

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY, Yerevan
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: *Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF)*
Funding Opportunity Number: *AEIF-FY23-ARM3*
Deadline for Applications: *March 20, 2023*
Assistance Listing Number: *19.022*
Total Amount Available: *up to \$70,000*

The Embassy of the United States in Yerevan announces an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2023 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2023). We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2023 should submit proposals to yerevangrants@state.gov by **March 20, 2023, 11:59 p.m.** (local, Armenia time). Applications submitted directly to ECA will not be accepted.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program objectives:

AEIF provides alumni of U.S. government-sponsored and facilitated exchange programs with funding to expand on skills gained during their exchange experience to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their community. Since its inception in 2011, AEIF has funded nearly 500 alumni-led projects around the world through a competitive global competition.

U.S. Embassy Yerevan will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support the following themes:

- Strengthen Democracy and Rule of Law
- Supporting Gender Equity and Women's Full Participation in Public Life
- Supporting Civil Society Capacity Building and Civic Activism
- Promoting Entrepreneurship, Economic Growth, and a STEM Future
- Advancing Food Security and Sustainable Food Systems
- Support social inclusion of people with disabilities and refugees through art, sport, education etc.

Participants and Audiences:

Please be specific when mentioning the target audience(s) of your proposed project, including demographic information and the approximate number of beneficiaries to be directly and indirectly impacted by project activities.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Announcement posted: February 15, 2023

Closing date for applications: March 20, 2023

Funding type: Small-grant awards

Anticipated program start date: September 1, 2023

Award amounts: Between \$5,000 to \$35,000

Length of Performance Period: Up to 12 months

Number of awards anticipated: Up to two awards

Total available funding: \$70,000

Type of Funding: Educational and Cultural Exchange Funds

NOTE: This notice is subject to funds availability.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award, or cooperative agreement. The type of funding instrument, exact amount of funding, the scope of work, and the terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and U.S. Embassy representatives after the application has been selected for funding.

Cooperative agreements are used only for awards to organizations in case the proposed project involves substantial U.S. Embassy involvement. “Substantial involvement” means that, after the award is approved for funding, U.S. Embassy staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role. The U.S. Embassy will not assume direction, primary responsibility, or a dominant role in project activities. These reside with the recipient for the entire project.

Examples of substantial involvement can include, but are not limited to:

- Active collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award;
- Joint preparation or presentation of results with the recipient;
- Involvement in the selection of program participants;
- Approval of activity agendas and program products.

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

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants:** The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded or sponsored exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>) or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team members in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni. Not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions are not eligible to apply in the name of the organization but can serve as partners for implementing project activities.

2. Cost Sharing

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

3. Grant Program Area:

Proposals must address themes outlined in this announcement. Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

4. Other Eligibility Requirements

If the grant will be processed with an individual, that individual is not required to have a UEI (Unique Entity ID) number or be registered in SAM.gov. However, should the grant be processed with an organization that is a partner in the project, that organization must have a UEI, as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices regarding beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

*Applicants are only allowed to submit **one** proposal.*

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application and budget templates are available at <https://www.usa.am/cms/announcements.php>

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official AEIF 2023 application and budget forms. 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 clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
- The proposal addresses all questions in the official AEIF 2023 application form.
- All documents are in English.
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is submitted using the designated AEIF 2023 budget form.
- All pages are numbered.

The following documents and information are required:

❖ **Mandatory application forms:**

- SF424-I (Application for Federal Assistance – individuals)
- SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)

❖ **Summary Page:** Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

❖ **Proposal:** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. The template for project proposals is attached to this NOFO, and includes:

- **Project Team Information:** At least two exchange alumni team members are required for a project to be considered for funding. Applications need to provide the name and contact information, describe the role each team member will have in the project, and their experience, qualifications, and ability to carry out that role. Applicants need to indicate what proportion of the team member's time will be used in support of the project.
- **Proposal Summary:** A short narrative which outlines the proposed project, including challenge/s to be addressed, project objectives, and anticipated impact.
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The goal/s of the proposed project need to describe what the project is intended to achieve and include the objectives which support the goal/s. Objectives should be specific, measurable, and realistically achievable in a set time frame.
- **Project Methods, Design, and Timeline:** A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal/s. This should include a description of the project's direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as a plan on how to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. The

proposed timeline for the project activities should include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events. Applicants may also submit proposed workshop or training agendas and materials.

- **Local Project Partners:** A list of partners who will support the proposed project, if applicable.
- **Communication Plan:** The communication plan should include a communication and outreach strategy for promoting the proposed project. It may include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media intended to use to share information about the project to beneficiaries and the public. Communications should include AEIF 2023, Exchange Alumni, and U.S. Embassy branding.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal should outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives. This should include any outcomes showing a change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will measure the impact of planned activities.

❖ **Detailed Budget and Budget Justification Narrative:** Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

❖ **Attachments:**

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities

3. 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.

Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

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 number 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 number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, 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 or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or 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 a CAGE or 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.

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 unique entity identifier and completing SAM 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.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than March 20, 2023.

5. Funding Restrictions

AEIF 2023 does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments, or entertainment
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to yerevangrants@state.gov. Please make sure to include “AEIF 2023” in the subject line of your application.

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

- 1. Evaluation Criteria:** The U.S. embassy or consulate Public Diplomacy Sections will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. The proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of regional and exchange program experts located at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

Relevance to Application Theme
The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the theme(s) of the competition. The narrative explains any relevant local context the D.C. Selection Committee may not be aware of in relation to this project. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy in nature (i.e., not development or military).
Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan
When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling. Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many will participate? How will they be selected?
Degree of Alumni Involvement
Projects must include the involvement of at least two (2) exchange alumni. They may be the project team leaders or collaborate directly with PDS in formulating the project. More than two alumni may comprise the team, however, the minimum is two. As the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, country of citizenship, and roles and responsibilities.
Participation and Support from Local Partners
The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement is a strong sign that there is community support and that the project will engage a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

Evaluation and Impact of the Project

A monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how that data collection will be accomplished. Well-crafted indicators should be used to understand a program's progress toward the desired results. An M&E plan should be reviewed for the following:

- Completion
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART criteria
- Feasibility of baselines and targets
- Data quality plan
- Capacity to implement plan

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan

The project should include a clear plan and timeline for how and when the team will share information about the project. It is important to ensure that the U.S. Embassy gets recognition throughout the process if circumstances permit.

Sustainability

Have the applicants considered how the project will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project?

Budget and Budget Narrative

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently 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. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Disclaimer: This notice is subject to availability of funding. U.S. Embassy Yerevan does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly, FAPIIS)

i. The Federal awarding agency, 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 U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

ii. An applicant, at its option, may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. Currently, federal agencies create

integrity records in the integrity module of the Contractor Performance Assessment and Reporting System (CPARS) and these records are visible as responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov;

iii. The Federal awarding agency 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 §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance 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.

Payment Method: Payments will be made in accordance with the program schedule and milestones.

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:

- [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](#)

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 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - 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 in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

3. **Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. All recipients must submit a formal report to the Grants Officer upon completion of the project. The report should discuss what was done, whether the project was successful from the applicant's perspective and how it might be improved in the future. Copies of video materials, CDs and other video and audio aids generated

during the implementation of the project attesting to the success of the grant activities are welcome, and sometimes required indeed. An accounting of the use of the grant funds must also be included.

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. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions about the grant application process should be directed to yerevangrants@state.gov.

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.