

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: 2024 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund

Funding Opportunity Number: BH-002-FY2024

Deadline for Applications: February 20, 2024, 23:59 CET

CFDA Number: 19.022

Total Amount Available: \$5,000 – \$35,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Embassy of the United States in Bosnia and Herzegovina announces an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to submit applications to the 2024 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2024). We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements below. **Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2024 should submit proposals to SarajevoPDSGrants@state.gov by February 20, 2024, 23:59 CET.**

Program Objectives:

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.

The Embassy will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support themes such as:

- Cooperation in Sciences, Technology, Health and Innovation
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Economic Development, Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Environment, Climate Change
- Media Literacy and Countering Disinformation
- Shared Security, Countering Violent Extremism
- Women and Girls' Empowerment

Proposals must address the selected themes. Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Announcement posted: November 30, 2023.

Closing date for applications: February 20, 2024.

Length of performance period: Up to 12 months.

Award amounts: Awards may range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$35,000.

Type of Funding: Educational and Cultural Exchanges Programs.

Anticipated program start date: September 1, 2024.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

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

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants:

Who can apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs/>) or exchange program or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects must be managed by 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.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni or alumni associations of USG exchange alumni. No other organizations are eligible to apply. Exchange alumni can partner with not-for-profit or non-governmental organizations, think tanks,

and academic institutions to implement project activities. The grant can be issued to the individual alumni or the partner organization.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section E. for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

[Application](#) and [budget](#) forms required below are available at our [website](#).

Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official AEIF 2024 application and budget forms.

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.
- The proposal addresses all questions in the official AEIF 2024 application form.
- All documents are in English.
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is submitted using the designated AEIF 2024 budget form.
- All pages are numbered.

The following documents and information are **required**:

2. Mandatory application forms

- [SF-424](#) (Application for Federal Assistance - organizations) or [SF-424-I](#) (Application for Federal Assistance - individuals)
- [SF424A](#) (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- [SF424B Individual](#) (Assurances for Non-Construction programs - individuals)

3. 2024 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Proposal Form

3.1. About Your Project: Please provide information on the title of your project, the requested budget total, and the primary location of the project. Projects need to take place outside of the U.S. or its territories.

3.2. Project Team Information: At least two exchange alumni team members are required for a project to be considered for funding. Applications need to provide the name and contact information, describe the role each team member will have in the project, and their experience, qualifications, and ability to carry out that role. Applicants need to indicate what proportion of the team member's time will be used in support of the project.

3.3. Project Summary, Goal(s), and Objectives: The goal/s of the proposed project need to describe what the project is intended to achieve and include the objectives which support the goal/s. Objectives should be specific, measurable, and realistically achievable in a set time frame.

3.4. Project Design and Methods: A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal/s. This should include a description of the project's direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as a plan on how to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. Applicants may also submit proposed workshop or training agendas and materials.

3.5. Project Timeline: A timeline of your project activities.

3.6. Beneficiaries: An estimated number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of your proposed project.

3.7. Local Project Partners: A list of partners who will support the proposed project, if applicable.

3.8. Communication and Outreach Plan: The communication plan should include a communication and outreach strategy for promoting the proposed project. It may include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media intended to use to share information about the project to beneficiaries and the

public. Communications should include AEIF 2024, Exchange Alumni, and U.S. Embassy branding.

3.9. Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal should outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives. This should include any outcomes showing a change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will measure the impact of planned activities.

3.10. 2024 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Budget Form with Budget Narrative: Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

3.11. Attachments:

- Official permission letters, if required for program activities
- Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

(NOTE: This is not required for applications from individuals.)

E. Required Registrations:

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain the following registration which is free of charge:

1. www.SAM.gov registration which will generate a UEI

Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

The Unique Entity Identifier (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. SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to register in SAM.gov.

The UEI will be assigned when an organization registers or renews its SAM registration. To access SAM.gov an organization is required to have a Login.gov account. Organization can create an account at <https://login.gov/>. As a reminder, organizations need to renew their sam.gov registration annually.

www.sam.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year to maintain an active registration status in SAM.gov. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov.

If an organization plans to issue a sub-contract or sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.

If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov the grant will not be signed with that organization. If you experience difficulties in registering in SAM during the process of applying, you may send us the screenshot as the proof that you already started the SAM registering process. All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, the latter are free of charge.

However, if you experience any problem in registering in SAM.gov use the following [link](#) to register for live chat, so the SAM administrators can answer your questions. Working hours for this service are from Monday through Friday after 14:00.

IMPORTANT: Please be informed that DUNS was replaced by UEI which will be assigned by SAM.gov.

