



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund

U.S. Mission in Saudi Arabia, Department of State

Opportunity number: PDS-SAU-FY26-01

Application deadline: May 7, 2026

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U.S Department of State
U.S. Mission in Saudi Arabia, Public Diplomacy Section
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund 2026
Funding Opportunity Number	PDS-SAU-FY26-01
Announcement Type	Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	May 7, 2026, 23:59 AST
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	12 months
Number of awards anticipated	Maximum of 3
Award amounts	The proposal must be in the range of \$5,000 to \$35,000
Total available funding	To be determined.
Type of Funding	FY26 Fulbright-Hays Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	Within 45 days of notification of funding approval

Funding Instrument Type: Grant or fixed amount award (FAA)

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less

Priority Region: Saudi Arabia

***This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

2. Executive Summary

The U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia is pleased to invite Saudi exchange alumni to develop project proposals for the 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) grant cycle that strengthen the historic ties between our two nations. The Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund will consider proposals worth \$5,000 and \$35,000.

Objectives:

- AEIF is designed to increase exchange programs' investment in exchange participants by helping alumni develop and implement projects that support U.S. foreign policy objectives and promote shared interests.

B. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

- Applicants must be alumni of a U. S. government-funded or sponsored exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team member in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries, but at least one of the team leaders must be a Saudi citizen or resident in Saudi Arabia.
- The majority of the activities funded by this grant must take place in Saudi Arabia.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni. Not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions are not eligible to apply in the name of the organization but can serve as partners for implementing project activities.

Cost Sharing or Matching

- Cost sharing is not required.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section E.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.
- This opportunity will not support:
 - Projects relating to partisan political activity;
 - Charitable or development activities; including direct social services such as medical, psychological, and/or humanitarian support
 - Construction projects;
 - Projects that support specific religious activities;
 - Fund-raising campaigns;
 - Lobbying for specific legislation or programs
 - Scientific research or surveys;
 - Commercial projects;
 - Projects intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
 - Projects that duplicate existing projects;
 - Illegal activities

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Project Background, Goals, and Objectives

AEIF increases the impact of the U.S. government's investment in exchange programs by helping alumni develop and implement projects to support U.S. policy objectives and promote

shared interests. All AEIF projects must celebrate and promote Freedom 250 – the celebration of the United States’ 250th anniversary – and align with policy goals such as making the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous, celebrating American excellence, or defending freedom of speech.

We are seeking innovative, alumni-led solutions that align with the following strategic priorities:

- Projects that use cultural heritage preservation and community-building to foster a stable, secure environment and protect against shared transnational challenges.
- Initiatives that empower the alumni community through leadership development, professional networking, and community engagement to build a resilient alumni network, reinforcing the foundations of the U.S.-Saudi partnership.
- Programs that advance sports and cultural initiatives to showcase shared excellence and leverage U.S. expertise in hosting world-class sporting and cultural events.
- Programs that promote educational excellence and professional exchange, driving mutual economic growth and expanding the pool of Saudi talent with world-class expertise.
- In honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States, we welcome projects that highlight the "Spirit of Independence," showcasing the shared values of self-reliance, initiative, and the innovative drive that fuels both our nations.
- Data-driven projects and media literacy programs designed to strengthen community resilience, ensure accurate messaging, and promote a healthy information ecosystem.
- High-impact initiatives in the creative economy (film, gaming, music) and tech sectors that prioritize U.S.-Saudi joint ventures, international standards, and entrepreneurial growth.

Special Priority Areas:

To further align with the current U.S.-Saudi Partnership, the Mission encourages proposals that specifically address:

- AI and Tech Transformation: Promoting ethical AI frameworks and digital innovation models
- Creative Economy: Building a professional workforce for the Kingdom’s expanding film and entertainment sectors through American production standards.
- Sustainable Energy and Minerals: Fostering technical collaboration in energy and critical mineral supply chains.

Other Eligibility Requirements

Grants can only be issued to Saudi citizens resident in Saudi Arabia.

4. Grant Program Area:

Proposals must address the priority themes listed above. Proposals that do not address the themes as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place in Saudi Arabia.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All applicant authorized signatures are provided where indicated on the various, required forms.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 ([Application for Federal Assistance – organizations](#)) or SF-424-I ([Application for Federal Assistance – individuals](#))
- SF-424A ([Budget Information for Non-Construction programs](#))

- SF-424B ([Assurances for Non-Construction programs](#)). Note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov.

