive list of activities that could be funded through this APS:

Basic Education

- Measurable improvements in literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills development that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce.
- Workforce development, vocational training, and digital literacy (for individuals at the secondary or lower education levels) informed by real market needs and opportunities and that results in measurable improvements in employment.
- Programs and activities designed to demonstrably improve:
 - Early childhood, pre-primary education, primary education, and secondary education, which can be delivered in formal or non-formal education settings.
 - Learning for out-of-school youth and adults at the secondary or lower education levels.
 - Capacity building for teachers, administrators, counselors, and youth workers results in measurable improvements in student literacy, numeracy, or employment.
- Programs at the pre-primary level should take a holistic approach to measurably improve learning and educational in at least three of the following domains:
 - Language and emergent literacy
 - Emergent numeracy and cognition
 - Social-emotional learning
 - Physical development

Higher Education

- Developing, expanding, or improving relevant, contextualized HE course content to be made available to regional or local scholars through in-person, virtual, and/or blended learning modalities.
- Promoting collaboration between U.S. universities, particularly engaging minority serving institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and other institutions not traditionally leveraged for supporting international development and education activities.
- Promoting collaboration between regional HEIs, local private HEIs, NGOs, and diaspora groups to support the goal of this activity.
- Supporting community-based work by NGOs, HEIs, diaspora groups, or other organizations that advance HE access, quality, diversity, equity and/or inclusion.
- Supporting community-based work to assist youth in acquiring knowledge and developing skills and behaviors to find jobs, establish viable self-employment ventures, and/or stay employed and productive in a changing economy.



- *(Individuals and Organizations)* Supporting research on higher education in Burma
- *(Individuals)* Supporting relevant work of scholars at risk from Burma
- *(Individuals)* Sponsoring visiting scholars at risk from Burma at U.S. or regional HEIs
- *(Individuals)* Sponsoring visiting faculty positions (regionally or within the US) or short-term visits or exchanges in fields of study supported by this Activity.
- *(Individuals)* Supporting community-based work by individual scholars or cohort groups that advances HE access, quality, diversity, equity and/or inclusion.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to integrate the following cross-cutting themes into their projects, as relevant and appropriate:

- Gender equality and women’s empowerment
- LGBTQI equality and empowerment
- Disability rights and inclusiveness
- Innovative uses of technology
- Strengthening and leveraging networks and coalitions

III. Applicant Eligibility & Award Considerations

This APS intends to issue multiple GUC awards to eligible organizations and individuals following the guidelines set in USAID’s [ADS 302.3.4.13](#). Further details on grant details, eligibility, and award considerations are provided below.

Grant Amounts and Duration

Applicants may apply for an initial period of up to 12 months. Successful grants may be considered for an extension beyond the initial 12-month period after the initial grant has been awarded, either as a follow-on or as a separate grant.

There is no grant amount minimum. Per U.S. federal regulations, the maximum grant amount for U.S. based organizations cannot exceed USD \$250,000¹. For non-U.S. applicants, there is no limit to the grant award amount.

Depending on complexity of the proposed grant description, budget, and the capacity of the applicant, the resulting grant type will be Cost-Reimbursable (CR) or Fixed Amount Award (FAA). DISP intends to award most grants as FAAs.

Award Discretion

DISP reserves the right to make or not make awards through this APS. The actual number of grants under this APS is subject to the availability of funds as well as the viability of applications received.

¹ This threshold applies to all award extensions. If the same organization applies for a separate grant under DISP at a later date, then they would be eligible for up to another \$250,000 USD.



Eligibility

All non-governmental, civil society, private HEIs, regional public HEIs and/or other private educational entities meeting USAID source and nationality geographic code 935² and excluding prohibited sources are eligible to compete. Organizations outside of Burma can include both public and private institutions. DISP strongly encourages women-led organizations to apply, local civil society network, Burmese organizations, and non-Burmese CBOs supporting Burmese education advancement to partner with an international organization.

Unless exempt, all applicants must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and provide DISP with their Unique Entity Identifier. If you are not registered in SAM.gov, please allow for several weeks for processing your registration through SAM.gov.

If the applicant is considered appropriate to receive GUCs, the applicant needs to be aware of the following requirements:

- U.S. organizations: 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 and applicable USAID Standard Provisions. For cost-reimbursable awards, please refer to: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303maa>. For fixed amount awards, please refer to <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mat>
- Non-U.S. organizations: For cost-reimbursable awards, please refer to <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mab>. For fixed amount awards, please refer to <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mat>.
- All applicants for GUCs that will be selected for an award will be subject to DISP's risk assessment before the award is finalized.
- In accordance with 2 CFR Part 25, all applicants (unless) exempt are required to have UEI and register with the System for Award Management (SAM). USAID will consider UEI waivers on a case-by-case basis for the most sensitive activities under DISP based on the criteria listed in 2 CFR Part 25. Registration information can be found at <https://www.sam.gov>. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time DISP is ready to make an award, DISP may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for not making an award.

