THIS GRANTS OPPORTUNITY IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

Funding Opportunity Title (PROGRAM): *Media Training & Development (MT&D) Small Grants Program*
Funding Opportunity Number: *SRB10020FO005*
Deadline for Applications: *06/30/2020*
CFDA Number: *19.900*
Total Amount Available: *$220,000 (but subject to availability of funds)*

Expected Number of Awards: *17*

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Belgrade is pleased to announce an open competition for applicants to submit proposals to carry out grant projects as part of our Media Training & Development (MT&D) Small Grants Program. Please carefully follow all instructions outlined below in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

1. **Program Objectives.** The purpose of the Media Training & Development (MT&D) Small Grants Program is to fund individual projects that support the strengthening of the Serbian press and ensure the free flow of accurate information to keep Serbia's citizens informed.

   Grant projects take any number of forms, including workshops, courses, public debates, conferences, role-playing sessions, TED Talks, hackathons, online projects, summer camps, online projects, or other activities.

   In light of social distancing measures, and to limit the spread of COVID-19, we welcome creative proposals that utilize video conferencing, distance learning tools, etc.

   Activities should focus on audiences in Serbia, but we also suggest applicants consider putting together regionally-focused proposals that include participants or partners from neighboring nations.

2. **Program Themes:** The Embassy is seeking applications that focus on the following themes:

   a) **JOURNALISM TRAINING & EDUCATION**: Projects might aim to: increase the professional skills of professional journalists; strengthen the investigative journalism skills of media professionals; train journalists on new techniques and approaches to make the transition to digital journalism; strengthen university

programs for journalism students; organize summer camps for aspiring young journalists; teach individuals how to become citizen journalists; and/or promote regional collaboration among professional journalists and journalism students.

b) **MANAGING NEWS OUTLETS**: Projects might aim to: strengthen the ability of managers to operate their news outlets and deal with the challenges they face in the 21st century media space;

c) **EXPANDING PUBLIC DEBATE:** Projects might aim to: increase and deepen reporting on community issues and public policy questions at the local, regional, or national levels; increase reporting, including production of content, on role of U.S. assistance to Serbia and importance of expanded economic, political, and cultural ties between Serbia and its neighbors; and/or support reporting projects that examine the evolution of bilateral ties between the U.S. and Serbia.

d) **DIVERSITY OF VIEWS:** Projects might aim to: expose media consumers to a broad diversity of viewpoints, including pieces that give the perspective of women and/or members of disadvantaged groups in society, e.g., the disabled, the elderly, minorities, the LGBT community, etc;

e) **COUNTERING DISINFORMATION:** Projects might aim to: educate students or other media consumers how to recognize, respond to, and combat disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda in the news and on the internet;

f) **MEDIA FREEDOM / ROLE OF THE FREE PRESS IN A DEMOCRACY:** Projects might aim to: build up understanding within Serbia society of the importance of media freedom, a prerequisite for Serbia's accession into the European Union (EU) and a key value shared by Serbia, the U.S., and the West.

- **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.

  Please be specific in your application about the target audience for your project. (See instructions below under D.4.d.)

  As a general rule, participants or audiences should not be charged for taking part in a PAS-funded activity. If you envisage that your project activity will not be free, please contact PAS to discuss your concept. We might be able to support the project if you can demonstrate how the revenue generated will used to support the larger objectives.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

- Length of Performance Period: Up to 18 months
- Award Amount: Awards may range from $5,000 to a maximum of $20,000.
- Type of Funding: FY19/20 Economic Support Funds (ESF) under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA)

- Anticipated Program Start Date: Depending on availability of funds, but no sooner than July 1, 2020.
- Funding Instrument Type: Grant, Fixed Amount Award (FAA), or Cooperative Agreement.

C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION

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

   - media outlets, journalist unions or associations, student groups, civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and think tanks.
   - public educational institutions.
   - individuals if they have a demonstrated capacity to carry out the proposed activities in the application

   Note: To be eligible for consideration, every Serbia-based applicant must be registered in the territory of the Republic of Serbia (Agencija za privredne registre – APR).

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:** Cost sharing is allowed but not required and will not impact funding decisions. While filling out the application, you will be required to tell us whether you are also receiving funding from other donors for 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 involved in the project 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 any 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 one proposal for this program.

If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from the applicant will be considered technically 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 charitable activities and/or the distribution of humanitarian aid;
- your project is a fundraising campaign;
- your project is commercial in nature, i.e., you are making money from this project.

See also "Section H" below regarding restrictions related to the project budget.
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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 Deadline: All application materials must be submitted by email to belgradepress@state.gov no later than June 30, 2020, at 23:59. 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.

As a backup, we strongly recommend that you also send a paper copy via post (postmarked before the deadline) to the following address:

Media Training & Development (MD&T) Small Grants Program
Public Affairs Section (PAS)
U.S. Embassy
Bulevar Kneza Aleksandra Karadjordjevica 92
11040 Belgrade

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

    a. Either the **SF-424** *(Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)* <u>or</u> **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 <u>only</u> 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. **Budget Justification Narrative (Excel spreadsheet)**.
    f. **CV:** Most recent curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé for the applicant**.**

4. 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.

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.

    a. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Briefly and clearly explain the proposed project, including objectives, participants/audience, activities/output, and anticipated impact and outcomes. Feel free to provide a very brief justification. THIS SECTION IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. The reader should be able to understand the whole project from reading the Executive Summary.

    b. **Problem Statement**: Briefly explain what problem or challenge this project addresses. Feel free to provide some basic background and/or appropriate links.

    c. **Overall Approach / Justification for the Project:** How will this project help solve this problem or address this challenge? Are you going to provide training, run workshops, develop curriculum, create opportunities of some sort for participants, create a traveling exhibit or a website, host a conference (real or virtual), organize a performance or other event, etc? How will this help your community or society?

