

# EMW-2016-CA-APP-00285

## Application Information

**Application Number:** EMW-2016-CA-APP-00285

**Funding Opportunity Name:** FY 2016 Countering Violent Extremism Grants

**Funding Opportunity Number:** DHS-16-OCP-132-00-01

**Application Status:** Pending Review

## Applicant Information

**Legal Name:** America Abroad Media

**Organization ID:** 17984

**Type:** Nonprofit having 501(c)(3) status with IRS, other than institutions of higher education

**Division:**

**Department:**

**EIN:** (b) (6)

**EIN Shared With Organizations:**

**DUNS:** 130012367

**DUNS 4:** 0000

**Congressional District:** Congressional District 98, DC

## Physical Address

**Address Line 1:** 1701 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

**Address Line 2:** Ste. 300

**City:** Washington

**State:** District Of Columbia

**Province:**

**Zip:** 20006-[Grantee Organization > Physical Address > Zip 4]

**Country:** UNITED STATES

## Mailing Address

**Address Line 1:** 1701 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

**Address Line 2:** Ste. 300

**City:** Washington

**State:** District Of Columbia

**Province:**

**Zip:** 20006-[Grantee Organization > Mailing Address > Zip 4]

**Country:** UNITED STATES

## SF-424 Information

### Project Information

**Project Title:** The Disrupters: A groundbreaking series of hackathons that will leverage Muslim American talent and the entertainment industry to disrupt and counter violent extremist narratives.

**Program/Project Congressional Districts:** Congressional District 98, DC

**Proposed Start Date:** Thu Dec 01 00:00:00 EST 2016

**Proposed End Date:** Fri Dec 01 00:00:00 EST 2017

**Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):** New York City, Minneapolis, Los Angeles

## Estimated Funding

Funding Source	Estimated Funding (\$)
Federal Funding	\$647546
Applicant Funding	\$0
State Funding	\$0
Local Funding	\$0
Other Funding	\$0
Program Income Funding	\$0
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$647546</b>

Is application subject to review by state under the Executive Order 12373 process? Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

Is applicant delinquent on any federal debt? false

## Contacts

Contact Name	Email	Primary Phone Number	Contact Types
Shafer Busch	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Secondary Contact
Aaron Lobel	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Signatory Authority
Ilana Weinberg	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Primary Contact
Ilana Weinberg	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Authorized Official

## SF-424A

### Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs

Grant Program: Countering Violent Extremism Grant Program

CFDA Number: 97.132

Budget Object Class	Amount
Personnel	\$64250
Fringe Benefits	\$6200
Travel	\$70680
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$3600
Contractual	\$419948
Construction	\$0
Other	\$24000
Indirect Charges	\$58868
<b>Non-Federal Resources</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Applicant	\$0
State	\$0
Other	\$24000
<b>Income</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Program Income	\$0

How are you requesting to use this Program Income? [\$budget.programIncomeType]

**Direct Charges Explanation:** Please see detailed budget narrative attached.

**Indirect Charges explanation:** Standard 10% G&A rate with no current NICRA.

## Forecasted Cash Needs (Optional)

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Federal	\$	\$	\$	\$
Non-Federal	\$	\$	\$	\$

## Future Funding Periods (Years) (Optional)

First	Second	Third	Fourth
\$	\$	\$	\$

**Remarks:** Please see Budget and Narrative for detailed cost and explanations (last 3 pages of program narrative proposal.)

## SF-424C

### Budget Information for Construction Programs

### Assurances for Non-Construction Programs

Form not applicable? false

**Signatory Authority Name:** Ilana Weinberg

**Signed Date:** Tue Sep 06 00:00:00 EDT 2016

**Signatory Authority Title:** President

### Certification Regarding Lobbying

Form not applicable? false

**Signatory Authority Name:** Ilana Weinberg

**Signed Date:** Tue Sep 06 00:00:00 EDT 2016

**Signatory Authority Title:** President

### Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Form not applicable? false

**Signatory Authority Name:** Ilana Weinberg

**Signed Date:** Tue Sep 06 00:00:00 EDT 2016

**Signatory Authority Title:** President

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## CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

### Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

#### \* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION

America Abroad Media

#### \* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Prefix:  \* First Name:  Middle Name:   
\* Last Name:  Suffix:   
\* Title:

\* SIGNATURE:

\* DATE:

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

\* 1. Type of Submission:

- ☐ Preapplication  
☒ Application  
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

\* 2. Type of Application:

- ☒ New  
☐ Continuation  
☐ Revision

\* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

\* Other (Specify):

\* 3. Date Received:

09/02/2016

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

### 8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

\* a. Legal Name:

America Abroad Media

\* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

(b) (6)

\* c. Organizational DUNS:

1300123670000

### d. Address:

\* Street1:

1701 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Street2:

Ste. 300

\* City:

Washington

County/Parish:

\* State:

DC: District of Columbia

Province:

\* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

\* Zip / Postal Code:

20006-5813

### e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

### f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

\* First Name:

Ilana

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Weinberg

Suffix:

Title:

Program Manager

Organizational Affiliation:

\* Telephone Number:

(b) (6)

Fax Number:

\* Email:

(b) (6)

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

### \* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

M: Nonprofit with 501C3 IRS Status (Other than Institution of Higher Education)

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

\* Other (specify):

### \* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

Department of Homeland Security - FEMA

### 11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

97.132

CFDA Title:

Financial Assistance for Countering Violent Extremism

### \* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

DHS-16-OCP-132-00-01

\* Title:

FY 2016 Countering Violent Extremism Grants

### 13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

### 14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

### \* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

The Disrupters: A groundbreaking series of hackathons that will leverage Muslim American talent and the entertainment industry to disrupt and counter violent extremist narratives.