Ineligible Applicants & Activities

U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. DISP will conduct checks in the System for Awards Management (SAM), Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the US Treasury, and the United Nations Security Council consolidated list.

Individual and entities ineligible to apply include the following:

- Political parties
- Armed Forces (State and Non-state Armed forces)

² [Code 935 means free world](#) and includes all countries except prohibited sources countries.



- Government institutions (this includes entities that the Government of Burma owns at least 50% share of or receive at least 50% of their financial support from the Government of Burma)

Outside of activities which do not contribute to the objectives of GUCs under DISP's BED and HE funding, activities and costs that are ineligible/unallowable for grant funding include, but are not limited to:

- Creation of endowments (Note: financing of loan portfolios is not an endowment).
- Any previous obligations by USAID to the beneficiary.
- The bad debts of the beneficiary.
- Fines imposed on the beneficiary.
- Penalties imposed on the beneficiary.
- Any expenses related to ceremonies, parties, and celebrations.
- The purchase of any goods restricted and prohibited under USAID regulations such as alcoholic beverages.
- The purchase of surveillance equipment, military equipment, or arms whether new or surplus, police or law enforcement equipment, abortion equipment and services, weather modification equipment, luxury goods and gambling equipment.
- The purchase of goods from prohibited sources.
- Expenses related to purchases or activities which are illegal under Burmese or U.S. law.
- Promotion of political parties, religion, or commercial interests.
- Fundraising.
- Payments made to government employees.
- Funds paid as profit to any recipient. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs.

IV. Application

Timeline

The APS open on 15 January 2024 and close 31 December 2024. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. The first deadline for application review is 15 March 2024. Responses will be sent to applicants within six weeks of the deadline. The full schedule of deadlines is below:

- Round 1: 15 January 2024 – 15 March 2024
- Round 2: 16 March 2024 – 15 May 2024
- Round 3: 16 May 2024 – 15 July 2024
- Round 4: 16 July – 15 September
- Round 5: 16 September- 15 November
- Round 6: 16 November- 31 December

Note: DISP reserves the right to close this APS early or amend depending on availability of funds. DISP also reserves the right to review applications outside of the rounds stated above.



Application Portal

Applications must be submitted to DISP via the secure application platform, Slate <https://myapp.iie.org/dispgrant>. All applicants must register and create an account, which will then allow the applicant to work on and save the application in stages before submitting for DISP review. The portal will also provide the technical proposal and budget templates for upload. For more detailed information on how to register and create an account in Slate, and frequently asked questions, please visit usaiddisp.com. For further details, please contact DISP at grants@usaiddisp.com.

Language

At this time, all applications must be submitted in English. If additional languages are accepted at a later date, the APS will be updated.

Required Documents

- Technical proposal using the template provided (further information below). Any other submissions will be considered ineligible.
- Budget with budget notes using the provided template (further information below). Any other budget submissions will be considered ineligible.

Note: As detailed in the [pre-award section](#) of this document, prospective grantees must later submit a certificate of registration or incorporation paper, as well as a signed Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements document (ADS 303MAV), in order to receive a grant.

Additional Information

- A list of any donors your organization has had in the last two years. Maximum of 3, provide contact email, and phone numbers.
- The names and brief biographies of the key technical and finance staff involved in the proposed project.

Optional Documentation

- Brochures, research reports, samples of publications and results of past programs (no more than 3) can also be uploaded into the application portal when relevant to the technical proposal.

Technical Proposal

The project description should be up to five pages long and include the following sections:

1) Project Justification (0.5 page)

- What are the issues that need addressing?
- Whom do these issues affect?
- Why is it important to address these issues now?
- What efforts, if any, have been made to address these issues?
- What has and has not worked?



- How will working on these issues help to promote the activity's goals?

In answering these questions, please focus only on those issues that you plan to address through your project.

2) Project Goal and Objectives (0.25 page)

- Which of the three issue areas are you applying for?
- What will your project accomplish at the end of grant term (your goal)? How will your project accomplish this goal (your objectives)? A goal should be specific, relevant, and realistic.

3) Description of Activities and Results (3.5 pages)

- What activities will you undertake to accomplish your project objectives?
- In describing your activities, please link them to the objectives you have identified.
- For each activity, answer the following: What will you do, when, where, and how? Who will participate? How will you engage other regional or International Higher Education Institution? How will this activity address gender concerns and inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalized groups (as applicable)?
- Please make sure that activities are realistic within the proposed budget and timeframe.
- Under each Objective, please list the expected result(s): What result(s) do you expect under this objective? Please show that results address the issues mentioned in the Project Justification.

4) Background & Past Performance of Organization (0.5 page)

- Describe your organization's past activities that are relevant to the activities in your proposal.
- Past performance is not a requirement but organizations that bring greater levels of experience will be scored more highly on the relevant evaluation criteria.

