Funding Opportunity Title (PROGRAM):   *English Language Program Grants*
Funding Opportunity Number: *SRB10020FO002*
Deadline for Applications: *08/31/2020*
CFDA Number: *19.900*
Total Amount Available: *$170,000*

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Belgrade announces an open competition for individuals and organizations to submit applications to carry out grant projects in support of our English Language Program in Serbia. Please carefully follow all instructions outlined below in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

In light of social distancing and restrictions imposed to stop the spread of COVID-10, the U.S. Embassy welcomes creative proposals that utilize video conferencing, distance learning tools, etc.

- **Program Objectives:**

  The U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section (PAS) has set aside funds for English Language Program Grants designated to help the citizens of Serbia strengthen their system of education, promote entrepreneurship and economic development, increase civic engagement, promote regional cooperation and stability, and make progress toward Serbia's accession into the European Union. Grant projects take any number of forms, including English language camps, conferences, workshops, courses, hackathons, online projects, or other activities.

- **Program Themes:**

  The following list represents the project themes that will receive preferential treatment during the English Language Program Grants committee's review of submitted proposals. However, proposals covering other topics will naturally be considered.

  1. **IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WITHIN SERBIA. For example, through projects which:**
     a. support development and improvement of English language teaching at all levels (K-12 and university), as well as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), i.e., for people in certain professions or areas of interest;
     b. model, disseminate information on, and enable access to current/innovative trends, methodologies, tools, and technologies in

English language instruction, including those that assist with distance learning;

    c. establish or strengthen connections between U.S. and Serbian and/or Serbian and regional (Western Balkan) teaching professionals and institutions;

2. **SUPPORTING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs).**
3. **HELPING SERBIAN CITIZENS GET JOBS, PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** For example, through projects which:

    a. help Serbian citizens develop English language skills in order to find jobs. Beneficiaries may include economically disadvantaged students and adults, residents of rural communities, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and members of other vulnerable populations;

    b. support entrepreneurship and innovation, including in STEAM fields (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics);

    c. assist cultural and historical sites attract more English-speaking visitors and thereby promote local tourism and economic development;

4. **MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD EU ACCESSION.** For example, through projects which:

    a. assist Serbian officials and civil servants improve the English language skills needed to accelerate progress toward EU integration;

    b. help Serbian society and the citizens of Serbia make progress toward EU accession in the areas of human rights protection, media freedom, environmental issues, rule of law, combating corruption, etc.

5. **PROMOTING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND STABILITY.** For example, through projects which use English to:

    a. promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect among peoples of the Western Balkans;

    b. identify joint approaches to solving problems or challenges facing the Western Balkan region;

    c. support the normalization of relations between Pristina and Belgrade;

    d. expand and strengthen ties of Serbian professional societies and civil society organizations with their English-speaking counterparts abroad, especially in the Balkan region;

6. **HIGHLIGHTING U.S.-SERBIAN CONNECTIONS.** For example, through projects which inform and educate audiences in Serbia about historical and cultural ties, common attitudes and values, cooperation in different sectors (economic, political, security, health, science), the intersection of national interests, etc.

7. **STRENGTHENING CRITICAL THINKING AND MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS**.

- **Project Participants/Audiences:**

The participants or audiences for the proposed activity:
- should be citizens or legal residents of Serbia, though if the project has a regional focus, a number of participants might come from neighboring countries, too;

- o may fall into any level of English language fluency, from beginner to fluent speaker;
- o may be students (high school or university);
- o may belong to any profession (not only English language instructors).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

- **Number of awards anticipated:** *10-20*
- **Award amounts:** May range from a minimum of *$500* to a maximum of *$30,000*
- **Total available funding:** *$170,000*
- **Type of funding:** *FY20/21 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act*
- **Anticipated program start date:** *June 1, 2020 or later*
- **Funding instrument type:** Grant or Fixed Amount Award
- **Program performance period**: Proposed activities should be completed in 18 months or less

C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants.** The following Serbian and American entities are eligible to apply:

   - not-for-profit civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and think tanks
   - public or private educational institutions
   - governmental institutions
   - individuals if they have a demonstrated capacity to carry out the proposed activities in the application

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:** Cost sharing is allowed but not required and will not impact funding decisions. Please do tell us, however, if you are also receiving funding from other donors as part of your project.

3. **Other Eligibility Requirements:**

   In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS number) and valid registration on file on the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM) website (www.sam.gov). Please see Section D.6 for information on how to register.

   Individuals are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

   Any applicant organization listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) system 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 <u>any</u> activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included in their project activities.

4. **Number of Applications**

Applicants, whether organizations or individuals, are only allowed to submit <u>one</u> proposal for this program.

If more than one proposal is submitted from an individual or organization, all proposals from that person or institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

If an individual or organization currently has another grant from the U.S. Embassy and that project and this one would overlap, the review committee will examine whether the applicant has the capacity to handle both grants concurrently.

5. **Funding Restrictions:**

You CANNOT apply for a grant from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade if:
- your project involves partisan political activity;
- your project involves giving charitable activity and humanitarian aid;
- your project is a fundraising campaign;
- your project is commercial in nature.