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424****16. Congressional Districts Of:**

\* a. Applicant 00-000

\* b. Program/Project US-a11

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

**17. Proposed Project:**

\* a. Start Date: 12/01/2016

\* b. End Date: 12/01/2017

**18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	647,546.00
* b. Applicant	0.00
* c. State	0.00
* d. Local	0.00
* e. Other	0.00
* f. Program Income	0.00
* g. TOTAL	647,546.00

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- ☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- ☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- ☒ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

**21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

☒ \*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:  \* First Name: Ilana

Middle Name:

\* Last Name: Weinberg

Suffix:

\* Title: Program Manager

\* Telephone Number: (b) (6) Fax Number: 

\* Email: (b) (6)

\* Signature of Authorized Representative: Ilana Weinberg \* Date Signed: 09/02/2016

BRIAN HIGGINS  
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
RANKING MEMBER  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE  
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE,  
EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3226**

September 2, 2016

2459 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3306  
(202) 226-0347 (FAX)

726 EXCHANGE STREET  
SUITE 601  
BUFFALO, NY 14210  
(716) 852-3501  
(716) 852-3929 (FAX)

640 PARK PLACE  
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301  
(716) 282-1274  
(716) 282-2479 (FAX)  
higgins.house.gov

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Nebraska Avenue Complex  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson,

I am writing in support of the Department of Homeland Security Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) grant application program led by American Abroad Media, Affinis Labs, and RL Leaders to leverage Muslim American talent and the entertainment industry to drive a global communications campaign to disrupt and counter violent extremist narratives. By drawing on the diverse expertise and deep talent from these organizations, DHS can greatly increase the volume of impactful CVE content in order to increase the likelihood that vulnerable individuals will be exposed to information and narratives that could help create resilience against the appeal of violent extremism.

This program will touch on many aspects of CVE engagement including:

- Establish stakeholder partnerships between local Muslim creative talent and the private sector to organize and expand targeted CVE content;
- Help improve the efforts of local community-based artists working on anti-extremism content by tracking the successes and failures of campaigns to reach target audiences;
- Create a YouTube multi-channel network that discovers and amplifies the leading and authentic community voices that challenge violent extremism;
- Give Muslim American communities valuable tools and networks that they can use for related activities, such as pushing back against anti-Muslim sentiment;
- Ensure partnerships will foster an environment where violent extremists routinely meet disinterest and opposition, recruitment attempts routinely fail, purveyors of extremist content are marginalized, and communities know what tools and support are available to assist individuals that may be on a path towards violence.

I commend DHS for employing the creative and technical expertise of creative arts professionals in such a beneficial manner.

Sincerely,

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



2101 El Segundo Blvd, Suite 201, El Segundo, CA 90245 USA  
www.poundsand.com

September 1, 2016

Mr. George Selim  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Selim,

My name is Greg Goodrich and I write this letter in support of the America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs grant application to fund a program dedicated to building community resilience through increasing the volume, quality, and effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) content and campaigns. Having worked in the entertainment industry for my entire career, I am intimately aware of the power narratives hold to not only capture audiences' attention but also to change the way audiences view and interact with the world.

Film, television, games, and digital media productions invest millions of dollars into crafting narratives, but their investments would yield nothing without the talent and skills of the people that bring those stories to life. That is precisely why I feel that the narrative and messaging training program proposed will be integral to providing content creators with the skills necessary to develop and implement successful CVE content.

I've been honored to work with RL Leaders as part of their enduring mission to make the world safer. RL Leaders has brought together hundreds of entertainment industry professionals that, like me, share a desire to use our skills, our experience, and our platform to do a greater good. In the years I've participated in RL Leaders' panels and projects, I've witnessed their unique ability to engage the brightest creative minds from my industry in order to solve complex global challenges. I have every confidence that with their proposed narrative and messaging training program, they will once again be able to tap into the entertainment industry's depth of knowledge and experience to deliver an effective and sustainable strategy for combating extremism at home and abroad. I'm very much looking forward to working on this CVE effort.

I have no doubt that RL Leaders' extensive network of entertainment professionals will stand with me in support of this crucial program. I therefore respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Community Partnerships select America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs to receive funding in order to ensure that this vital CVE program will thrive.

Respectfully,

(b) (6)

Greg Goodrich  
CEO / Founder  
Pound Sand, LLC.



September 1, 2016

Mr. George Selim  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Selim,

My name is Kristanna Loken and I write this letter in support of the America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs grant application to fund a program dedicated to building community resilience through increasing the volume, quality, and effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) content and campaigns. Having worked in the entertainment industry for my entire 23 year career, I am intimately aware of the power narratives hold to not only capture audiences' attention but also to change the way audiences view and interact with the world.

