Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation – Lebanon 2025

U.S. Embassy Beirut, Lebanon, Department of State
Opportunity number: LBN-PDS-2025-AFCP

Application deadline: January 3, 2025

AFCP 2025

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AFCP 2025

U.S Department of State
U.S. Embassy Beirut, Lebanon
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation – Lebanon 2025
Funding Opportunity Number	LBN-PDS-2025-AFCP
Announcement Type	Initial funding opportunity announcement
Deadline for Applications	January 3, 2025, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time
Assistance Listing Number	19.025
Length of performance period	12 to 60 months
Number of awards anticipated	1 award (dependent on amounts)
Award amounts	Between $25,000 and $500,000
Total available funding	$500,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY25 AFCP funds
Anticipated project start date	No later than September 30, 2025

Funding Instrument Type: Grant.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 60 months or less.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

2. Executive Summary

The Public Diplomacy Section at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon announces this call for proposals for the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) 2025. The Embassy seeks project ideas that support risk reduction and resilience for cultural heritage in disaster-prone or politically unstable and economically disadvantaged areas. Or support post-disaster cultural heritage recovery. The application process involves two rounds. Interested applicants should submit proposals for Round One by January 3, 2025at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time to PDBeirutGrants@state.gov.

Selected applicants will be invited to submit full project applications for Round Two, by April 17, 2025, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND FUNDING AREAS:

The State Department established the AFCP in 2001 at the request of Congress. At the time, the Senate noted that preserving cultural heritage offers an opportunity to showcase a different aspect of America — one that is non-commercial, non-political, and non-military. AFCP projects support U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy (PD) goals and can contribute to the development of civil society, promote cultural diversity and good governance, create economic opportunity, and help foster political stability.

Appropriate project activities may include:

- **Anastylosis:** Reassembling a site using its original parts.
- **Conservation:** Addressing damage or deterioration to an object or site.
- **Consolidation:** Connecting or reconnecting elements of an object or site.
- **Documentation:** Recording the condition and important features of an object, site, or tradition in analog or digital format.
- **Inventory:** Listing objects, sites, or traditions by location, feature, age, or other unifying characteristics.
- **Preventive Conservation:** Addressing conditions that threaten or damage a site, object, collection, or tradition.
- **Restoration:** Replacing missing elements to recreate the original appearance of an object or site, usually appropriate for fine arts, decorative arts, and historic buildings.
- **Stabilization:** Reducing the physical disturbance of an object or site.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible project implementers must be reputable and accountable non-commercial entities that can demonstrate they have the requisite capacity to manage projects that preserve cultural heritage. Eligible implementers may include non-governmental organizations, museums, educational institutions, ministries of culture, or similar institutions and organizations, including U.S.-based educational institutions and organizations subject to Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. The AFCP will not award grants to individuals, commercial entities, or past award recipients that have not fulfilled the objectives or reporting requirements of previous awards. All project activities must take place in Lebanon.

Sites and Objects Having a Religious Connection: The Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution permits the government to include religious objects and sites within an aid program under certain conditions. For example, an item with a religious connection (including a place of worship) may be the subject of a cultural preservation grant if the item derives its primary significance and is nominated solely on the basis of architectural, artistic, historical, or other cultural (not religious) criteria.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost participation required. When an implementing partner offers cost sharing, it is understood and agreed that the partner must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the budget of the application and later included in an approved agreement. The implementing partner will be responsible for tracking and reporting on any cost share or outside funding, which is subject to audit per 2 CFR 200. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs.

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 E.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

Funding Priorities: In 2025, AFCP will prioritize projects that do one or more of the following:

- Support risk reduction and resilience for cultural heritage in disaster-prone or politically unstable and economically disadvantaged areas.
- Support post-disaster cultural heritage recovery.

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.

Round One (by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on January 3, 2025):

All submitted concept notes must include:

- **Project Basics:** Include the implementer's name, background information, a working title of the project, anticipated project length (between 12-60 months), project location, a project cost estimate (amount requested from AFCP, in U.S. dollars) and implementer's SAM registration.
- **Project Summary Description:** Provide a summary (3,000 characters maximum) that outlines the project activities, deliverables (outputs), and intended results (outcomes).

