U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. Embassy Belgrade, Serbia
Public Affairs Section (PAS)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Funding Opportunity Title (Grant Program): University Partnership Program (FY2021)
Funding Opportunity Number: SRB10021FO006
Deadline for Applications: May 17, 2021
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 Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to support the objectives of the **University Partnership Program** as described under "Program Objectives" below.

PAS welcomes proposals from new applicants.

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

Priority Region: Serbia.

Note: PAS Belgrade will give priority this year to proposals with activities focusing on audiences in university cities and towns in Serbia besides Belgrade.

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 of 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.

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.

It 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; setting up a center focused on American Studies; and/or establishing or strengthening a career development center.

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 the U.S. universities as well.

Development of a Research & Development (R&D) office at a Serbian university is another possible area of activity.

Please use the acronym S.M.A.R.T. when thinking about your project. 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.

As you work on the budget, consider all the logistics and the administrative costs involved in your project. For example, if program participants are traveling to a workshop, remember to factor in the how much it might cost to pay for their travel to the workshop location. Limitations and restrictions on what PAS can fund are described below.

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. If your proposal includes in-person activities, please consider the inclusion of contingency plans, just in case the health situation requires that social distancing measures be implemented during the grant period. How might you switch your project from an in-person to a virtual format?

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

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*
    - *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 / Management, specifically:***
    - *Agro-business and Agricultural Development*
    - *e-Commerce, e-Business*
    - *Renewable & Sustainable Energy Studies*
    - *Tourism Management / Cultural Preservation / Museum 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.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (R&D). PAS is unable to fund specific R&D projects, but we welcome proposals that would help Serbian universities strengthen their own R&D efforts.

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

Based on the objectives, themes, and potential activities mentioned above, PAS expects that the participants or primary audiences for your project would be Serbian and American students, professors/academics, and/or administrators.

You might have secondary audiences or beneficiaries, too. Depending on the focus field of your proposed university partnership project, these may include media, civil society organizations or wider professional audiences within your particular field.

Please note that the participants or audiences for the proposed activity should be citizens or legal residents of Serbia, with American counterparts involved as appropriate.

If your project idea might involve citizens of any other countries, check C.4. below to see if PAS can fund travel for participants who might need to cross the border into or out of Serbia. (Regulations for some PAS funding sources do not allow for us to cover the costs of regional travel, but others do allow it.) If regional travel is in fact allowed, as a general rule, at least half the participants in your project should still be citizens of Serbia. Please contact PAS if you have further questions about projects involving participants from other countries besides Serbia and the U.S.

Information Session. PAS will hold a virtual information session on April 1, 2021 at 17:00 (5pm) Central European time to discuss this funding opportunity and to answer questions from potential applicants. Please contact PAS at BelgradePASUniv@state.gov for details. If you happen to miss that online session for any reason, we will provide a link to the recording on the website.

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: FY20/21 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act.
Anticipated program start date: Flexible, but no earlier than September 1, 2021.

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.

PAS and 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. ELIGILIBITY 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, every Serbia-based applicant organization 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 from PAS, 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.

PAS 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 PAS 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.

Furthermore, if an individual or organization has already received a 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 and make a determination.

4. Funding Restrictions.

You may NOT apply for a grant from PAS 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, child care, food subsidies, or other social services to populations.

Please be aware, too, that 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 if that is an essential part of the project; and Grant funding can likewise be used to cover the cost of travel between the U.S. 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 PAS-funded activity. If you envisage that your project activity will not be free for some reason, please contact PAS while you are in the process of completing the application to see whether that could be allowed. Depending on the funding source, PAS might be able to support your project, but only if you can demonstrate how the revenue generated will 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. One of the following two forms:
    - **SF-424** ***(Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)*** if the applicant is an organization; or
    - **SF-424-I** ***(Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)*** if the applicant is an individual person;

b. **SF-424A** ***(Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)***

c. **SF-424B** ***(Assurances for Non-Construction programs)*** if the applicant is:
    - an individual;
    - an organization whose registration in SAM.gov is still pending.

d. **Grant Application Form for FY2021 (Fiscal Year 2021).**
    - Note: Detailed directions for filling out the form may be found in Appendix A.
    - Please note that for this particular Funding Opportunity 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.

Again, please do 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 if an applicant listed 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.

Again, 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@dlis.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, do not panic. Check the appropriate box in section "h" of the application form after "SAM.gov Registration." You will also need to 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:

no later than May 17, 2021

5. Other Submission Requirements

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

If PAS 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 PAS 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. (Once again, 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. Applicant also has a plan on how to

measure or evaluate impact or results, i.e., what has changed as a result of the project, giving the organization the ability to explain where the project succeeded, identify where it might have fallen short, and discuss lessons learned. **(20 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, PAS 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:

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

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

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

completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

PAS anticipates that funding decisions will be made by June 17, 2021.

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: PAS 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:

- President's September 2, 2020 memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities*;
- *Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence* (E.O. 13933); and
- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
    - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
    - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
    - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
    - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
    - Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

3. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. Please be aware that a Final Report to PAS will be due within 120 days after the end of the grant period.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within

their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: BelgradePASUniv@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 PAS to check whether that would be an allowable expense. (Note: Transatlantic travel is not allowed for Democracy Commission grants.)

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.

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

APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Please follow carefully all the instructions below for filling out the **Grant Application Form (FY2021)**. The letters (starting with "a," "b," "c," etc) correspond with the sections on that form, which can be found on our website at https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/.

Please note that for this Funding Opportunity for the **University Partnership Program** you do **NOT** need to constrain yourself to the maximum word limits listed in each of the sections of the Grant Application Form. Please ignore those.

Contact PAS at the email address listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) or Annual Program Statement (APS) if you have any questions while filling out the form.

The application form is structured to follow the strategic planning process followed by the U.S. State Department for public diplomacy activities. The instructions should help you think through the following steps which should results in a proposal that fits with our requirements:

- define a problem or challenge you are trying to deal with;
- develop a plan to deal with that problem or challenge:
    - identify the/your overall goal;
    - figure out which participants or audiences to involve;
    - come up with a good, logical approach;
    - come up with timeline and details about the activities you will carry out;
- tell us how you will evaluate you project:
    - define measurable objectives;
    - come up with a plan to evaluate whether you achieved those objectives at the end of your project, and to collect lessons you learned during the course of the activities.

Please be aware that any applications which are incomplete or do not meet the requirements laid out below and elsewhere in the NOFO or APS will be considered "technically ineligible." Proposals in this category will not go to the review committee and will not be considered for funding.

And before you submit your application via email:

- Read the NOFO or APS once more time. Make sure your proposal and the activities match the objectives, focuses on the right audiences, and follows all the other requirements.
- Carefully review the application to make sure it is complete and free of errors.
- 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 clear and easy to understand. Remember that if the members of the review committee cannot understand what you are trying to do with your project, it will not be approved.
- If you know someone with past experience applying for grants or managing projects, ask that person to look at the application and provide advice on how to improve or strengthen your proposal.

a. Date of Application. Please just insert the date you are sending this application. Make sure the date you provide is not before the day when this NOFO or APS was issued, but not after the application deadline.

b. Grant Program. Simply copy the name of the program you see after "Funding Opportunity Title (Grant Program)" at the very beginning of the NOFO or APS.

c. Program Theme. Go through the list of Program Themes in the NOFO. Your project should fit into the scope of one of these. If you choose "Academic Field," please tell us which one from the list you have selected. If you choose "Research & Development (R&D)," further information is unnecessary.

d. Project Title <u>in English</u>. Please make this descriptive. Try to avoid acronyms, clever names, or word play. Make sure that someone in our budget office in Washington would understand the activity from reading the title. Note: If you have a concept for a more interesting name that would help you attract participants or publicize the activity, you can use that "working title" if your grant proposal is approved. But you should submit reports to PAS using this Project Title.

e. Project Title <u>in Local Language</u>. Please include the Serbian or local language translation of the Project Title in English. In addition, feel free to share with us your "working title."

f. Legal Name of Applicant (Individual or Organization) <u>in Local Language</u>.

