**Annual Program Statement**

**Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**Small Grants Program**

Announcement Type: Fixed Amount Award and Grants

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity: Small Grants Program - Open Competition

Funding Opportunity Number: DOS-PAS-SLO-2025-001

**Announcement Type** **Final Announcement**

Deadline(s) for Applications Monday, May 12, 2025

Catalog of Federal Domestic 19.040

Length of Performance Period up to 12 months

Award amounts Grants typically range from $5,000 to $10,000

Total available funding: up to $50,000

Type of Funding: FY25 Smith Mundt and Fulbright Hayes

Public Diplomacy Funds

Expected Period of Performance: 09/01/2025 – 09/01/2026

Key Dates: Announcement published April 8, 2025

 Deadline for Applications May 12, 2025

Anticipated Award Date September 1, 2025

Anticipated Project Completion Date September 1, 2026

Opportunity Category: Discretionary

Ceiling of Award Amount: $15,000

The U.S. Embassy Ljubljana is pleased to announce that funding is available through its Small Grants Program. This is an Annual Program Statement, outlining our funding priorities, the strategic themes we focus on, and the procedures for submitting requests for funding. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), Cooperative Agreement

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

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

**Executive Summary**:

The Embassy offers small grants to U.S. and Slovenian individuals and organizations for well-designed public diplomacy projects that advance U.S. government priorities and strengthen people-to-people ties between the United States and Slovenia.

Successful proposals will strengthen bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding in priority areas broadly defined to include security and defense issues; economic and business development; science, technology and innovation; cultural and artistic exchange;

democracy; education and research collaboration; and shared values and heritage.

Each application must clearly explain how the project makes the American and Slovenian people safer, stronger, and/or more prosperous

Typically grant awards range from $5,000 to $10,000 and may supplement other funding. Some exceptional projects may qualify for up to $15,000. The deadline for submitting proposals is by Monday, May 12, 2025. New grantees are given priority over previous grantees. Funding for public diplomacy grants is decided through a competitive application process. Each proposal is reviewed by an Embassy committee to determine the project’s potential to advance U.S. policy priorities.

This is an Annual Program Statement, outlining our funding priorities, the strategic themes we focus on, and the procedures for submitting requests for funding through the Small Grants Program of the U.S. Embassy Ljubljana and U.S. Department of State. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Eligibility for this NOFO is limited to: U.S. or Slovenian individuals; U.S. or Slovenian not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations; U.S. and Slovenian higher educational and research institutions; and/or Slovenian independent public entities.

***Other Eligibility Requirements***

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

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.

Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws None of the funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) 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.

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) It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable U.S. Federal anti-discrimination laws.

The initial period of performance is recommended to be from September 1, 2025, onward. Funding authority rests in the Smith-Mundt Act and Fulbright-Hays Act, as amended.

All applicants should be familiar with OMB Circular 2 CFR Part 200, UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS

Please read the entire NOFO package before submitting an application and follow the steps in order to submit before the deadline. **Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria and do not contain all of the required information will not be considered.**

PLEASE NOTE: We recognize that the requirement for all program proposals to include a significant American component may be challenging in some cases. We encourage you to consider submitting proposals which include an alternative virtual component as well if necessary. Please reach out to us if you have any questions around this requirement.

EXAMPLE: A program proposal includes a lecture series on entrepreneurship for a variety of audiences. The proposal envisions an American professor visiting Slovenia to conduct in-person lectures. Ideally the proposal should also include a backup plan to use video conferencing in lieu of international travel to conduct the lecture tour.

# Program Description

##

## A. Funding Opportunity Description

###

### Goals and Objectives

Successful proposals will strengthen bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding in priority areas broadly defined to include: democracy and human rights; security and defense issues; economic and business development; energy; science, technology and innovation; cultural and artistic exchange; education and research collaboration; and shared values and heritage. Each application must clearly demonstrate how the project aligns with U.S. policy priorities, particularly by enhancing the safety, strength, and prosperity of the American people.

**The following types of programs are not eligible for funding:** *(suggested examples below; edit as needed)*

* + Programs relating to partisan political activity;
	+ Charitable or development activities;
	+ Construction programs;
	+ Programs that support specific religious activities;
	+ Fund-raising campaigns;
	+ Lobbying for specific legislation or programs;
	+ Scientific research;
	+ Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization;
	+ Programs that duplicate existing programs;
	+ Programs specifically intended for an American audience; or
	+ Programs that are counter to American values and do not advance administration priorities.
1. **What are we looking for in a proposal?**
* Programs that build and enhance relationships between Slovenia and the United States.
* Applications must have an American component. Projects which incorporate an American speaker, expert, author, etc., are often considered stronger proposals.
* Sustainable projects with strong merit and clearly defined goals and outcomes.
* Projects that include acknowledgement of U.S. Embassy support and a plan to amplify our cooperation via traditional or digital media.
1. **Available Funding and Legislative Authority**

