



**REQUEST FOR GRANTS APPLICATIONS (RFA) for
Promoting Resilience Through Empowerment and Care for Trauma-affected Children and
Families (PROTECT)**

To:	Prospective Applicants
From:	ARK Group DMCC (ARK)
Reference:	RFA-ARK-24-YEM-01
Published:	April 16, 2024
Clarification requests:	April 22, 2024 - 23:00hrs (Local Time: Aden)
Closing Date: Stage 1.	May 6, 2024 - 23:00hrs (Local Time: Aden)
Closing Date: Stage 2.	May 20, 2024 - 23:00hrs (Local Time: Aden)
Contact Details:	Yemengrants@arkgroupdmcc.com

ARK is a social enterprise, empowering local communities through the provision of agile and sustainable interventions to create greater stability, opportunity, and hope for the future. We believe that strong, resilient communities are the foundation of local, national, regional, and international development and stability and ultimately a safer, peaceful, and more prosperous world. At ARK, we have delivered research and programmatic interventions validating this approach in Yemen since 2008. As a social enterprise we work in partnership with communities, our donors, and other implementers to build local capacities, generate opportunity and bring about sustainable change.

The USAID Yemen Community Resilience program seeks to collaborate with local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by providing grants that enhance their capacities and bolster the sustainability of their child protection initiatives that promote empowerment and care for children experiencing trauma because of conflict. To accomplish this, the program will allocate grants to eligible CSOs and CBOs, up to 25,000 USD, tailored to the scope and nature of each activity. In addition to funding, following a capacity assessment of successful applicants, ARK will offer technical assistance and share its expertise with these organizations, ensuring not only successful grant implementation but also the long-term sustainability of their initiatives.

Organizations are invited to apply for grants of up to 150,000 USD, provided they satisfy the following criteria:

- hold a valid registration and authorization to operate in Yemen.
- have a formal constitution and recognition by the Yemeni authorities, and compliance with all civil, fiscal, and legal regulations.



While for-profit entities may apply for grant funding, they must exclude profit from their grant budgets. Please note that government and parastatal entities are not eligible to apply for these grant funds.

Application process:

There is a two-stage application process.

Stage 1 – Concept note: Potential applicants should submit a concept note no longer than three pages to Yemengrants@arkgroupdmcc.com, on or before the stated deadline. Applications received after the final closing date and time will not be considered for award of grant funds. ARK will then review the concept notes and invite successful applicants to submit a full application.

Stage 2 – Full application: If invited by ARK, organizations should submit an application by email, using the format and templates provided in this RFA, to Yemengrants@arkgroupdmcc.com. All applications must be submitted before the stated deadline for each round. Applications received after the final closing date and time will not be considered for award of grant funds.

All applications for stage one and two received before the published closing date will be evaluated. However, this solicitation does not in any way commit ARK to make an award or compensate the responding organizations for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of their applications.

Clarification requests about this RFA and applications should be sent by the time and date stated above. Responses will be shared with all known prospective applicants.



Table of Contents

1. Abbreviations and Acronyms	4
2. Program Description	5
3. Application and Submission Information	10
4. Application Review Information	14
5. Award and Administration Information	17
6. Post-award Reporting	17
7. Branding and Marking	18
8. Standard Provisions	18
9. List of Attachments	18



1. Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CFR	The Code of Federal Regulations
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FAA	Fixed Amount Awards
LACs	Local Advisory Councils
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
PROTECT	Promoting Resilience Through Empowerment and Care for Trauma-affected Children and Families
RFA	Request for Applications
SDN	Specially Designated Nationals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UEI	Unique Entity ID
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WPS	USG Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security



2. Program Description

2.1 Background

Nine years after the onset of the conflict in Yemen, the country continues to face a complex crisis driving humanitarian needs and disproportionately impacting children. In 2024, it is estimated that 7.3 million Yemeni children will need some form of child protection assistance¹. The protracted conflict continues to have a profound impact on people's mental health across the country, contributing to negative coping mechanisms. Children and adolescents, in particular, carry psychological scars from years of continued violence and displacement.² Yet, national and community-level mental health services at the national and community level are acutely inadequate, and even more so for child and adolescent mental health³. Traditionally, mental health is a neglected area in Yemen, poorly understood and sparsely resourced, with significant societal stigma and understanding compounding poor access and limited-service provision⁴. Whilst national and international organizations have been filling gaps in services, needs remain, particularly at the community level. With growing regional conflict and a reduction in humanitarian funding globally, community-based protection structures lack the resources and capacity to provide much needed preventative, supportive, and safe Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services to children and families experiencing trauma in Yemen.