2. *Proposal:*

The attached Microsoft Word proposal form, *AEIF 2026 Proposal Form.docx*, must be used. **Do not save as a PDF**. A partially completed form may result in your application being rejected on technical grounds.

3. *Budget:*

The attached Microsoft Excel proposal form, *AEIF 2026 Budget Form.xlsx* must be used. **Do not save as a PDF**. Read the “Budget Guidelines” tab first. Budget amounts must be in U.S. dollars.

AEIF 2026 can support the following budget items:

- Intra-regional or in-country transportation
- Rental of venues for project activities
- PPE and sanitizing equipment
- Meals/refreshments integral to the project (i.e., working lunch for a meeting)
- Reasonable costs to support virtual programming (i.e., subscription to Zoom, WebEx, camera/microphones for virtual meetings, mailing services, etc.)
- Trainer or speaker honoraria expenses (i.e., maximum \$250/day fee, travel, lodging, per diem)
- Reasonable equipment and materials
- Communications and publicity materials, such as manuals or project advertisements

AEIF 2026 will not support the following budget items:

- Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments not integral to the project, or entertainment
- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts, gratuities, or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs

- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in the project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population

Additional attachments are optional:

For example, support materials like workshop agendas, curricula, or previous pilot projects connected to your submission.

4. *Attachments*

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

1. *Address to Request Application Package*

Application forms required above are available at [US Embassy website](#)

2. *Department of State Contacts*

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:
RiyadhGrants@state.gov

3. *Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)*

Required Registration: All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 also requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should [submit a help desk ticket](#) (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

- Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](#) for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. *Submission Dates and Times*

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by May 7, 2026, at 23:59 AST

Submission Method: Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: RiyadhGrants@state.gov. Applicants must include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

5. *Funding Restrictions*

- i. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).
- ii. Certification Regarding Compliance with Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws
If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:
 - a. Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code and;
 - b. It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.
- iii. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities
 - a. (a) *Definitions.*
 - i. *American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity* means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>
 - ii. *FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system* means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.
 - iii. *Unmanned aircraft* means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

- iv. *Unmanned aircraft system* means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.
- b. (b) *Prohibition*. Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:
 - i. delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements
 - ii. Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and
 - iii. Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system.
- c. c) *Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers*. The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 ([41 U.S.C. 3901](#) note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].
- iv. Pre-Award Costs: Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.
- v. Construction: Any award made as a result of this NOFO will not allow for construction activities or costs.
- vi. Direct Social Services: Costs that cover and provide direct social services, such as welfare, charity, health or economic relief, are unallowable. Medical assistance, such as costs to include medical professionals, including but not limited to doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists to participate in the project activities are not allowed.

6. Other Submission Requirements: Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.

Applicants must acquire all required registrations and rights in the United States and Saudi Arabia. All intellectual property considerations and rights must be fully met in the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Any sub-recipient organization must also meet all the U.S. and Saudi Arabia requirements described above.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. *Review Criteria*

Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Relevance to the Embassy's Priorities (See Section C, above)

The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the Mission's priorities. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy and public services oriented in nature (i.e., not development or military).

Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan

When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling. Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood of the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many will participate? How will they be selected?

Degree of Alumni Involvement

Projects must include the involvement of at least two exchange alumni. More than two alumni may comprise the team; however, the minimum is two. As the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, exchange program, country of citizenship, roles and responsibilities, and degree of time spent on the project.

Participation and Support from Local Partners

The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement is a strong sign that there is community support and that the project will engage with a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking of progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how that data collection will be accomplished. Well-crafted indicators should be used to understand a program's progress toward the desired results. An M&E plan will be reviewed for the following:

- Completeness
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) criteria
- Data quality plan
- Capacity to implement plan

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan

The project should include a clear plan and timeline for how and when the team will share information about the project. It is important to ensure that the U.S. Embassy gets recognition throughout the process if circumstances permit.

Budget and Budget Narrative

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Risk Review

i. Risk factors

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance

- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

G. AWARD NOTICES

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by August 22, 2026, via email.

Payment Method:

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
 - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)

- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)

- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)

- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)

- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)

- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)

- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

2. *Reporting*

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

I. **Other Information**

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.