



Embassy of the United States

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. Embassy Managua
Public Diplomacy Section
Alumni Small Grants Competition
PDS-MGA-FY25-01



Funding Opportunity Title	U.S. Embassy Managua Public Diplomacy Alumni Small Grants Competition
Funding Opportunity Number	PDS-MGA-FY25-01
Deadline for Applications	No applications will be accepted after May 15, 2025 at 12:00 PM CST . Proposals will be reviewed and funds could be fully committed as we receive them, so it is in applicants' interest to submit as soon as possible.
Assistance Listing Number	19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs
Length of performance period	Up to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated	To be determined
Award amounts	Awards may range from \$5,000 – \$30,000 for organizations and individuals
Total available funding	Pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY24 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	August 1, 2025

A. Program Description

1. Overview

U.S. Embassy Managua of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for **alumni of U.S. government-sponsored and facilitated exchange programs** to submit a **statement of interest (SOI)** for funding to carry out a project that advances U.S. public diplomacy priorities and reinforces ties between the people of the United States and Nicaragua. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

The submission of the SOI is the first step in a two-step process. Applicants must first submit a concise **1-3 page** statement of interest designed to clearly communicate projects idea and objectives. This is not a full proposal and will not result in a federal assistance award at this step.

The purpose of the SOI process is to allow applicants to submit project ideas for evaluation prior to requiring the development of a full proposal application. Upon a merit review of eligible SOIs, selected applicants will be invited to expand on their project idea(s) by submitting a full proposal application. Full proposals will go through a second merit review before final funding decision(s) are made.

2. Purpose of Grants Program

The U.S. Department of State provides funding for well-conceived projects that support U.S. Embassy Managua's strategic priorities in Nicaragua. All proposed projects should include a clear U.S. element that will promote increased understanding of the United States among the Nicaraguan public. They may include U.S. expert(s), organization(s), or institution(s) in a specific field that will promote increased understanding of U.S. policy and perspectives.

Proposals should address one or more of the following priority program objectives:

- **Promoting Information Integrity-** Projects that counter information manipulation by malign actors, strengthen Nicaragua's independent media sector, increase the public's access to credible information, and/or improve media and digital literacy for the Nicaraguan people.
- **Fostering Economic Prosperity and Opportunities at Home-** Projects that foster economic growth and enhance skills, education, and resources to contribute to the economy.
- **Encouraging safe and legal migration-** Projects that decelerate irregular migration and increase public awareness of legal migration pathways.

B. Federal Award Information

Length of performance period	Up to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated	To be determined
Award amounts	\$5,000 – \$30,000 for organizations and/or individuals
Total available funding	Dependent on funds availability
Type of Funding	FY24 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	August 1, 2025

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, Fixed Amount Award, or Cooperative Agreement. Cooperative Agreements are different from grants in that PDS staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation.

Examples of the substantial involvement by PDS staff include the development of the grant program, final approval of grant activities, and participation in selection panels for program participants.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less, with limited exceptions.

The Public Diplomacy Section will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants- The following are eligible to apply:

- *Alumni or alumni associations of U.S. government- sponsored exchange programs*
- *Projects teams that include more than one alum. Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs.*

No other organizations are eligible to apply. Exchange alumni can partner with not-for-profit or non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions to implement project activities, however applications must be submitted and led by exchange alumni. The grant can be issued to the individual alum or the partner organization.

The following types of projects are NOT eligible for funding:

- *Projects relating to partisan political activity;*
- *Charitable or development activities;*
- *Construction projects;*
- *Commercial projects;*
- *Projects that support specific religious activities;*
- *Fundraising campaigns;*
- *Lobbying for specific legislation or projects;*
- *Competitions where the prize is the only outcome of the program;*
- *Scientific research and/or surveys; or*
- *Projects that duplicate existing projects.*

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or in-kind contributions are not required but are encouraged.

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

D. Application Contents and Format

1. Statement of Interest (SOI)-

Content of SOI must include (3 pages maximum):

Submissions will be reviewed and receive a response within 20 business days of the deadline.

The deadline to apply is May 15, 2025, with limited exceptions.

