

NOFO

**Pathways to Success: Career Readiness through American
Expertise**

U.S. Mission Poland, Department of State

Opportunity number: WAW-NOFO-FY25-02

Application deadline(s): June 18, 2025

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U.S Department of State
U.S. Mission Poland
NOFO

A. Basic Information

1. Overview

Funding Opportunity Title	Pathways to Success: Career Readiness through American Expertise
Funding Opportunity Number	WAW-NOFO-FY25-02
	Initial Announcement
Deadline for Applications	June 18, 2025
Assistance Listing Number	19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs
Length of performance period	6 to 18 months
Number of awards anticipated	1 - 2
Award amounts	Awards may range from a minimum of \$25,000 to a maximum of \$50,000
Total available funding	\$50,000
Type of Funding	FY25 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds
Anticipated program start date	September 30, 2025

The Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Department of State at U.S. Embassy Warsaw and Consulate General Krakow (PD Poland) is pleased to announce that funding is available through its Public Diplomacy Grants Program. This is a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), outlining our funding priorities, the strategic themes we focus on, and the procedures for submitting requests for funding. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements and some FAAs are different from grants in that bureau/embassy staff are more actively involved in the grant implementation (“Substantial Involvement”).

Program Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed in 18 months or less. PD Poland 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

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) at the U.S. Mission in Poland invites proposals for programs that strengthen U.S.-Poland ties by promoting bilateral cooperation and building lasting connections with emerging Polish leaders. Proposals should utilize American leadership, entrepreneurship, and workforce readiness best practices to equip high school students (ages 16 – 19) with essential soft skills—such as public speaking, critical thinking, self-management, an entrepreneurial mindset, risk-taking, presentation skills, and problem solving.

Programs should also incorporate career guidance components to help youth confidently navigate the transition into adulthood, explore professional pathways, and make informed decisions about their futures. These initiatives should empower participants through practical tools and knowledge that reflect American models of education and career development, while fostering long-term engagement that supports shared democratic values and addresses the challenges of the modern workforce.

Projects should empower participants to approach both personal and professional challenges with confidence, adaptability, and a proactive mindset. They should also foster lasting peer connections, mentorship networks, and sustained engagement beyond the program’s duration. Ultimately, all initiatives should focus on equipping youth with key soft skills essential for success in today’s job market, including public speaking, critical thinking, self-management, and problem solving.

By strengthening these competencies, Polish high school students will grow into confident and resilient individuals who remain connected to U.S. values and approaches, supporting their continued personal growth and professional development—while advancing the long-term U.S.-Polish partnership.

Awards will be made subject to the availability of appropriated funds and final selection. This NOFO is for projects beginning no earlier than September 30, 2025. The deadline for this NOFO is June 18, 2025. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Appropriately registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience
- Individuals to include alumni of U.S. government sponsored exchange programs; and
- Non-profit or governmental educational institutions including public libraries, schools, and universities.

For-profit or commercial entities are not eligible to apply.

To be eligible for consideration, the applicant organization must be registered to operate in Poland, or if this is not the case, they are strongly encouraged to partner with a local Polish organization registered to operate in Poland.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is allowed but not required and will not affect funding decisions.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on SAM.gov. Please see Section E.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

1. Goals and Objectives

A successful proposal will include a comprehensive calendar of activities up to 18 months that includes a series of skills-building workshops and/or interactive trainings for high school students. All projects must address the development of youth leadership, critical thinking, project management skills, and resilience as well as career guidance activities.

Proposals are encouraged to include the active involvement of U.S. business representatives, U.S. experts, alumni of U.S. government exchange programs, or other individuals with direct U.S. experience to provide real-world insights and mentorship that reflect American leadership in innovative approaches to entrepreneurship and career development. Engaging these stakeholders not only enriches the learning experience for participants but also showcases U.S. achievements in building competitive, skills-based

career pathways. These connections help foster a deeper understanding of American values and practices and build long-term connections between Poland and the United States.

By the end of the project, participants should demonstrate increased confidence and competence in key soft skills and a clearer understanding of potential career paths. The project should also result in tangible outcomes such as student presentations, project portfolios, or individual career action plans that reflect the skills and knowledge gained.

All proposals are required to have a clear connection to the United States, either through U.S. organizations, experts, and/or best practices in order to increase the awareness and understanding of U.S. perspectives, policies, and society.

