



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2026 Celebrating Freedom 250

U.S. Embassy Muscat, Department of State

Opportunity Number: MUSCAT-PAS-2026-01

Application Deadline: 06/14/2026

Contents

A. Basic Information3

B. Eligibility4

C. Program Description4

D. Application Contents and Format.....5

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines.....7

F. Application Review Information10

G. Award Notices12

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration13

I. Other Information15

**U.S Department of State
NEA Bureau/U.S. Embassy Muscat
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2026
----------------------------------	--

Funding Opportunity Number	MUSCAT-PAS-2026-01
Announcement Type	Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	06/14/2026
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	Proposed programs should be completed in one year (12 months) or less.
Number of awards anticipated	2 awards
Award amounts	Awards may range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$35,000
Total available funding	\$75,000, pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchanges (ECE)
Anticipated project start date	September 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Individual grant, grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. An FAA can also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

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

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

The U.S. Embassy Muscat invites alumni of U.S. government-sponsored and facilitated exchange programs to apply for the 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2026). Proposals must include teams of at least two alumni who meet all program eligibility requirements. The most competitive proposals will advance key priorities identified below. Interested exchange alumni must apply via the online application form which includes space to upload the

required proposal and budget documents. The deadline to apply is **June 14, 2026**. For questions, please contact MuscatPASGrants@state.gov.

This year, the U.S. Embassy Muscat is seeking proposals from teams of at least two (2) alumni. All AEIF projects must celebrate and promote Freedom 250 – the celebration of the United States’ 250th anniversary.

- Preference will also be given to projects engaging with one or more of the following themes:
 - Commercial ties
 - Sports diplomacy
 - Cultural heritage and showcasing U.S. excellence in creative industries
 - Emerging and advanced technologies
 - Space cooperation and innovation

B. Eligibility

1. *Eligible Applicants*

The following are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded exchange program or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizen alumni cannot submit proposals, but may participate as team members in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching*

Cost sharing or matching is not mandatory. However, if an applicant proposes cost sharing, they are expected to contribute the specified amount outlined in their application, which will subsequently be incorporated into the approved agreement.

3. 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 D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

The Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) is an annual grant program of the U.S. Department of State that supports projects led by alumni of U.S. government-sponsored and facilitated exchange programs. The program enables alumni to apply the knowledge and skills gained during their exchange experiences to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their communities. Since its launch in 2011, AEIF has funded more than 500 alumni-led projects worldwide through a competitive global competition.

All AEIF projects must celebrate and promote Freedom 250 – the celebration of the United States’ 250th anniversary. Preference will be given to projects engaging with one or more of the following themes:

- ⊖ Commercial ties
- Sports diplomacy
- Cultural heritage and showcasing U.S. excellence in creative industries
- Emerging and advanced technologies
- Space cooperation and innovation

2. Substantial Involvement

If the award is issued as a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Embassy will have substantial involvement in the project. This may include participating in the selection of participants, coordinating and scheduling activities, reviewing and approving messaging and outreach materials, facilitating U.S. Embassy participation in events, and supporting the integration of administrative and cultural components of the program.

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 pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Application Form including the following:
 - 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Proposal Form
 - 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Budget Form

2. Attachments (optional)

- 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
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are also available at U.S. Embassy Muscat website and grants.gov.

2. *Department of State Contacts*

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

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

Required Registrations

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 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.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](#)

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 a 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*

Applications are due no later than June 14th, 2026

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:

- 1) 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;
- 2) 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) *Definitions.*

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>

FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.

Unmanned aircraft means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft .

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) *Prohibition.* Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

(1) delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;

(2) Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and

(3) Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system .

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. Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA)

Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR Part 602, 603, and 604.

These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.

602: The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

603: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

604: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

- v. Award funds cannot be used for personal gain. All funds must be dedicated solely to program activities and implementation.

6. *Other Submission Requirements*

All application materials must be submitted electronically through this form.

F. Application Review Information

1. *Review Criteria*

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

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 30 points: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The proposal does not include any activities contrary to any standing Executive Orders. For a full list, see <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

Degree of Alumni Involvement – 20 points: The alumni have expertise in their stated fields and must be closely involved in project planning, implementation and evaluation. Applicants must also demonstrate the ability to manage project funds responsibly, including having a financial management system and a bank account. If sub-awards are proposed, applicant demonstrates experience managing subawards.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget and Budget Narrative – 10 points: The budget justification is 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation plan – 15 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

Sustainability – 10 points: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

2. *Indirect Costs*

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the

lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

3. Review and Selection Process

An Embassy Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications and will contact successful applicants for next steps following a decision by the Review Committee meeting.

4. Risk Review

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 September 30, 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:

- 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),

- o 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
 - o 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). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- 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
 - Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

2. *Reporting*

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit quarterly financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted. Closing reports are due within 120 days of the grant's end date.

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.

3. **Branding and Marking**

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at [Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System](#). Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual [10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions](#).

For more information, visit: <https://brand.america.gov/>

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.