In response to these critical needs, Promoting Resilience Through Empowerment and Care for Trauma-affected Children and Families (PROTECT) forms part of the USAID Yemen Community Resilience Activity, a five-year program implemented in 15 communities across four governorates in southern Yemen from August 2022 to August 2027. The program will strengthen the resilience of communities by partnering with local civil society and community-based organizations, especially those led by women. The program will strengthen community cohesion and child protection through direct support and case management, including referrals.

Moreover, the program will contribute to USAID/Yemen's Development Objective 3: Improved Governance and Social Cohesion by working with and supporting community structures and community-based organizations/civil society organizations (CBOs/CSOs) to lead prevention mechanisms and support services to conflict-affected children. It will also align with the key objectives of the USG Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS): (i) women are more prepared and increasingly able to participate in efforts that promote stable and lasting peace; and (ii) women and girls are safer, better protected, and have equal access.

The program will also address various community, family, and individual needs, including conflict resolution, mediation and reconciliation mechanisms, education, vocational training and income generation/livelihood opportunities, safe spaces, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

¹ Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-needs-overview-2024-january-2024>

² Ibid.

³ HeRAMS Yemen 2023 Baseline Report: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/herams/herams-yemen-baseline-report-2023-operational-status.pdf?sfvrsn=24b649e0_1&download=true

⁴ National Mental Health Strategy in Yemen, 2022 - 2026:

<https://www.mhinnovation.net/sites/default/files/content/document/National%20Mental%20Health%20Strategy%20in%20Yemen%2C%202022-2026.pdf>



(MHPSS). All interventions will prioritize support to vulnerable population groups—including children, adolescents, women, and marginalized groups—and will seek to enhance transparency, human rights, and accountability, with a special emphasis on protection from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Interventions proposed should fill gaps and not duplicate existing interventions by international and national actors and facilitate referrals to specialist providers where appropriate.

The USAID Yemen Community Resilience Activity invites applications for implementing activities that aim to create robust community-based protective networks for children impacted by conflict. These activities will be carried out under the PROTECT grant-funding scheme in the target communities. Applications can propose interventions in more than one community.

2.2 Objective and Interventions

The primary goal of Promoting Resilience Through Empowerment and Care for Trauma-affected Children and Families (PROTECT) initiative is to provide communities with sustainable, culturally relevant, context-specific, and age- and gender-appropriate Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) that is accessible to all community members who have been exposed to prolonged traumatic events including conflict, particularly children and young people.

Outlined below are the key interventions that will be implemented to strengthen resilience and improve the wellbeing of children and families affected by trauma. Applicants may suggest additional activities that align with the program objectives. Applicants may propose interventions in more than one community from the listed provided below and may submit proposals for funding up to \$150,000, assuming an estimated budget of \$25,000 per community. Most importantly, applications should detail the organization's approach and method to accomplish the interventions in the targeted locations. Consideration must be given to the developmental stage and life course of children and young people, and prevent re-traumatization when designing and implementing approaches, methods, and interventions.

Target interventions include:

- Provide case management services to support families in accessing available services.
- Deliver trauma stabilization interventions and approaches targeting children and families, aimed at strengthening positive coping strategies, understanding how trauma manifests and the processing of victimization. This should cover, at minimum, the following⁵:
 - Understanding bio-psycho-social symptoms of trauma and difficulties faced because of trauma experienced.
 - Developing and maintaining personal safety plans, including the recognition of early warning signs of suicidal intent or low mood, implementation of initial coping mechanisms, and identification of key social or familial support contacts.
 - Delivering age and developmental stage-appropriate skills-based programs (such as Problem Management+, EASE⁶) aiming to strengthen skills of targeted children in emotional

⁵ Note: PROTECT does not seek proposals for interventions covered by other funding streams, including the IASC triangle

⁶ EASE is Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions: See <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240082755>