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I have no doubt that RL Leaders' extensive network of entertainment professionals will stand with me in support of this crucial program. I therefore respectfully request that the

U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Community Partnerships select America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs to receive funding in order to ensure that this vital CVE program will thrive.

Respectfully  
(b) (6)

Kristanna Loken  
Actress & Producer

September 1, 2016

Mr. George Selim  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Selim,

My name is Aaron Sims and I write this letter in support of the America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs grant application to fund a program dedicated to building community resilience through increasing the volume, quality, and effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) content and campaigns. Having worked in the entertainment industry for my entire career, I am intimately aware of the power narratives hold to not only capture audiences' attention but also to change the way audiences view and interact with the world.

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I have no doubt that RL Leaders' extensive network of entertainment professionals will stand with me in support of this crucial program. I therefore respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Community Partnerships select America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs to receive funding in order to ensure that this vital CVE program will thrive.

Respectfully,  
(b) (6)

Aaron Sims  
Founder, Aaron Sims Creative

# KEARIE PEAK

4343 BAKMAN AVE. STUDIO CITY, CA 91602

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September 1, 2016

Mr. George Selim  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Selim,

My name is Kearie Peak and I write this letter in support of the America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs grant application to fund a program dedicated to building community resilience through increasing the volume, quality, and effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) content and campaigns. Having worked in the entertainment industry for my entire career, I am intimately aware of the power narratives hold to not only capture audiences' attention but also to change the way audiences view and interact with the world.

Film, television, games, and digital media productions invest millions of dollars into crafting narratives, but their investments would yield nothing without the talent and skills of the people that bring those stories to life. That is precisely why I feel that the narrative and messaging training program proposed will be integral to providing content creators with the skills necessary to develop and implement successful CVE content.

I've been honored to work with RL Leaders as part of their enduring mission to make the world safer. RL Leaders has brought together hundreds of entertainment industry professionals that, like me, share a desire to use our skills, our experience, and our platform to do a greater good. In the years I've participated in RL Leaders' panels and projects, I've witnessed their unique ability to engage the brightest creative minds from my industry in order to solve complex global challenges. I have every confidence that with their proposed narrative and messaging training program, they will once again be able to tap into the entertainment industry's depth of knowledge and experience to deliver an effective and sustainable strategy for combating extremism at home and abroad. I'm very much looking forward to working on this CVE effort.

I have no doubt that RL Leaders' extensive network of entertainment professionals will stand with me in support of this crucial program. I therefore respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Community Partnerships select America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs to receive funding in order to ensure that this vital CVE program will thrive.

Respectfully,

(b) (6)

Kearie Peak  
Producer



37-18 Northern Blvd. | Suite 414 | Long Island City, NY 11101

September 2, 2016

Mr. George Selim  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Selim,


My name is Mitchell Stuart, Managing Partner at HQ Creative, LLC, and I write this letter in support of the America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs grant application to fund a program dedicated to building community resilience through increasing the volume, quality, and effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) content and campaigns. Having worked in the advertising and entertainment industry for my entire career, I am intimately aware of the power narratives and great storytellers hold to not only capture audiences' attention but also to change the way audiences view and interact with the world and to, in fact, shape the viewers minds to take an action. Particularly in the world of branding and advertising, as storytellers we must portray our stories to emotionally persuade and convince our audience. All branding is emotional, and emotions inspire actions.

Film, television, games, advertising and digital media productions invest millions of dollars into crafting narratives, but their investments would yield nothing without the talent and skills of the people that bring those stories to life. That is precisely why I feel that the narrative and messaging training program proposed will be integral to providing content creators with the skills necessary to develop and implement successful CVE content.

I've been honored to work with RL Leaders as part of their enduring mission to make the world safer. RL Leaders has brought together hundreds of entertainment industry professionals that, like me, share a desire to use our skills, our experience, and our platform to do a greater good. In the years I've participated in RL Leaders' panels and projects, I've witnessed their unique ability to engage the brightest creative minds from my industry in order to solve complex global challenges. I have every confidence that with their proposed narrative and messaging training program, they will once again be able to tap into the entertainment industry's depth of knowledge and experience to deliver an effective and sustainable strategy for combating extremism at home and abroad. I'm very much looking forward to working on this CVE effort.

I have no doubt that RL Leaders' extensive network of entertainment professionals and storytellers will stand with me in support of this crucial program. I therefore respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Community Partnerships select America Abroad Media, RL Leaders, and Affinis Labs to receive funding in order to ensure that this vital CVE program will thrive.

Re (b) (6)

  
Mitchell Stuart  
Managing Partner  
HQ Creative. LLC

# *THE DISRUPTERS*

Submitted by: America Abroad Media

Focus Area: Challenging the Narrative

## THE DISRUPTERS

### Executive Summary

Affinis Labs, RL Leaders, and America Abroad Media (AAM) invite DHS to consider a 12-month grant of \$647,546 to support a groundbreaking series of hackathons and communications campaigns that will leverage Muslim American creative talent and the entertainment industry to disrupt and counter violent extremist narratives. Each hackathon will bring together a diverse group of Muslim and non-Muslim creative artists to develop communications campaigns and content that not only counter the influence of ISIL, but also encourage and enable community members to develop and promote their own Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) content (i.e. a viral effect). The winning teams will work with mentors and content producers from Hollywood to fully develop and execute their communications campaigns.

