



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

AEIF 2026 Alumni Summit: Freedom 250

NEA/Riyadh, Department of State

Opportunity number: PDS-SAU-FY26-07

Application deadline: **September 14, 2026, at 23:59 AST (Arabia Standard Time)**

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U.S Department of State
NEA/Riyadh
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	AEIF 2026 Alumni Summit: Freedom 250
Funding Opportunity Number	PDS-SAU-FY26-07
Announcement Type	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	September 14, 2026, at 23:59 AST (Arabia Standard Time)
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	12 months
Number of awards anticipated	1 Award
Award amounts	Maximum of \$100,000
Total available funding	\$100,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	19.022 - Fulbright-Hays
Anticipated project start date	October 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. An FAA can also include substantial involvement.

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

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

The U.S. Mission in Saudi Arabia Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) is pleased to announce an open competition for not-for-profit organizations (NGOs), think tanks, and academic institutions to organize and host the AEIF 2026 Alumni Summit in Riyadh. Given the program's intersection with U.S. government exchange funded alumni, we encourage alumni with linkages to qualifying organizations to consider applying for this opportunity via the appropriate institutional vehicle.

The goal of this initiative is to activate, unite, and strengthen U.S. exchange alumni networks across Saudi Arabia's three posts (Embassy Riyadh, Consulate General Jeddah, and Consulate General Dhahran) as active strategic partners in advancing shared U.S.-Saudi priorities. Aligned with Freedom 250, the summit celebrates American values of leadership, innovation, and civic engagement, reinforcing U.S. policy priorities of making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Target Audience and Participants

The summit must be designed for 70 to 90 U.S. exchange program alumni representing at least five prominent U.S. Government exchange programs (such as IVLP, Fulbright, Humphrey, SYLEP, MEMI, and YES). Participants will be selected from across all 13 provinces of Saudi Arabia, ensuring a robust cross-regional representation that reflects the array of U.S. government exchanges.

Program Components Overview

The selected implementing partner (grantee) will manage the complete lifecycle of the cooperative agreement, structured into three mandatory phases:

- i. **Phase 1:** Planning and Recruitment (October – December 2026): Administrative setup, regional outreach, speaker selection, travel arrangements, and agenda finalization in close coordination with the Embassy.
- ii. **Phase 2:** Summit Design & Execution (January 2027): Implementing the interactive two-day summit in Riyadh, featuring panels, workshops, an U.S. industry session allowing alumni to engage directly with leaders of American businesses operating in Saudi Arabia to discuss U.S. private-sector approaches and explore partnership opportunities, to strengthen U.S.-Saudi economic and professional ties, and a micro-grant pitch competition.
- iii. **Phase 3:** Post-Summit Follow-on Activities, Micro-grants, & Advisory Network (February – July 2027): Managing the post-summit micro-grant disbursements, 3 to 5 micro-grants of up to \$5,000 each, not to exceed \$25,000 in the aggregate, all of which must be budgeted within the \$100,000 total award, supporting project implementation, launching a 10-member Alumni Advisory Network, and finalizing reporting requirements.

Mandatory Program Elements

Applicants must design and implement a two-day, in-person alumni summit that convenes an estimated 70–90 U.S. exchange program alumni from across Saudi Arabia. Participants should reflect a cross-section of exchange program alumni (e.g., IVLP, Fulbright, Humphrey, UGRAD, sports exchanges, and other U.S. government-sponsored programs) and represent professional sectors, including government, private sector, civil society, education, media, and entrepreneurship.

The summit must be designed as an interactive, alumni-driven experience that emphasizes engagement, cross-sectoral collaboration, and action-oriented outcomes, rather than a traditional conference format. At a minimum, the agenda must include the following elements:

- i. **Opening and Framing** A plenary or keynote session that situates the summit within the broader U.S.-Saudi bilateral relationship, articulates the strategic value of alumni engagement, and reflects current U.S. Mission priorities. This should include remarks or a moderated discussion involving U.S. Mission leadership.