- regulation, managing impulsivity, making and maintaining healthy relationships, problem-solving in relationships, and coping with emotions.
- Developing skills and approaches parents/caregivers and family members can adopt when supporting children affected by conflict.
 - Strengthen the capacity of community-based structures and social support services (religious leaders, community leaders, social workers, health professionals, etc.) through delivering training to these structures and support services on the significance of mental wellbeing, trauma informed care principles and approaches, and support services available.
 - Enhance Local Advisory Councils' (LACs) knowledge in a range of MHPSS support topics, including but not limited to trauma-informed care principles and approaches and MHPSS referral pathways, collated by the MHPSS Technical Working Group.
 - Encourage LACs to actively engage with key stakeholders, such as local leaders, community networks, the MHPSS Working Group, and government agencies, with the aim of increasing awareness of the importance of MHPSS prevention and response for children and parents/caregivers and referral pathways available, collated by the MHPSS Technical Working Group.
 - Strengthen, in locations not supported by other actors, the capacity of formal and non-formal education staff (teaching and non-teaching personnel) to screen and refer children to safe and appropriate support services. Capacity strengthening initiatives could include trauma-informed care principles, psychological first aid, and MHPSS referral pathways available in each community.
 - Facilitate collaboration between schools, health facilities, community-based protection structures and local authorities and communities to broaden their impact, improve identification or and awareness efforts for MHPSS survivors, and link them with available support services including education and health where available.

2.3 Expected Outcome

PROTECT builds upon the gains of the program's other grants schemes, to cultivate a culture of prevention and protection within communities, making it increasingly challenging for external actors to exploit vulnerable children and families. The interventions of PROTECT are anticipated to create a secure and nurturing environment for children affected by conflict. To achieve this, at an individual level, PROTECT aims to enhance the knowledge and application of safe, sustainable coping strategies of children, young people, and parents/caregivers whose mental health and psychosocial well-being are affected by conflict. At a community level, PROTECT will strengthen the capacity of community-based protection mechanisms and social support services to provide safe, developmental stage, and age-appropriate, trauma-informed MHPSS support, and refer acute cases to specialized MHPSS services, where available. These approaches will lead to sustainable, culturally relevant, context-specific, and age and gender-appropriate MHPSS that is accessible to all community members who have been exposed to and impacted by conflict-related trauma, particularly children and young people.



2.4 Targeted Communities

The program will be implemented in 15 local communities spread across nine districts within four Yemeni governorates: Abyan, Aden, Lahj, and Al-Dhali'. In all these communities, the PROTECT grants will be implemented by civil society organizations and community-based organizations. Therefore, this solicitation pertains specifically to all the 15 targeted communities, as per the table below.

Governorate	District	Community
Abyan	Khanfar	Al-Habeel
		Al-Lakida
		Batais Al-Gharbiya
	Zinjibar	Bajadar
		Al-Wadi/Dal Ahmed
		Al-Rayan
		Al-Maraqid
Aden	Dar Sa'ad	Dar Sa'ad Al-Sharqiya
	Sheikh	Al-Saysaban
	Othman	Al-Mahareeq
Al-Dhali'	Qa'taba	Isaf Marais
	Al-Dhali' town	Al-Dhali' town
	Al-Azariq	Al-Azariq
Lahj	Radfan	Wahhda and Hasi Ala'la
	Yafei	Lab'oos (Al-Shohada Ber and Jabal Al- Yazidi)

In February 2024, the program gathered data on the existing MHPSS response capabilities to assess referral pathways and how to complement these existing services. The mapping suggests that the landscape of MHPSS interventions in Yemen is limited, with a total of sixteen organizations—including ten international NGOs, one UN agency, and five local organizations (two of which are local implementing partners for the INGOs)—contributing across the program's four targeted various governorates.

The geographic distribution of these interventions varies, with each region having a distinct level of support. In Abyan, interventions are focused in two districts, offering support to health facilities and child-friendly spaces, particularly in the Khanfar district. Aden has a range of support across all its districts, including psychiatric services at Al-Sadaqa hospital in Sheikh Othman and community center and mobile team support in Dar Sa'ad. Interventions in Al-Dhali include support for health facilities in key locations, including the program's targeted locations of Al-Dhali town and Al-Azariq. In Lahj, one of the MHPSS actors extends support to a health facility in the Radfan district. These interventions



include awareness-raising, one-on-one psychosocial support, psychological counseling, group support and therapy, school-based initiatives, psychological first aid, and psychiatric and medical treatments.

Prospective applicants are expected to detail in their submissions an overview of the services currently available in their targeted areas, underscoring how their proposed activities will integrate with and augment existing interventions. This approach ensures a cohesive and synergistic effort toward improving the overall welfare and resilience of the targeted communities.

