

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Notification of Funding Opportunity  
S-DR860-21-NOFO-005  
U.S. EMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT INNOVATION FUND (AEIF) 2021**

**Announcement Type:** Grant

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2021

**Date Opened:** May 20, 2021

**Closing Date and Time for Submission of Application:** June 20, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. (Santo Domingo time). Received proposals will be reviewed and submitted to the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund 2020 global competition.

**Eligibility Category:** Teams with at least two alumni of U.S. Government sponsored exchange programs

**Award Ceiling:** U.S. \$50,000.00

**Award Floor:** U.S. \$5,000.00

**Electronic Requirement:** Applications must be submitted by email to the email address listed below

**Federal Agency Contact:** Grants Officer, Alex Titolo

**Email:** [SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov](mailto:SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov)

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is pleased to announce the 2021 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF). AEIF 2021 supports teams of alumni of U.S. government-sponsored international exchange programs with funding from US\$ 5,000 up to US\$ 50,000 to support public service projects.

We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements below. Alumni interested in competing in AEIF 2021 should submit proposals via email to [SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov](mailto:SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov) by **Sunday, June 20, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. (Santo Domingo time)**

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

AEIF projects promote shared values and innovative solutions to global challenges. Since its inception in 2011, AEIF has funded nearly 500 alumni-led projects around the world through a competitive global competition.

In 2021, AEIF will support the United States commitment to empower youth and strengthen STEAM education in the Dominican Republic, through experiential learning projects that foster the themes mentioned below.

The U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo will accept proposals for AEIF 2021 that consist of public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that address one or more of the below listed priority areas to:

- Engage high school students from underserved communities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEM) based programs.
- Engage high school students and/or youth (ages 15-25) on developing solutions to address climate change, conservation and local environmental issues.
- Engage high school students and/or youth (ages 15-25) on developing solutions to address current health challenges with innovative and sustainable community focused solutions.

The U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo will review submitted proposals and select ONE to recommend to the Alumni Affairs Office in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of the Department of State in Washington D.C for funding consideration. Selection for consideration is not a guarantee of funding.

## **B. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

- Applicants must be alumni of U.S. government-funded or sponsored exchange programs, and form 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, but at least one of the team leaders must reside in the Dominican Republic.
- Proposals must address the priority areas listed above. Proposals that do not address the priorities as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible.
- All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.
- Proposals must be submitted in English and using the official AEIF 2021 Forms by no later than **June 20, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. (Santo Domingo time)**.

### **Allowable Activities and Costs**

All project activities and initiatives must take place outside of the United States. AEIF 2020 can support the following costs and activities:

- Intra-regional or in-country transportation.

- Rental of venues for project activities.
- Trainer or speaker expenses.
- Reasonable equipment and materials.
- Meals or refreshments integral to the project goals (i.e. working lunch during a meeting).
- Communications and publicity materials, such as manuals or project advertisements.

### **Ineligible Activities and Unallowable Costs**

AEIF 2020 does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- Airfare to or from the United States and its territories.
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories.
- Sustained 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 or the provision of direct social services to a population.
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation or programs.
- Programs that support specific religious activities.
- Fund-raising campaigns.
- Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization.
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in the project.
- Individual scholarships.
- Personal development.
- Social travel/visits.
- Gifts or prizes.
- Programs that duplicate existing programs.

### **C. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Alumni interested in competing in AEIF 2021 should submit proposals via email to [SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov](mailto:SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov) by **Sunday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. (Santo Domingo time)**

The U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo will review all the received proposals that meet the eligibility requirements and will present ONE proposal from the Dominican Republic for the AEIF 2021 global competition.

## 1. Content and Form of Application Submission

Proposals must be submitted in English and in U.S. dollars, using the official applications forms “AEIF 2021 Application Form” and “AEIF 2021 Budget”. These are available on the U.S. Embassy website at [www.do.usembassy.gov](http://www.do.usembassy.gov)

Please follow the instructions listed below. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or that do not meet the established requirements will not be eligible.