Rationale for AFCP Support: Explain why it's in the interests of the U.S. government to fund the project, specifically how does the project relate to strategy goals, existing bilateral agreements, or any other U.S. foreign policy objectives (1,000 characters maximum).

- **The projected public diplomacy benefits** of the project (1,000 characters maximum).

- **Five (5) high quality digital images (JPEGs)** or audiovisual files that convey the nature and condition of the site, collection, or tradition and show the urgency or need for the proposed project (collapsing walls, water damage, etc).

Round Two (By 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on April 17, 2025):

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit full proposals by April 17, 2025. 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 considered ineligible:

- **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):** Include Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A), Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B), and, if applicable, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL).
- **Updated Project Description:** Expand on the project summary provided in the Round 1 concept note. Clearly describe the goals of the project. Explain the outputs and outcomes the project will produce to achieve each goal, and the activities that will generate these outputs and outcomes. Do this for both primary goals (such as restoring a part of a monument) and secondary goals (such as improving economic opportunities). Successful AFCP Round 2 applications describe a clear, logical pathway from activities to goals, including the necessary steps in between. Unsuccessful applications state broad goals but omit details on how they will be achieved. In addition to the description, applicants may include a list, table, or Gantt chart of activities in chronological order, along with major outputs and outcomes and target dates for achieving them.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project.
- **Statement of Importance:** Highlight the historical, architectural, artistic, or cultural (non-religious) values of the cultural heritage.
- **Maintenance Plan:** Outline the steps or measures that the applicant will take to maintain the site, object, or collection in good condition after the AFCP-supported project is complete; or, in the case of forms of traditional cultural expression, preserve and disseminate the documentation, knowledge, or skills gained from the project.
- **Implementer Public Outreach Plan:** Describe how the implementing partner will build awareness and engage communities and stakeholders. Awareness-building activities typically include social media posts, ribbon-cutting events, and news stories. Community and stakeholder engagement activities may include community-led or community-produced workshops, short videos, documentary films, oral histories, storytelling or interpretive exhibits, and educational or enrichment events tailored for specific audiences, such as young people. Successful Round 2 applications feature strong and innovative public outreach activities.
- **Data and Information Access Plan:** Outline how the implementing partner will share, as appropriate, raw data or processed information, such as publications, generated from the project with the public and the State Department.

- **Detailed Project Budget:** Provide a detailed project budget that lists all costs in separate categories (Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel [including Per Diem], Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Other Direct Costs, Indirect Costs) and indicates funds from other sources.
- **Budget Narrative:** Explain how the costs were estimated (quantity x unit cost, annual salary x percentage of time spent on project, etc.) and any large budget line items.
- **Resumes or CVs:** Provide resumes or CVs of the proposed project director and other key personnel.
- **Support Letters:** If applicable, letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- **Proof of Official Permission:** Official permission letters, if required for project activities.
- **Relevant Supporting Documentation:** Provide relevant supporting documentation, such as historic structure reports, restoration plans and studies, conservation needs assessments and recommendations, architectural and engineering records, etc., compiled in preparation for the proposed project.
- **Additional Visual or Audiovisual Documentation:** As requested by the CHC or as appropriate, provide additional high-quality digital images (JPEGs or PNGs) or audiovisual files that convey the nature and condition of the heritage and show the urgency or need for the proposed project (e.g., collapsing walls, extensive water damage).
- **NICRA:** If applicable, provide the latest Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) as a PDF file.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available at the grants.gov portal.

2. Department of State Contacts

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

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 for round one are due no later than January 3, 2025, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time.
Applications for round two are due no later than April 17, 2025, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time.