2.5 Eligible Entities

Applicants eligible to apply are organizations with a valid registration *in Yemen*, formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate *Yemen* authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations. Examples of potentially eligible entities include CSOs & CBOs who can respond through written applications. Eligible applicants must demonstrate experience providing services to vulnerable children and youth affected by armed conflict, including case management and MHPSS. Applicants must have the capacity to implement case management, integrating MHPSS with children, young people and families, and must have established partnerships with local organizations, communities, and government agencies, and preferably are an active member of the MHPSS Working Group. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law and authorized to operate in Yemen.

To be eligible for award of a Subgrant Agreement, in addition to other conditions of this RFA, organizations must have a politically neutral humanitarian mandate, a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to their employees and to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that 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. It is the legal responsibility of the subrecipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all lower-tier subawards, and contracts issued under the Subgrant Agreement. Applicants may also be subject to vetting by the USG.

2.6 Pre-Award Risk and Capacity Assessment

Applicants must have organizational capacity and adequate internal controls to meet the requirements of ARK and USAID. To be considered for a grant award, applicants will be required to complete ARK's Pre-award Risk Assessment and organizational capacity assessment and provide documents and manuals to demonstrate the organization has the capability to manage US government funds.



2.7 Anti-Terrorist Financing and Debarment and Suspension

Applicants are informed that ARK complies with U.S. Sanctions and Embargo laws and Regulations, including Executive Order 13224 on Terrorist Financing, which effectively prohibits transactions with persons or entities that commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism. Any person or entity that participates in this RFA process, as either a prime or sub to the prime, must certify they do not:

- a) have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM) (www.sam.gov);
- b) appear on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury for the Office of Foreign Assets Control, sometimes referred to as the "OFAC List" (online at: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDNList/Pages/default.aspx>); and
- c) is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list (online at: http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/qa_sanctions_list.shtml).

ARK shall disqualify any bid received from a person or entity that is found to be on the List or otherwise ineligible.

2.8 Other Qualification Requirements

- a) Each applicant/organization may submit a maximum of two (2) applications.
- b) Each application must be made for communities in one (1) district.
- c) The applicant must provide a valid Unique Entity ID (UEI) as part of their application. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time ARK is ready to issue an award, ARK may disqualify the application.
- d) The applicant must be registered, operating with the appropriate Yemini supervisory body or governmental ministry and licensed to operate in the field of the proposed activities.
- e) The applicant must have the management and financial structure that enables the grantee to implement the proposed activities effectively, efficiently and compliantly.

3 Application and Submission Information

3.1 Submission Instructions

- a) Applicants must address the specified terms, conditions, and clauses in this Request for Applications (RFA). Applications that do not meet the RFA.
- b) requirements may be deemed non-compliant and excluded from further consideration.
- c) Responses to this solicitation will be reviewed in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified in Section 5, Application Review Information.
- d) All applications must be in Arabic or English.
- e) Applications must be concise and clearly demonstrate the applicant's understanding of and compliance to the requirements in Section 2 of this RFA, Program Description.
- f) The application should clearly address the evaluation criteria in Section 5 of this RFA.

The overall proposal shall consist of two (2) physically separated parts, as follows:

Submission 1 – Technical Proposal

Submission 2 – Budget Proposal.



All pages of each submission must be sequentially numbered and identified with the name of the applicant and the RFA number. The first submission shall be marked “[Technical Proposal - Grantee Name - RFA-ARK-24-YEM-01]”, and the second submission shall be marked “[Budget Proposal - Grantee Name - RFA-ARK-24-YEM-01]”.

- g) Applicants must use the following appendixes in their submission:
- Appendix A – Technical Proposal Template (included in submission 1)
 - Appendix B – Budget Proposal Template (included in submission 2)
 - Appendix C – Budget Narrative Template (included in submission 2)
 - Appendix D – Proposal Declaration Template (included in submission 1)
- h) Applications must remain valid for a hundred and twenty (120) days.
- i) ARK reserves the right to accept or reject any application, cancel the solicitation process, and reject all applications, at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to applicants or any obligation to inform applicants of the grounds for ARK’s action.
- j) Application deadlines are as follows:
- Stage one application deadline: May 6, 2024
 - Round two (final) application deadline: May 20, 2024
 - Applicants may submit their applications anytime until the closing deadlines for the two stages. Early submission is strongly encouraged, as applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis, with the evaluation panel convening twice. Only those applications advancing past stage 1 will be invited to proceed to stage 2 submission. See sections 3.2 and 3.3 for more details on the requirements of each submission.
- k) Applications must be sent by email to: Yemengrants@arkgroupdmcc.com
- l) Proposals should be submitted in MS Word, Excel, or Adobe Acrobat.
- m) Applications submitted after the final deadline will not be considered.
- n) Applications must be signed and submitted by individuals with the authority to commit the applicant to all the provisions of the RFA.
- o) ARK is not obligated to grant an award to any applicant.
- p) ARK will not cover any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation of their application.
- q) In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations *2 CFR Part 701 - Partner Vetting* ARK will submit successful applicants for vetting before awarding an agreement.

