

# UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS & GRANT APPLICATIONS

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You never know where the next great idea will come from. That's why USAID welcomes unsolicited contract proposals and assistance applications for consideration. We do review every submission, but can only approve only a small number, so please read this guidance carefully.

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## Definitions

- **An unsolicited proposal refers to contracts.** It is a written proposal for a new or innovative idea that is submitted on the initiative of the offeror for the purpose of obtaining a contract with the Government, and that is not in response to a request for proposals or any other Government-initiated solicitation or program.
  - **An unsolicited application refers to grants or cooperative agreements.** It is a written request for a grant that represents an appropriate use of Agency funds to support or stimulate a public purpose.
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## Introduction

Unsolicited proposals and applications provide a method for organizations to submit unique, innovative or proprietary approaches for solutions to development challenges. USAID reviews unsolicited proposals and applications to determine whether funding such applications are in the best interest of the Agency and consistent with USAID's development objectives.

Unsolicited proposals and applications can be received by USAID on a continuous basis for review; however, only in highly exceptional cases are these likely to be approved for funding. Generally, funding for USAID programs is concentrated and focused on clear objectives within program priorities and funding for unsolicited applications is limited.

USAID encourages those considering submission of unsolicited proposals and applications to first review USAID competitive announcements published on [sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov), [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), and review the **Agency's Business Forecast**. When responding to specific announcements, the instructions contained in that announcement must be followed.

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## Unsolicited Proposals

The USAID policy for Unsolicited Proposals for contracts can be found in **ADS Chapter 302**, USAID Direct Contracting, section 302.3.4.2. In addition organizations interested in submitting proposals should review the guidance in **FAR 15.6** and **AIDAR 715.6**.

### Basic Eligibility Criteria for Unsolicited Proposals

While all proposals will be received and reviewed for funding, anyone who applies must keep in mind that resources are limited. Potential offerors should be aware that USAID will be able to approve only a small number. To be legally eligible for consideration, unsolicited proposals must be:

- Innovative and unique
- Independently originated and developed by the offeror
- Prepared without U.S. Government supervision, endorsement, direction, or direct Government involvement
- Include sufficient detail to permit a determination that USAID support could be worthwhile and the proposed work could benefit USAID's research and development or other responsibilities

- Not be an advance proposal for a known USAID requirement that can or will be acquired by competitive methods.
- Not address a previously published agency requirement.

## Required Contents for Unsolicited Proposals

### Basic Information

- Offeror's name, address, and type of organization (profit, nonprofit, educational, small business, etc.)
- Names and telephone numbers of technical and business personnel to be contacted for evaluation or negotiation purposes
- Identification of proprietary data to be used for evaluation purposes only
- Names of other Federal, State, or Local agencies or parties receiving the proposal or funding the proposed effort
- Date of submission
- Signature of a person authorized to represent and contractually obligate the offeror

### Technical Information

- Concise title and abstract (approximately 200 words) of the proposed effort
- A reasonably complete discussion stating the objectives of the effort or activity, the method of approach and extent of the effort to be employed, the nature and extent of the anticipated results, and the manner in which the work will help to support the accomplishment of USAID's mission
- Names and biographical information of the offeror's key personnel who would be involved, including alternates
- Type of support needed from USAID (facilities, equipment, materials, or personnel resources)

### Supporting Information

- Proposed price or total estimated cost for the effort presented in sufficient detail for meaningful evaluation
- Period of time for which the proposal is valid (suggested six month minimum)
- Type of contact preferred
- Proposed duration of effort
- Brief description of the organization, previous experience in the field, and facilities to be used
- Other statements, if applicable about organizational conflicts of interest, security clearances, and environmental impacts

### Limited Use of Data

An offeror may restrict the data included in its unsolicited proposal by marking the proposal with the legend set forth in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 15.609. You can access the FAR at <https://www.acquisition.gov/far/>.

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## Unsolicited Grants and Cooperative Agreements

Guidance on unsolicited grants and cooperative agreements is provided in **ADS Chapter 303**, Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations.

Unsolicited applications are those submitted to USAID for an award by an applicant solely on his or her initiative, without prior formal or informal solicitation by USAID.

USAID may make an award based on an unsolicited application, without the benefit of competition, when the application:

- Clearly demonstrates a unique, innovative, or proprietary program;
- Represents an appropriate use of USAID funds to support or stimulate a public purpose; and
- Fits within an existing Development Objective.



USAID encourages organizations to submit unsolicited applications in the form of a concept paper for initial consideration as opposed to a more lengthy detailed application. An unsolicited application concept paper should not exceed 5 pages and should contain the following:

- Name and address of organization and identification of point of contact with contact information.
- Type of organization (e.g., non-profit, university, etc.).
- Names of other organizations (federal and non-federal as well as any other USAID offices) to whom the applicant submitted the application and/or are funding the proposed activity.
- Signature of authorized representative of the applicant, authorized to obligate the applicant.
- Concise title and objective of proposed activity.
- Discussion of the objectives, the method of approach, the amount of effort to be employed, proposed duration of activity, the anticipated results, and how the work will help accomplish USAID's mission in the targeted area.
- Type of support the applicant requests from USAID (e.g., funds, facilities, equipment, materials, or personnel resources).
- Proposed estimated cost; and brief cost breakdown, and any proposed cost-sharing or matching (see 2 CFR 200.306).
- Brief description of applicant's previous work and experience, both functionally and geographically.

Unsolicited applications should exclude and minimize the inclusion of proprietary data. If included the applicant should clearly mark any sensitive selection information and/or proprietary data.

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## Useful Background Information

The **Development Experience Clearinghouse**, the Agency's online resource for USAID-funded technical and program documentation, provides useful information for those who wish to ensure their idea is relevant.

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## Who Will Review My Idea?

Both unsolicited proposals and unsolicited applications should be sent to **[UnsolicitedProposals@usaid.gov](mailto:UnsolicitedProposals@usaid.gov)**.

- Unsolicited proposals are reviewed by the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs.
- Unsolicited applications are routed from the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs to the appropriate parties for consideration.

To make sure your idea is given due consideration, please make sure that all requested information is included, and that you've followed the guidelines provided.

Learn more about "**the USAID Grant and Contract Process: A Basic Guide**" [here](#).