

U.S. Department of State
U.S. Embassy to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean and the OECS
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

The Embassy of the United States to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean and the OECS (U.S. Embassy Bridgetown) announces an open call for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2021 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2021). We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements listed below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2021 must submit completed proposals to Bridgetownexchanges@state.gov by **11:59 PM (Atlantic Standard Time) on Friday, March 26, 2021**.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AEIF provides alumni of U.S. 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 2020 will support the United States’ commitment to working with our partners around the world to advance core themes such as Rule of Law and Good Governance; and Greater Economic Sustainability, Energy Independence, Growth, and Natural Disaster Resilience.

U.S. Embassy Bridgetown will accept projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support themes not limited to:

- Supporting Rule of Law and Good Governance;
- Greater Economic Sustainability, Energy Independence, Growth, and Natural Disaster Resilience

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Number: PASBGI-21-001

Announcement posted: January 25, 2021

Closing date for applications: March 26, 2021 (11:59 PM Atlantic Standard Time)

Funding type: Small grant awards

Decision date: May 7, 2021

Expected size of individual awards: Between \$10,000.00 to \$50,000.00

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed during the period August 2021 - June 2022.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants:

The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>) or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team members in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni. Not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions are not eligible to apply in the name of the organization but can serve as partners for implementing project activities.

2. Cost Sharing

Examples include in-kind support (services, labor, supplies/equipment, or volunteers), a business contributing food, an organization offering a venue at a discount or free of charge, an NGO sponsoring an activity, an expert donating time to facilitate a seminar, etc. We encourage all proposals to include some form of cost sharing.

3. Grant Program Area

Proposals must show strong community engagement and support to themes that address Rule of Law and Good Governance; and Greater Economic Sustainability, Energy Independence, Growth, and Natural Disaster Resilience. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

4. Other Eligibility Requirements

If the grant will be processed with an individual, that individual is not required to have a DUNS number or be registered in SAM.gov. However, should the grant be processed with an organization that is a partner in the project, that organization must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices in respect of beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application and budget templates are available at <https://bb.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants/>

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official AEIF 2021 proposal and budget forms. Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet

the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Please ensure that:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity;
- The proposal addresses all questions in the official AEIF 2021 proposal form;
- All documents are in English
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is submitted using the designated AEIF budget form;
- All pages are numbered.

The following documents are required:

1. Mandatory application forms

- a) SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance - individuals) – [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- b) SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) - [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- c) SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) - [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- d) AEIF 2021 Application Form
- e) AEIF 2021 Budget

2. Proposal

The proposal should contain enough information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the alumni team wants to do.

Proposals include the following:

- a) **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- b) **Alumni Team Information:** There must be at least two exchange alumni team members for a project to be considered for funding. Along with 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. Indicate what proportion of their time will be used in support of the project.
- c) **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed.
- d) **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- e) **Local Program Partners:** List partners who will support your project. Please note if you have an existing relationship with your partner organization(s) and describe their role in the project. If you do not have an existing relationship, explain how you anticipate establishing a partnership with the organization(s).
- f) **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.

- g) **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- h) **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal will outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives (listed above). A strong proposal will include:
- Outcomes the grantee expects to achieve. Outcomes could include: 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 those outcomes (surveys, interviews, observations, etc.).
 - For example: If the program expects that a teacher-training program will improve the skills of a teacher, a proposal may explain the skills the teacher would gain and plan to perform a survey before the program and a survey following the program that would show a change in understanding due to the program.
 - A plan to include the grantee's reflection of how their program contributed to the program's goals. As applicable, a strong final report would include success stories, behaviors changed, lessons learned, and results obtained.
- i) **Sustainability:** Explain how you plan to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
- j) **Communication Plan:** Explain how you will promote your project. Include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media you intend to use to share information about your project to beneficiaries and the public. Communications must include AEIF 2021 and U.S. Embassy branding. These include training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement. Note: Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable especially in the case where branding would adversely affect the safety and security of the beneficiaries.

