

**@U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. Embassy Belgrade, Serbia
Public Diplomacy Section (PDS)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

Funding Opportunity Title (Grant Program): University Partnership Program (FY2022)

Funding Opportunity Number: SRB10021FO002

Deadline for Applications: April 15, 2022

Assistance Listing Number: 19.900

Total Amount Available: \$300,000

Please note that this notice is subject to availability of funding.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications for the **University Partnership Program**.

Please check for information on other PDS funding opportunities on the U.S. Embassy website at: <https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/>.

Priority Region: Serbia.

Program Objectives:

The U.S. Embassy works to assist the Serbian people to strengthen democracy, rule of law, and the protection of human rights; help fight brain drain and advance the country's 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.

University partnership proposals should support these goals while facilitating lasting connections between Serbian and American institutions of higher education.

Proposals can involve in-person and/or virtual exchanges for students, faculty, and/or administrators as well as any 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; setting up a center focused on American Studies; and/or establishing or strengthening a career development center or a research and development center.

We welcome proposals which provide Serbian students and 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.

Partnership program proposals should be two-way exchanges that also give American participants the opportunity to broaden their perspectives, provide them with new insights, and allow them to learn firsthand from Serbian academics about their research projects.

University partnership proposals should be crafted with a S.M.A.R.T. logic model. The objective of your activity should be: Specific, Measurable, realistically Achievable within the period of the grant, Relevant to an actual problem or challenge, and Time-based, meaning that you will be able to finish the project and measure the impact by a set date.

In accordance with the [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program advances equity with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. The proposal should also demonstrate how the program will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

In light of social distancing measures, and to limit the spread of COVID-19, we welcome proposals that utilize video conferencing, distance learning tools, etc. If your proposal includes in-person activities, please consider the inclusion of contingency plans, if the health situation requires that social distancing measures be implemented during the grant period.

Grantees are expected to: publicize your activities, including through social media and/or traditional press outlets; and highlight U.S. Embassy support, with our logo included on project-related materials.

Program Themes: The Embassy is seeking applications that focus on any of the following academic fields:

- ***Social Sciences:***
 - *International Affairs*
 - *Security Studies*
 - *Mediation, Peace, and Conflict Resolution Studies*
 - *Regional or Area Studies: European Studies, Eurasian or Russia Area Studies, Asian Studies, Western Balkan Studies*

- *American Studies / American Minority Studies / American Gender Studies*
- *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 / Management / Economic Development / Entrepreneurship, specifically:***
 - *Agro-business and Agricultural Development*
 - *e-Commerce, e-Business*
 - *Renewable & Sustainable Energy Studies*
 - *Tourism Management / Cultural Preservation / Museum Management*
 - *Local Economic Development*

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

All proposals should seek to strengthen Serbian academic institutions and innovative methods of instruction.

Participants and Audiences: Participants or primary audiences for university partnership proposals should be Serbian and American students, professors/academics, and/or administrators.

Depending on focus, projects may have secondary audiences or beneficiaries including media, civil society organizations or wider professional audiences, which you may note in the proposal.

If your project idea might involve citizens of any other countries, check C.4. below to understand restrictions on funding.

Information Session. PDS will hold a virtual information session on February 1, 2022, at 16:00 (4 pm) Central European time to discuss this funding opportunity and to answer questions from potential applicants. Please contact PDS at BelgradeUniP@state.gov for details.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: 6 to 30 months (including the evaluation)

Number of awards anticipated: 1-5 awards (dependent on dollar amounts of the grants)

Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of \$60,000 to a maximum of \$300,000

Total available funding: \$300,000

Type of Funding: FY21/22 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act.

Anticipated program start date: Flexible, but no earlier than September 1, 2022.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 30 months or less.

The U.S. Department of State may entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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.

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

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching.** 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. Please be aware, however, that you must be able to carry out all the activities described in your application with the funding you receive, even if the contributions from other donors or other funding sources fail to materialize.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must receive a unique entity identifier (UEI) from Dun & Bradstreet called a Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS number, 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.

PDS prefers that applicants submit one proposal per organization under this NOFO. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, please include a separate letter in the application packet, explaining to the PDS grant review panel how your organization can manage more than one project and describe your past experience and track record indicating that your organization has the capacity to do so.

If an individual or organization has already received a grant from the U.S. Embassy and the grant period for the new project will overlap with the existing one, the review committee will examine whether the applicant has the capacity to handle both grants concurrently.

4. Funding Restrictions.

You may NOT apply for a grant from PDS if your project:

- involves partisan political activity;
- involves charitable activities and/or the distribution of humanitarian aid;
- is a fundraising campaign;
- is commercial in nature, i.e., you or a project partner are making money from this project, or the activity supports a current or future business or entrepreneurial venture.
- involves the provision of health care or services, childcare, food subsidies, or other social services to populations.

The funding opportunity aims to support specific projects with objectives which can be achieved within a set timeframe. We will not accept applications which are aimed more broadly at supporting your organization's usual or typical daily activities and operations. Those will be deemed technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding by the review committee.

For this particular NOFO, grant funding can be used to cover the cost of travel within the region or between the United States and Serbia for program participants if that is an essential part of the project.

As a general rule, participants or audiences should not be charged for taking part in any PDS-funded activity. If you envisage that your project activity will not be free for some reason, please contact PDS while you are in the process of completing the application to see whether that could be allowed. Depending on the funding source, PDS might be able to support your project, but only if you can demonstrate how the revenue generated will

be used to support the larger objectives and explain that your organization will profit from the modest entrance fee.

