

Annual Program Statement (APS)

Celebrating America’s 250th Anniversary and its Friendship with France: 250 Years of Diplomacy and Shared Prosperity

Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Mission to France, Department of State

Opportunity Number: PDS-France-FY2025-02

Updated on July 25, 2025

Deadline for Applications:

Round #1 – September 2, 2025, at 18:00 CET (UTC+1:00)

Round #2 – January 5, 2026, at 18:00 CET (UTC+1:00)

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Commemoration of America's 250th Anniversary

On July 4, 2026, the United States of America will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout 2026, the U.S. Mission to France will commemorate this milestone, highlighting the historical and future connections between France and the United States.

The Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Mission to France is pleased to announce this funding opportunity as part of this celebration of America's 250th Anniversary. This is an Annual Program Statement (APS 250) that invites proposals for our year-long campaign to tell the story of America in France. It aims to support organizations in creating and developing public programs that celebrate the people, events, ideas, and legacies related to the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, and the 250 years of diplomacy and shared prosperity with France that followed.

France's influence on the American Revolution began long before the first shots were fired. American founders like Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and John Adams were deeply inspired by French philosophers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. The ideas of the French Enlightenment shaped the Declaration of Independence and helped establish American principles of republicanism, rule of law, individual rights, and meritocracy—values that were founded 250 years ago and continue to guide us today.

A.1. Program Requirements

Proposed programs must:

- Include French audiences.
- Strengthen bilateral ties between the United States and France.
- Promote increased understanding of the United States among the French public.
- Demonstrate a clear connection to the 250th anniversary.

Programs should focus on themes of innovation, American history, and/or the Franco-American partnership. All programs must include a clear U.S. element or connection, which could involve cooperation with experts, private or public organizations, or institutions from the United States.

Programs with a countrywide reach will be considered favorably.

A.2. Goals and Objectives

We seek innovative public diplomacy initiatives that showcase the full extent of American excellence and U.S.-French cooperation, past, present, and future. This will be achieved through various public diplomacy outreach and experiential learning, highlighting achievements, legacies, and contributions, and translating these historical moments into lessons for the future.

A.3. Priority Themes:

Innovation: American Ingenuity Across Borders

- Highlight the United States as a global engine of innovation in science, technology, culture, arts, and storytelling.
- Showcase American leadership in areas such as artificial intelligence, biomedical breakthroughs, and space exploration.
- Elevate cultural exports like film, music, fashion, literature, sports, and digital media as uniquely American contributions that inspire and connect communities worldwide.

American History: Reflecting on Our Past, Shaping Our Future

- Engage French audiences with a nuanced and compelling narrative of American history.
- Include uplifting stories of resilience, civil rights progress, democratic ideals, and the enduring quest for a more perfect union.
- Promote a deeper understanding of America's founding values and historical journey through exhibits, lectures, social media content, and public diplomacy campaigns.

Partnership: 250 Years of Diplomacy and Shared Prosperity

- Celebrate the strength and diversity of U.S. partnerships around the world.
- Highlight the evolution of diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties with France framed in terms of shared interests and shared values.
- Underscore how U.S. alliances have fostered peace, security, and prosperity globally.

A.4. Objectives for 2026:

- Renew appreciation for the United States among French audiences who are historically neutral or skeptical.
- Attract new audiences to discover American excellence and consider the United States as a preferred place for education, business, and tourism.
- Reignite programs and initiatives showcasing innovation, American history, and the Franco-American partnership.
- Create excitement toward the United States at the subnational level, particularly in cultural spaces, and attract media attention.

A.5. Participants and Audiences

All applicants must specify their target audience (age, sex, geographic breakdown) and estimate the expected audience reach through direct and indirect contact (via social media or traditional media).

A.6 Ineligible Programs

The following types of programs are not eligible for funding:

- Programs relating to partisan political. Lobbying for specific legislation or programs.
- Charitable or development activities. Programs that support specific religious activities.
- Construction programs.
- Fund-raising campaigns.
- Scientific research or individual study projects.
- Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization.
- Programs that duplicate existing programs. Projects seeking funds for personal use.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

This notice is subject to the availability of funding.

Funding Opportunity Title	Annual Program Statement – America 250
Funding Opportunity Number	PDS-France-FY2025-02
Deadline for Applications	Round #1: September 2, 2025, at 18:00 CET (UTC+1:00) Round #2 January 5, 2026, at 18:00 CET (UTC+1:00)
Total funding available	\$100,000.00 <u>pending funding availability</u> *
Award amounts	\$5,000.00 to \$24,999.00
Number of awards anticipated	5 to 20 awards (dependent on amounts)
Anticipated program start date	No earlier than October 2025
Length of performance period	Up to 18 months
Type of funding	*Fiscal Year 2025 or 2026 Public Diplomacy Funding

B.1. Funding Instrument Type

Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements mean that the Public Diplomacy Section will be more actively involved in the grant implementation, such as approving speakers or selecting participants, reviewing and approving program content or sites. FAA can also include substantial involvement.

B.2. Program Performance Period

Proposed projects should be completed in 18 months or less from the start of the program.

The period of performance is the time during which you may incur expenses to carry out the work under the award.

The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants 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.

Funding authority rests in the Smith-Mundt Act. The source of funding is FY2025 or FY2026 Public Diplomacy Funding, pending availability of funding.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

The Public Diplomacy Section encourages applications from the United States and France:

- Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience.
- Non-profit educational institutions.
- Governmental institutions.
- Applications from organizations that include alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs are highly encouraged.

For-profit or commercial entities are not eligible to apply.