The strategic goals of this initiative are to (a) significantly expand the depth of talent that is helping counter ISIL by mobilizing Muslim Americans and the entertainment industry (and connecting them); (b) catalyze and proliferate organic and authentic community-based narratives; and (c) increase the volume and quality of CVE content and campaigns. Minneapolis, NYC, and LA have been selected as the locations for the hackathons because they have (1) extensive networks of talented and creative Muslim Americans; (2) strong ecosystems of mentors, hackathon judges, and community organizations; and (3) local community partners with whom we can collaborate. We already have secured initial partners in all three cities, including:

- **LA:** Salam Al-Marayati (Muslim Public Affairs Council), Munir Shaikh (Bayan), Rushdi Cader (Trauma Assistance Training), Omar Ricci (Reserve Police Officer, LAPD);
-  **NYC:** Debbie Almonstaser (Muslim Community Network), Haroon Moghul (Center for Global Policy); Oz Sultan (Sultan Interactive), Zeba Iqbal (Former Exec. Director, Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals); and
- **Minneapolis:** Zaheer Baber (former Regional Director-Land O'Lakes), Mary McKinley (Heartland Democracy), Hashi Shafi (Somali Action Alliance), Mohamad Farah (Ka Joog).

The total cost of the project is \$647,546 for three hackathons and three communications campaigns involving communities and the entertainment industry.

## **Technical Merit**

*The Disrupters* is a series of hackathons and CVE communications campaigns that leverage Muslim American creative talent and professionals from the entertainment industry to increase the volume and quality of organic, community-driven CVE content. Our theory of change is that the increased prevalence of quality CVE content will (1) make it more likely that supporters of violent extremism will encounter messages that could erode their certitude in extremist beliefs; and (2) increase the likelihood that vulnerable individuals and bystander audiences will be exposed to information and narratives that could help build resilience against violent extremism.

The “hackathons” will be intense, organized experiences in which teams of Muslim talent and creative artists from the entertainment industry compete with one another in a fast-paced race against the clock to develop content and campaigns to counter violent extremism. Teams will ideate and develop concepts; build prototype concepts; test, iterate, and refine these prototypes; and pitch their solutions to a judging panel, live audience, and online crowd watching via live stream. Winning teams will work with mentors from the entertainment industry and receive technical support to ensure their campaigns are fully developed and launched. Our approach is based on models we have successfully used for CVE hackathons and similar interactive engagements across the world. A few examples include:

- **No2H8:** ([www.no2h8.com](http://www.no2h8.com)): hackathon to combat online hate and extremism (in partnership with Facebook and Google).
- **Haqqathon:** (haqq means “truth” in Arabic): hackathon in Abu Dhabi to help Islamic scholars promote peace by more effectively connecting with young people through technology (case study at <http://www.affinislabs.com/hackathon-case-study.html>).
- **CVE HackAbout:** hackathon at the CVE Summit in Sydney to simultaneously combat violent extremism and anti-Muslim sentiment (<http://cvehackabout.com>).
- **Connect + Create: Innovative Solutions Against Violent Extremism:** a three-day workshop series in LA where experts and creative artists developed CVE solutions.
- **Beda Tapi Satu:** (<http://www.bedatapisatu.com>): hackathon in Jakarta to promote diversity, social harmony, and resilience against violent extremism (sponsored by Facebook). See <https://www.facebook.com/bedatapisatu/?fref=nf> for videos and other content.

Community participants will be selected through local partner networks, the personal networks of the organizers, an online application process, and interviews. Participants will be evaluated based on their interest in the subject matter, passion and drive, ability to work well in teams, and skill sets. We will ensure a balance of disciplines, experiences, gender, race, ethnicity, and other factors to maximize inclusiveness and the prospects for innovation. For each hackathon, we will create five teams based on an assessment of how the mix of skill sets and other factors will impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the teams. Each team will include three community members and two creative artists from the entertainment industry.

We will use 5-8 mentors and 3-5 judges from the entertainment industry for each hackathon as well, which will also further build relationships between communities and the entertainment industry that potentially could be leveraged in the future. RL leaders, Affinis Labs, and America Abroad Media (AAM) have all worked extensively with the entertainment industry, and will recruit creative artists with whom we have previously worked such as: Ben Silverman, the Emmy, Golden Globe, and Peabody Award-winning executive producer of *The Office*, *Ugly Betty*, *The Tudors*, and *Marco Polo*; Greg Daniels, leading comedy writer, producer, and director on shows such as *Saturday Night Live* and *The Simpsons* and co-creator of *The Office*, *King of the Hill*, and *Parks and Recreation*; Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon, award-winning creators of *24* and *Homeland*; and Mindy Kaling, creator and star of the *The Mindy Project*.

Each hackathon will be structured as follows:

***Day One: Skill-Building.*** Affinis Labs, RL Leaders and AAM will team up with local community partners to host an open public workshop to equip communities with tools to counter violent extremism through social media, viral videos, and storytelling. This will help empower communities to generate their own CVE content, help allay any pre-existing fears about the role of government in mobilizing Muslim Americans to counter violent extremism, and invest the local community in the goals of *The Disrupters*. Hackathon participants will also participate in this workshop to jump start the hackathon process and to ensure teams have similar baseline skills. The workshop content will be delivered by representatives from the entertainment

industry, social media companies, and specialists in communications campaigns. We anticipate 100-150 community change agents at each workshop, based on previous hackathons.