- <u>ORGANIZATION</u>: For Serbian organizations, the name should match the one on file with the Agencija za privredne register (APR).
- <u>INDIVIDUAL</u>: Please provide your name as it appears on your government-issued identification document, e.g., lična karta, passport, etc.

g. English Translation of Organization Name. (Optional).

h. Registration. Required for organizations only. See section C.3. in the NOFO for details on how to obtain these numbers.

i. Contact Information. Please provide the name, email, and phone number for the person(s) who can answer questions about this application.

j. Website and/or Social Media. Please provide your organization's website address(es) and information about your social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc). If you are applying as an individual, this is optional.

k. Grant Amount Requested from PAS. Specify the total amount you are requesting from PAS in U.S. dollars, not in dinars. This figure should match with the calculations in the Excel spreadsheet for your budget. If your project proposal includes monitoring and evaluation (M&E) costs, including costs to conduct of focus groups or follow-up impact assessments to gauge the outcome(s) of your project, please add that into your budget. Please do include this figure in section "aa," along with cost share and information on other sources of support.

l. Start and End Dates (Proposed or Anticipated). Please do build in time into your project calendar to assess the results or impact of your activity. Depending on the complexity of your project and the activities, that could take a couple days, or maybe weeks or even months.

m. Brief Project Summary. In one paragraph, so in about five or six sentences, briefly and clearly explain the proposed project, including objectives, participants, any partners, a description of activities, timeline, and the expected impact.

THIS SECTION IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. The reader should be able to get a good understanding of your project from reading the Brief Project Summary alone, without reading the rest of the proposal. We highly recommend including your measurable objectives from item "s" below in this section.

Please focus on the so-called "Five Ws": What are the activities associated with this project? Who will be involved, as participants, as audience member, as partners, etc? Where will the project take place? When will the project take place? Why is your project important or worthwhile? Additionally, what exactly is the change or result or impact you expect to achieve through the project?

Example:

> "Teachers and administrators in eastern Serbia have reported that their students have problems identifying disinformation and tend to share false stories in their social circle. Our organization, the NGO Budućnost, will conduct a five-day workshop in March 2021 at Dom omladine in Zaječar on media literacy and critical thinking for 45 teachers. Trainers from our NGO have worked with local journalists to develop a curriculum based on a model used in Ohio, which uses group project assignments to teach students how to examine news stories critically and develop better defenses against disinformation. Our objective is that by June 2021, at least half of the 45 teachers from Zaječar who participate in our December 2020 workshop will introduce innovative project-based learning activities into their classrooms. Our NGO will work on an exam to test whether students have improved their media literacy and critical thinking skills as a result of that project-based learning."

n. Problem or Challenge Statement. Please discuss the challenge, problem, or difficult issue that your project is going to address. Please make sure this connects with the Project Objective and on one of the Themes or Priority Areas.

Please do provide some basic background and/or appropriate links to related research, academic studies, media articles, and/or your organization's past experience in dealing with this problem or challenge. Please focus on established facts, rather than opinions. We suggest again that you use the "Five Ws": What is the problem or challenge? Who is affected? Where is the problem occurring? When does this problem occur or since when has this been a challenge? Why is it important to address? Your summary should provide website links to your sources.

The paragraph might read something like this:

- "According to studies conducted by the town of XXX since 2010, 20% of young people from the town leave to find better jobs in Belgrade or abroad. In an RTS report that aired on February 12, a spokesman for the YYY manufacturing company said…. (For the video, go to www.rts.rs...) According to surveys conducted with high school and university age students, they state that…. The impact on the local economy is… If the problem of brain drain is not addressed, city authorities state that…. Detailed research on this issue can found on the website of the Center for Youth Employment at www…."