Proposals without significant U.S. content will not be considered for funding.

Examples of possible public diplomacy grant activities include, but are not limited to:

- Workshops, panels, and/or interactive sessions on public speaking, problem solving, critical thinking, and career planning.
- CV/Resume building clinics, mock interviews, and mentorship meet-ups with professionals.
- A series of guided sessions helping students explore career options through hands-on experiences, guest speakers, workplace visits, and practical exercises in self-presentation and goal setting.

Participants and Audiences:

Proposals should describe audiences for the program, including anticipated numbers to be reached. Applicants should be as specific as possible in their proposals about how their project's primary audience will be recruited and how they will engage them through programming. Primary audiences are those who will participate directly in the program, while secondary audiences are those who will be reached by the project's primary audiences as a result of their participation (for example, a workshop for high school students as primary audience could include elements of mentorship where teachers as a secondary audience may take a role of a facilitator or a mentor who would provide new ways to engage with students beyond traditional curricula).

The principal method of engagement will be through in-person programming. Virtual engagement may be a part of the overall strategy, augmenting in-person programming.

The following types of programs are NOT eligible for funding:

- Programs relating to partisan political activity;
- Charitable or development activities;
- Construction programs;
- Programs that support specific religious activities;
- Fund-raising campaigns;
- Lobbying for specific legislation or programs;
- Scientific research;
- Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization; or
- Programs that duplicate existing programs.

This funding opportunity aims to support specific projects with objectives that can be achieved within a set timeframe. We will not accept applications that are aimed more broadly at supporting your organization’s usual or typical daily activities and operations. Those will be deemed technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding by the review committee.

2. Substantial Involvement

Awards issued under this notice may be made as a Grant, Fixed Amount Award (FAAs), or Cooperative Agreement, depending on the nature of the activity. Cooperative Agreements and some FAAs are different from grants in that PD Poland staff are actively involved in program activities beyond routine monitoring, i.e., “substantial involvement.” The appropriate instrument may vary depending on the nature of the project proposed and will be determined during pre-award negotiations with successful applicants. Examples of “substantial involvement” include the review and approval of program modifications, such as project locations, participant numbers, implementing organizations, or program structure; provision of guidance and concurrence on participant outreach, recruitment, and selection; and a review of implementing organizations' program descriptions and program plans/schedules.

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 Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals) at <https://grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/>
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at <https://grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/>
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at <https://grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/> (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. Summary Page

Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. Proposal (5 pages maximum)

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. **We highly recommend that applicants use the [proposal template provided here](#).** If you choose not to use the template provided, you may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.

- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

4. Budget Justification Narrative

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

5. Attachments

- 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from project 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:

<https://pl.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants/>

2. Department of State Contacts

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

grantspoland@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 with the 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 the NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that subrecipients obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

[NCAGE Code Request Tool \(nato.int\)](#)

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and SAM.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See [2 CFR 25.110](#) for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications may be submitted for consideration at any time before the closing date of *June 18, 2025*. No applications will be accepted after that date. Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by July 31. Responses will be sent by September 1 subject to confirmation of the availability of funds.

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

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.

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.

6. Other Submission Requirements

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

F. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

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

- **Organizational capacity and record on previous grants:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and PD Poland is confident of its ability to undertake the program. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea:** The program idea is well developed, with details about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.
- **Goals and objectives:** SMART goals and objectives are clearly stated, and the program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.
- **Embassy priorities:** Applicant has clearly described how stated goals are related to and supports U.S. Embassy Warsaw and Consulate General Krakow's priority areas and target audiences.
- **Strength of American component:** The extent to which the project will engage American experts/counterparts, create or strengthen ties between U.S. and Polish peer institutions, foster connections between Americans and Poles, or present American culture and society or best practices in an innovative manner.

- **Budget:** The budget justification is 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.
- **Monitoring and evaluation plan:** Applicant demonstrates it can measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.
- **Sustainability:** Program activities will continue to have a positive impact after the end of the program.

2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee convened by PD Poland will evaluate all eligible applications. Please note that you may be asked to submit additional information and/or a revised budget in response to Committee deliberations.

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

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 signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant 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 September 1, 2025 via email.

Payment Method:

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer.

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget’s guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and

- Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

2. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify what reports are required and how often these reports must be submitted.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

I. Other Information

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

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

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