Please ensure that:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of AEIF 2021.
- The proposal answers all questions on the official forms for the proposal and the budget of AEIF 2021.
- All documents are in English.
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is presented using the official AEIF budget form.

## 2. Guide to complete the Application Form

AEIF projects demonstrate innovation by tackling a new issue, using a unique approach, working with a different group of people, or performing the project in a different location than other projects. The strategies and questions below are designed to help you create a strong proposal.

**Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan:** Explain what your project is about. When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, you should make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling.

To write your narrative, consider the following questions:

- What is your project and why is it important?
- What change will your project create?
- Who is your target audience (are you trying to reach youth; a specific professional sector; disadvantage communities, etc.?)
- How many people will be impacted by your project?
- Are you carrying out an awareness campaign, training, mentoring program, etc.?
- What impact or changes will you see because of the project?
- Who are your partners? What responsibilities will each team member and partner have?
- What major steps and activities will you undertake to make your project happen?

**Relevance of the project to strengthening STEAM education and empowering youth in the Dominican Republic:** Throughout your proposal, you will need to demonstrate how your project will serve to promote STEAM education, health and/or environmental challenges.

**Degree of alumni involvement:** Projects must include at least two (2) alumni team leaders. 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. You should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, and country of citizenship. In the proposal, you'll need to explain the roles and responsibilities of each member of the alumni team. Remember, alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit an application, but they may be part of a team.

**Participation and support from local partners:** Buy-in and support from the community is important for the success of a project! The involvement of local partners is a strong sign that there is community support and that you are engaging a broad array of experts. List and describe non-alumni partners and the role, resources, or services they will provide to your project (i.e. subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces). If you don't have an existing relationship with the partner(s), explain how you will establish the partnership.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities take place and at the end of the project. Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies the intended outcomes and what you plan to achieve with the project, 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured, 3) identifies when the outcomes will be measured, and 4) explains how outcomes will be collected (such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups). Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes.

**Sustainability:** AEIF funds can only take your project so far. If implementation is successful, what are ways that your project will continue to make a positive impact? How do you plan to continue this project beyond this initial funding year?

**Communication, media, and outreach plan:** How will you promote your project to the public and beneficiaries? Include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media you will use to share information about your project. Interim and final reporting is required for winning AEIF projects. Please be prepared to develop a reporting plan to share information about the success/impact of your project.

### **3. Guide to complete the Budget Form**

All budgets must be submitted using only the AEIF 2021 budget form, available through the U.S. Embassy website at [www.do.usembassy.gov](http://www.do.usembassy.gov). Other budget formats will not be accepted, and the project will be deemed ineligible.

Alumni are allowed to request between US \$5,000 to US \$50,000. Consider carefully the amount of funds you will need to implement your project. There is no need to go for the full US \$50,000 if that is not necessary to achieve the impact you are seeking. Smaller projects that require less funding are as worthy as larger projects. You might also want to consider running a small-scale pilot project before fully rolling out a larger project.

Please note that items valued at US \$200 or more must be itemized. Related costs should not be lumped together. For example, travel, accommodations, and meals for a speaker should be three separate line items. The table below provides guidance on filling out the budget form:

<b>Venue Cost</b>	Reasonable costs based on local environment for renting space for project-related activities. Look for donated space first (American space and academic institutions often donate or discount venues). Consider negotiating deals to include coffee breaks, lunch, presentation equipment, or modest supplies, and include this information in the budget justification.
<b>Promotional Items and Advertising</b>	Promotional items that you will use to amplify the project. Break down promotion and advertising, clearly indicating what you will get in return for costs incurred (i.e. number of ads, on which platforms, and at which times). Consider cost share or free online tools for graphic design work. Funding used for the creation of websites will need to be strongly justified.
<b>Meals &amp; Beverages</b>	Reasonable requests for snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and meals if essential to the program (i.e. a working lunch is acceptable, but a cocktail reception is not). Break down meals by the cost per person per meal per day.
<b>Speaker Honorarium or Trainer Fees</b>	Speaker: Maximum of US\$200 per day for a full day of programming. Trainer: Maximum US\$200 per full day or \$25 per hour. Preparation and follow-up costs are acceptable and should be itemized at the same rate. Consider asking your fellow alumni to provide their expertise as in-kind support for the project (i.e. cost share).
<b>Lodging and per diem</b>	In-country and intraregional airfare, meals, lodging, and local travel (i.e. taxi, bus, train). Indicate if lodging is single or dual occupancy and the duration of stay and one-way or roundtrip fares.
<b>Travel</b>	In-country and intraregional air fare or local travel costs (via car, bus, train, etc.). Please specify the mode of transportation, who will travel, the destination/arrival points, and if the cost covers round-trip or one-way travel. Travel to the U.S. will not be covered as all projects must take place outside of the U.S.