Describe any past attempts, by you or others, to resolve the above problem or challenge. Why do you think those attempts been unsuccessful? Or what still remained to be done after those earlier tries? (It makes sense to us if you are building on past efforts to address the problem or challenge, and learning lessons from what has been done before.)

Note: Please do not start telling us yet about your approach or your activities here. That comes later (in section "r").

o. Overall Project Goal(s).

What is your overall goal? What is the change that you are trying to bring about that will address the above problem or challenge? What is the outcome or impact you will be aiming for?

Check one, two, or at most three boxes that corresponds best with what you are trying to do and the results you are trying to achieve. Then provide a brief explanation, but keep your answers short.

If you check the box for…	**…then after "Brief Explanation" please explain…**
"Promote general awareness about an issue"	…about what issue or topic?
"Educate, teach, or train others"	…about what topic or issue or skill?
"Promote dialogue or debate"	…about what issue or topic?
"Shift attitudes or opinions"	…on what issue and in what direction?
"Inspiring action or change"	…what type of action or change?
"Create or strengthen linkages"	…between which groups, organizations, or institutions?
"Strengthen the capacity of a group or organization"	…what group or organization, and in what area activity? (Examples: strategic planning, advocacy, social media, communications, budgeting, etc.)

Please be aware that from the Embassy's point of view, shifting someone's opinions and inspiring action are perhaps difficult goals, but they are important and worthwhile. Those projects are more likely to get funded than those focused on promoting basic awareness, which is an easier task.

Also, as you think about your intended impact or results you are aiming for, keep in mind that you will need to define objectives, which should be specific, measurable, and realistic in section "s."

Note: Please do not discuss details of your planned activities in this section. That comes later (in section "r").

p. Participants, Audiences, and Beneficiaries.

- Please read the section of the NOFO on "Participants and Audiences."
- Primary Audience(s):
    - To help bring about that change or have that impact you discussed above, what will be the specific audience for your project? What types of individuals will take part? Will they be, for example:
        - Residents of certain villages, towns, or cities?
        - Students or member of a certain profession, e.g., teachers, civil society activists, legislators, government officials in a certain office, academics, young leaders, decision-makers, union leaders, journalists? Will a mix of these groups be involved?
        - Women, men, or a mix of both? Citizens of a certain age?
        - Members from disadvantaged or minority groups, or maybe their teachers, social workers, potential employers, etc.?
        - Citizens of neighboring countries (in addition to participants who are citizens of Serbia)?
    - Why are you focusing on this group or these groups? How will this particular population help you address the problem and have an impact?
    - How many participants, beneficiaries, or audience members will be involved?
    - How exactly will you identify, choose, or select the individuals who will take part in the project if only a limited number can be involved?
- Secondary audiences or beneficiaries. Beyond the main participants (your primary audience), will there be other people impacted by or benefit from the project (your secondary audience)? Who are they? How many of them are there? For example, if you provide training to 10 teachers on media literacy, will they be teaching new skills to their students? If they each have 80 students, your secondary audience will be 800 students? If you improve the capacity of 20 newspaper journalists to improve their investigative journalism skills, their readers will presumably benefit as a result. Can you estimate how many readers would that include?

Note: In the section on Locations, please simply check off the boxes of where participants come from, even if you've already mentioned that previously.

q. Approach and Justification. What general, overall approach will you take with your project to address that problem or challenge, bring about that change you are seeking, and involve your target audience(s)?

We want you to be creative as you decide on a strategy or approach that makes the most sense, while you take into account your overall goal and your target audience. You could, for example: run a youth camp; set up a travelling or virtual exhibit; create an app or website; start an exchange program: run a hackathon; train individuals about an issue so they can train others; develop curriculum on a topic; organize a competition to generate concepts to fix a local problem and then provide mini-grants; host a debate or conference (real or virtual) on a topic; organize a performance

or master classes; organize a course or workshop to teach a skill or a body of knowledge; run an advocacy campaign or lobbying effort. There are lots more options open to you. These are just a couple of ideas to inspire you or to help you start brainstorming. Feel free to come up with your own, unique approach that will help you achieve your overall goal.