3. **Budget Justification 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. Items valued at \$200.00 or more must be itemized. Related costs should not be lumped together (i.e. lodging, meals, and per diem should be separate line items). See below for guidance on completing the budget:

Venue Costs

Reasonable costs based on local environment for renting space for project-related activities. Look for donated space first. Consider negotiating deals to include coffee breaks, lunch, equipment, or modest supplies, and include this information in the budget justification.

Promotional Items and Advertising

Promotional items that you will use to amplify the project. Break down promotion and advertising, clearly indicating what you will get in return for costs incurred. Consider cost share or free online tools for graphic design work. Funding for the creation of websites will need to be strongly justified.

Meals & Beverages

Reasonable requests for snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and meals if essential to the program (i.e. a working lunch is acceptable, but a cocktail reception is not). Break down the cost per person per meal per day. This section should *not* include per diem meals for travel days.

Speaker Honorarium or Trainer Fees

Speaker: Maximum of US\$200 per day for a full day of programming (in-person or virtual).
Trainer: Maximum US\$200 per full day or \$25 per hour. Preparation and follow-up costs are acceptable and should be itemized at the same rate. Consider asking your fellow alumni to provide their expertise as in-kind support for the project (i.e. cost share).

Lodging and Per Diem

In-country and intraregional meals and lodging. Indicate if lodging is single or dual occupancy and the duration of stay. Explain if meal costs cover an entire day or partial day.

Travel

In-country and intraregional airfare or local travel costs (via car, bus, train, etc.). Specify the mode of transportation, who will travel, destination/arrival points, and if the cost covers roundtrip or one-way travel. Travel to/from the U.S. (including speaker travel) will not be covered as all projects must take place outside of the U.S.

Supplies, Materials, and Equipment

General office supplies, software, fuel, small equipment such as laptops, projector, etc., and expendable material (i.e. paint or paper). When possible, rent rather than purchase equipment. Indicate what you will do with purchased equipment after the project concludes.

Other

List any items that do not apply to the categories above. Be specific! Commonly cited items are administrative costs and monitoring and evaluation, which require details and cost breakdown. Indirect costs incurred for the benefit of the project (such as administrative and overhead costs) should not exceed 10% of the total proposed budget.

Allowable costs:

- 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 \$200/day fee, travel, lodging, per diem)
- Reasonable equipment and materials
- Communications and publicity materials, such as manuals or project advertisements

Budget Restrictions: AEIF 2021 **does not support** the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs **ineligible**:

- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments, or entertainment
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria: The Public Affairs Section of U.S. Embassy Bridgetown will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. After this initial review, the Public Affairs Section will submit the top proposals from their country to the global AEIF 2021 competition. The proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of regional and exchange program experts located at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan

When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling. Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many will participate? How will they be selected?

Degree of Alumni Involvement

Projects must include the involvement of at least two (2) exchange alumni. They may be the project team leaders or collaborate directly with the Public Affairs Section in formulating the project. More than two alumni may comprise the team; however, the minimum is two. As the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, country of citizenship, and roles and responsibilities.

Participation and Support from Local Partners

The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement is a strong sign that there is community support and that the project will engage a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

Evaluation and Impact of the Project

A monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how that data collection will be accomplished. Well-crafted indicators should be used to understand a program's progress toward the desired results. An M&E plan should be reviewed for the following:

- Completion
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART criteria
- Feasibility of baselines and targets
- Data quality plan
- Capacity to implement plan

Sustainability

Have the applicants considered how the project will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

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.

Disclaimer: This notice is subject to availability of funding. U.S. Embassy Bridgetown does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The grant award will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. 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.

Payment Method:

The Recipient must request payment under this award by completing form [SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement](#) and submitting the form to the Grants Officer. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Recipient may request payments on a reimbursement or advance basis.

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

FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions about the grant application process should be directed to:

Grants Officer:

Laurence J. Socha
U.S. Embassy Bridgetown, Public Affairs Section
Willey Business Park, Willey, St. Michael, Barbados
Telephone: 1-246-227-4000
Email: SochaLJ@state.gov

Alumni Coordinator:

Lisa Howell
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For more details, please, visit us at <https://bb.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants/>