- ii. **Thematic Alumni-Led Programming** Alumni-led panels or facilitated discussions on at least two priority themes selected from areas such as: innovation and economic diversification; media literacy, and civic engagement; and creative economy/cultural diplomacy. Sessions should be designed to elevate alumni voices and expertise rather than rely primarily on outside speakers.
- iii. **Private-Sector Engagement** A structured session connecting alumni with representatives from U.S. companies operating in Saudi Arabia, designed to build professional networks, surface private-sector perspectives, and identify potential partners for alumni-led community initiatives.
- iv. **Structured Networking** Facilitated opportunities for cross-regional and cross-sectoral relationship-building among alumni, distinct from informal networking time.
- v. **Skills-Building Component** At least one applied, skills-based workshop track (e.g., project design, digital storytelling/advocacy, or partnership-building) that equips alumni with practical tools tied to the summit's thematic priorities.
- vi. **Collaborative Project Development** Structured working sessions in which cross-sectoral alumni teams develop concrete project proposals addressing local community or bilateral priorities, culminating in a competitive pitch process before a panel and/or peer audience.
- vii. **Micro-Grant Mechanism.** A process for selecting a minimum of three (3) and up to five (5) alumni-developed projects for micro-grant funding, including clear selection criteria and a transparent evaluation process. Each micro-grant may not exceed \$5,000, and total micro-grant funding may not exceed \$25,000 across the award. These funds must be included within the applicant's proposed budget under the \$100,000 total award; the Embassy will not provide a separate pool of funding for micro-grants outside the recipient's award budget. Micro-grants will be administered by the recipient as participant support costs to individual alumni beneficiaries. Applicants are advised that participant support costs are excluded from the Modified Total Direct Cost base for indirect cost purposes (2 CFR § 200.1), and that prior written approval from the Grants Officer is required to transfer funds budgeted for participant support costs to any other budget category (2 CFR § 200.308(f)(5)). **Sustained Engagement Structure** Establishment of a mechanism (e.g., an alumni advisory group or similar body) to sustain alumni engagement, provide ongoing input into future programming, and support peer-to-peer connections beyond the summit.
- viii. **Follow-On Programming** A minimum six-month period of follow-on activities to sustain summit outcomes, which must include, at a minimum:
 - a. Implementation support (funding, mentorship, and monitoring) for micro-grant recipients
 - b. Recurring alumni engagement opportunities (virtual and/or in-person)
 - c. Ongoing digital communication and resource-sharing among participants
 - d. A culminating event or activity to showcase project outcomes and alumni achievements

Applicants have flexibility in determining the specific format, sequencing, session titles, and facilitation methods used to meet these requirements, provided the overall design achieves the outcomes described in the Anticipated Results section below.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations, operating in Saudi Arabia or the United States.
- Public and private educational institutions

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required for the prime applicant.

Applicants are permitted to propose voluntary cost sharing, such as cash or third-party in-kind contributions (like donated staff time or facilities). Because cost sharing is not required, it will not be evaluated as a competitive factor during the primary merit review, and no point values will be assigned for offering it.

In the event that two or more applications receive identical scores after being evaluated against all primary criteria, the U.S. Embassy will first use the applicant's indirect cost rate to break the tie. If a tie remains, the Embassy will consider the availability and strength of any proposed voluntary cost sharing to select the final winner.

(Note: Once approved by the Grants Officer, any proposed cost sharing becomes a legally binding requirement that the recipient must document, verify, and report during financial audits).

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

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

Individual Beneficiaries: Individual alumni participating in the summit or selected to receive micro-grants are program beneficiaries and participants, not subrecipients. Consistent with 2 CFR § 200.1, the terms 'subrecipient' and 'subaward' do not include beneficiaries or participants. Accordingly, micro-grants issued under this award are not subawards, and the pass-through entity requirements at 2 CFR § 200.332 do not apply to them. Individual beneficiaries are exempt from Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov registration requirements.

This exemption does not reduce the recipient's accountability for these funds. The recipient remains fully responsible under 2 CFR § 200.302 and § 200.303 for maintaining records that identify the amount, source, and expenditure of all federal funds, for supporting all costs with source documentation, and for establishing and documenting effective internal control over micro-grant selection, disbursement, and verification. The recipient must also take reasonable measures to safeguard any personally identifiable information collected from beneficiaries, consistent with 2 CFR § 200.303(e).

C. Program Description

1. Background

U.S. exchange alumni in Saudi Arabia represent a highly skilled cross-section of Saudi society from across sectors—government, academia, entrepreneurship, media, science, and culture. Facilitating connections between these alumni with shared U.S. experience and maintaining their connection to the U.S. is a key element of our strong bilateral relationship and opens the door for further collaboration. This summit aims to unite alumni across all regions as strategic partners in advancing shared U.S.-Saudi priorities. Aligned with Freedom 250, this summit celebrates American values of innovation, leadership, and democratic engagement, while giving Saudi alumni a platform to showcase their own talents and achievements.

2. Project Goal

The primary goal is to activate and unite U.S. exchange alumni across Mission Saudi Arabia's three regions (Riyadh, Jeddah, and Eastern Province) as partners in innovation, leadership, and community engagement aligned with U.S. Mission priorities, while celebrating Freedom 250 and strengthening U.S.–Saudi collaboration for shared prosperity and long-term impact.

