

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
U.S. EMBASSY IN THE PHILIPPINES  
Public Affairs Section  
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	2025 U.S.- Philippines Entry to the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) Competition
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	FY25-PHL-AEIF
<b>Deadline for Applications:</b>	March 3, 2025 (Monday, 11:59 p.m. PH time)
<b>CFDA Number:</b>	19.022 -- Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs
	Appropriation Overseas Grants
<b>Maximum for Each Award:</b>	\$35,000

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines announces an open competition for past participants (“alum” or “alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2025 U.S.- Philippines Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2025).

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

This year PAS will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support one or more of the following themes:

- Peace and Security
  - Conflict Mediation and Resolution
  - Resilience to ongoing and emerging security threats
  - Nonviolent Advocacy
- Economic Prosperity
  - Digital literacy
  - Establishing Public-Private Partnerships
  - Social Entrepreneurship
- Organizational Capacity Building for Alumni Engagement
  - Proposal writing

- Organizational management
- Budgeting/Financial management
- Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place within the Philippines.

## **B. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

- Applicants must be organizations led by an alumnus/alumna of a U.S. government-funded exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>), or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Additional organizational requirements include:
  - Registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the Philippines
  - Registration in SAM.gov
  - The organization may be a not-for-profit, non-governmental, think tank, or academic institution. For-profit companies and organizations are **NOT** eligible to apply.
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Only the lead applicant is required to be a member of the applying organization. Project teams are encouraged to invite alumni from different exchange programs to be part of the project, as volunteers, speakers, facilitators, etc.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team members in a project.
- Application must be submitted by an alumnus/alumna. A non-alum staff member of the applying organization cannot submit the application.

## **C. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

- **Length of performance period:** 12 months
- **Number of awards:** 1-3
- **Award ceiling:** \$35,000
- **Award floor:** \$5,000
- **Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative Agreement.

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, Fixed Amount Award (FAAs), or Cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements and some FAAs are different from grants in that PDS staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation (“Substantial Involvement”). *If a cooperative agreement or an FAA that includes substantial involvement may be used.*

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

- *Active collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award;*
- *Joint preparation or presentation of results with the recipient;*
- *Involvement in the selection of program participants and scholarship recipients;*
- *Approval of the curriculum and the structure of the Program;*
- *Approval of the participants for the program.*

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

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

None of the funds awarded under this agreement may be used for any initiatives or programs, or any activities that do not comply with Executive Order 14173 titled Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.

The Recipient shall submit, prior to award or upon request from Grants Officer, a certification that confirms:

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.

#### **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Instructions:** Please follow all instructions below carefully. Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements may lead to the application's disqualification for consideration. Applicants must set forth accurate and complete information as required.

**Step 1:** Fill out the mandatory federal assistance forms – All forms are available as part of the grants package on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

- Form SF-424—Application for Federal Assistance
- Form SF-424 (Individual)—Application for Federal Assistance-Individual
- Form SF-424A—Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- Form SF-424B—Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (Only if the representations and certifications have not been completed in SAM.gov)

**Step 2: Create a coversheet**

The cover sheet includes the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, and a proposed start and end date. It should also include a very brief synopsis of the goals to be achieved through the program.

**Step 3: Create a Proposal** (See [2025 AEIF Proposal Form](#) in Related Documents Tab)

**Step 4: Create a Budget Plan**

After filling out the SF-424A Budget, create a more detailed budget proposal and budget justification to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. Use [AEIF Budget Form](#) Philippines in Related Documents Tab.

**Step 5:** Attach additional documents. Please attach a copy of:

- Unique Entity Identifier, unless the applicant organization has received an exception
- Active registration in SAM.gov, unless the applicant organization has received an exception

**Optional forms:**

- One-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Please feel free to submit additional information as you think necessary.

**Step 6:** Carefully read the terms and conditions. Funded proposals are expected to fully comply with these terms and conditions, including:

- The Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including the S. flag branding and marketing requirements, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271865.pdf>
- The regulations found in 2CFR 200, 2 CFR 600 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200/context>

Complete a final review of your documents. Ensure that:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity; (please see guidelines in last page)
- All documents are in English;
- All budgets are submitted in U.S. dollars;
- All pages are numbered;
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper;

When these steps are complete, you may submit your application package to [GrantsManila@state.gov](mailto:GrantsManila@state.gov) with Subject Title: “NOFO FY25-PHL-AEIF - (Name of Organization)”

#### **E. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

1. **Criteria.** Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Section F below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success.
2. **Acknowledgement of receipt.** Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their proposal.
3. **Review.** A technical review panel will review the proposal based upon the criteria noted in Part E. A determination will be made regarding the program’s proposed area of activity and the Mission’s strategic goals. Proposals that are the best fit will be given additional consideration.
4. **Follow up notification.** Applicants will generally be notified within 90 days after the submission deadline regarding the results of the review panel.

#### **F. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

##### **Relevance to the theme**

The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the theme(s) of the competition. The narrative explains any relevant local context the D.C. Selection Committee may not be aware of in relation to this project. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy in nature (i.e., not development or military).

**Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan**

When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling. Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many will participate? How will they be selected?

**Degree of Alumni Involvement**

Projects must include the involvement of at least three (3) exchange alumni. They may be the project team leaders or collaborate directly with PAS in formulating the project. More than three alumni may comprise the team; however, the minimum is two. As the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, country of citizenship, and roles and responsibilities.

**Participation and Support from Local Partners**

The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement is a strong sign that there is community support, and the project will engage a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

**Evaluation and Impact of the Project**

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

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

**Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan**

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

**Budget and Budget Narrative**

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

**G. AWARD INFORMATION:**

If proposal is selected for funding, the Grants Officer Representative will reach to the Project Leader to complete other required forms. The grant award or cooperative agreement 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 after the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

PAS may: (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, and (d) waive irregularities in applications received.

PAS may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

PAS 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 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. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**H. BUDGET PLAN AND JUSTIFICATION:**

**Personnel:** 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. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

**Equipment:** Describe any machinery, furniture, or other property that is required to implement 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 \$5,000 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 \$5,000 per unit, 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, honorarium for organizers, speakers, graphic designer, or cost for monitoring and evaluation. Sub-grants or funding for small scale projects will also fall under this category.** 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 document. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

**Cost Sharing:** "Cost Sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

**Meals or refreshments:** Applicants are encouraged to include reasonable costs for meals or refreshments that support the program under "other direct costs."

**Alcoholic Beverages:** Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.