See also "Section H" below regarding restrictions related to the project budget.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. General Instructions:

Application forms required below are available in the "Grants" section of the U.S. Embassy Belgrade website:
https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/

- 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 considered technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding.
- Please ensure that:
  - all documents are in English;
  - the proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity;
  - all budget items are in U.S. dollars.

2. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than: *08/31/2020*

3. **Requirement to Email the Application Materials**: All application materials must be submitted by email to BelgradeEL@state.gov. Do not send the application through the mail. If we do not receive a complete project proposal at the above address by the deadline, it will be considered technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

4. **Mandatory Application Forms.** The following documents are **required**:

   a. Either the **SF-424** *(Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)* or **SF-424-I** *(Application for Federal Assistance – individuals)*
   b. **SF424A** *(Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)*
   c. **SF424B** *(Assurances for Non-Construction programs).* However, the SF-424B is required only for those applicants who:
        1) have never registered in SAM.gov; or
        2) have not recertified in SAM.gov prior to February 2, 2019.
   d. **U.S. Embassy Belgrade's Grant Application Form.** SEE GUIDELINES BELOW.
   e. **CV:** Most recent curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé for the applicant**.**

5. **Instructions for Filling Out U.S. Embassy Belgrade's Grant Application Form:** The grant application submitted to PAS Belgrade should contain sufficient information and be explained clearly enough (in English) so that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. It must include all the elements below.

   a. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** A short narrative that outlines the proposed program of activities, including objectives, concrete activities, and anticipated impact or results.
   b. **Problem Statement**: A brief explanation of the problem or challenge addressed in the project. Feel free to provide some basic background.
   c. **Overall Approach / Justification for the Project:**
        1) What approach are you taking to solving this problem or challenge and why do you think this will be effective? Who are you trying to help? Are you going to provide some training, run workshops, develop some curriculum, create opportunities of some sort for participants, create a traveling exhibit or a website, host an event, etc.? Will you be partnering with any other organizations or institutions? How will your project help fix the problem or overcome the challenge, and make a positive contribution to your community or to Serbian society more broadly? Is there some element of the project that uses a similar approach used by American organizations, that results from your discussions with American counterparts, or that reflects shared Serbian-American values?

d. **Project Beneficiaries or Audiences.** Who are the specific target audiences for your program activity and why are you focusing on this group or these groups of people? How will you choose what individuals will participate in the project? In what town or towns will the activity take place?

e. **Description of Project Activities.**

   1) What are going to be your specific "outputs," i.e., what specific activities will take place and how many times will you carry out? How many individuals will be directly involved in program activities?

   2) What is the project schedule? What are the milestones you will reach during the lifetime of the project?

   3) What is the role that your partners -- other organizations, institutions, government offices, and/or individuals -- will play?

   4) How will you publicize what you are doing through public events, press coverage, media interviews, social media, or other means of communication?

f. **Measuring Outcomes/Impact.**

   1) First, what are your larger goals or objectives? What are your anticipated outcomes that will result from the "output" of your activity?

   a) What is the impact you hope to achieve during the project or by the end of the project period? What changes in attitude or perceptions or awareness about an issue or problem are you seeking? What actions do you want individuals to be able to take, even after the project is completed, to fix a problem or improve the situation in their communities? What do you hope the participants will be able to do as a result of the skills or knowledge gained during your project?

   b) Make sure that your goals or objectives for what you want to accomplish by the end of program follow the S.M.A.R.T. acronym. Ensure that they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound. Note: Please do not propose unrealistic goals. Do not say you will impact 1 million Serbian citizens. What can you realistically achieve?

   2) Secondly, what is your plan to measure these outcomes at the end of the project? Will you conduct a survey or do you have a plan to track activities by participants after the main activities are completed? Can you measure success through press coverage or social media metrics? Will you use an outside organization to help you evaluate the success of your project? Make sure you work your evaluation process into your planning and consider including expenses involved in your budget.

g. **Sustainability.** How might the this activity continue in some form or fashion even after the grant project formally comes to an end? What kind of "multiplier effect" will this project have? (For example, if your participants include instructors, journalists, youth leaders, or others with significant reach into their communities or professions, they could potentially share their experiences in some way with others and magnify the impact of your project.) What actions do you predict your participants or audiences might take in the weeks or months after

the grant is finished? What are your possible follow-on plans after this project ends? Do you have an idea for ways to make sure further progress is made – by you, your partners, or other like-minded organizations – to solve the problem or challenge you are addressing in this proposal, even after this project finishes?

h. **Background on the Applicant.**
1) Please provide a short introduction, of two or three sentences, to the individual or organization applying for grant funding.
2) Note past and present activities of the organization, particularly those related to the theme of the project proposal. What experiences demonstrate the ability to carry out the proposed program?
3) Include information on any previous grants from the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, from U.S. government agencies, or other donors or sponsors. Include the amount of grant, name of donor, contact information for the donor, description of activity, and results.
4) If you have received a U.S. Embassy grant before, please state:
   a) the longer-term impact of said grant(s), beyond what you included in your final report to us;
   b) the most important lessons learned from the project(s);
   c) the most compelling argument that your current project merits additional funding from the U.S. Embassy.

i. **Key Personnel and Partners.**
1) Give the names, titles, roles of key personnel in this project, including any organizational staff and trainers, and one-sentence describing the person's qualifications.
2) Provide information on your partner organizations and, if already known, whichever contractors you will use.