3. Project Objectives

- a) Convene 70–90 alumni representing at least 5 U.S. exchange programs, ensuring representation from all three Mission Saudi Arabia regions (Riyadh, Jeddah, and the Eastern Province) in Riyadh by January 2027.
- b) Deliver 6 interactive sessions (2 panels, 2 workshops, 2 working groups) focused on innovation, leadership, and the creative economy by Day 2 of the summit.
- c) Generate at least 10 alumni-led project proposals addressing community challenges aligned with U.S. Mission priorities by the end of Day 2.
- d) Award and launch 3–5 micro-grants of up to \$5,000 each (not to exceed \$25,000 total) within 3 months post-summit, ensuring direct local community impact.
- e) Establish a 10-member cross-regional Alumni Advisory Network with defined roles and a quarterly meeting schedule within 2 months after the summit.
- f) Achieve an 80% participant satisfaction rating and a 70% commitment to ongoing alumni engagement as measured by post-summit evaluations.

4. Program Components and Timeline Phases

The recipient will implement these objectives through three mandatory, integrated phases:

Phase 1: Planning and Recruitment (October – December 2026)

The recipient will establish the project's administrative framework and manage all pre-summit logistics:

- a. Identify, secure, and book a suitable conference venue and lodging in Riyadh.
- b. Draft the initial summit agenda, speaker profiles, and facilitation guides in coordination with PDS.
- c. Launch promotional outreach and recruitment across all exchange networks to secure 70-90 alumni.
- d. Coordinate and fund regional travel (flights and ground transportation) and hotel accommodation for out-of-town participants.
- e. Prepare all printed materials, branding, translation/interpretation services, and digital registration platforms.

Phase 2: Summit Design & Execution (January 2027)

The recipient will execute a high-impact, interactive, and alumni-driven two-day summit in Riyadh. Day 1 will focus on the vision for the summit (policy priorities, shared prosperity, and how U.S. connectivity can help fuel Vision 2030) and feature an engagement with a high-profile U.S. company operating in Saudi Arabia. Day 2 will deliver targeted skill-building workshops, collaborative working groups, a competitive micro-grant pitch contest, and the establishment of an Alumni Advisory Network to ensure long-term sustainability.

Phase 3: Post-Summit Follow-on Activities, Micro-grants, & Advisory Network (February – July 2027)

- a. Micro-grant Administration (Months 1–3 post-summit): In consultation with the U.S. Mission team, determine criteria for selection, conduct merit-based review, and perform due diligence before awarding each micro-grant. Disburse, manage, and monitor 3–5 community-focused micro-grants to individual alumni beneficiaries.
Micro-grants are administered as participant support costs paid directly to or on behalf of individual beneficiaries; they are not subawards, and the recipient does not act as a pass-through entity with respect to them. The recipient must maintain written policies and procedures documenting the classification of these costs as participant support costs and must apply that classification consistently across its federal awards, consistent with 2 CFR § 200.456. The recipient must retain, and make available to the Grants Officer upon request, documentation of the selection decision, the disbursement, and evidence that each funded project was carried out for the approved purpose.
- b. Establishment of Alumni Advisory Network (Month 2 post-summit): Launch the 10-member advisory group and hold the first quarterly meeting to sustain network cohesion.

- c. Monitoring and Mentorship (Months 4–6 post-summit): Monitor project progress and provide quarterly virtual networking sessions.
- d. Impact Showcase and Final Reporting (Month 6 post-summit / July 2027): Complete all projects, collect impact metrics, and submit final certified programmatic and financial reports.

5. Technical Deliverables, Policies, and Statutory Guardrails

Prohibition on For-Profit Sub-Awards

Because this program is funded under Public Diplomacy Fulbright-Hays resources (Assistance Listing 19.022), strict statutory restrictions apply. No funds awarded under this agreement may be made available to issue sub-grants, sub-awards, or direct financial assistance to commercial, for-profit entities, or for-profit educational institutions. This restriction applies to micro-grants as well as to any other distribution of award funds. Micro-grants may be awarded only to individual alumni beneficiaries for non-profit, community-based, and educational initiatives. A micro-grant may not be used, directly or indirectly, to provide federal funds to a commercial or for-profit entity, including by awarding a micro-grant to an owner or employee of a for-profit organization for the benefit of that organization.

Venture Capital and Commercial Seed Funding Prohibition

In accordance with Public Diplomacy program guidelines, federal funds cannot be used to provide direct capital, loans, or seed funding for commercial ventures, startups, or for-profit businesses launched by program participants. The micro-grants must be used strictly for non-profit, community-based, and educational initiatives. Micro-grants are capped at \$5,000 per project, \$25,000 in the aggregate, and must be budgeted within the \$100,000 total award.

