



Alumni Small Grants Program 2020 U.S. Embassy Rome

The Embassy of the United States in Rome is pleased to announce the launch of the 2020 Alumni Small Grants program for alumni of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchanges. The Embassy is soliciting proposals from alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements specified below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in the program should submit proposals to ItalyAlumni@state.gov by **May 15**.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program provides alumni of U.S.-sponsored and facilitated exchange programs with funding to expand skills gained during their exchange experiences and to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their communities.

Due to the difficulties Italy and the rest of the world are facing with the spread of COVID-19, this year the Alumni Small Grants Program will be dedicated to addressing the social and economic impact of the Coronavirus in Italy and to finding ways to kickstart Italy's economy once the pandemic is over.

The U.S. Embassy Rome will accept public service projects proposed and managed by alumni that support any of the following activities such as:

- Hackathons;
- Business plan competitions;
- Public awareness campaigns;
- Socio-economic analysis with concrete measures to revive the Italian economy after the lockdown period;
- Technological innovations.

Along with the focus on addressing coronavirus, proposals can also include the following themes:

- Women's empowerment – prosperity, peace, security
- Combating domestic violence
- Sports diplomacy
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Environmental protection
- Cybersecurity and building a secure 5G infrastructure
- Countering cyberbullying
- Art and culture
- Cultural heritage to foster economic development
- Countering disinformation
- Strengthening the transatlantic relationship and U.S.-Italy relations

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Announcement posted: March 25, 2020

Closing date for applications: May 15, 2020

Funding type: Small grant awards

Decision date: no later than June 5, 2020

Expected size of individual awards: \$5,000 to \$20,000

Number of grants: Subject to availability of funds

Program Performance Period: Project activities must not exceed 12 months, with a start date within 30 days after the grant is executed. Costs incurred before the official grant period will not be reimbursed.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants:

The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants should be Italian citizens
- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>)
- Projects teams with at least two (2) alumni are recommended not mandatory
- Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations with programming experience, where an Alumnus is involved.

2. Cost Sharing

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity but it is recommended.

3. Grant Program Area

Proposals must address the above mentioned topics. Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place in Italy.

4. Other Eligibility Requirements

Should the grant be processed with an organization, it must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices with regard to beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

If the grant will be processed with an individual, that individual is not required to have a DUNS number or be registered in SAM.gov

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal. If more than one proposal is submitted, all proposals from that alumni team will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application and budget templates are available at <https://it.usembassy.gov/>

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official Alumni Small Grant Program 2020 proposal and budget forms.

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:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity;
- The proposal addresses all questions in the official proposal form;
- All documents are in English;
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is submitted using the designated budget form.

The following documents are required:

1. Mandatory application forms

- a. SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance - individuals)
- b. Budget form
- c. Project proposal

2. Proposal: The proposal should contain enough information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the alumni team wants to do.

Proposals include the following:

Proposal Summary: Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.

Alumni Team Information: Teams of at least 2 alumni are preferred. Along with the name and contact information, describe the role each team member will have in the project and their experience, qualifications, and ability to carry out that role. Indicate what proportion of their time will be used in support of the project. Please include team members resume.

Problem Statement: Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed.

Program Goals and Objectives: The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.

Local Program Partners: List partners who will support your project. Please note if you have an existing relationship with your partner organization(s) and describe their role in the project. If you do not have an existing relationship, explain how you anticipate establishing a partnership with the organization(s).

Program Methods and Design: A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.

Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline: The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal will outline in detail how the proposal’s activities will advance the program’s goals and objectives (listed above). A strong proposal will include:

- Any outcomes the grantee expects to occur because of their program.
- A plan to include the grantee’s reflection of how their program contributed to the program’s goals.

Sustainability: Explain how you plan to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

Communication Plan: Explain how you will promote your project. Include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media you intend to use to share information about your project to beneficiaries and the public. Communications should include U.S. Embassy branding. These include training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement.

Note: Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable especially in the case where branding would adversely affect the safety and security of the beneficiaries.

3. Budget Justification Narrative: Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Budget Restrictions: Alumni Small Grant Program does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- ✓ Humanitarian aid or development cooperation programs
- ✓ Airfare to or from the United States and its territories
- ✓ Activities that take place out of Italy
- ✓ Sustained staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses exceeding 10% of total operational costs
- ✓ Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- ✓ Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments, or entertainment
- ✓ Academic or scientific research
- ✓ Charitable or development activities or the provision of direct social services to a population
- ✓ Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation or programs
- ✓ Programs that support specific religious activities
- ✓ Fund-raising campaigns
- ✓ Programs intended primarily for the growth or institutional development of the organization
- ✓ Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in the project
- ✓ Individual scholarships
- ✓ Personal development
- ✓ Social travel/visits
- ✓ Gifts or prizes
- ✓ Programs that duplicate existing programs
- ✓ Purchase of equipment (rental is allowed).

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria: The U.S. Embassy and Consulate Public Affairs Sections will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

Purpose and summary, description, and implementation plan: 20 points

When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling. Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many people will participate and how will they be selected?

Relevance of the project to topics: 10 points

Alumni Small Grant Program will provide resources for alumni-led projects that address the social and economic impact of the Coronavirus in Italy. The proposals can also contain the above mention themes.

Degree of alumni involvement: 10 points

Teams of at least two alumni are preferred. More than two alumni may comprise the team, however, as the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, country of citizenship, and roles and responsibilities.

Participation and support from reliable local partners: 10 points

A successful application will demonstrate buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. The involvement of local partners is a strong sign that there is community support and that the project will engage a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

Evaluation and impact of the project: 10 points

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities take place and at the end of the project. Overall, the quality of monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies the intended outcomes and how these outcomes will be achieved, 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured, 3) identifies when the outcomes will be measured, and 4) explains how outcomes will be collected (such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups). Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes and consider potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success. Interim and final reporting is required for winning projects and winning applicants should have a reporting plan to share information about the success/impact of the project.

Sustainability: 10 points

Continuation of the program beyond the grant period and availability of other resources if that is applicable. Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

Communication, media and outreach plan: 10 points

The project includes a plan to share information about the project.

Budget and budget narrative 20 points

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Total: 100 points

Disclaimer: This notice is subject to availability of funding. U.S. Embassy Rome does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Issuance of this funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the United States Government. It does not commit the USG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. The USG reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy in Rome has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. The USG reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project evaluation requirements.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The grant award 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, U.S. Embassy Rome 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 U.S. Embassy Rome.

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: Bank transfer. Payments will be made in one or two installments, as needed to carry out the program activities

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions about the grant application process should be directed to: ItalyAlumni@state.gov .