3.2 Proposal Layout

All applications shall be submitted with single-spaced, Times New Roman using font size 11. Each page is to be numbered consecutively and have at least one-inch (2.5cm) margins on the top, bottom and sides.

Stage 1 - An up to three-page concept note outlining:

- Location of intervention
- Objectives
- Results
- Activities



- Past performance
- Total budget

The following requirements are mandatory and must be clearly included in your concept note. Concept notes failing to meet any of these mandatory requirements will not be considered.

- a) The applicant must be registered and have a valid license to provide services in the governorate of delivery or Aden. A copy of the organization registration documents must be submitted.
- b) The applicant must have an established office in the governorate of delivery or Aden.
- c) The applicant organization must be established for a minimum of 18 months.

Stage 2 - Full technical proposal with budget:

Using Appendix A – Technical Proposal Template, the technical application must be organized so that it follows the technical evaluation factors listed in Section 5. The technical application must not exceed 5 pages in length, including any graphics and charts that are used but excluding resumes and annexes. Additional pages that exceed the limit will not be evaluated nor will any unnecessary annexes.

The technical proposal must include:

a) Technical Approach (limit 2 and a half pages).

This summary must demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the context, objectives, results, and interventions outlined in Section 2 of this RFA as well their logical interlinks. The applicant must describe their approach to implementation and include the sequence of the activities, the units of each activity (in which the costing will be based upon), and a workplan. The applicant must also provide direct beneficiaries (gender-disaggregated) listed for each activity.

b) Key Personnel (limit half a page, excluding resumes).

The applicant must propose individuals for key personnel positions who are highly qualified and are able to fulfill the responsibilities as described below. The applicant shall submit a complete and current resume for each proposed key personnel (not exceeding 2 pages each). These resumes must clearly describe the individuals' education, experience, and professional credentials. The resumes shall be submitted as an annex to the technical proposal and will not be counted in the page limit. The management structure of the applications should reflect the technical approach proposed in the subject matters listed in section 2.2 "Objectives and Interventions". The applicant must demonstrate that the combined experience of proposed key personnel meets the following standards:



- i. **Grant Lead:** Steers the grant implementation, administrative functions (including staff safety and security) and ensures timely achievement of project milestones as per the workplan.
Qualifications: A bachelor's degree in a related field such as social work, psychology, child protection and three years of experience in a similar role is preferred. Education certificates must be submitted with the application.
- ii. **Technical Specialist:** Leads training and supports the day-to-day implementation of grant activities.
Qualifications: A bachelor's degree in social work or psychology from a recognized academic institute and two years of experience in a similar role. Education certificates must be submitted with the application.
- iii. **Finance Specialist:** Manages the day-to-day financial and human resource functions of the project, ensures compliance with regulations and internal/external controls, and prepares monthly closures and bank reconciliations.
Qualifications: degree in accounting, finance, or related field and one year of experience in a finance-related role.

c) Capabilities of Organization (limit 1 page).

The applicant shall demonstrate the following:

- i. The specialized competence the organization possesses regarding the requirements described in Section 2 of this RFA.
- ii. Sound organizational systems and procedures are in place in areas such as personnel and recruitment, financial management, progress reporting, and any other areas pertinent to the delivery of grant activities.
- iii. Child protection and safeguarding policies developed and shared as part of the application.

d) Past Performance of the Organization (limit 1 page)

The applicant must submit a narrative describing their past performance which is relevant to this RFA.

In addition to the narrative, an annex listing all grants, subgrants or contracts delivered in the last three (3) years with a brief description of the objective, location, award number (if available), the work performed, the donor (source of funds) and a point of contact with their current telephone number and email address should be provided. ARK may contact the points of contact provided on the list to assist in our selection process. This annex does not count towards the page limit.