Hardware and Software Purchase Restrictions

Federal award funds must be used strictly for direct programmatic execution and cannot be used for capital expenditures or the procurement of permanent information technology (IT) infrastructure.

- Grant funds cannot be used to purchase high-end computing servers, specialized AI processing hardware, or standalone commercial software licenses for the permanent ownership or general operational use of the recipient or partners.
- Budget items for hardware and software are strictly limited to temporary configurations, cloud-based computing credits, or standard participant supplies (such as standard computing devices with a per-unit cost under \$10,000) that are directly and exclusively utilized by selected beneficiaries during the active project phases.
- Any equipment acquired under this award must adhere to property standards and disposition requirements under the Federal Assistance Directive.

Intellectual Property, Data, and Publication Guardrail

Background intellectual property, proprietary tools, software, curricula, data, and technical materials will remain with the originating institution or owner unless otherwise agreed in writing. Per 2 CFR § 200.315, the U.S. Government reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable right to use, reproduce, or publish all grant-funded deliverables for public diplomacy, education, workforce development, and partnership purposes under the AEIF program.

6. Expected Performance Monitoring, Indicators, and Outcomes

To ensure accountability, the applicant must incorporate a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) aligned with standard Department requirements. Performance indicators must track both short-term outputs and long-term outcomes, utilizing established baselines and targets.

The Federal agency expects the following specific results:

First: Convene exchange alumni across all three Mission Saudi Arabia regions (Riyadh, Jeddah, and the Eastern Province). The program expects seventy to ninety alumni representing at least five distinct exchange programs to participate, with at least eighty percent reporting increased motivation to engage with the network as verified through participant registration tracking and post-summit surveys.

Second: Enhance leadership capacity and technical skills in innovation, leadership, and the creative economy. Participants must complete six interactive sessions—comprising two panels, two workshops, and two working groups—with eighty percent demonstrating increased knowledge and sixty percent acquiring actionable skills as measured through post-session evaluation surveys and workshop tracking.

Third: Establish sustained engagement mechanisms. The program targets the formal creation of a ten-member regional alumni advisory network within two months post-summit, maintaining a seventy percent participant commitment to ongoing engagement as verified through post-summit surveys and network milestone tracking.

Finally: Generate community-level impact. The program targets at least ten alumni-led project proposals resulting in three to five awarded micro-grants of up to \$5,000 each launched within three months post-summit, achieving an eighty percent completion rate and reaching over five hundred community members, as evaluated through proposal review panels, pitch competition feedback, and micro-grant beneficiary progress and completion reports.

7. Substantial Involvement

This program will be implemented via a Cooperative Agreement. Unlike standard grants, this requires consistent, substantial programmatic involvement from the U.S. Embassy and Consulates' Public Diplomacy Sections throughout the project's lifecycle, specifically in:

- a. Direct Selection Participation: Mission KSA will participate directly on the merit review panel to select the 3–5 micro-grant recipients. The 70–90 exchange participants are subject to Mission approval.

- b. Curriculum, Agenda, and Speaker Approval: The recipient must submit the pre-departure materials, final summit agenda, workshop curricula, and external guest speakers to Mission KSA for review and final approval.
- c. Saudi Institutional Facilitation: Mission KSA will directly facilitate initial introductions and coordinate ongoing collaboration between the recipient and essential local stakeholders, if needed, to supplement recipient's own efforts.
- d. Milestone Monitoring: Mission staff will participate in virtual orientations, attend the virtual and in-person summit, and maintain prominent roles at the final showcase.
- e. Media Coordination: Mission KSA PDS will exercise direct oversight and approval authority over all public media relations, press releases, social media campaigns, and public branding of program deliverables, ensuring integration of Freedom 250 themes.

D. Application Contents and Format

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.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at grants.gov
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at grants.gov (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)

2. Summary Page

A cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title (AEIF 2026 Alumni Summit), proposed start and end dates, and a brief purpose statement of the project.

3. Proposal (20 pages maximum)

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it 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 project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department 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:** Describe 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. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include 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. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program 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.