Note: Please do not discuss details of your planned activities in this section. That comes next (in section "r").

Please explain how exactly this proposed approach will help your audience/participants address the problem or challenge you mentioned above? Why is this a good, effective way of solving the problem or challenge? How will this help you achieve the intended impact or change you spelled out above? And why do you think this will be more successful than other past attempts?

In this section, also tell us who your essential partners are for this activity to be successful. For example, if you are working with high school students and teachers, you might need to partner with the school administration. If your project is centered upon cooperation with the city council or a media outlet, then they would be considered partners.

Please consider whether you will foresee the need to use any outside contractors for your project to be successful and mention that in this section. Do also include projected contractor costs in your budget in the Excel spreadsheet.

Your answers here in section "q" should provide a strong, compelling enough justification for the logic of your approach for the PAS review committee to decide to fund your project.

r. Project Timeline and Program Activities. What specific activities will take place during the weeks or months required to carry out your project? Please provide details!

What is the project schedule or timeline for your project? Please lay out the "milestones" throughout the project. We assume you will need time to plan and organize, to publicize the activity and identify participants, to implement the main activities, and then to conduct a follow-on evaluation. Consider ways of publicizing your activities, via traditional press outlets, social media, and/or other methods, and include your ideas here.

Example:

- By March 1: We will conduct additional in-depth research on topic X, work with our partners (Faculty of X at the University of Novi Sad and the NGO Inovacija) to finalize our timeline and detailed plans, set up a page for the project on our website, and identify a workshop location during the first two weeks.
- By March 15: We will advertise the workshop opportunity on social media, via email to educational, civil society, and business organizations, and on flyers posted in and around the university. We will accept applications for two weeks.
- By March 20: Applicants selected and notified. We will have participants fill out a pre-activity survey at this time.
- March 31: Participants travel to the workshop venue in Novi Sad.

- April 1-2: Prof. Srdan Jovanovic from the Faculty of X at the University of Novi Sad and Ms. Tijana Kovacevic from the NGO Inovacija conduct a workshop for six hours on X topic on day one and participants will get hands-on training on Y topic for four hours on day 2.
- Apr 3-14: Participants will return to their home cities and work on their projects which they will carry out with youth participants at the American Corners or other available locations in their home communities. Participants should post photos and videos of their projects on their social media accounts, and include Twitter handles and hashtags for our organization and for the U.S. Embassy.
- Apr 15: Participants will come back to Novi Sad to make their presentations about their community projects. Our social media manager will post items on our Instagram account. We will invite press to cover the closing event our NGO president will give an interview to RTS and *Politika*. We will urge media reps to interview participants engaged in their community projects
- By Apr 20: We will update the project page on our website.
- By May 30: We will complete the required follow-on/post-activity assessment or evaluation of the impact of our activities, including putting together a compilation of lessons learned.
- By June 10: We will submit our final project report to PAS.

Just one more time: Do not forget to build in time (and, if applicable, a budget) for the assessment/evaluation portion.

s. Defining Measurable Objectives. Think about the intended impact or change you said above that you wanted to achieve. Consider your audiences and the activities you spelled out. What is the impact your project should have on your participants or audiences (primary and, if applicable, secondary)? What measurable progress should have been made toward solving that problem or dealing with the challenge you discussed at the beginning?

Taking into account everything above, try to define your objective(s) in one or maybe two sentences. We strongly recommend that you include your objective(s) in your Brief Project Summary.

Your objective(s) should be: Specific, Measurable, realistically Achievable within the period of the grant, Relevant to the problem or challenge, and Time-based, meaning that you will be able to finish the project and measure the impact by a certain date.

Examples:

- "Our objective in this project, which addressing the problem of disinformation in eastern Serbia, is that by June 2021, at least half of the 45 teachers from Zaječar who participate in our December 2020 workshop will introduce project-based learning activities into their classrooms as a way to improve the media literacy and critical thinking skills of their students."
- "Our objective in this project, which addressing the employment challenges faced by Persons With Disabilities in Vranje, is that by October 2021, 10 activists mentored through our project will have met with five firms in our city, securing their promise to hire more PWDs, and given two serious media interviews to educate viewers about the contributions PWDs can make in the workplace."