The source of this funding is D&CP (PD) Funds, under statutory authorities established by the Smith-Mundt Act and Fulbright-Hays Act

1. Summary of Award Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of Award: | Fixed Amount Award/Grant/Cooperative Agreement |
| Appropriated Fiscal Year of Funds: | FY2025 |
| Approximate Total Funding: | $50,000 |
| Approximate Number of Awards: | 10 |
| Anticipated Award Date: | September 1, 2025 |
| Anticipated Project Completion Date: | September 1, 2026 |

### Deadline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deadline for Applications: | May 12, 2025 |

#

## B. Application 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.**

## 1. Address to Request Application Package

##

Public Affairs Section
U.S. Embassy Ljubljana
Attn: Small Grants Program
Prešernova 31
1000 Ljubljana
Tel: (1) 200-55-00
 **In addition, please send one copy in electronic form to the following address:****LjubljanaGrants@state.gov**

## 2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please read the entire NOFO and follow the guidelines for proposal preparation.

Applicants must include the following in the proposal submission. **All submissions must be in English.**

**Requested:**

1. Table of Contents that lists application contents and attachments (if any);
2. Completed and signed SF-424 (for organizations) or SF-424-I (for individuals) and SF-424A, as directed on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).
3. Completed and signed Small Grants Program – Application Form
4. If your organization engages in lobbying activities, a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) form is required;
5. Summary and detailed Budget in USD and detailed budget narrative that includes an explanation for each line item in the spreadsheet, as well as the source and description of any cost share offered;
6. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

**Optional:**

1. Attachments may be included, (letters of commitment from the applicant institution and sub-award partners, CVs of key personnel, project experience, etc.) but should not be unreasonably lengthy; see NOFO for details on required attachments, if any;

## 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 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. 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 the NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that subrecipients 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”)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsd.gov%2Fgsafsd_sp%3Fid%3Dgsafsd_kb_articles%26sys_id%3Dc81018e71b1601d0937fa64ce54bcb57&data=05%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C0cc4e2b471f44abcd32308db093ecead%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C638113937577534024%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=W2ShcazZBQbanYGj0cLOTnUJwv%2BGL4xfwr83%2BycQY2E%3D&reserved=0) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at [www.fsd.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsd.gov%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C0cc4e2b471f44abcd32308db093ecead%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C638113937577534024%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=t32ANWzgpiB93pMWoq%2BFCSHz4YJY9QF1S1iQzCsS6RM%3D&reserved=0) 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](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Feportal.nspa.nato.int%2FAC135Public%2Fscage%2FCageList.aspx&data=05%7C01%7Cfjeldkk%40state.gov%7C0cc4e2b471f44abcd32308db093ecead%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C638113937577534024%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=v3TLT8F%2FNfk5SuTcI2zw7SMhV4HK542OhP9XDx4ln%2BY%3D&reserved=0)

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool (nato.int)](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/home)

**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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-I/part-25/subpart-A/section-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 Requirements and Deadlines

Completed applications should be submitted electronically through **LjubljanaGrants@state.gov** and on the following address: Public Affairs Section

U.S. Embassy Ljubljana, Attn: Small Grants Program, Prešernova 31, 1000 Ljubljana.

**Please follow all NOFO instructions carefully and start early to ensure you have time to collect all of the required information.** All applications must be submitted by Friday, **May 12, 2025**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

**5. Designated Performance and Integrity System (currently FAPIIS)**

The Department of State, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

The applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

The Department of State will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

## C. Application Review Information

# 1. Criteria

# The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

**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.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 20 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.

**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 – 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. Review and Selection Process

The review will be done by *The Embassy Small Grants Committee* consisting of an odd number of Embassy staff who will conduct a review of the project applications using cost-benefit analysis in consideration of a project’s potential to advance U.S. policy priorities.

**2. 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:

* 1. Financial stability
	2. Management systems and standards
	3. History of performance
	4. Audit reports and findings
	5. Ability to effectively implement requirements

## D. Federal Award Administration Information

## 1. 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 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.

**2. Unsuccessful applicants:** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.

## E. 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.

## F. 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](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) (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](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.175&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.182&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.183&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2chapterVI.tpl)
* [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.state.gov/federal-assistance-policies-appeals/)
1. **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

1. **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.

## G. 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.

## H. Agency Contact

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should email them to **LjubljanaGrants@state.gov**. Note that once the NOFO deadline has passed Department of State staff in Washington, D.C. and overseas at U.S. Embassies/Missions may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed.