

January 17, 2025

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

U.S. EMBASSY FINLAND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Notice of Funding Opportunity

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Update on February 11, 2025

The Notice of Funding Opportunity has been updated with the following:

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 Federal anti-discrimination laws.

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Embassy in Finland Public Diplomacy Annual Program Statement

Funding Opportunity Number: PDS-FI-FY25-01

Type of Funding: FY2025 Smith-Mundt and Fulbright-Hays Public Diplomacy Funds

Date Opened: January 17, 2025.

Deadline for Applications: Proposals will be considered on a rolling basis until March 28, 2025, 23:59 EST. Decisions will be announced by April 30, 2025.

Assistance Listing Number: 19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs

Length of performance period: 3 to 24 months

Award amounts: Awards may range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$20,000.

Project scalability in proposals is encouraged.

Anticipated project start date: No earlier than September 2025.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by the embassy's Public Diplomacy Section staff in program implementation of the project.

2. Priority Program Areas

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) at the U.S. embassy in Helsinki, Finland, invites proposals for programs that promote bilateral cooperation, highlight shared values, and focus specifically on the following priority areas:

- Promoting economic prosperity and entrepreneurship, especially the facilitation of technology and innovation cooperation
- Addressing global security challenges and increasing understanding of Finland's integration into NATO, including programs in support of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) initiatives
- Promoting youth, academic, and professional exchange programs
- Promoting Arctic and High North collaboration

B. ELIGIBILITY

- All programs must include a U.S. perspective, societal or cultural element, or connection with U.S. expert/s, organization/s, or institution/s in a specific field that will promote increased understanding of U.S. policies and viewpoints in the priority program areas listed in A.2.
- Additionally, programs must include public outreach components, such as livestreaming, masterclasses, traditional media, digital outreach, and/or events open to audiences.
- If you are an **individual or organizations based outside Finland**, a confirmed local Finnish organization (or partnering organization) must be identified in the grant application.

1. Eligible Applicants

The Public Diplomacy Section considers the following applicants eligible, including:

- Registered not-for-profit organizations, such as think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Individuals
- Non-profit educational institutions; and
- Public international organizations and governmental institutions

Please note that for-profit or commercial entities are not eligible to apply.

2. Other Eligibility Requirements

- All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid and active registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section D.4. for more information.

- - Individual applicants are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.
- Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization per Notice of Funding Opportunity. 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 Federal anti-discrimination laws.

3. Ineligibilities

The following types of programs are not eligible for funding:

- Programs relating to partisan political activities
- Charitable or development activities
- Construction programs
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Lobbying for specific legislation
- Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization
- Programs intended for an individual's personal enrichment or career development (including studies, study trips, conference participation or travel)
- Programs implemented by an individual applicant with the intention of distributing funds to other implementors or participants
- Programs which audiences' age is below upper secondary/high school
- Artist residencies
- 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).

C. SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The Public Diplomacy Section will accept and review proposals received by March 28, 2025, 23:59 EST, with responses going out by April 30, 2025. No applications will be accepted after March 28, 2025. Any applications received after the closing date of this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be held or considered for future funding opportunities. Applicants who have not heard from the Public Diplomacy Section after the deadline indicated above may contact HelsinkiGrants@state.gov for an update. Organizations or individuals whose applications are not funded will be notified via email.

1. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

2. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Applicants should apply for grants with enough lead time to factor in both the anticipated grant evaluation date above as well as a four-week processing period.

Committee evaluations are final and due to the large volume of requests, feedback on proposals or program content will not be provided.

3. U.S. Department of State Contacts

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

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications that will apply to an award to ensure that they will be able to comply, including those listed in the Appendix, under Item 3.

All application materials must be submitted via electronic submission through www.grants.gov.

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

Content of the Application (all documents must be in English). Please ensure the application package includes the following:

1. Proposal (Two pages maximum): The proposal clearly addresses at least one of the priority program areas of this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with the program would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below:

- - **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, the program

period's proposed start and end date, program activities, and project objectives and anticipated impact

- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual Applying:** A brief description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, and include information on all previous grants from the U.S. Department of State (U.S. embassy in Helsinki or other U.S. embassy) and/or U.S. government agencies
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities:** Description of the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives
- **Project Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities, including the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program, including what proportion of staff time will be used in support of this program
- **Project Partners:** The confirmed names and type of involvement of key Finnish partner organizations and sub-awardees, including any social and community involvement
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** Throughout the timeframe of the grant, a description of how activities will be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner and how the program will be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable

2. Mandatory application forms: All the required forms below (as applicable) must be filled and signed where appropriate.

The forms repository is available at: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>.

•

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – Organizations) OR
- SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance – Individuals/Application for Federal Domestic Assistance – Individual)

- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) – ONLY for individual grants

3. Budget Justification Narrative (in U.S. dollars): After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See the “Guidelines for Budget Narrative Submissions” in the Appendix, under Item 1.

4. Required Registrations: Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an Active System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. If your organization had a previously active SAM.gov registration, please note it could have been deactivated as SAM.gov registrations must be renewed annually.

- 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.
- A **UEI** is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all U.S. federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department of State (U.S. embassy in Helsinki) and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any federal award that results from this NOFO. The 2 CFR 200 also requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. 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.
- 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.

NOTE: If your organization is based outside the United States and intends to apply for a U.S. Department of Defense award, please refer to the Appendix, Item 2.

5. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

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.

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

E. AWARD NOTICES

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by a Grants Officer at the embassy. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and countersignature. 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 U.S. Department of State (U.S. embassy in Helsinki) 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 U.S. Department of State (U.S. embassy in Helsinki).

Issuance of this Notice of Funding Opportunity 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 via email by HelsinkiGrants@state.gov.

F. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

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.

G. APPENDIX

1. Guidelines for Budget Justification Narrative

- **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:** This refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues. Please note that cost sharing is not required.

Unallowable Costs:

- Alcoholic beverages.
- Whole or partial costs for first-class or business class tickets without prior justification and authorization from the embassy’s Public Diplomacy Section.
- Fees associated with the participation of U.S. federal government employees.
- Banquets and entertainment.

2. NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code

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 plan to do business with the DoD in addition to the Department of State (U.S. embassy in Helsinki) should follow the below instructions:

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 \(nato.int\)](#)

3. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

In accordance with the U.S. Office of Management and Budget’s guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable U.S. federal laws, and relevant U.S. executive guidance, the U.S. Department of

State (U.S. embassy in Helsinki) will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this Notice of Funding Opportunity in accordance with the

[Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the U.S. 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).

Additional Resources:

- [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](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to pay a fee to complete the SAM registration/renewal process?

SAM.gov is the official U.S. government website for entity registration. Please note there is no cost to register. Maintaining and renewing your registration is free of charge. If you are asked to pay money to complete or renew your SAM.gov registration, be cautious. These messages are not from the federal government. You engage third party vendors at your own risk.

On the application for federal assistance (SF424-individual), what is the “Name of Federal Agency”?

State Department (U.S. Embassy Helsinki).

Do “project description” and “short proposal summary” have a similar meaning?

Yes.

If I have two potential budgets for the same project, should I submit both as different grant applications?

One grant/budget submission indicating scalability is fine.

What if my project changes after submitting the application?

Please communicate updates to applications via the U.S. Embassy grants email: HelsinkiGrants@state.gov.

What if I have changes to a grant after it has been issued?

Depending on the nature of the change requested, and based on the award provisions, terms, and conditions, there may be an opportunity to amend a grant to reflect updates to the project.

However, amendments are not always possible, particularly if changes would alter the scope of the grant or the amount of the grant.