The workshop will use RL Leaders' proprietary Applied Creative Thinking (ACT) methodology, which leverages experienced creative and technology professionals and local community insights to empower individuals to think differently about problem solving. The ACT is a multidisciplinary, immersive, and iterative approach to rapid problem solving. The moderated decision journey is built around divergent thinking and forces participants to challenge assumptions, discover connections and consider unusual outcomes. In previous CVE efforts, the process has produced: a blueprint for a CVE investment fund; an app to rapidly respond to hate speech; a simulation to identify improvised explosive devices (IEDs); a plan for a city to insulate itself against recruitment efforts; and designs for a multi-channel network to manage a CVE campaign. ACT has been successfully used to support Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), the Intelligence Community, and the private sector in the global fight against violent extremism. The workshop will provide participants with a deep understanding of the narrative process, the implications and consequences of choices made during that process, and the skills they will need to develop compelling campaigns and content.

***Day Two: Ideation and Prototyping.*** In this phase, teams will develop concepts and initial prototypes for CVE content and campaigns. Teams will be supported by mentors, who will provide critical, constructive feedback and help polish initial ideas. After working on low-fidelity prototypes (mock-ups or other visual or physical representations of a concept), teams will participate in a "speed dating" exercise in which they pitch initial concepts to each mentor. After receiving feedback from the mentors, teams will test and refine their concepts with potential users and/or target audiences. At our previous CVE hackathons, teams quickly tested prototypes through Facebook, on site "experiments," and focus groups via skype, among other methods.

***Day Three: Rapid Prototype Testing and Refinement; Pitch Session:*** Teams will continue refining their concepts based on user and audience feedback. In the evening, they will pitch their concepts through a short teaser video to a live audience, a panel of judges, and an online audience that will be watching via live stream. For live audience and online crowd voting, we

will use a second generation online voting platform developed by Affinis Labs for its hackathons. Based on a U.S. hackathon that Affinis Labs ran earlier this year for Facebook and Google, we anticipate there will be 150 audience members and 3,000 online votes. The high level of online voting at our prior hackathons is the result of social media engagement campaigns, which we will use for *The Disrupters* to garner public support and an online audience (Facebook Likes for our hackathons typically range from 10K-20K within 7-10 days).

Prototypes will be evaluated based on four criteria: technical feasibility, creativity, whether they will effectively encourage others to generate CVE content, and likely impact on target audiences. Each criterion will receive a score from 1-5 from audiences and judges, and the average sum will determine the team's final ranking. Judges' votes will be weighted higher than audiences because projects often have technical components that require specialist insight. Teaser videos could be animation, music videos, shorts drama clips, mock documentaries, movie trailers, or other formats.

**Campaign Execution:** Affinis Labs, RL Leaders, and AAM will work closely with the winning teams after the hackathons for 4-6 months to help them successfully develop content and execute their campaigns. We will provide mentorship and access to stakeholder networks and resources, guide development, and help teams build media narratives to generate publicity and attract additional partners/allies. Creative artists on the winning teams will continue to be involved as team members, and each winning team will also receive weekly virtual mentorship and ongoing feedback over 4-6 months from other creative and technical mentors in the entertainment industry. Potential mentors include individuals we have worked with such as writer/directors such as: David Ayer (*Suicide Squad*, *Fury*, *SWAT*, *Training Day*) and Randal Kleiser (*Blue Lagoon*, *Grease*); writer/producers like Tom DeSanto (*X-Men* franchise, *Transformers* franchise); and technical and editing professionals like Ezra Dweck (*Pulp Fiction*, *Apollo 13*, *Total Recall*, *Speed*) and Dave Stumpf (*Quantum of Solace*, *Into the Blue*, *Garfield*, *X-Men 2*, *Panic Room*, *The Bourne Identity*). Teams will come away with a deep understanding of the narrative and story development process, the implications and consequences of each choice made during that process, and the technical skills that will allow them to implement emotionally compelling CVE narratives and distribute them to a variety of audiences.

Although it is difficult to measure a counterfactual (i.e., that an individual did not become an extremist because of exposure to a particular message), we can specifically measure the volume and reach of CVE content generated by our initiative. This includes not only the winning campaign ideas from the hackathons, but also specific CVE content that is inspired by each of these campaigns, keeping in mind that **a key goal for the hackathons is that resulting campaigns help others produce CVE content and that this content, in turn, further inspires others to produce (i.e. a viral effect)**. Each hackathon winner will be given assistance to track the volume and reach of content that their work inspires and enables.

Tactically then, we will use traditional social media metrics. Specific metrics will depend on the nature of each initiative, type of digital or social media platform, and other factors, but some common online metrics include clicks, views, tweets/retweets, follower-counts, downloads, likes, level and quality of user engagement and behavior. Metrics to track user engagement could include, where feasible, tracking instances where content clearly produces discussions or debates about whether violent extremism is permissible. These measurements, in turn, will help identify best practices and CVE content, which could be replicated and expanded.

Because of the quality and global nature of the communications campaigns, we anticipate the resulting CVE content could reach hundreds of thousands of people at home and abroad, and possibly more. High-quality social media content produced as a result of a single Affinis Labs hackathon in Jordan earlier this year received 1.2 million total video views, 670,000 post engagements, 6,000 comments, an average of 36,000 viewers reached per post, and 150,000 likes. Given that we will be running three hackathons and communications campaigns, the numbers could be higher. In addition, *The Disrupters* will directly empower thousands to generate their own online content through the public workshops and the winning teams' campaigns, which could substantially increase content production and dissemination.

## Needs Analysis

ISIL has demonstrated enormous creativity and sophistication in its propaganda, including high-quality videos, slick magazines, sharp memes, and digital campaigns. As Hassan Hassan has observed, this “jihadist pornography [has] demonstrated ISIL’s peerless ability to produce sleek, hour-long propaganda and recruitment films, featuring the very kind of content that Western politicians and diplomats have hoped will *dissuade* people’s attraction to the group.”<sup>1</sup> Violent extremists facilitate this content by leveraging leaderless networks and the open, decentralized nature of the internet to mobilize armies of online followers and engage audiences,<sup>2</sup> outpacing the messaging campaigns led by governments, civil society, and religious leaders.<sup>3</sup>

While violent extremist content continues to propagate across the Internet, despite attempts by social media companies to shut down violent extremist accounts, counter speech and positive alternative messaging remain limited. This is a serious gap for CVE. As online CVE specialist JM Berger argues, “much of ISIS’ success on social media comes from large volumes of fast-paced activity, and subsequent engagement in the form of conversations about the content ISIS seeks to promote.” Campaigns against violent extremism, in contrast, are plagued by low volume and limited engagement with online audiences and users, which tends to severely inhibit influence.<sup>4</sup> The Radicalisation Awareness Network Center of Excellence notes that “counter-narratives and alternative narratives are vital to preventing [violent extremism], but at present, the volume and quality of counter- and alternative narratives is not even close to being delivered at the same scale, quality and proportion as that produced and disseminated by ISIL.”<sup>5</sup> Although research on the impact of specific CVE campaigns remains limited, anecdotal evidence suggests that campaigns can be used to deliver messages that can erode support for violent extremism and enhance community resilience.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hassan, Hassan. "From Twitter to Dabiq." *ISIL: Inside the Army of Terror*. By Michael Weiss. New York, NY: Regan Arts, 2015. 170-71. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Mazzetti, Mark, and Michael R. Gordon. "ISIL Is Winning the Social Media War, U.S. Concludes." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 12 June 2015. Web. 19 Aug. 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> J. M. Berger, “Making CVE Work: A Focused Approach Based on Process Disruption,” ICCT Research Paper, May 2016, p. 9

<sup>5</sup> RAN Issue Paper, “Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives,” January 2015, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Kate Ferguson, "Countering violent extremism through media and communication strategies: A review of the evidence," March 2016. (8/9) (1) Sieckelinck, Dr. Stijn and De Winter, Prof. Dr. Micha (eds., 2015), Formers and

While the quality of ISIL's content production is widely lauded as "slick" and sophisticated, the reality is that its talent depth is extremely limited when compared to the pool of Muslim talent and creative artists opposed to violent extremism. The challenge is how to leverage and mobilize this creativity and talent to fight back and generate authentic campaigns rooted in communities.

The Muslim American community has enormous expertise in the narrative space — directors, screenwriters, producers, storytellers, YouTube stars, etc.— but this talent has yet to be unlocked in the fight against ISIL. This is partly the result of two factors. First, ISIL is foreign to most Muslim American creative artists; and although they are appalled by terrorism in general and the acts of ISIL in particular, they have not seen a role for themselves in countering ISIL's influence.<sup>7</sup> Muslim creative artists, like most Americans, do not see fighting terrorism as a priority given other challenges, such as rising anti-Muslim sentiment and hate crimes.<sup>8</sup>

Second, there are enormous sensitivities in Muslim communities about CVE programs in the United States. To a large extent, this is because some community organizations and leaders conflate CVE with stories about NYPD mosque crawlers, FBI informants and entrapment, profiling, and NSA surveillance.<sup>9</sup> While some Muslim organizations have been involved in CVE, they are frequently attacked by others in the community as reinforcing the securitization of Muslims in America.<sup>10</sup> CVE has emerged as a third rail in the community and there are palpable tensions that must be managed for any empowerment initiative to succeed, as illustrated by the

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Families – Transitional journeys in and out of extremism in the United Kingdom, Denmark and The Netherlands, National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, Ministry of Security and Justice, Denmark; (2) Neumann, Peter R. (2015), Victims, Perpetrators, Assets: The Narratives of Islamic State Defectors, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. Available at: <http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/ICSR-Report-Victims-Perpetrators-Assets-The-Narratives-of-Islamic-State-Defectors.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Obeidallah, Dean. "Can Muslim Americans Stop Isis?" *The Daily Beast*. 7, December, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Mogahed, Dalia; Pervez, Fouad. "American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities and Facing Prejudice in 2016 Elections." ISPU. March 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Clyne, Melissa. "Muslims Uneasy with Scrutiny in Obama's Anti-Extremism Summit." *Newsmax*. Newsmax, 17 Feb. 2015. Web. 19 Aug. 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Shaikh, Ahmed. "PAC, Countering Violent Extremism and American Muslim Astroturf – A Critical Review." *Altmuslim*. 9, June, 2015.

August 31, 2016 open letter to Secretary Jeh Johnson from community organizations opposed to DHS's Countering Violent Extremism Grant Program.<sup>11</sup>

Despite this community opposition to CVE, however, Muslim Americans have become more vocal in the past year about helping undermine violent extremists and are less divided about influencing global narratives against ISIL. In particular, the rapid sequence of attacks and carnage over the past year—including Brussels, Paris, Orlando, Istanbul, Baghdad, Nice, Bangladesh, and others—have pushed Muslim Americans towards action, and they are looking for opportunities to play a significant role in countering violent extremism. This includes Muslim American creative artists. As one up-and-coming Muslim American director and screenwriter told Affinis Labs last month, “If given the support, I could create content that runs circles around ISIL.” Yet, moderates are not empowered, motivated, or organized as a countermovement. The good guys lack effective tools and opportunities to leverage their unique strengths and numbers, and thus struggle to effectively challenge violent extremist narratives. The result is a relative dearth of effective organic CVE content and missed opportunities to enlist a broader array of community-based talent.

Our proposed program, *The Disrupters*, will fill this critical gap by leveraging leading Muslim American talent and the broader entertainment industry to create community-driven, global campaigns against ISIL. Importantly, this program will empower Muslim Americans to meaningfully contribute to the fight against extremist narratives in their own organic, effective ways.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cair.com/images/pdf/2016-CVE-Grant-Program.pdf>.

## **Expertise**

**Affinis Labs** is an award-winning social enterprise that empowers community-driven innovation for social impact. It was named one of the 50 most innovative Global Muslim Startups and Thomson Reuters called the company “a key driving force behind developing the Digital Islamic Economy.” Affinis Labs received the Global Islamic Economy Award for Small and Medium Enterprises, and its work has been featured by *Wall Street Journal*, *NBC News*, *Forbes*, *National Public Radio*, *Newsweek*, *The Guardian*, *Fast Company*, and others. Affinis has run CVE hackathons for Facebook, Google, the U.S. Government, the Australian Government, Hedayah, the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, and the UK Government. The team includes President Obama’s former senior advisor for CVE and architect of the national CVE strategy and implementation plan; a leading Muslim American entrepreneur; and one of the best known Muslim American media figures and creative artists.

**RL Leaders** (LEADERS) is uniquely positioned at the nexus of the entertainment industry and the U.S. national security community. LEADERS’ world-class network of over 500 creative arts professionals includes Academy, Emmy, Golden Globe, and Tony winning writers, producers, directors, actors, video game developers, and other technical experts and creative artists. LEADERS draws upon talent from film schools, major studios, cutting edge production houses, and other organizations that support the film, television, and gaming industries. In the CVE space, LEADERS convened *Connect + Create: Innovative Solutions Against Violent Extremism* and *Film2Future (F2F)*.

**America Abroad Media (AAM)** is a non-profit dedicated to harnessing the power of media to promote the free exchange of ideas, critical thinking, and self-governing citizens worldwide. AAM’s global media network reaches large-scale audiences through groundbreaking programming and production partnerships with leading media outlets in the MENA region and South Asia. AAM recently launched a new effort to bring its extensive network of top Hollywood professionals to the Middle East to train and sustain a community of progressive, indigenous Muslim creative talent, equipping them with Hollywood storytelling abilities in order to create compelling comedies and dramas that will also aim to positively impact societies.

*The Disrupters: CVE Hackathons and Campaigns*

**A. Personnel**

Position	Employee name	Salary	Level of Effort	Cost ( <i>Salary x LOE</i> )
AAM President	Aaron Lobel	(b) (6)	20%	(b) (6)
AAM Program Manager	Ilana Weinberg		15%	
AAM Director of Events	Shafer Busch		10%	
<b>Personnel Sub-Total</b>				<b>\$64,250</b>

*Narrative Justification:* AAM personnel will manage the grant and all reporting requirements, support Hollywood engagement, and lead all media outreach and engagement.

**B. Fringe Benefits**

Component	Wage	Rate	Cost ( <i>Wage x Rate</i> )
FICA (7.65%) + Workers Compensation (2%)	\$64,250	9.65%	\$6,200
<b>Fringe Benefits Sub-Total</b>			<b>\$6,200</b>

*Narrative Justification:* FICA is 6.2 percent Social Security tax + a 1.45 percent Medicare tax. 2.5% is workers compensation

**C. Travel**

Purpose of Travel	Item Description	Unit of Measure	Cost Per Unit/Rate	Number of Units	Cost ( <i>Cost Per Unit x No. of Units</i> )
LA: RT Airfare IAD-LA	Economy class tickets (flexible)	per ticket	\$1,305	4	\$5,220
LA: Per diem (includes hotel, M&IE)	4 people, 4 days	per day	\$239	16	\$3,824
LA: Ground transportation	\$173 RT to and from airport, 4 people	per person	\$173	4	\$692
LA: Hotel for local participants	20 people, one night, USG rate	per night	\$175	20	\$3,500
NYC: RT Train DC-NYC	3 people, Accela	per ticket	\$445	3	\$1,335
NYC: RT Airfare Los Angeles - NYC	6 people, flex economy class ticket	per ticket	\$1,560	6	\$9,360
NYC: Per diem (includes hotel, M&IE)	US per diem rates for 4 days, 4 organizers, 5 creative artists from LA	per day	\$375	36	\$13,500
NYC: Ground transportation	\$178 RT to and from airport, 9 people	per person	\$178	9	\$1,602
NYC: Hotel for local participants (USG rates)	15 participants, 1 night, USG rate	per hackathon	\$301	15	\$4,515
MN: RT Airfare IAD-Minneapolis	3 Economy class tickets (flexible)	per ticket	\$1,367	3	\$4,101