CAGE/NCAGE number is no longer needed to register in SAM.gov! *

*Only organizations which plan to do business with the Department of Defense (DOD) will be issued a CAGE code or be required to obtain an NCAGE number. When registering in SAM.gov, organization must self-select whether it plans to submit proposals to DOD. Only if an organization indicates “yes” will it be issued a CAGE code or be prompted to enter its NCAGE number.

If you are planning to respond to this call, please carefully follow instructions how to register in SAM and select “NO” if asked whether you plan to submit proposal to Department of Defense (DOD.)

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique

entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

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.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

AEIF 2024 does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- 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
- Provision of direct social services to a population
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Criteria:

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

Relevance to Application 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 two (2) exchange alumni. 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. Applicants should ensure that 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 that 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.

Review and Selection Process

The U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section will use the criteria outlined above to evaluate all applications.

G. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Please refer back to Funding Restrictions in section E for costs not supported through the 2024 AEIF.

Venue Costs: Calculate costs for renting space for project-related activities such as workshops or other training activities. Consider looking for donated space first. If donated space is not possible, costs should be reasonable based on the local environment. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Promotional Items and Advertising: These items aim to amplify your project. All requests should be reasonable and relevant to the project. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Meals and Beverage: Include reasonable costs for snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and meals if essential to the project. Break down meals by the cost per person per meal. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Speaker/Consultant/Training Fees: Speaker: Maximum of \$250 per day for full programming. Trainer: Maximum of \$250 per day or \$25 per hour. Consider asking fellow Alumni with expertise to cost-share speaker/training fees. Consultant: A reasonable consultant fee may be included by Alumni for project management and oversight. However, consider cost-sharing as the AEIF cannot provide salary type expenses. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Lodging and Per Diem: List per diem rates and hotel costs which directly support the implementation of the project and indicate single or double occupancy. Per Diem rates should be calculated according to the U.S. government allowable rates or be adjusted to local prices if appropriate. Please consult with your U.S. Embassy/Consulate. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Travel: If the program involves travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel. Estimate the costs of travel for this project, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. Costs can include in-country and intraregional air fare or local travel costs required for the actual implementation of the project. Travel between the

U.S. and project country is not supported. The AEIF does not support travel in business class or higher. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Supplies, Materials, Equipment: Include general office supplies, computer software, consumable automotive supplies (i.e. fuel), small equipment such as laptops, projector, etc., and expendable materials (i.e. paper, paint). Rent equipment rather than purchase if it is more cost-efficient. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

Other: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. Commonly cited items are administrative and accounting costs, shipping costs for materials and equipment, and monitoring and evaluation. All expenses must be itemized and explained.

“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.

Guidelines for AEIF Cross-Border Projects

We encourage and support cross-border collaboration of alumni of all programs under the AEIF. Those projects create new opportunities for networking across borders but also require additional planning.

What criteria does an AEIF cross-border project need to fulfill?

- The project will need a minimum of two alumni actively involved in the project and deliver project components in their countries.
- The project needs to show a link between the countries involved.

When planning and discussing cross-border projects, please consider these points:

- Alumni need to contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in their respective countries to learn about the AEIF competition process. How the AEIF is implemented might differ from post to post. Alumni will need to decide from which country to apply.
- Alumni need to consider local NGO restrictions and laws.
- Proposed projects need to connect alumni communities in all involved countries.
- Support for travel follows the general rules for [the AEIF](#).

Sample Scenario:

An alum from Argentina and an alum from Spain want to collaborate on a project: The alumni should contact the U.S. Embassy/consulate in both countries to learn about how AEIF is being implemented. If the proposal will be submitted through Mission Argentina,

then the alum from Argentina will need to be the team lead and vice versa. In-person activities need to take place in both countries. The same applies to proposed projects submitted by a team from three and more countries.

H. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices

The grant award will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer and the grants management team. The Recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed 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.

Funding decisions are contingent on the availability of funds. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Funding Opportunity at any time without any commitment to any applicant.

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 call for proposals 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.

Payment Method: The payment of the award amount will be effected in two or three installments. A certain percentage of the total award amount up to 50% of the total award amount will be paid immediately after signing the grant and submission of the valid bank account by Recipient. However, if the project implementation requires a percentage of advance payment higher than 50%, the Public Diplomacy Section will make a payment based on the Recipient's justification. The rest will be paid upon submission of the interim and final program and financial reports by Recipient. Each award document will contain detailed payment information. The U.S. government holds the right to retain the last payment up to 10% of the award amount until all project activities are completed and the final program and financial reports submitted by the Recipient are approved by the Grant Officer and the Grant Officer Representative.

Terms and Conditions

Before submitting an application, applicants may wish to 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:

2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>. Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify the forms and how often these reports must be submitted.

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

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For more information, please contact us by email: SarajevoPDSGrants@state.gov