3.3 Budget Proposal Format



The applicant must propose costs that it believes are realistic and reasonable for the work in accordance with the applicant's technical application, with a ceiling of USD 150,000 and an approximate allocation of USD 25,000 per community. The applicant shall provide a complete budget by the cost elements described below using Appendix B - Budget Proposal Template. The budget application must be submitted separately from the technical application. All cost and financial data should be fully supported with a budget narrative, complete in every detail, and organized in a manner that facilitates review and permits cost analysis. The cost and financial data shall include the following information/data:

- a) **Direct Employee Salaries** – List employee name (when identified), functional position and duration of assignment (in terms of person days). The annual salary of an employee is that individual's basic compensation, exclusive of fringe benefits, travel incentives, housing allowances, differentials, and/or other bonuses. Salary and wages should be proposed in accordance with the applicant's personnel policies.
- b) **Fringe Benefits** – Benefits shall be budgeted in accordance with what is mandated by local law and in accordance with the applicant's written established personnel policies. Describe the allocation method and base used. Fringe Benefits shall be expressed as a percentage(s) of salaries.
- c) **Travel and Transportation** – Provide the number of trips, destination, purpose, and cost by traveler.
- d) **Other Direct Costs** – Itemize and provide complete details of other direct costs, including unit prices that may be incurred.
- e) Under this RFA, there will be no construction costs; and pre-award costs will not be reimbursed.

4 Application Review Information

4.1 General

Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria described in section 5.3 below. To facilitate the review of applications, applicants are advised to organize the narrative sections of their applications in the same order as the review criteria.

In the event an application is rejected, the applicant will be sent a notice stating the reason(s) that the application was not considered for detailed review.

4.2 Basis for Award

- a) The technical factors presented below will serve as the basis upon which applications will be reviewed. The relative weight accorded to each factor is expressed in points, with 100 points being the maximum score.



- b) The budget proposal will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined below and accordingly awarded a PASS/FAIL mark. Resubmission of budget proposals is permissible based on evaluation panel feedback to ensure only eligible costs are included and costs are necessary for program delivery.
- c) Proposals will be evaluated in two batches:
 - Stage one. Evaluation to take place following the deadline of May 6, 2024.
 - Stage two (final). Evaluation to take place following the deadline of May 20, 2024.

Applicants may submit at any time until the application deadline for each of the two stages. Early submission of applications is strongly encouraged as applications will be assessed continuously on a rolling basis. Only applications that successfully move beyond stage 1 will be invited to submit for stage 2.

4.3 Evaluation Criteria - Technical

- a) **Technical Approach (40 points)** – The extent to which the applicant’s proposal demonstrates a clear and effective overall technical approach to performing the requirements described in the Program Description.
- b) **Proposed Key Personnel and their Qualifications (20 points)** – Demonstrated expertise, experience, and availability of personnel to meet the requirements of the Program Description.
- c) **Capabilities and Relevant Experience of the Organization (20 points)** – Demonstrated organizational capabilities and experience as follows:
 - i. Organizational specialized competence relative to the Program Description, including knowledge of and past experience providing technical assistance and implementing interventions and community-led initiatives related to child protection and MHPSS. (10 points).
 - ii. Organizational systems and procedures in areas such as personnel and recruitment, financial management, progress reporting, and any other areas pertinent to the delivery of grant activities. Child protection and safeguarding policies developed and shared as part of the application. (10 points).
- d) **Past Performance of the Organization (20 points)** – Quality of service, including cost control, timeliness of performance, and meeting goals and targets. Having previous experience working with USAID is a plus.

4.4 Evaluation Criteria - Budget

Budget proposals will be evaluated and assigned a PASS/FAIL score. The review will focus on three sub-factors: cost reasonableness, cost completeness, and cost-effectiveness. ARK may request a re-



submission of the budget proposal if cost components that do not meet these requirements are identified in the budget submission.

- a) **Cost Reasonableness:** Budgeted costs will be analyzed to determine whether they accurately reflect the costs incurred during the performance of the program and whether those costs are reasonable. In addition, ARK will make a determination of cost reasonableness based on its own cost experience of similar items or services, what is available in the marketplace, and/or other applications.
- b) **Cost Completeness:** A detailed line-item budget (template available as Annex B), budget narrative (template available as Annex C), assumptions, and schedules that clearly explain how the estimated amounts were derived must adequately support the applicant's budget proposal. ARK may request additional supporting information to the extent necessary to determine whether the costs are realistic and reasonable.
- c) **Cost Effectiveness:** involves maximizing the percentage of the budget allocated to program delivery.
- d) **Ineligible Costs/Activities:** Commodities and services that are ineligible for financing under this RFA include the following:
 - i. Military equipment.
 - ii. Surveillance equipment.
 - iii. Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities.
 - iv. Abortion equipment and services.
 - v. Luxury goods and gambling equipment.
 - vi. Weather modification equipment.
 - vii. Construction or infrastructure activities of any kind.
 - viii. Purchases of restricted goods, such as: agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptive products, or used equipment.
 - ix. Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplishing grant purposes as defined here and determined by ARK.
 - x. Prior obligations of and/or debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the grantee.
 - xi. Other unallowable costs in accordance with the federal regulations, such as alcoholic beverages. Refer to 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost principles for more information on types of unallowable costs.
- e) **Ineligible Suppliers:** Organizations or individuals that are not in compliance with the requirements in the Standard Provision "Debarment and Suspension" and the Standard Provision "Preventing Terrorist Financing" may not be used to provide any commodities or services contemplated under this RFA.
- f) All submissions should adhere to the award total **budget ceiling of USD 150,000**, allocating approximately \$25,000 for each community. This is indicative and does not mean applicants



should strive to meet the maximum amount, but should rather focus on cost reasonableness, cost completeness, and cost-effectiveness.

5 Award and Administration Information

5.1 Anticipated Award Schedule

This RFA will result in the issuance of multiple awards, with no single award surpassing USD 150,000, and an approximate allocation of \$25,000 per community. In exceptional circumstances, this amount may be adjusted depending on the grant timeframe, the applicant's institutional capacity, the geographic scope of the proposed program, and the type and extent of partnership or other teaming arrangements that are proposed. ARK reserves the right to fund none of the applications submitted.

5.2 Start Date and Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance is from June 2024 to May 2025.

5.3 Type of Award

Grants may be provided where funds are disbursed based on specified milestones or deliverables (Fixed Amount Awards – FAA). The grant mechanism will be determined by ARK through a pre-award determination process based on the nature of the grant activity and the financial and management capacity of the grantee organization. The award size, the number of awards and the amount of available funding are subject to change. ARK reserves the right to issue cost reimbursement grants in case it is determined to be conducive to program implementation.

5.4 Authorized Geographic Code

The Authorized Geographic Code for the procurement of goods and services is 937.

5.5 Cost Sharing

Not Required.

6 Post-award Reporting

- a) **Monthly Progress Reports** - The subrecipient will prepare and submit a monthly progress report within five (5) days after the end of each month, using the template provided by ARK, with agreed means of verification. The subrecipient shall use the template that will be shared as part of the agreement package.
- b) **Monthly Financial Reports** - The subrecipient will prepare and submit monthly financial reports within fifteen (15) days after the end of each month, to include:
 - i. Total estimated cost of the subaward.



- ii. Total amount obligated.
 - iii. Total amount liquidated.
 - iv. Total amount expended but not yet liquidated.
 - v. Remaining unexpended funds.
- c) **Close-out Plan** – Three months prior to the completion date of the subaward, the subrecipient shall submit a Close-out Plan to ARK. The close-out plan shall include, at a minimum, a Property Disposition plan; a plan for phase out of in-country operations; a delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the subaward; and a timeline for completing all required actions in the Plan.
- d) **Final Report** - The subrecipient shall submit a final performance report within thirty (30) days after the period of performance end date.

7 Branding and Marking

All activities under the subgrants should be marked and branded in accordance with USAID and ARK branding and marking requirements. The subrecipient will obtain ARK approval before branding or marking any of the activities. ARK will provide the selected grantees with detailed guidance on branding and marking upon signing the agreement.

8 Standard Provisions

The grants will be subject to the following provisions:

- a) Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US Governmental Organizations
- b) Required As Applicable Standard Provisions for Non-US Governmental Organizations

Provisions are available via: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>

9 List of Attachments

- a) Appendix A – Technical Proposal Template
- b) Appendix B – Budget Proposal Template
- c) Appendix C – Budget Narrative
- d) Appendix D – Proposal Declaration Form