See also “Guidelines for Budget Justification” under Section H below for more information on budget items.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Requesting the Application Package

All the mandatory application forms required below are available online at <https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/>. We do not send out hardcopy versions of the application packages.

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.

Please ensure that:

- 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 documents are formatted either to A4 or 8 ½ x 11 paper.

The following documents are **required**:

- a. **SF-424 (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)** if the applicant is an organization; or
- b. **SF-424A (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*)**
- c. **SF-424B (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*)** if the applicant is an organization whose registration in SAM.gov is still pending.
- d. **Grant Application Form for FY2022 (Fiscal Year 2022).**
 - Note: Detailed directions for filling out the form may be found in Appendix A.
 - Please note that for this particular NOFO for University Partnerships you do not need to constrain yourself to the maximum word limits in each of the sections of the Grant Application Form.
- e. **Budget Justification Narrative (Excel Spreadsheet)**: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use the Excel spreadsheet template to describe and explain each of the budget expenses in detail. See *section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.
- f. **Attachments**

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner, if applicable.
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.
- If you still have not completed SAM.gov registration, a screenshot from SAM.gov reflecting that you have started the process.

Please follow all the instructions in Appendix A when filling out the Application Form.

3. **Required Registrations:** Registration for a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), obtaining an NCAGE/CAGE code, and registering within the System for Award Management (www.SAM.gov) is not optional for organizations, i.e., it is mandatory. Individuals applying under this NOFO, however, can skip this section.

Please be aware that SAM registration must be renewed annually.

If an applicant listed is on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#), the individual or organization 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 (but not individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

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

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number, which is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), 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 within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423
For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766
Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.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.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The registration process can take some time and past applicants have, in fact, run into difficulties. Please do not wait until the last minute to start the registration process. If in the end you are unable to complete the SAM registration by the application submission deadline, check the appropriate box in section “h” of the application form after “SAM.gov Registration,” and attach a screenshot from SAM.gov as proof that you have started the registration process. Let us know as soon as you have completed your SAM registration. Until that step is complete, the review panel will not read or consider your application. If you are unable to finish the SAM registration process, we unfortunately will be unable to support your project.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due April 15, 2022.

5. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to BelgradeUniP@state.gov

If PDS does 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.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

- **Quality of the project proposal.** The proposal is well-developed, clear, and innovative. It offers a creative approach and/or solutions to deal with the stated problem or challenge, focused on specific audiences or participants, with an approach that is likely to achieve results and have an impact. The application includes sufficient details that spell out exactly what the project activities will entail, and how and when elements will be carried out, with a reasonable implementation timeline and clear milestones provided. Appropriate partners, if

applicable, have been identified and have agreed to take part in the activity. (40 points)

- **Organizational capacity and (if applicable) record on previous grants.** The individual or organization submitting this application has the qualifications, skills, talent, drive, and/or demonstrated ability, perhaps with the assistance of an identified partner organization or contractor, to carry out the grant activities (outputs) with the participants, which will provide a good chance of achieving the goals and objectives laid out in the proposal. Applicant has sufficient internal controls in place to monitor activities, track spending, etc. If the applicant has received a grant (or grants) in the past from PDS or others, those were carried out in line with the project proposal[s], reports were filed in a timely manner, etc. (20 points)
- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan.** The project has a clearly identified, S.M.A.R.T. objectives (in addition to outputs), with a good approach to measure the impact of the grant activity on target audiences and/or to bring about some change. (S.M.A.R.T. stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.) The proposal outlines in sufficient detail how activities will be monitored or tracked. The applicant also has a plan for how to measure or evaluate impact or results, giving the organization the ability to explain in a report or what has changed as a result of the project, where the project succeeded, where it might have fallen short, and to discuss lessons learned. (15 points)
- **Support of Underserved Communities.** The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation. (5 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. (20 points)
- **Potential for Multiplier Effect/Longer-term Impact/Sustainability.** 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 primary or secondary audiences. (Up to 10 points extra)

2. Review and Selection Process

A grants review committee will evaluate all eligible applications. You may be asked to submit additional information and/or a revised budget. Please also be aware that, depending on the availability of funding, PDS might be able to fund only part of the budget you have requested.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). Please follow these instructions if the grant amount is \$250,000 or more.

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), 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), i.e., \$250,000 or more, this section must also inform applicants:

- a. 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);
- b. 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;
- c. 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.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

PDS anticipates that funding decisions will be made by May 20, 2022.

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.

Payment Method: PDS will discuss payment method and frequency with you before issuance of the award.

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:

- [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.

The final report to PDS must be submitted no later than 120 days after the project end date.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: BelgradeUniP@state.gov

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the fees -- 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. Total 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. Fees should be reasonable, in accordance with expected levels in the locality where the grant activity is taking place.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. 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. If you are proposing a visit to Serbia by a subject matter expert, trainer, instructors, performer, or anyone else from the U.S., please contact PDS to check whether that would be an allowable expense.

Honorarium: Honorarium is limited to a maximum of \$250 per day. Compensation for time spent preparing for a presentation, workshop, or other activity, however, can be included in

Personnel and Fringe Benefits, including hours spent in preparation based on a realistic hourly rate.

Equipment: The budget cannot include purchase of any equipment, which is defined by the USG 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.”

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, see entry for “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, such as rent, salaries for personnel not directly involved in the project, etc. 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. If you do this, you are obviously not allowed to include itemized indirect costs in your budget request.

Cost Sharing. The term “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.

Food and Beverages: Costs for food and other drinks cannot exceed 10% of the total amount of the award. This includes meals for organizers, experts, and participants during in country travel.

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