4. <u>Budget Justification Narrative</u>:

- After filling out the SF-424A Budget form (mentioned above), use a separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail.
- See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information on what can and can't be funded.

5. <u>Attachments:</u> Please include the following:

- A recent curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé of each of the key personnel who will be involved in the program
- Official permits, licenses, and/or letters of support, if required, for project activities.
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file (See Section H below)

6. Required Registration for Organizations: Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS Number) and System for Award Management (SAM)

- **Required Registrations:**

  As mentioned above, in order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System, or DUNS number), as well as have a valid registration on file on the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM) website (www.sam.gov).

  Individuals applying for a grant are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

  The applicant's partner organizations in the project, whether the applicant is an organization or an individual, will need DUNS numbers, too.

  Contractors delivering goods or services required in the implementation of this project – including suppliers, trainers, web developers, etc – will not need a DUNS number.

  Again, these registrations are required for organizations applying for funding. It is not optional.

  All registrations are free of charge.

  All organizations applying for grants must undergo the following registration:

    - Duns & Bradstreet: to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.
    - NCAGE Code Request Tool website: to obtain an NCAGE/CAGE code.
    - System for Award Management (SAM) website (www.sam.gov): to register with the U.S. Government.

  NOTE: SAM registration must be renewed annually.

- **Registrations Instructions:**

  Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number.

    - Go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform to complete a DUNS application.
    - You can also call +1-866-705-5711.

  Step 2: Complete the NCAGE application:

    - Go to https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx to complete the application.

- Instructions are available at:
  https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf
- For assistance in filling out the form:
  - call +1-888-227-2423 from within the U.S.
  - call +1-269-961-7766 from outside the U.S.
  - send an email to NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil

Step 3: Register on the System for Award Management (SAM) website .

- Go to: https://www.sam.gov.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. **Criteria:** Project proposals that meet the basic criteria as outlined in this NOFO will be considered for funding through the English Language Program. Projects will be evaluated and scored based on the following:

   - **Quality of the project proposal.** The proposal is well-developed, innovative, and offers a creative approach and/or solutions to deal with the stated problem or challenge, focused on specific audiences or participants, with sufficient details that spell out what the project activities are and how they will be carried out, with clear milestones provided. Appropriate partners, if applicable, will take part in the activity. (40 points)
   - **Capacity.** The individual or organization submitting this application—and, if applicable, any partner organization—has the qualifications, skills, talent, and demonstrated ability to achieve the goals and objectives laid out in the proposal. (15 points)
   - **Clarity of Outcomes and Objectives.** The project has a clearly identified, S.M.A.R.T. objectives, with a good approach to measure impact on target audiences. Once again, S.M.A.R.T. stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. (15 points)
   - **Budget.** The figures, narrative, and justification are complete and reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget accounts for all necessary expenses and the justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable and realistic in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. (10 points)
   - **Measuring the Impact.** The proposal outlines in sufficient detail how success, impact, or progress will be measured with a plan (even a basic one) on how to evaluate impact upon conclusion of the grant activity. (10 points.)
   - **Sustainability/Multiplier Effect:** The proposal includes a discussion of the follow-on impact of the funded activity even after the end of the program through the multiplier effect or through expected follow-on activities by the applicant and/or partners and/or participants/audience. (10 points)

2. **Review and Selection Process:** A grants review committee will evaluate all eligible applications. You may be asked to submit additional information.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement 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.

2. 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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY (U.S. EMBASSY) CONTACTS: If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: BelgradeEL@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Guidelines for Budget Justification

a. Personnel:

2) 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.
3) Fees for any staff who might be engaged in the implementation or execution of the project (e.g., project manager, project assistant, accountant, etc.) cannot exceed 30% of the total project budget.

b. Travel:

1) Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries.
2) Costs for international travel, including within the Balkans, can be included in the budget only if that travel is essential to the implementation of the project. Please make sure the project proposal makes clear why international travel is necessary.

c. Equipment: The budget cannot include purchase of any equipment, which is defined as property costing $5000 or more with a useful life of one year (or longer than the duration of the grant). Only rental of equipment is allowed. The rental should be listed under "Other Direct Costs."

d. Supplies: List and describe all the supply items and materials that are needed for the program.

e. 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.

f. Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, include shipping costs (for materials and equipment), applicable taxes, etc.

g. Indirect Costs:

1) Indirect costs are expenses that cannot be linked directly to the proposed program activities, but are overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating, such as rent, salaries for personnel not directly involved in the project, etc.
2) If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA), include NICRA charges in the budget and attach a copy of your latest NICRA.
3) Organizations without a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

h. Cost Sharing: This refers to contributions from the applicant organization, partners, donors, or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It may also include in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time, donated venues, etc.

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