- "Our objective is that by October 2021, following our crisis management seminar with U.S. experts and authorities in Belgrade, government officials from the towns of X, Y, and Z in western Serbia will improve their joint plan related to flooding, fires, and other natural disasters."
- "At the end of 2021, at least 75% of the young participants from Serbia and Croatia involved in the summer camp focused on civil participation will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the issues confronting their counterparts in the other country, 50% will still be in contact with new friends from the other country, and 25% will implement joint projects, either in-person or virtually."

t. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan: Tracking Progress and Measuring Impact, Change, or Results. How will you monitor whether you and your partners are sticking to your schedule and hitting all your milestones? Even more importantly, how exactly will you measure results and evaluate the progress you have made toward your objectives?

Will you conduct "before" and "after" surveys of participants, using SurveyMonkey or a questionnaire you send by email, or maybe run focus groups at the beginning and end of the project? Will you measure change in public opinion in a community? Will you conduct an assessment whether beneficiaries retain new skills or knowledge gained during the main grant activity? Will you track whether participants have taken certain actions in the weeks or months after the main project activity ends? Will you see if new courses are established at a school or new teaching methodologies adopted? Will you monitor whether legislative hearings take place or new laws are passed? Will you track changes in how the media covers your focus issue?

This evaluation and assessment can be done by you internally, especially if the grant is less than $50K. However, if the grant amount is larger than $50K, you should seriously consider hiring or contracting an outside organization to conduct the evaluation and assessment.

PAS understands that you might fall short of your goals. That is completely acceptable from the Embassy's point of view, as long as you carried out the activities you have described, or if you run into unforeseen problems. We expect that some projects will not achieve the objectives laid out at the beginning of the planning process. An honest assessment at the end about a project that is not completely successful will provide both you and us with important lessons learned.

Again, please do remember to include measurement and evaluation into your planning, both in terms of your timeline and (if applicable) your budget.

u. Multiplier Effect/Longer Term Impact/Sustainability. First, check the "Criteria" section of the NOFO to see if this is required or instead whether you get bonus points for filling out this section. Then, start to think ahead, imagining that period of time after you have completed your project, measured or evaluated the impact, and submitted your final report to PAS. Answer whichever questions below would best apply to your project:

- What further actions do you expect the participants or audiences will take in the weeks, months, or perhaps even years that follow?
- What is the "multiplier effect" that could still occur as a result of your project? (For example, what might be the impact of students of a teacher who develops a new curriculum

or who learns an innovative instructional technique? Might a journalist write a story using skills he/she learned through your project? Might participants continue to pass along knowledge to others formally or informally? Do you expect participants or partner organizations to continue working on the problem or challenge at the center of your project? Will partner organizations have to capacity to take on larger, more complex projects?)

- What longer-term impact do you think your project could have if it is successful?
- How might you yourself build on what you accomplish with this project after the grant period is over? How could you expand or "scale up" the activity if this project is successful?
- What further activities might you recommend that governmental, educational, cultural, or other institutions take to expand upon your project idea?

v. American Element or Angle to the Project Activity. Please read the "Objectives" section of the NOFO or APS to see whether or not this is required, but even if not obligatory, including an American element or angle is still recommended. Are you, for example, connecting your audiences with an American expert, organization, or institution, either in person or virtually? Are you basing your activity or program on a model or methodology used by counterparts in the U.S.? Does your project highlight shared Serbian-American values, focus on an interesting chapter in the history of our bilateral relations, or analyze how Serbians and American approach a certain policy issue or common challenge? Are you, for example, using American movies or graphic novels to examine how U.S. society approaches issues like toleration or disability rights or entrepreneurship, and trying to apply that to your audience here in Serbia?

w. Background on Applicant. Please provide a short introduction to the individual or description of the organization applying for grant funding. Do spell out what experience or expertise you have, if any, in the terms of the problem/challenge addressed, the approach taken in this project, working with the audiences/participants, and/or the activities involved in this project. What past or current activities or experience, if any, demonstrate your capacity or ability to carry out the proposed project?

x. Key Personnel, Partners, and Contractors. Provide the names and titles of team members, partners, and contractors. Make sure you also attach the required CVs.

