

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
U.S. EMBASSY BELGRADE  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION (PAS)

**UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)**

**THIS GRANTS OPPORTUNITY IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	<b>University Partnership</b>
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	SRB10020FO006
<b>Deadline for Applications:</b>	July 20, 2020
<b>CFDA Number:</b>	19.900
<b>Total Amount Available:</b>	\$240,000

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade [hereafter “PAS”] announces this funding opportunity to strengthen or establish academic partnerships between Serbian and American institutions of higher learning.

Please carefully follow all instructions below.

PAS will hold an information session on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> (time TBD) to discuss this university partnership funding opportunity and to answer questions from potential applicants. Please contact PAS at [BelgradePASUniv@state.gov](mailto:BelgradePASUniv@state.gov) for details.

**Priority Region:** N/A. (PAS Belgrade welcomes applications creating partnership that involve the students and professors of any of Serbia’s public universities.)

**Program Objectives:**

The university partnership proposal should support the U.S. Embassy’s overall objectives in Serbia. Broadly speaking, we are trying to assist the Serbian people to: strengthen democracy, rule of law, and the protection human rights; help fight brain drain and advance the country’s further economic development; promote regional stability and cooperation; cooperate with international partners to combat crime, terrorism, human trafficking, and other global challenges; and make further progress towards Serbia’s accession into the European Union. We also strive to explain U.S. policies, culture, society, and values to Serbian audiences and deepen ties between our two countries and our two peoples.

**ACADEMIC EXCHANGE:** A university partnership between Serbian and U.S. institutions of higher learning could involve in-person and/or virtual exchanges involving students, faculty, and/or administrators.

The main goal(s) of an academic exchange could be to provide Serbian students and their professors:

- American academic perspectives on shared areas of interest and lessons learned from the American experience in the focus subject(s);
- insights into current research and academic debates in the U.S. on the focus subject(s);
- the chance to engage in discussions and debate with their American counterparts; and/or
- the opportunity to experience and assess teaching methodologies used in American university classrooms.

On the flip side, the American participants would obviously have the opportunity to learn a great deal from their Serbian counterparts. This partnership program will broaden their perspectives, provide them with new insights, and allow them to learn firsthand from Serbian academics about their research projects. This academic exchange would greatly enrich U.S. universities as well.

Some academic fields that fit within the parameters of the U.S. Embassy's objectives include:

- ***Social Sciences:***
  - *International Affairs*
  - *Security Studies*
  - *Mediation, Peace, and Conflict Resolution Studies*
  - *Regional or Area Studies: European Studies, Russia Area Studies, Asian Studies*
  - *American Studies / African American Studies / Latino American Studies / Asian American Studies / etc.*
  - *U.S. History*
  - *U.S. Government and Politics*
  - *Law and Human Rights*
  - *Holocaust Studies*
- ***Journalism***
- ***Education:***
  - *Civics Education / Teaching of Social Studies*
  - *Holocaust and Tolerance Education*
  - *Special Education (for students with physical and/or learning disabilities)*
  - *Educational Technology (incl. distance learning)*
- ***Economics / Business, specifically:***
  - *Agro-business and Agricultural Development*
  - *Technology & Innovation*
  - *e-Commerce, e-Business*
  - *Renewable & Sustainable Energy Studies*
  - *Tourism Management*

Note: If your institution is interested in developing a partnership focused on other academic fields besides the ones listed above, please contact PAS early in the application process to see if that field would be acceptable within the above framework.

**OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:** A university partnership project could also include one or more of the following activities: curriculum development; needs assessments; joint online courses; joint research projects; development of a joint degree program; development of a study abroad program; sharing of best teaching practices and instructional methods; support for participation in academic conferences or student competitions (e.g., moot court, Model U.S. Congress, Model United Nations); establishing an American Studies course or academic program; and/or setting up a center focused on American Studies.

#### **ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES.**

No matter which menu of activities are in the proposal, the university partnership ideally would further strengthen Serbian academic institutions and methods of instruction.