<b>Supplies, Materials, and Equipment</b>	General office supplies, software, fuel, small equipment such as laptops, projector, etc., and expendable material (i.e. paint or paper). When possible, rent rather than purchase equipment. Indicate what you will do with purchased equipment after the project concludes. Please consider including health and safety needs such as testing kits, sanitation items, social distancing and prevention supplies.
<b>Other</b>	List any items that do not apply to the categories above. <i>Be specific!</i> Commonly cited items are administrative costs and monitoring and evaluation, which require details and cost breakdown. It is allowable to include indirect costs incurred for the benefit of the project such as administrative and overhead costs. This amount should not exceed 10% of the total proposed budget and should not include salaries for team members.

**Budget Justification:** Budgets should be accompanied by a narrative description known as a budget justification. In the narrative, you will explain what the numbers in the budget form represent, how you calculated them, and why you need to incur them for your project. Be sure to explain any unusual circumstances or requests. This information will help the reviewer understand your costs to determine if they are reasonable.

**Cost Share:** Your budget justification is also an opportunity to explain financial support from other sources (“cost share”). Examples of cost shared items are in-kind support (services, labor, supplies/equipment, or volunteers), a business contributing food for your event, an organization offering a venue at a discount or free of charge, an NGO sponsoring an activity, an expert donating time to facilitate a seminar, etc. Proposals with cost shared items will be considered more competitive.

## **D. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

The Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo will use the following criteria to evaluate all applications. After this initial review, the Public Affairs Section will submit the top proposal from the Dominican Republic to the global AEIF 2021 competition. 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. The strongest proposals will be recommended for funding.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan	20 points
Relevance of the project to women, peace, and security	10 points
Degree of alumni involvement	10 points
Participation and support from local partners	10 points
Evaluation and impact of the project	10 points
Sustainability	10 points
Communication, media and outreach Plan	10 points
Budget and budget narrative	20 points
<b>Total possible points</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Review and selection timeline**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Phase of the selection process</b>
May 20-June 20, 2021	The call is open for proposals.
June 21-25, 2021	PAS Santo Domingo will evaluate and select ONE proposal to recommend to the Alumni Affairs Office in Washington D.C. for funding consideration.
June 25, 2021	Alumni who submitted a proposal will be notified if they are moving forward with the process.
June 28, 2021	Finalist must submitted final proposal to PAS Santo Domingo.
June 30, 2021	Final proposal is submitted to Alumni Affairs Office in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of the Department of State in Washington D.C for funding consideration.

### **E. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

Once the AEIF 2021 Selection Committee has determined the projects that are recommended for funding, the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo will contact those teams to finalize any programmatic and budget details and issue the grant. To be eligible to receive your funding, all organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, as well as a valid registration on [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). Individuals are not required to have a DUNS number or be registered in SAM.gov.

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 notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Furthermore, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**Payment Method:** Electronic Fund Transfers. These funds are not delivered in part or total in cash or checks.

**Reporting Requirements:** AEIF 2021 beneficiaries must submit financial and program reports. The grant agreement will specify the frequency of submission of reports.

#### **F. CONTACT INFORMATION**

For questions about the AEIF 2021 application process, please contact us via email at [SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov](mailto:SantoDomingoDRAlumni@state.gov).