

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

2026 Young Trilateral Leaders (YTL) Summit

U.S. Embassy Seoul, Department of State

Opportunity number: PD-SEOUL-FY25-04

Application deadline: Monday, July 21, 11:59 p.m. GMT+9

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U.S Department of State
U.S. Embassy Seoul, Public Diplomacy Section
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	2026 Young Trilateral Leaders (YTL) Summit
Funding Opportunity Number	PD-SEOUL-FY25-04
Announcement Type	The Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	Monday, July 21, 11:59 p.m. GMT+9
Assistance Listing Number	19.040
Length of performance period	12 months
Number of awards anticipated	1 award
Award amounts	\$200,000 pending availability of funds
Total available funding	\$200,000
Type of Funding	FY24/FY25 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated project start date	November 2025

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. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

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

The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

Priority Region: Republic of Korea

Executive Summary

The U.S. Embassy Seoul Public Diplomacy Section and U.S. Embassy Tokyo Public Diplomacy Section announce an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out the 2026 Young Trilateral Leaders (YTL) network's third annual summit, to be held in the Summer of 2026 in the United States in a location of significance to all three countries, for instance Hawaii or other U.S. location with well-developed and cost-effective transportation linkages with both the ROK and Japan.

The trilateral relationship between the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) has never been more important to advance security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. This program will build upon the inaugural [2024 YTL Summit](#) held in Busan, Republic of Korea and [2025 YTL Summit](#) held in Osaka, Japan, aiming to give youth leaders a firm policy background in the security and economic issues facing the trilateral partnership as well as a platform to collaborate on joint projects – while also developing leadership and public engagement skills to help them inspire peers to also support the trilateral partnership.

For detailed information on program objectives, activities, and requirements, refer to Section C: Program Description.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply (U.S. Based Organizations Only):

- *Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience*
- *Public and private educational institutions*

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required. However, applicants may offer cost share voluntarily. While it will not affect the formal merit review scoring, the review panel may take it into account as an indicator of organizational commitment and capacity.

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.

C. Program Description

1. Goals and Objectives

Proposals must include an American element or connection with U.S. experts, organizations, or institutions and should clearly explain the applicants' previous experience running similar programs across the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the United States.

The Summit will focus on developing the leadership skills and global outlook of a cohort of approximately 50 youth leaders from the three countries. Participants should have demonstrated leadership abilities, a track record of engagement in their communities, and the capacity to collaborate with peers from other nations. We will also leverage the expertise of youth leaders from other Department of State regional youth leadership programs like the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), the Young Pacific Leaders (YPL) Program, and the Young South Asian Leaders Initiative (YSALI) to share best practices as well as build institutional linkages between the Department's suite of Indo-Pacific youth leadership programs.

This Youth Summit is a key pillar of Young Trilateral Leaders (YTL), a regional youth initiative that creates space for young leaders to make meaningful contributions to trilateral policy discussions that bolster U.S. security alliances with both countries, contributing to a safer, stronger, and more prosperous Indo-Pacific region. YTL fosters a tight-knit network of emerging leaders who understand the issues facing trilateral partnership while working together to identify innovative solutions to future global challenges. Participants who complete the program can continue contributing to the network as YTL alumni.

Participants / Beneficiaries

The program will support a cohort of approximately 50 youth leaders from the United States, Republic of Korea, and Japan.

Eligibility criteria:

- Ages 18 to 35
- Fluent in English
- Demonstrated record of leadership and community engagement
- Proven ability to collaborate in multinational settings
- Deep interest in and understanding of the U.S.–ROK–Japan trilateral partnership, shown through academic, professional, or volunteer experience

Residency requirements:

- Korean and Japanese applicants must reside in ROK or Japan
- American participants may reside in the U.S., ROK, or Japan

Participants will be selected through a public online application, with final approval by the U.S. government. Selection will be jointly managed by the recipient, U.S. Embassy Seoul, and U.S. Embassy Tokyo. The program may also include participants from YSEALI, YPL, and YSALI in coordination with those respective managing offices.

Recipient Expectations

Program Structure:

Proposals should incorporate four primary elements:

(1) Pre-program promotion and selection process: The recipient will design and implement a program promotion and online application process for prospective participants, including a dedicated application portal. Proposals should include a plan to incorporate U.S. Embassy promotional channels, U.S. Embassy concurrence on the selection process, and U.S. Embassy participation in applicant selection itself.

(2) Four-week period (minimum) of virtual engagement: The recipient will organize a series of preparatory virtual engagements with the participants to generate excitement for the summit, prepare summit objectives and structure, and allow participants to build rapport. These events should also include subject-matter experts (academic, civil society, government, etc.) from all three countries who can speak about trilateral partnership, youth civic engagement, and other issues relevant to the theme of trilateral security and economic issues. These engagements should also lay out logistics and expectations for the in-person summit.

(3) Three-day (minimum) summit in the United States (preferably Hawaii or other location of significance to all three countries): The recipient will organize a summit to include lectures, exercises, facilitated workshops, and training sessions that cover topics such as organizing, advocacy, civic engagement, and briefings on international issues (e.g., regional security, trade and economics, supply chain issues, emerging technologies). The sessions should be led by expert trainers and subject-matter experts representing the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Participants may also lead sessions about youth initiatives in their own countries. The final output of this summit should be an actionable plan leading to follow-on activity projects. The recipient may also organize limited visits to relevant cultural and/or political sites and community service/social engagement activities to connect with the host community. The recipient will be responsible for arranging all logistics, including travel, transportation, food, and other items as necessary. Decisions on venues for the Summit will be determined with the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

(4) Follow-on activities: Following the summit, the recipient will conduct mentorship activities and facilitate/monitor any potential follow-on projects.

2. Substantial Involvement

The U.S. Embassy in Seoul, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, will maintain substantial involvement throughout the planning and implementation of the program. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Participating in the design of virtual and in-person program content, including speaker recommendations and session structure
- Reviewing and approving participant recruitment materials, selection criteria, and final participant lists
- Providing remarks and supporting programming during the in-person summit
- Coordinating with regional youth initiatives (e.g., YSEALI, YPL, and YSALI) on potential participant contributions
- Collaborating on the design and monitoring of follow-on activities
- Promoting the program through Embassy social media and outreach platforms

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

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

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

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. Proposal (10 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? What expertise do staff have running programs in the Republic of Korea, Japan, and United States?
- **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 time-frame 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. See section I. *Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

Note: Not mandatory, but you may use the templates provided here:

[Proposal Template](#) / [Budget Template](#)

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: [Embassy website](#) and [grants.gov](#)

2. Department of State Contacts

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

SeoulPDGrants@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](#) 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 Monday, July 21, 11:59 p.m. GMT+9

5. **Funding Restrictions**

i. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

ii. 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.

6. Other Submission Requirements

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

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

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

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants: The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

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

Budget: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Monitoring and evaluation plan: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

Sustainability: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. 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:

- a. Financial stability
- b. Management systems and standards
- c. History of performance
- d. Audit reports and findings
- e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

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 by August 2025 via email.

Payment Method: *SF-270*

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.

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: NOTE:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
 - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

2. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted.

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.

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.