

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

Funding Opportunity Title:	2021 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2021)
Funding Opportunity Number:	PAS-France-FY2021-01
Deadline for Applications:	March 22, 2021, 23:59 CET
Assistance Listing Number:	19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs
Total Amount Available:	\$10,000 – \$50,000

The U.S. Mission to France announces an open competition 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 below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2021 should submit proposals to GrantsFrance@state.gov mail address by March 22, 2021, 23:59 CET. The U.S. Mission will evaluate all proposals and recommend one proposal for funding by the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Projects will be evaluated by ECA against proposals received from alumni around the world. Given the current health situation, projects that can be easily adapted to virtual or hybrid virtual/in-person activities will be given priority.

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.

U.S. Mission to France will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support U.S.-France leadership on global challenges:

- Entrepreneurship and economic development
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Women and girls' empowerment
- Promotion of American studies and American English
- Cooperation in sciences, technology, health and innovation
- Countering violent extremism
- Media literacy and countering disinformation

Priority Region:

France

Participants and Audiences:

All applicants for awards must stipulate who their target audience is (age/gender/geographic breakdown) and estimate the expected audience reach through direct contact and, if possible, through indirect contact (via social media or traditional media).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: 6 to 12 months.
Number of awards anticipated: One.
Award amounts: Between \$10,000.00 to \$50,000.00
Type of Funding: FY2021 ECE.
Anticipated program start date: Between July 2020 and September 2020.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: The type of funding instrument, exact amount of funding, the scope of work, and the terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and U.S. Embassy representatives after the application has been selected for funding.

The funding instrument will be either a grant or a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements will be used only for awards to organizations in case the proposed project involves substantial U.S. Mission involvement. “Substantial involvement” means that, after the award is approved for funding, U.S. Mission staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role. The U.S. Mission will not assume direction, primary responsibility, or a dominant role in project activities. These reside with the recipient for the project as a whole.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 6 to 12 months timeframe.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following 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/>) residing in France.
- ❖ Projects 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. A not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, or academic institutions must serve as partner for implementing project activities (see C.4).

2. Cost Sharing

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

3. Grant Program Area

Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined above will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

4. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations 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. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals are not required to have a unique entity identifier 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

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available on the U.S. Embassy France website, or at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/forms-repository.html>

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

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.

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official AEIF 2021 proposal and budget forms.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- 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**:

a) *Mandatory application forms*

[SF-424](#) (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)

[SF-424A](#) (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)

[SF-424B](#) (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) for organizations not registered in SAM.gov

b) 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.

Proposal Summary: Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.

Project 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.

Problem Statement: Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed.

Project Goals and Objectives: The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. How will the project impact the community and what changes (in people, institutions, attitudes, or practices) will you see? The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.

Local Project Partners: List partners who will support your project. Please note if you have an existing relationship with your partner organization(s) or individual(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).

Project Methods, Design, and Timeline: A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. This should include description of your direct and indirect beneficiaries. The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events. Please include a description of how the project could be adapted to a virtual/hybrid activity if needed.

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:

- Any outcomes the grantee expects to occur because of their program. 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 know those outcomes are occurring (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.

Sustainability: Explain how you plan to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

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 should 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.

c) Budget Justification Narrative: In addition to form SF424A, 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. *See section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions below for further information*

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

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page here: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-704-7930

Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil or dlacontactcenter@dlia.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto:

<https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

You can also refer to the PDF "Instructions DUNS NCAGE SAM.GOV" available on the Embassy website.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than March 22, 2021 23:59 CET.

5. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to GrantsFrance@state.gov or submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. Evaluation Criteria

The U.S. Mission to France Public Affairs Section will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. After this initial review, the Public Affairs Section will submit the top proposal from the country to the global AEIF 2021 competition.

The top proposal 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.

Relevance to Application Theme The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the theme(s) of the competition. The narrative explains any relevant local context the D.C. Selection Committee may not be aware of in relation to this project. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy 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 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 PAS 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.

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

2. Review and Selection Process

After an initial review, the U.S. Mission to France's Public Affairs Section will submit the top proposal from the country to the global AEIF 2021 competition. The Selection Committee made up of regional and exchange program experts located at the Department of State in Washington, DC may or may not select France's proposal

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, if the Federal awarding agency anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold on any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity may include, over the period of performance (see §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold), this section must also inform applicants:

i. That the Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

ii. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

iii. That the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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: Payments will be made in at least two installments, as needed to carry out the program activities. The U.S. Mission to France reserves the right to amend the final amount to be reimbursed after reviewing the final progress and financial reports.

2. 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:

- [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 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:

- President's September 2, 2020 memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities*;

- *Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence* (E.O. 13933); and
- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - 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 in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

3. Reporting

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.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions about the grant application process should be directed to: GrantsFrance@state.gov

The U.S. Embassy to France will be holding an informative presentation for alumni to provide additional information and details about the U.S. Alumni Small Grants Competition. Presentation dates and locations will be shared on the U.S. Embassy Paris's social media.

H. 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 \$5,000 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 \$5,000 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 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“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.