

2025 AEIF NOFO

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

NOFO Title: Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund NOFO

U.S. Embassy Kigali, Department of State

Opportunity number: PDS-Kigali-FY25-002

Application deadline: March 14, 2025

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

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number	PDS-Kigali-FY25-002
Announcement Type	Initial announcement
Deadline for Applications	March 14 at 11:59 p.m. (GMT+2)
Assistance Listing Number	19.022 (Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs Appropriation Overseas Grant)
Length of performance period	Six (6) to 12 months
Number of awards anticipated	Maximum two (2) awards
Award amounts	Awards may range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$35,000 (approximately)
Total available funding	Pending availability of funds
Type of Funding	FY25 Fulbright-Hays Act
Anticipated project start date	July 2025

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement of the bureau or embassy in program implementation of the project. An FAA can also include substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 12 months or less.

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

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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

The Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2025 initiative is a strategic funding opportunity designed to enhance alumni engagement through impactful, public service-oriented projects. These projects leverage the experiences and skills gained from U.S. exchange programs to address pressing global issues and local challenges in Rwanda, while also making U.S. safer, stronger and more prosperous. By supporting these initiatives, the AEIF aims to strengthen the U.S. government's relationship with exchange alumni and advance shared goals. The AEIF 2025 initiative is a testament to our commitment to fostering mutual understanding and collaboration between the people of Rwanda and the United States.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following are eligible to apply:

- 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 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 U.S. government 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.

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2. 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.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

C. Program Description

The Public Diplomacy Section of the Embassy of the United States of America in Kigali, Rwanda, is pleased to announce an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2025 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2025). We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2025 should submit proposals by email to KigaliPDGrants@state.gov by March 14, 2025, 11:59 p.m. (GMT+2).

1. Goals and Objectives

AEIF 2025 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, AEIF 2025 will support United States’ commitment to increase economic growth and strengthen human capital and to promote democracy, good governance, and rule of law. All AEIF projects must address U.S. policy goals that align with administration objectives to make the U.S. safer, stronger and more prosperous.

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

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- Promote leadership and/or health diplomacy through science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM).
- Support professional development to improve job readiness.
- Promote media professionals' and/or early career reporters' capacity; and/or.
- Promote digital literacy and soft skills to advance economic growth.

Additionally, all AEIF projects must include at least one of the following:

- Convene alumni from different exchange programs to build or expand an alumni network capable of working together on common interests and increasing regional and global collaboration of alumni.
- Strengthen the relationship between alumni and the U.S. government to work together on activities that address shared goals and challenges.
- Support alumni as they develop their leadership capacity and implement projects in their communities for maximum impact.

2. Substantial Involvement

The U.S. Embassy will determine the level of substantial involvement after the grantee is selected.

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.
- Length of proposal does not exceed 10 pages.
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper; and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

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The following documents are required:

1. Mandatory application forms

- [AEIF 2025 Proposal Form](#)
- [AEIF 2025 Budget Form](#)

2. 2025 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Proposal Form

- **Project Summary:** 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 United States or its territories.
- **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 must indicate what proportion of the team member's time will be used in support of the project.
- **Problem Statement:** A short narrative which outlines the proposed project, including challenge/s to be addressed, project objectives, and anticipated impact.
- **Project Goals 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.
- **Project Methods, Design, and Timeline:** 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. The proposed timeline for the project activities should include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events. Applicants may also submit proposed workshop or training agendas and materials.
- **Project Timeline:** A timeline of your project activities.
- **Beneficiaries:** An estimated number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of your proposed project.

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- **Local Project Partners:** A list of partners who will support the proposed project, if applicable.
- **Communication 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 2025, ExchangeAlumni, and U.S. Embassy branding.
- **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. 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.

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

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1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required above are available on the U.S. Embassy website <https://rw.usembassy.gov/embassy/kigali/grants> and at <https://www.grants.gov>.

2. Department of State Contacts

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

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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 2: 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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-25/subpart-1/section-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.

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Mandatory Provision

Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws

None of the funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) 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.

By signing the SF-424 or SF-424I Application for Federal Assistance, the Applicant certifies the following:

- 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.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than March 14, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. (GMT+2)

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).

6. Other Submission Requirements

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

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F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

The AEIF Selection Committee will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

Advancement of At Least One NOFO Goals/Objectives – 20 points

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

Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan – 20 points

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 of 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?

Participation and Support from Local Partners – 15 points

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.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project – 15 points

A monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking of progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress

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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:

- Completeness
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART criteria
- Data quality plan
- Capacity to implement plan

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan – 15 points

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 – 15 points

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.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

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

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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 June 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:

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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).
- [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](#)

In accordance with the [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program advances equity with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography,

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gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. The proposal should also demonstrate how the program will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

The support of underserved communities will be part of the review criteria for this opportunity. Therefore, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

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. This include activities completed during the reporting period, milestones achieved, outcomes and impact of project activities, and other elements. Recipients must ensure that adequate time is allocated for the preparation and submission of reports. It is recommended to designate a specific team member responsible for financial and programmatic reporting to ensure timely and accurate submissions.

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**

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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.

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“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.