



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

ROK: Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2026)

U.S. Embassy Seoul, Department of State

Opportunity number: PD-SEOUL-FY26-01

Application deadline: Monday, May 4, 2026, 11:59 p.m. (GMT+9)

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U.S Department of State
U.S. Embassy Seoul
Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	ROK: Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2026)
Funding Opportunity Number	PD-SEOUL-FY26-01
Announcement Type	The initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	Monday, May 4, 2026, 11:59 p.m. (GMT+9)
Assistance Listing Number	19.022
Length of performance period	6 to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated	2 awards
Award amounts	Awards may range from \$5,000 to \$35,000 per award.
Total available funding	\$70,000 pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY26 Educational and Cultural Exchanges (ECE)
Anticipated project start date	October 2026

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should begin in calendar year 2026 and be completed within 12 months. 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 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2026) supports alumni-led projects that celebrate and promote the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America (Freedom 250). The program empowers alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange and training programs to design and implement initiatives that highlight American history, values, and democratic principles, while strengthening U.S.-ROK ties.

Through competitive funding, AEIF 2026 encourages innovative approaches to community engagement, public diplomacy, and cross-cultural collaboration. Projects should promote civic engagement, open dialogue, and shared values, while strengthening connections between U.S. and Korean communities.

The primary participants are alumni of U.S. government exchange programs residing in the Republic of Korea, who will design and lead project activities. Broader beneficiaries include local communities, youth, educators, and civil society stakeholders engaged through alumni-led initiatives.

Eligible applicants include individuals and organizations that meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 1, B, including mandatory alumni participation criteria. Awards will support small-scale, high-impact projects that demonstrate innovation, sustainability, and measurable outcomes.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- Individuals
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

Mandatory Additional Eligibility Requirements:

In addition to the eligibility categories listed above, all applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded or sponsored exchange program or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program.
- Project teams must include teams of at least two alumni.

Additional Consideration (Non-Mandatory):

- *Proposals demonstrating regional or global collaboration among alumni will be viewed favorably.*

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

N/A

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

Background and Program Overview

The Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2026) supports alumni-led projects that celebrate and promote the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America (Freedom 250). The program empowers alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange and training programs to design and implement initiatives that highlight American history, values, and democratic principles, while strengthening U.S.-ROK ties.

Through competitive funding, AEIF 2026 encourages innovative approaches to community engagement, public diplomacy, and cross-cultural collaboration. Projects should promote civic engagement, open dialogue, and shared values, while strengthening connections between U.S. and Korean communities.

Program Goal

The goal of this program is to empower U.S. government exchange alumni to design and implement innovative projects that celebrate Freedom 250, strengthen U.S.-ROK relations, and promote meaningful community engagement.

Program Objectives

- Support at least five alumni-led programs during the grant period that celebrate Freedom 250 and promote civic engagement and shared values.
- Achieve a minimum of 100 direct beneficiaries and 2,000 indirect beneficiaries through funded projects and related outreach efforts.

Expected Activities

Applicants may propose activities such as, but are not limited to:

- Community-based events, workshops, or campaigns highlighting Freedom 250 themes
- Educational or cultural programming promoting civic engagement and cross-cultural understanding
- Digital or media-based initiatives to expand outreach and audience engagement
- Collaborative projects that strengthen alumni networks and partnerships

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Applicants should clearly define expected outputs and outcomes and include a plan for monitoring and evaluation. Proposals should identify:

- Performance indicators (e.g., number of participants, audience reach, engagement levels)
- Targets and, where appropriate, baseline data
- Data collection methods (e.g., attendance records, participant feedback, surveys, digital analytics)

Participant Eligibility (Beneficiaries)

Primary participants must be alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange or training programs residing in the Republic of Korea. Projects should also demonstrate broader community engagement, including youth, educators, and civil society stakeholders.

2. Substantial Involvement

This award will be administered as a cooperative agreement. The U.S. Embassy Seoul will have substantial involvement in the program, including:

- Providing guidance on program design to ensure alignment with Freedom 250 objectives and broader public diplomacy priorities
- Reviewing and approving key project activities, timelines, and major deliverables
- Facilitating connections with relevant stakeholders, experts, and partner institutions
- Monitoring program implementation and performance, including participation in evaluation activities

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 Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms available at Grants.gov

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)

- 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. Proposal (15 pages maximum)

Applicants must complete and submit the **AEIF 2026 Proposal Application Form** included with this NOFO. Proposals submitted in other formats will not be considered. All sections of the application form must be completed for the proposal to be eligible.