5) Target Beneficiaries and Geographic Coverage (0.25 page)

- Who will benefit? How do you know this group needs the proposed activities? Which geographic areas and populations will the project cover? Why did you select these locations to implement your activities?

6) Annexes (not included in page count)

- Draft Project Work Plan (included in Application form)
- Draft Monitoring & Evaluation Plan (Included in Application form)

Budget and Budget Notes

The Budget should show estimated costs. Applications should also include budget notes that provide a narrative description of the estimated costs that are listed in the budget. Please use the budget template provided.



Grant budgets can cover core costs including rent, staff salaries and utilities. These expenses should be presented as separate line items. The estimated core costs should only include expenses that are directly related to project activities (e.g., salaries for staff working on the proposed activities, internet, or telephone costs for proposed activities, etc.). If your organization receives other donor funding, and if the other donors also cover these core costs, please illustrate how you will share costs proportionately with other donors.

Budgeting for Core Administrative Costs

Most organizations incur core administrative costs which need to be paid for through the grants they receive from their donors. DISP partners can use the following options to charge core costs:

- **Directly charge all costs:** In this case, the core administrative costs are budgeted as direct costs, and no core cost line is included in the budget. This is the preferred option. Partners should make sure that the costs are fairly divided across different projects/donors if your organization receives funding from different sources.
- **Use up to a 10% allowable core cost rate:** Organizations may include up to a flat *de minimis* 10% allowable core cost rate in the budget. The costs included in the flat rate must be specified in the budget notes and must be verifiable. Organizations that have NICRA (negotiated indirect cost rate agreement) must use the indirect rates as approved by their cognizant agency.
- **Other negotiated core cost rate:** Any other core cost rates must be approved by DISP. The rate must be based on the last three year's audited financial statements or a signed certification from the organization's independent auditor attesting to the accuracy of the proposed rate based on the data from the audited financial statements and indicating how the rate was calculated.
- **Cost share:** DISP will strongly encourage applicants to include a cost share contribution, though it will not be required. When providing cost-share, applicants must explain the source of funds that will constitute their cost share contribution (membership fees, other products and services, in-kind contributions from volunteers, etc.) and identify other potential and/or committed sources of support for the proposed project. Cost-share contribution may not be made with U.S. Government funding under another grant, cooperative agreement, or contract.

V. Evaluation & Selection

Selection Criteria

The Grant Evaluation Committee (GEC), which is comprised of DISP leadership, will review applications received and assess them per the criteria below. USAID has the final approval authority.

<i>Relevance of the proposed activities to this APS</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Clear identification of beneficiary group and demonstration of need for activity</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Capacity and past performance of the applicant</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Inclusion of one or more of the cross-cutting themes</i>	<i>15%</i>



<i>Creative Approaches, Quality, and impact of proposed activities</i>	25%
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Budgets are not assigned a score, but the Grant Evaluation Committee will evaluate budgets to make sure they are reasonable and cost effective.

Costs/prices will be analyzed as part of the due diligence process. Applicants should note that the budget must be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate cost/price reasonableness and completeness, and that budgets including cost/price information determined to be unreasonable, incomplete, or based on a methodology that is not adequately supported may be deemed unacceptable.

Notification

The GEC will decide whether an applicant can be considered for final submission to the designated USAID representative. Once approved by USAID, applicants will become a “Prospective grantee.”

Prospective grantees will be notified of their selection by email (and by phone if required). This initial notification does not guarantee that an applicant will receive a grant. Once notified, the applicant will work together with DISP on next steps (“Pre-Award Steps” below) that must be successfully completed for that applicant to qualify for and receive a grant.

Pre-Award Steps

Once the GEC has notified prospective grant recipients, grants team members will work with each of the prospective grantees to complete the remaining steps, including:

- Clarifying any technical aspects of the proposal that are unclear.
- Undertaking a Financial Pre-Award Assessment to clarify the prospective grantee’s financial capacity.
- Supplying audited financial statements, if available. If no recent audit has been conducted, a revenue and expense statement and balance sheet for the previous fiscal year can be supplied instead.
- Providing the names of the prospective grantee’s Board Members or equivalents.
- Getting a UEI number and registering on www.sam.gov as needed
- Having Debarment, Terrorist Financing and other searches done, in compliance with US Government Burma Special Provisions and other applicable regulations (searches performed by Grant Project team members).
- Evaluation Plan. Grants members will provide guidance as needed to ensure that the M&E plan includes defined project results and objectives; measurable performance indicators, with definitions; baselines, benchmarks, and targets; and the name of the team member responsible for the timely collection of data. DISP may also request certain indicators that feed into broader DISP data collection; and
- Ensuring gender mainstreaming and inclusion. Grants team members will provide assistance as needed to help prospective grantees mainstream into their project plan considerations relating to gender and include measures relating to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged or marginalized peoples.

Project Reporting



After completing the Pre-Award Steps and signing a grant under DISP, grantees will be required to submit project progress reports to DISP. The DISP grant team will provide successful applicants with more information about their reporting requirements when their award is confirmed.