5. Funding Restrictions

The AFCP does not support the following activities or costs, and applications involving any of the activities or costs below will be deemed ineligible:

- **Privately or Commercially Owned Property:** Preservation or purchase of privately or commercially owned cultural objects, collections, or real property, including those whose transfer from private or commercial to public ownership is envisioned, planned, or in process but not complete at the time of application.
- **Natural Heritage:** Preservation of natural heritage (physical, biological, and geological formations, paleontological collections, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, fossils, etc.) unless the natural heritage has a cultural heritage connection or dimension.
- **Human Remains:** Preservation of hominid or human remains.
- **News Media:** Preservation of news media (newspapers, newsreels, radio and TV programs, etc.).
- **Published Materials:** Preservation of published materials available elsewhere (books, periodicals, etc.).
- **Mandated Educational Materials:** Development of curricula or educational materials for required classroom use.
- **Archaeological Research:** Archaeological excavations or exploratory surveys for research purposes.
- **Historical Research:** Historical research, except in cases where the research is justifiable and integral to the success of the proposed project.
- **New Exhibits or Collections:** Acquisition or creation of new exhibits, objects, or collections for new or existing museums.
- **New Construction:** Construction of new buildings, building additions, or permanent coverings (over archaeological sites, for example).
- **New Works of Art:** Commissions of new works of art or architecture for commemorative or economic development purposes.

- **New or Modern Adaptations:** Creation of new or modern adaptation of existing traditional dances, songs, chants, musical compositions, plays, or other performances.
- **Conjectural Reconstructions:** Creation of conjectural reconstructions of cultural objects or sites that no longer exist.
- **Relocation:** Relocation of cultural sites from one physical location to another unless under imminent threat of irreversible damage or destruction.
- **Removal:** Removal of cultural objects or elements of cultural sites from the country for any reason.
- **Digitization:** Digitization of cultural objects or collections, unless part of a clearly defined conservation, documentation, or PD effort.
- **Conservation Plans or Studies:** Conservation plans or other studies, unless they are one component of a larger project to implement the results of those studies.
- **Cash Reserves or Endowments:** Cash reserves, endowments, or revolving funds (funds must be expended within the award period [up to five years] and may not be used to create an endowment or revolving fund).
- **Fund-Raising Campaigns:** Costs of fund-raising campaigns.
- **Contingency Costs:** Contingency, unforeseen, or miscellaneous costs.
- **Pre-Award Costs:** Costs of work performed prior to the announcement of the award unless allowable per 2 CFR 200.458 and approved by the Grants Officer.
- **International Travel:** International travel outside the project country, except in cases where travel is justifiable and integral to the success of the proposed project or to provide project leaders with learning and exchange opportunities with cultural heritage experts.
- **Project Cost Limits:** Individual projects which cost less than US $25,000 or more than $500,000.
- **Independent U.S. Projects:** Independent U.S. projects overseas.

6. Other Submission Requirements

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

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

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

Strategic Value (5 points): The project should address the priority areas outlined in this AFCP call.
Project Idea and cost (2 points): The project should include a strong problem statement and be innovative, well-developed, and have a reasonable implementation timeline.
Project Goals and Objectives (3 points): Goals and objectives are clearly stated and are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
Grant Management Capacity (5 points): Applicant has organizational and personnel expertise in its stated field. It has accounted for adequate staffing to manage the project.

Evaluation and Project Impact (2 points): The monitoring and evaluation plan clearly identifies outputs, outcomes, and impact. It evaluates project success during and at the end of the project. The plan identifies potential risks and offers mitigation strategies.
Sustainability (1 points): Activities could continue to have positive impact after the end of the project. Impact could include changes in individual or community perceptions or potential.
Budget and Budget Narrative (2 points): The budget is well developed, with itemized budget lines, and aligns with OMB guidelines (Please refer to the "Guidelines for Budget Justification" under section H). The budget justification is detailed with itemized costs. Budget items are reasonable, allocable, and allowable. The budget accounts for all forecasted expenses in line with proposed activities.

2. Review and Selection Process

A grants review panel will evaluate all eligible proposals against the criteria listed above. Proposals are reviewed individually against the criteria and not against competing applications. The panel may provide conditions and/or recommendations on shortlisted proposals to enhance the proposed project. Conditions must be addressed, and recommendations should be addressed, in a full proposal application as part of round two.

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

ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

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 1, 2025 via email.

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.

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.