Some other questions you might want to think about while putting together your proposal are:

1. Why is this a good, effective approach? Are there other, better ways?
2. Should you partner with any other organizations or institutions to help you succeed with your project?
3. What's the American element of your project? Have you consulted with American counterparts? Are you using an approach used by American organizations in similar circumstances? Does your project connect in some way to shared Serbian-American values?

d. **Project Beneficiaries, Audiences, or Participants.** Who is the specific target audience for your project? People of a certain age, gender, profession? Students, civil society activists, officials, academics, young leaders, decision-makers? Members from disadvantaged or minority groups? Why are you focusing on this group or these groups? In what cities, towns, or communities will the project take place? Why did you select these locations? How will you choose the individuals who will take part in the project?

e. **Description of Project Activities.** What specific activities will take place during the course of your project? What is the project schedule or timeline? More specifically:

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. **Intended Outcome (General).** Are you trying to: Promote or raise awareness? Shift attitudes? Generate action (to help improve a community solve a problem)? Strengthen the capacity of a group or organization? Create or strengthen linkages between two (or more) groups or institutions?

g. **Defining Anticipated Outcomes/Impact More Narrowly.**

1. What are your larger goals or objectives? What are the specific anticipated outcomes you hope to achieve? What is the impact you hope to have on the participants?
2. Make sure your objectives are **S.M.A.R.T.** In other words, they should be: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.
3. Think about the impact you hope to achieve by the end of the project period. What do you want the participants to have learned, produced, analyzed, publicized, experiences, etc? What changes or shifts in attitude or perceptions or awareness about an issue or problem are you seeking? What

connections do you want to build? What institutional capabilities do you want to strengthen?

4. <u>After the project is completed</u>, what actions (if any) do you want or expect individuals to take to address the original problem? How will they fix a problem or improve the situation in their home communities? What do you hope the participants will be able to do as a result of the skills or knowledge gained during your project? What longer-term impact will your activity have, on the participants themselves and/or on others?

h**. Measuring Outcomes/Impact.** What is your plan to measure your outcomes or the impact of your project?

1. Will you conduct a before and after survey?

2. Can you perhaps measure success through press coverage or social media metrics?

3. Will you use an outside organization to help you evaluate the success of your project?

4. Do you have some other plan to track activities by participants after the main activities are completed and/or a few months afterwards?

5. Make sure you work the evaluation process into your timeline and include any expenses involved in evaluation in your budget.

i. Sustainability/Multiplier Effect.

1. What longer-term effects do you predict your project will have? What actions do you predict the participants or audiences will take <u>beyond</u> the period covered by your project and your evaluation?

2. Related to that, what kind of "multiplier effect" might 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.)

3. How might this activity continue in some form or fashion even after the grant project formally comes to an end? 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 your project finishes? What further activities would you recommend governmental, educational, cultural, or other institutions take to build upon your activity?

j**. Background on the Applicant.**   Please provide a short introduction, of two or three sentences, to the individual or organization applying for grant funding.

k. 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.

l. Past and Present Activities. What past experience and/or current activities demonstrate your ability to carry out the proposed project? Please be sure to include information on any previous grants -- from the U.S. Embassy, other U.S. government agencies, and other donors or sponsors -- including the project name, the amount of grant, name of donor, contact information for the donor, description of activity, and results. If there were press reports or social media postings, please feel free to include those.

m. If You Are a Past Recipient of a U.S. Embassy Grant. What was the longer-term impact or results of each grant, beyond what you wrote in your final report? What are the most important lessons learned you can draw from the grant? Also, more broadly, what is your most compelling argument why your current project merits the receipt of additional funding from the U.S. Embassy, at the expense of other activities by new partners?

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

- After filling out the SF-424A Budget form (mentioned above), use the Budget Justification Narrative (Excel spreadsheet) 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.

6. <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)

7. <u>Required Registration for Organizations: Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS Number) and System for Award Management (SAM)</u>

- **Required Registrations:**

As mentioned above, in order to be eligible to receive an award, all <u>organizations</u> 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 (<u>www.sam.gov</u>).

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 Alumni Small Grants 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: belgradepress@state.gov

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. **Guidelines for Budget Justification**

   a. Personnel:

      1) 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.
      2) 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. <u>Contractual</u>: 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. <u>Other Direct Costs</u>: 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. <u>Indirect Costs</u>:

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

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

2. **Before You Submit Your Application.**

- Read through the above guidelines one more time to make sure you understand what is required and confirm that your project meets the program's intent.

- Carefully review the application to make sure it is complete and free of errors. Applications which do not include the required information or do not comply with the requirements of the Program guidelines will be considered technically ineligible and will not be reviewed by the review panel.

- Make sure the application is neatly typed and easy to read in English. (Perfect English is not required but the proposal must be understandable to an English speaker.)

- Ask someone who does not know anything about your project to read your proposal to determine if it is understandable. Remember that the members of the review committee will not know anything about your proposal until they read it. If they cannot understand what you plan to do simply by reading the application, chances are it will not be approved.

- Ask someone with experience applying for grants to look at the application and provide advice on how to improve your application.

3. **Continuation Grants.** If you are awarded a grant under this program, PAS may entertain applications for continuation grants beyond the initial grant period on a non-competitive basis subject to: 1) availability of funds; 2) satisfactory progress of your grant; and 3) a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.