MN: RT Airfare LA-Minneapolis	8 Economy class tickets (flexible)	per ticket	\$1,238	8	\$9,904
MN: Per diem (includes hotel, M&IE)	USG rate 4 days, 11 people	per day	\$209	44	\$9,196
MN: Ground transportation	\$186 RT to and from airport, 11	per person	\$186	11	\$2,046
MN: Hotel for local participants (USG rates)	13 people, one night, USG rate	per hackathon	\$145	13	\$1,885
<b>Travel Sub-Total</b>					<b>\$70,680</b>
<b>Narrative Justification:</b> For each hackathon, local participants will stay at a hotel near the venue because they will be working late into the night. For the LA hackathon, 2 Affinis and 2 RL staff will be traveling to run the workshop and the hackathon and flying to LA. For the NYC hackathon, 2 Affinis and 1 RL staff will take the train from DC; 1 RL staff and 5 creative artists will travel from LA-NYC (we will supplement creative artists with local NYC talent). For Minneapolis, we will fly 2 Affinis and 2 RL staff including 1 from LA) as well as 10 creative artists from LA.					
<b>D. Equipment - Not applicable, no equipment being used.</b>					
<b>Equipment Sub-Total</b>					<b>\$0</b>
<b>E. Supplies</b>					
<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Unit of Measure</b>	<b>Cost Per Unit</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Cost</b> (Cost Per Unit x No. of Units)	
Flip charts, paper, pens, zip drives, tape, and prototyping materials	per hackathon event	\$1,200	3	\$3,600	
<b>Supplies Sub-Total</b>					<b>\$3,600</b>
<b>Narrative Justification:</b> Teams will use these supplies during the hackathon.					
<b>F. Construction: Not Allowable</b>					
<b>Construction Sub-total</b>					<b>\$0</b>
<b>G. Contractual</b>					
<b>Name/Item Description</b>	<b>Unit of Measure</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Cost</b> (Cost Per Unit x No. of Units)	
Project Partner: Affinis Labs - Project Partner	per project period	\$208,061	1	\$208,061	
Project Partner: RL Leaders - Project Partner	per project period	\$154,387	1	\$154,387	
Contract: Live stream for hackathons	per hackathon	\$3,500.00	3	\$10,500	
Contract: 5 designers per hackathon to support team mock ups	half day	\$500.00	15	\$7,500	
Consultants: Virtual mentoring by entertainment industry professionals	per day	\$1,000	12	\$12,000	

Consultants: Entertainment industry hackathon participants - honorarium	per day	\$1,250	22	\$27,500
<b>6. Contractual Sub-Total</b>				<b>\$419,948</b>
<b>Narrative Justification:</b> <i>Project Partners: Affinis Labs</i> will lead for the hackathons, support the Day One workshops, lead engagement with Muslim creative artists (inside and outside of Hollywood), and support winning teams in the execution of their campaigns. <b>RL Leaders</b> will lead engagement with Hollywood, development and execution of the Day One workshops, and lead ongoing support to teams from the entertainment industry. <b>Contracts:</b> Live stream is needed to engage online audiences and support the hackathons. Designers will help teams create mockups during the first half of the final day of the hackathons. <b>Consultants:</b> Entertainment industry professionals will participate in each hackathon as part of teams. Other entertainment industry professionals will work with winning teams to fully develop and execute their ideas.				
<b>H. Other Direct Costs</b>				
Item Description	Unit of Measure	Cost Per Unit	Number of Units	Cost (Cost Per Unit x No. of Units)
Marketing, branding for hackathons, large backdrop/banner for pitch	per hackathon	\$2,500	3	\$7,500
Creative artist presentation at hackathon pitch	per hackathon	\$500	3	\$1,500
Venue, food, for the hackathon event (each requires 3 days)	per event	\$5,000	3	\$15,000
<b>Other Direct Costs Sub-Total</b>				<b>\$24,000</b>
<b>Narrative Justification:</b> Each hackathon requires branding and marketing to generate online audiences and support, and a large backdrop will be used for the final pitch session/presentation. At each hackathon, a creative artist will present their artform during the period of voting. And each hackathon will require a venue and food.				
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>				
<b>Federal Cost</b>				<b>\$588,678</b>
<b>I. Indirect Costs</b>				
Item Description	Allocation Base Code	Cost Per Unit	Number of Units	Cost
10% of Direct Cost				<b>\$58,868</b>
<b>Narrative Justification:</b> Standard if there is no negotiated indirect cost agreement.				
<b>Subtotal Indirect Cost</b>				<b>\$58,868</b>
<b>Total Cost (Sum of the Total Direct and Indirect Costs)</b>				
<b>Federal Cost</b>				<b>\$647,546</b>