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not mandatory and therefore will not be included in the criteria for evaluation. However, if a project includes cost sharing, please detail whether the cost-share is through in-cash or in-kind contribution and approximate dollar amount. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

Please note that we do not accept ongoing projects.

C.4. Unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the 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.

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.”*

Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and make sure to complete the SAM.gov registration process.

It’s FREE to register on SAM.gov.

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 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.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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.

Please ensure:

- The proposal and budget are submitted using the dedicated templates.
- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of the funding opportunity.
- All documents are in English. All budgets are in U.S. dollars.
- All pages are numbered and do not exceed ~5 pages (including budget template).

D.1. Mandatory Forms

All mandatory forms must be submitted in English and signed with a handwritten signature or a certified digital signature.

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)

D.2. Summary Coversheet

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program (application form, page 1).

D.3. Proposal narrative (three pages maximum)

The proposal must be submitted in English. The proposal must clearly address the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity. The proposal should contain sufficient information so that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. Please make sure to use the templates provided in www.grants.gov and/or the Embassy website which includes:

Proposal Summary: Provide a brief narrative outlining your proposed project, including objectives, anticipated impact, and how the engagement will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States.

Introduction to the Organization: Describe your organization's past and present operations, demonstrating your ability to carry out the program, and include information on previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.

Problem Statement: Present a clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem your project aims to address and explain why the proposed program is necessary.

Program Goals and Objectives: Outline what your program intends to achieve, specifying how it will support the relationship between the U.S. and France, ensuring that the goals and objectives are achievable and measurable.

Project Activities: Detail the activities planned for your program and explain how these activities will help achieve the objectives.

Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline: Provide a timeline for your program activities, including dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.

Project Beneficiaries/Audience: Describe the target audience and beneficiaries of your program, explaining who will benefit and how.

Project Methods and Design: Explain how your program will work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal, including a logic model if appropriate.

Promotion and Communications Plan: Suggest a plan to promote your project, identifying target audiences, platforms to be used, and estimated reach, including strategies for engagement with traditional media, social media, or a combination of both.

Key Personnel: Provide information about the key personnel involved in the program, including names, titles, roles, experience, and qualifications, and specify the proportion of their time dedicated to the program.

Project Partners: List key partner organizations and sub-awardees, describing their type of involvement in the project.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Explain how you will monitor and evaluate the program, describing how activities will be monitored to ensure timely execution and how the program will be evaluated to ensure it meets the grant's goals.

Future Funding or Sustainability: Outline your plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, mentioning the availability of other resources or plans for future funding, if applicable.

D.4. Budget and Justification Narrative

After filling out the SF-424A Budget, complete the budget template available on www.grants.gov and/or the Embassy website. In addition, describe each of the budget expenses in detail, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered (application form, page 5).

D.5. Guidelines for Budget

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly 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 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.

Program Income: Is income earned by the recipient that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the award. Examples of program income include: ticket sales for events funded through an award, the sale of items made under an award, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights... Interest earned on advances of Federal funds is not program income. Program income earned during an award will be added to the overall program and used to further eligible project objectives.

D.6. Attachments (optional)

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each one
- 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.

D.7. Submission Requirement, Deadlines and Contact Information

Application forms are available at the website of the U.S. Embassy in France and on www.grants.gov.

Applications may be submitted for consideration at any time before the closing date of:

- ❖ Round #1 September 2, 2025, at 18:00 CET (UTC+1:00).
- ❖ Round #2 January 5, 2026, at 18:00 CET (UTC+1:00).

No applications will be accepted after these dates.

Please send your application to [**GrantsFrance@state.gov**](mailto:GrantsFrance@state.gov)

Subject line of the email: "APS FY250 - America 250: Name of applicant & Project Title"

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

Note: We do not provide pre-consultation for application related questions that are addressed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Once an application has been submitted, the U.S. Mission to France Grants Team will not be able to discuss the competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Review Criteria

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

Link to Strategic Priorities and Goals (15 points): The proposal clearly aligns with strategic priorities and goals. It demonstrates how the project will contribute to these priorities and goals.

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea (20 points): The program idea is well-developed, with detailed information on how activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants (15 points): The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account. The organization's past performance on previous grants is also considered.

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

Budget (10 points): The budget justification is detailed, with costs that are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic and accounts for all necessary expenses to achieve the proposed activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (15 points): The applicant demonstrates the ability 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): The proposal shows that program activities will continue to have a positive impact after the end of the program.

E.2. Review and Selection Process

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the U.S. Mission to France strives to ensure that each application receives a balanced evaluation by a Review Panel.

PDS France's Grants Officer will determine eligibility of each submitted proposal. The Review Panel will also evaluate how the application addresses the priorities outlined in this funding request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the overall priority needs of the U.S. Mission to France.

The Review Panel may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of the funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

E.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

An impartial evaluation panel composed of Mission personnel will evaluate all eligible applications current September 2025 for round #1 applications, and current January 2026 for round #2 applications.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified within 60 days of the applications deadlines.

Ineligible or unqualified applicants will be informed once the initial screening has been completed.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION

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 signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant 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.

F.1. 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:

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 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. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this Annual Program Statement will be **within the United States**, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:

By signing the SF-424 or SF-424I Application for Federal Assistance, the Applicant certifies the following:

- 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) 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.

- iv. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements.

Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:

- 1) Its compliance in all respects with section 1011f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

F.2. 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

F.3. 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

The Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Mission to France reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period. A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 120 days after the expiration of the award.

Please note: Delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals, and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipient's ability to receive future U.S. government funds.

F.4. Branding Requirements

As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all 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.