The SOI must be completed in English, follow the character limits stipulated, and includes:

- Legal name of the organization, name of person submitting the SOI, title, telephone, address, e-mail, and UEI (if available)
- Name of the project, total budget in USD, length and timing of project
- Brief project summary: description, project statement, and solution
- Audience, location, and promotion plans
- Goals and objectives
- Outputs and outcomes
- Brief introduction of the organization or individual
- Estimated budget in U.S. dollars, divided by category

E. Application Review Process Information

1. Statement of Interest Review Criteria

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) at U.S. Embassy Managua will convene a committee to review and analyze the quality and feasibility of each proposed project and how well it aligns with the Embassy's priorities. The panel may provide conditions and/or recommendations on SOIs to enhance the proposed project. These conditions must be addressed if the applicant is invited to complete the second step, the full proposal application. Each SOI will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Program areas addressed are aligned with priorities - 30 points
- Objectives and expected outcomes are clear – 20 points
- Target Audience – 10 points
- Proposed budget and timeline – 20 points
- Proposal is viable, reasonable, and executable – 10 points
- Compliance with required information and documents – 10 points

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible SOI applications.

Following the review, any **successful SOI applicants** will be contacted and instructed to submit full applications. A full application will include:

- **Completion of full proposal**, at a link to be provided.
- **Beneficiary Protection Plan (Required)** – a description of the organization’s standards of conduct policy, training protocols, and reporting mechanisms to prevent discrimination, harassment, and abuse of beneficiaries of the program, especially if the beneficiaries include minors or other particularly vulnerable groups.
- Additional mandatory forms/documents, to be uploaded:
 - **SF-424** (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or **SF-424-I** (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)
 - **SF424A** (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
 - **SF424B** (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) – the SF424B are only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov.

3. Full Proposal Criteria

- Goals and objectives: Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results. (40%)
- Creativity and audience: The proposal demonstrates creativity and clear on how it will impact the Embassy’s priority audiences. (15%)
- Quality and feasibility of the program idea: The program idea is well-developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. (15%)
- Organizational capacity and record on previous grants: The organization has expertise in its stated field, the Embassy is confident of its ability to undertake the program, including a financial management system and a bank account. (10%)
- Monitoring and evaluation plan: Applicant demonstrates how it plans to monitor and evaluate for measuring impact (results) of the proposed project. Results from monitoring and evaluation efforts should demonstrate to the Public Diplomacy Section that the applicant can use information and data to show that its project is meeting program objectives and goals. We encourage applicants to use

their own M&E template. Otherwise, there is an example located in the application package on the Grants Corner page. (10%)

- Marketing and media plan: Applicant provides a detailed press and social media plan that outlines how the implementer will publicize the activities, goals, and U.S. support of the program. (10%)
- Budget and narrative justification: The budget should be detailed, and narrative justification be complete and reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The cost estimates are realistic. (15%)
- Sustainability: The application clearly communicates the applicant's strategy for ensuring that the project benefits will continue to be realized after the conclusion of the period of performance

4. 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

F. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)

2. Department of State Contacts

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

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

Required Registrations

To be eligible to receive an award, 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. **Please note there is no cost associated with UEI or SAM.gov registration.**

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 \(nato.int\)](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx)

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and SAM.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a UEI and completing SAM.gov registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

See [2 CFR 25.110](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-25/subpart-1/section-25.110) for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email PASManagua@state.gov at least two weeks prior to the deadline.

4. 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. Prohibition on Funding Activities that Encourage Mass-Migration Caravans towards the United States Southwest Border: None of the funds awarded under this grant may be made available to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. Funds may not be made available for legal counseling on the United States asylum process; and/or for referrals to legal or representation in the United States.

Funds may only be used for cash cards for use in the country in which they are provided or to facilitate assisted voluntary returns and other purposes that do not encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass migration caravans towards the United States southwest border. The provision of humanitarian assistance is permitted.

- iii. Award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages, construction, vehicle purchases, or property.
- iv. Award funds cannot be used for expenses incurred before the start of the award period or after the conclusion of the award period.

G. Other information

1. Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel: 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. 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 \$5,000 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 \$5,000 per unit, then it should be listed 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 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“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.

2. Branding requirements. Copyrights and Proprietary Information.

As a condition of receipt of a grant award, materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. **Note:** Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

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.

Specifically, unless otherwise specified, the recipient may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed or acquired under a Federal award. However, the Department of State reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes, and to authorize other entities, including other non-Federal entities, to do so. In addition, the Federal Government has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use data produced under a Federal award.

3. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

None of the funds awarded under this agreement may be used for any initiatives or programs, or any activities that do not comply with Executive Order 14173 titled Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.

The Recipient shall submit, prior to award or upon request from Grants Officer, a certification that confirms:

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

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](#)