The application form is designed to capture all required proposal elements, including:

- Project Summary (including the need or challenge to be addressed)
- Project Goal(s) and Objectives (SMART objectives required)
- Project Design and Methods
- Project Timeline
- Project Team Information (minimum of two exchange alumni required)
- Beneficiaries (direct and indirect)
- Local Project Partners
- Communication and Outreach Plan
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (using the provided template)

Applicants should follow the instructions and word limits provided within the application form. Additional attachments are not required unless specifically requested.

3. Budget Justification Narrative

Applicants must submit a completed **SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs)** as required.

In addition, applicants must complete and submit the **AEIF 2026 Budget Form** included with this NOFO. This form serves as the primary detailed budget document for the proposal.

The AEIF Budget Form requires applicants to:

- Itemize all requested costs by category (e.g., contractual, supplies, travel, equipment, and other direct costs)
- Provide quantities and unit costs
- Include any cost share or in-kind contributions, if applicable
- Provide detailed budget justifications within the form for each cost category

A separate budget justification narrative is **not required**, as justification must be included directly in the AEIF Budget Form. Applicants should ensure that the SF-424A and AEIF Budget Form are consistent.

4. *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](#) & [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://ncagecode.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 are due no later than Monday, May 4, 2026, 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 of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan

Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds \$500,000:

- 1) To the best of the Recipient's knowledge, neither the Recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the Recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#);

The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175\(a\)](#) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in [2 CFR 175\(b\)\(5\)](#).

- 2) That the Recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in [2 CFR 175.105\(a\)](#) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and

relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

iv. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems Manufactured or Assembled by American Security Drone Act-Covered Foreign Entities

(a) *Definitions.*

American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity means an entity included on a list developed and maintained by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) and published in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>

FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by an American Security Drone Act-covered foreign entity.

Unmanned aircraft means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft .

Unmanned aircraft system means an unmanned aircraft and associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the unmanned aircraft) that are required for the operator to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.

(b) *Prohibition.* Recipients of funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (including subawards and subcontracts issued by the recipient) will be prohibited from:

(1) delivering any FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system, which includes unmanned aircraft (i.e., drones) and associated elements;

(2) Operating a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system in the performance of the award; and

(3) Using Federal funds for the purchase or operation of a FASC-prohibited unmanned aircraft system .

c) *Exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.* The prohibitions described above will not apply if the agency determines that an exemption, exception, or waiver applies and the award indicates that such a determination has been made. [See sections 1823 through 1825 and 1832 of Public Law 118-31 ([41 U.S.C. 3901](#) note prec.) for statutory requirements pertaining to exemptions, exceptions, and waivers.].

v. Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA)

Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR Part 602, 603, and 604.

These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.

602: The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

603: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

604: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

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 based on the criteria below:

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea: The proposal clearly defines the need or challenge and presents a well-developed, practical approach to address it. Activities are realistic, clearly described, and appropriate to achieve the stated goals. The proposal does not include any activities contrary to any standing Executive Orders. For a full list, see <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

Project Design and Impact: The project design is coherent and likely to achieve meaningful results. The proposal demonstrates clear alignment between goals, objectives, activities, and expected outcomes, with potential for tangible impact on target audiences.

Alumni Leadership and Team Capacity: The project team includes at least two qualified exchange alumni and demonstrates the experience, skills, and roles necessary to successfully implement the project.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: The proposal includes clear, measurable objectives and appropriate indicators. The M&E plan demonstrates how progress and outcomes will be tracked and assessed.

Budget and Cost Effectiveness: The budget is realistic, well-justified, and aligned with proposed activities. Costs are reasonable and clearly itemized.

Communication and Outreach: The proposal presents a clear plan to promote project activities and share results with target audiences and the broader public.

Sustainability and Follow-on Impact: The proposal demonstrates potential for continued impact beyond the grant period or outlines plans for follow-on activities.

2. Indirect Costs

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

3. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

4. 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 the end of August 2026 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.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

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:

- [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). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department’s convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.
- [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](#)
 - Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

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.

3. Branding and Marking

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. Government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at [Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System](#). Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual [10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions](#).

For more information, visit: <https://brand.america.gov/>

I. Other Information

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Applicants must complete the **AEIF 2026 Budget Form** included with this NOFO. Detailed budget justifications should be provided directly within the form under each cost category.

Applicants should refer to the **Budget Guidance tab** included in the AEIF Budget Form for detailed instructions on allowable costs and budget preparation.

All costs must be:

- Allowable and necessary for program implementation
- Clearly itemized with unit costs and quantities
- Reasonable and consistent with proposed activities

Cost sharing and in-kind contributions may be included but are not required.

Please note that award funds **must not be used for alcoholic beverages**.