4. Budget Justification Narrative

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. The proposed budget can be detailed as follows:

- a. Detailed Budget: Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget based on a target cohort of 90 participants.
- b. Budget Justification Narrative: A separate file describing each budget line-item in detail.
- c. Per-Participant Cost Control: The budget narrative must include an explicit "per-participant unit cost breakdown" for travel and lodging. This ensures that if the final attendee count scales down (e.g., between 70 and 90), the award can be adjusted programmatically without administrative friction.
- d. Micro-Grant Line Item: The budget must include a discrete line item for micro-grant funding, reflecting 3-5 micro-grants of up to \$5,000 each and not exceeding \$25,000 in total. This line item must be identified as participant support costs and excluded from the base used to calculate any indirect cost rate.

See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

5. *Attachments*

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (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
- 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.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. *Address to Request Application Package*

Application forms required above are available at grants.gov.

2. *Department of State Contacts*

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:

RiyadhGrants@state.gov.

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 in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

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

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx)

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-25/subpart-1/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 Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than September 14, 2026 23:59 (AST)

5. Funding Restrictions

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

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

- 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 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.

iii. 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.

iv. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan

Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds \$500,000:

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- 1) To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#);

The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#) and is compliant with this

plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5).

- 2) That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

- v. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). If your project involves the purchase or use of an UAS, see this [link](#) for requirements and information you must include in your application.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to RiyadhGrants@state.gov.

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

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

A technical review committee will evaluate and score all eligible applications against the following criteria:

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea (30 points):** The program idea must be well-developed, demonstrating a logical, integrated flow across the virtual prep, the Riyadh summit, and follow-on activities. The proposal must include a realistic timeline, a clear plan to coordinate cross-regional logistics, and show a clear understanding of the U.S. and Saudi economic and private-sector landscapes. It must directly align with Freedom 250 themes and contribute to U.S. foreign policy priorities.
- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants (25 points):** The applicant must demonstrate prior experience administering direct payments to individual program beneficiaries or participants, including documented internal controls for beneficiary selection, disbursement, expenditure verification, and safeguarding of personally identifiable information.

- **Project Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives (20 points):** Goals and objectives must be SMART and clearly stated. Points are awarded for realistic recruitment plans to secure 70-90 participants across all three regions, innovative methods to engage U.S. corporate partners, and clear follow-on paths.
- **Budget and Cost Effectiveness (10 points):** The budget must be detailed, reasonable, and competitive. Evaluators will closely examine the per-participant unit cost breakdown for travel and lodging to ensure cost efficiency, and will assess whether the micro-grant line item is correctly budgeted within the total award and consistent with the stated per-grant and aggregate ceilings.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (10 points):** The proposal must include a comprehensive M&E plan (Theory of Change and Datasheet) with clear output and outcome indicators.
- **Sustainability (5 points):** The proposal must outline a realistic approach to launching and sustaining the 10-member Alumni Advisory Network beyond the 12-month federal funding period.

2. Indirect Costs

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). If a tie remains, the U.S. Embassy will utilize the availability, relevance, and strength of any proposed voluntary cost sharing as a secondary tie-breaking mechanism. This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

3. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

4. Risk Review

i. Risk factors

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

- Financial stability
- Management systems and standards
- History of performance
- Audit reports and findings
- Ability to effectively implement requirements
- Cross-Regional Logistics and Participant Travel Safety: The applicant's ability and contingency planning to safely manage inter-regional travel, commercial flights, ground transport, and hotel lodging for 70–90 alumni traveling from

across Saudi Arabia (specifically from the Eastern Province/Dhahran, Jeddah, and Riyadh) to the venue in Riyadh.

- g. Micro-Grant Administration and Beneficiary Payment Oversight: The applicant's financial internal controls, administrative capacity, and past experience disbursing and monitoring direct payments to individual program beneficiaries, including its ability to document micro-grant selection decisions, verify that funds were expended for approved purposes, maintain records supported by source documentation consistent with 2 CFR § 200.302, and safeguard beneficiary personally identifiable information consistent with 2 CFR § 200.303.
- h. Host-Nation Approvals and Permitting: The applicant's demonstrated track record and operational readiness to secure all necessary local host-government approvals, municipal venue permits, and maintain active Saudi organizational registrations required to host a multi-day conference involving U.S. diplomatic officials and alumni.

G. 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 counter-signature. 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 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.

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via RiyadhGrants@state.gov.

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.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

- [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). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- [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](#)
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

2. *Reporting*

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports as follows:

- Quarterly Progress and Financial Reports: Most recipients will be required to submit quarterly program progress reports (including updated M&E data) and financial reports (SF-425) throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period.
- Final Reports: Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 120 days after the close of the project period.
- Equipment Inventory: The awardee must provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all U.S. government-provided equipment using form SF-428.

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.

3. **Branding and Marking**

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at [Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System](#). Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual [10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions](#).

For more information, visit: <https://brand.america.gov/>

I. **Other Information**

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.