Directly or indirectly, PAS hopes that this project will assist thoughtful academics at Serbian universities to better prepare their students for further study, for future employment, and to take up the responsibility to be well-informed citizens.

#### **Participants and Audiences:**

Participants will be Serbian and American students, professors/academics, and/or administrators.

#### **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

- Length of performance period: 6 to 24 months.
- Number of awards anticipated: 1-6 awards (depending on amounts awarded to successful applicants).
- Award amounts: From a minimum of \$40,000 to a maximum of \$240,000.
- Total available funding: \$240,000.
- Type of Funding: FY19/20 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act
- Anticipated program start date: Flexible, but no earlier than September 1, 2020.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant.

**Program Performance Period:** Proposed programs should be completed in 24 months or less.

#### **C. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Eligible Applicants: The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- a. public universities in the Republic of Serbia;

- b. accredited U.S. universities (public or private);
  - c. non-profit educational foundations legally registered in the United States with the demonstrated capacity to fulfill the objectives outlined in this NOFO, i.e., to set up one or more university partnership programs.
2. Cost Sharing or Matching. Cost sharing is welcome but not required. The review panel will not use cost-sharing in the evaluation process.
3. 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](http://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](http://SAM.gov).

#### **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

1. **Application Package Accessibility.** All application forms are available at: <https://rs.usembassy.gov/university-partnership-notice-of-funding-opportunity-2020/>

2. **Submission Dates and Times.**

Applications are due no later than midnight on **July 20, 2020**.

Please submit proposals to the Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, electronically via email to [BelgradePASUniv@state.gov](mailto:BelgradePASUniv@state.gov).

3. **Content and Form of Application:** Applicants must follow the instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required.

**Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.**

The penalty for making false statements in proposals submitted to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity;
- All documents are in English;
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars;
- All pages are numbered;
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times new Roman font, with one-inch margins.

Applicants must provide full, accurate, and complete information as required by this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

The proposal must include the following:

4. **Mandatory application forms.** (Again, you can find these on the U.S. Embassy website at <https://rs.usembassy.gov/university-partnership-notice-of-funding-opportunity-2020/>)
  - **SF-424** (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations).
  - **SF424A** (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs).
  - **SF424B** (Assurances for Non-Construction programs).
  - **PAS Belgrade Grant Application Form** -- unless applicant uses own form. (See note under “c. Full Proposal” below).
  - **Detailed Budget** (Excel spreadsheet). (See note under “d. Detailed Budget, with Justification Narrative” below.)
  
- a. **Summary Page.** Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.
  
- b. **Full Proposal:** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. Please feel free to use the PAS Belgrade Grant Application Form on the website. (Please type in “University Partnership” in the “Program” box. You can ignore the character limits throughout the form.) You may instead use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.
  - **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Short narrative (ideally less than 1000 words) that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives, information on participants, description of activities, and anticipated impact and outcome.
  - **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem or challenge to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed.
  - **Intended Outcome/Impact.**
    - How will this project create or strengthen linkages between the two partner institutions? What will be the impact? What outcomes or impact do you hope to have?
    - **NOTE:** Your objectives should be specific and measurable. They should also be realistic. You should be able to complete them within the timeframe of the grant period.
  - **Participants/Beneficiaries.** Who take part in this university partnership project from each of the partner institutions? Which students, professors, and/or professors? How many? How will they be selected. What roles will they play.
  - **Description of Program Activities:** Describe the program activities What specific activities will take place during the course of your project? What is the project schedule or timeline? What are the “milestones” during the course of the project? How will the activities help achieve the project’s desired or anticipated objectives or outcome?
  - **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner. How will the program be

evaluated to see whether it has met the goals of the grant? How will lessons learned be captured?

- **Sustainability:** What is applicant's plan for continuing the university partnership beyond the grant period? What is the expected availability of other resources, if any, to keep this university partnership going?
- **Introduction to the Applying Organization or Institution:** A description of the applicant organization. A summary of past and present operations showing ability to carry out the program and information on previous grants. Information on past projects funded by U.S. Government sources -- U.S. Embassy Belgrade, the U.S. Department of State, and other U.S. Government agencies -- or other public or private organizations or institutions.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles, and qualifications/experience of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations (including most importantly the Serbian or U.S. partner university) and any sub-awardees.

