

## 2026 AEIF NOFO



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

# 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund

U.S. Embassy Sarajevo, Department of State

Opportunity number: BH-001-FY2026

Application deadline: April 30, 2026

# 2026 AEIF NOFO

## Contents

<b>A. Basic Information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B. Eligibility .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>C. Program Description .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>D. Application Contents and Format .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>F. Application Review Information .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>G. Award Notices .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>I. Other Information .....</b>	<b>15</b>

# 2026 AEIF NOFO

**U.S Department of State**  
***U.S. Embassy Sarajevo***  
**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

## A. Basic Information

### *1. Overview*

<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund 2026
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	BH-001-FY2026
<b>Announcement Type</b>	Initial announcement
<b>Deadline for Applications</b>	April 30, 2026, 23:59 CET
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	19.022
<b>Length of performance period</b>	12 months
<b>Number of awards anticipated</b>	Maximum of 2
<b>Award amounts</b>	The proposal must be in the range of \$5,000 to \$35,000
<b>Total available funding</b>	To be determined.
<b>Type of Funding</b>	FY26 Fulbright-Hays Public Diplomacy Funds
<b>Anticipated project start date</b>	Within 45 days of notification of funding approval

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant or fixed amount award (FAA).

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

**Priority Region:** Bosnia and Herzegovina

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

### *2. Executive Summary*

The U.S. Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) is pleased to announce the roll-out of the 2026 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF). The AEIF is an annual funding opportunity designed to invest in U.S. government-funded exchange participants and programs by helping alumni develop and implement projects that promote shared interests and policy objectives and benefit local communities. We invite you to submit proposals for projects that meet the requirements of the program (discussed in Section C below). Please read this notice carefully before preparing and submitting a funding proposal.

Please also note the following: This solicitation does not constitute an award commitment by the U.S. government. A final award cannot be made until the

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

proposal has been reviewed and approved, and an award agreement is drawn up and signed by a grants officer. The U.S. Mission reserves the right not to issue an award after receipt of any proposal. The U.S. Mission also reserves the right to reduce, revise, and/or increase a proposal budget in accordance with the needs of the program and availability of funds.

**Please do not apply for this funding opportunity if you are not an alumnus of a U.S. government-funded exchange program.**

### B. Eligibility

#### *1. Eligible Applicants*

- Alumni who participated in a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program where the proposed project involves **at least two** U.S. government-sponsored exchange program alumni, and one is a **specified team lead**.
- Alumni associations from countries with current U.S. representation, but such applications must specify an alumni team lead.
- If three or more alumni are applying together, U.S. citizen alumni may be included on alumni teams, but the team must have at least two non-U.S. citizen exchange program alumni. U.S. citizen alumni cannot be team leads on project proposals.

#### *2. Cost Sharing or Matching*

- Cost sharing is not required.

#### *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*

AEIF increases the impact of the U.S. government's investment in exchange programs by helping alumni develop and implement projects to support U.S. policy

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

objectives and promote shared interests. All AEIF projects must celebrate and promote Freedom 250 – the celebration of the United States’ 250<sup>th</sup> birthday – and align with policy goals such as making the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous, celebrating American excellence, or defending freedom of speech.

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

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

### 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 and Form of Application Submission:**

Please follow all the instructions below carefully. Only proposals submitted using the official AEIF 2026 forms will be considered for funding. All proposals must be submitted via email as described below to **SarajevoPDSGrants@state.gov**. The subject of the email should be AEIF26\_BiH\_Project Title, for example, AEIF26\_BiH\_STEM Curricula. Only applications submitted via email to SarajevoPDSGrants@state.gov will be considered. The required documentation listed below must be attached to the email. Documents uploaded to the “cloud” will not be retrieved. 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

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

- All pages are numbered
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 14-point Times New Roman 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](#))
- 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:***

The attached Microsoft Word proposal form, *AEIF 2026 Proposal Form.docx*, must be used. **Do not save as a PDF**. Rename the document to AEIF26\_BiH\_Project Title.docx, for example, AEIF26\_BiH\_STEM Curricula.docx. A partially completed form may result in your application being rejected on technical grounds.

### ***3. Budget:***

The attached Microsoft Word proposal form, *AEIF 2026 Budget Form.xlsx* must be used. **Do not save as a PDF**. Rename the document to AEIF26\_BiH\_Project Title.xlsx, for example, AEIF26\_BiH\_STEM Curricula.xlsx. Read the “Budget Guidelines” tab first. Budget amounts must be in U.S. dollars.

AEIF 2026 can support the following budget items:

- Intra-regional or in-country transportation
- Rental of venues for project activities
- PPE and sanitizing equipment
- Meals/refreshments integral to the project (i.e., working lunch for a meeting)
- Reasonable costs to support virtual programming (i.e., subscription to Zoom, WebEx, camera/microphones for virtual meetings, mailing services, etc.)
- Trainer or speaker honoraria expenses (i.e., maximum \$250/day fee, travel, lodging, per diem)
- Reasonable equipment and materials
- Communications and publicity materials, such as manuals or project advertisements

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

AEIF 2026 will **not** support the following budget items:

- Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments not integral to the project, or entertainment
- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts, gratuities, or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in the project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population

Additional attachments are optional:

For example, support materials like workshop agendas, curricula, or previous pilot projects connected to your submission.

#### 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
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

## E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

### ***1. Address to Request Application Package***

Application forms required above are available at the U.S. [Embassy Sarajevo website](#).

### ***2. Department of State Contacts***

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: [SavaticA@state.gov](mailto:SavaticA@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



## 2026 AEIF NOFO

should submit a help desk ticket (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at [www.fsd.gov](http://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://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx)

### **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 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 *April 30, 2026, at 23:59 CET*.

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

### 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 (It seems this provision applies only to awards with place of performance or delivery within the USA)

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.

### 6. *Other Submission Requirements*

All application materials must be submitted by email to [SarajevoPDSGrants@state.gov](mailto:SarajevoPDSGrants@state.gov).

## F. Application Review Information

### 1. *Review Criteria*

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

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

### Relevance to the Embassy's Priorities (See Section C, above)

The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the Mission's priorities. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy and public services oriented 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 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?

### Degree of Alumni Involvement

Projects must include the involvement of at least two 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, exchange program, country of citizenship, roles and responsibilities, and degree of time spent on the project.

### 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 with 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

A monitoring and 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 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 will be reviewed for the following:

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

- Completeness
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) criteria
- 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.

## **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

## **G. Award Notices**

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

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 August 22, 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:

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

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

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

- [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.

## 2026 AEIF NOFO

**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.