Note: If successful completion of the project will require working with certain institutions or organizations, you will need to provide the appropriate letter of support or memorandum of understanding before the grant can be approved.

y. Current or Completed U.S. Embassy or U.S. Government Grants. For <u>each</u> past U.S. Embassy or U.S. Government grant, please provide the following:

- project name.
    - source of funding, e.g., PAS, USAID, etc…
    - program name.
    - the amount of the grant.
    - start and ends dates of the grant activity or project.
    - a short description of the grant activities (outputs).
    - analysis of the impact of the project (outcomes) and your lessons learned.

    - any links to your website, social media postings, and media stories about that grant activity.
- Additionally, what is your most compelling argument or case for why your current project merits additional funding from the U.S. Embassy?
- Also, if have one or more current PAS grants that would overlap with this project (assuming the review panel approves your application), please explain how you will manage the implementing of the concurrently running activities. You need to convince the review panel that you have the capacity to juggle more than one project at a time.

z. Current or Completed Activities Funded by Other Donors.

For each past grant from other (non-US Government) donors or sources, please provide the following:

- project name.
    - source of funding.
    - the amount of the grant.
    - date of the grant activity.
    - a short description of the grant activities (outputs).
    - analysis of the impact of the project (outcomes) and your lessons learned.
    - any links to your website, social media postings, and media stories about that grant activity.

aa. TOTAL PROJECT COST.

You are attaching a separate Excel Spreadsheet with a detailed budget spelling out exactly what PAS is being asked to fund in relation to this project. This chart tells us what contributions or donations (if any) are coming from you, your partner organizations, and other donors or funding sources. That could include equipment, food and drink, cash, volunteers, services, etc.

Include the name, phone number, and email address for the contact person at each organization.

Please be aware that the amount in the PAS line should match the figure in both section "k" and the final figure in the Excel spreadsheet.

Below is an example:

TOTAL PROJECT COST

aa. Funding Sources.		
Funding Source.	**Budget Item(s) + Contact Info.**	**Amount.**
Public Affairs Section (PAS)	*See Excel Spreadsheet.*	$19900
Applicant	Renting video camera ($50), hiring videographer ($50), designing and producing notebooks for 50 participants ($75).	$175

Partner	Faculty of Pedagogy: Providing venue for workshop and final conference ($150); two professors taking part as judges ($100). Contact: Tanja Jovanovic, Administrative Assistant, Rector's Office, tjovanovic@university.rs, 011222333.	$250
Partner	NGO Prijatelstvo: Two master trainers, 4 hours/day X 2 days ($200). Contact: Vlada Niksic (NGO president), vniksic@ngo.rs, 0653334444.	$200
Other Funding Sources - CONFIRMED	Bank of Sumadija: Funding for the five best projects, 5 x $500/project ($2500). Contact: Ivona Bogdanic, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, IBogdanic@bank.ru, 011555999. Confirmed via email on January 10.	$2500
Other Funding Sources - PENDING	McFood's: Lunch ($5) x 2 days x 60 people ($600); coffee, water, and juice ($50). Contact: Bane Popovic, Charitable Events Administrator, BPopovic@mcfoods.rs, 011555999. NOTE: Requested donation on January 15. Expecting answer by April 20.	$650
Other Funding Sources - PENDING	Embassy of Ruritania: Funding two more of the best projects. 2 x $500/project ($1000). Contact: Klara Tedesco, Cultural Affairs Officer, KTedesco@RurEmbassy.rs, 011222999. NOTE: We discussed with Klara on February 1. Expecting confirmation before March 30.	$1000
TOTAL PROJECT COST		$24675