**d. Detailed Budget, with Justification Narrative:** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate Excel spreadsheet to describe each of the budget expenses in greater detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

**e. Attachments**

- 1-2 page CV or résumé of key personnel who will be involved in the program;
- Letters of support from program partner(s) that describes or defines the roles and responsibilities of each;
- Any permission letters required for any program activities.
- For American university applicants: If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and you are including NICRA charges in the budget, include a PDF of your latest NICRA letter.

**4. Required Registrations: Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov).**

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 of which 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. (Note: 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> . Note: This process can take some time. Do not wait to apply for a DUNS number.

Step 2. NCAGE application:

Application page is found 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 within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423.

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766.

Email [NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil](mailto:NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil) for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 3: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

**5. Funding Restrictions.** Again, see section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below.

**6. Other Submission Requirements.** N/A.

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

1. **Criteria.** Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.
  - **Quality and feasibility of the program plan:** The program plan should reflect realistic and thoughtful development of an academic partnership. A quality program plan will indicate key milestones and targets for each stage of the program. This timeline will serve as the basis for determining whether program

implementation is on track. The plan should be reasonable, feasible, and adjustable.

- **Organizational capacity and performance on past activities.** The applicant institution should have experience in the management of university partnerships, academic exchanges, or other international academic programs. The applicant should also have internal controls in place to manage the project, including a financial management system.
  - **Program Objectives:** Proposals should clearly identify the number of faculty, students, and/or administrators who will be involved in this program and their roles, i.e., as instructors, beneficiaries / participants, project implementers / managers, etc. Proposals should spell out the specific, measurable objectives the applicant aims to achieve during the project period. What skills or knowledge will be transmitted to students? What projects will be implemented? What attitudes will shift? What personal or institutional relationships will develop? How might the attitudes or opinions of Serbian and American participants change?
  - **Monitoring and evaluation plan.** Proposals should include a robust evaluation plan to measure progress towards achieving the goals spelled out in the Program Objectives above. The applicant should describe their organization's capacity to evaluate the impact of this partnership program on the students, professors, and/or administrations and perhaps even on the partner institutions.
  - **Budget/Cost-effectiveness.** Indirect (overhead) costs should be low in comparison to direct program costs, such as faculty and student exchanges, curriculum development, and delivery of training. PAS will compare the target number of faculty and students that each applicant proposes to reach through this program, while also assessing the feasibility of those proposed targets.
  - **Sustainability:** What does the applicant predict will be the longer-term impact of this university partnership project after the grant period ends? Thinking about the impact of the project on university instructors, what will be the multiplier effect in future years? PAS would welcome ideas on how the educational institutions might sustain the university partnership upon the conclusion of the federal award, but that is not required.
2. **Review and Selection Process.** A Grants Review Committee will review all eligible applications.
  3. **Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates. July 20, 2020.**

Applicants should expect to be notified within one month after the submission deadline.

Note: Once again, 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.

5. **Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS).** If the amount of an award is \$250,000 or more:
  - PAS 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);
  - An applicant 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;
  - PAS 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 §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

## **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

- 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 solicitation letter 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 proposal received.

- **Payment Method:** The payment method and schedule will be specified in the Federal Award and based on the milestones laid out in the project proposal.

- Administrative and National Policy Requirements

**Terms and Conditions:** 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 200, 2 CFR 600, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.

Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Award recipients are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.
  - 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.

## **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**

If you have any questions about the grant application process or the requirements of this solicitation, please contact: [BelgradePASUniv@state.gov](mailto:BelgradePASUniv@state.gov).

## **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.

- Interpretation Costs. Locally-based interpreters should be hired to assist when necessary. Interpreters' salaries should reflect the local economy. Per diem and transportation costs for interpreters should be included in the budget when needed.
- 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.
  - Materials development. The proposal may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials for participants.
- 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.

### **Other Grant Funding Opportunities**

Visit <https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/> at any time for information on PAS Belgrade grant opportunities.