

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
United States Mission to China
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: US-China Connections in Southwest China
Funding Opportunity Number: EAPBJ-21-GR-002-EAP-04152021
Deadline for Applications: June 30,2021
Assistance Listing Number: 19.040 – Public Diplomacy Funding
Total Amount Available: Amount pending funds availability
Maximum for Each Award: \$30,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy, Beijing is pleased to announce an open competition for awards through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). We seek to support projects that promote connections between the provinces of Southwest China and the American people. Funding for this program is now available through our PAS grants office. This call for proposals outlines funding priorities, strategic themes, and procedures for submitting funding requests. Applicants may apply for funding for any amount up to \$30,000.

Priority Region: Southwest China, including the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and the Chongqing Municipality).

Program Objectives:

PAS Beijing invites proposals for projects that promote connections between the people of China and the U.S. and Southwest China (including the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the Chongqing Municipality, and Yunnan).

Supporting dialogue and understanding between our two peoples and creating a space for engagement with a diversity of opinions is a cornerstone of U.S. public diplomacy. This program seeks to promote a broader understanding of American and Chinese shared economic, health, scientific, environmental, and technological goals and interests in order to maximize the benefits to both societies and also to protect the planet. Also of interest are university-to-university partnerships for Chinese and American students to approach and solve environmental, health, and science problems of mutual interest, project-based learning, and long-term student-to-student interaction. Competitive proposals should include a connection with American expert(s), organization(s), or institution(s) that will promote increased cooperation between the people of the United States and China even after the program has ended. Proposals that promote an understanding of American higher education in the fields of the environment, science, health, and technology could be considered under this category.

Proposals can include, but are not limited to the following themes:

- **Enhancing US-China relations:** Projects that support the enhancement of U.S.-China people-to-people relations, especially with regard to China's Southwest region.

- **U.S. Business in China:** Programs that provide a framework for U.S. businesses in Southwest China to develop and share American values through specific corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities.
- **Education, cultural exchange, and diversity and inclusion activities.** These may include expanding access for persons with disabilities, women’s empowerment, LGBTQI rights, and the preservation of minority cultures, especially including projects to ensure sustainable incomes and prosperity for minority communities and those with otherwise limited access to networks of support.
- **Environment:** Collaboration on environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation, (particularly protection of habitats and wildlife unique to Southwest China), climate change, and other related issues. Mutual sharing of expertise in environmental protection and conservation. Public outreach on low-carbon development, limiting climate change impacts, and improving climate resilience.
- **Health:** Projects that promote a greater understanding of the value of cooperation between China and US to improve public health, including increasing understanding of U.S.-China cooperation on health research, supporting policy development, and enhancing program implementation.
- **English Language:** Projects that support innovative, interactive teaching and learning of the English language. Projects that directly support ongoing efforts of the Mission English Language Office will be especially welcome.

Participants and Audiences:

Residents and members of civil society institutions in the priority region. National level programs that have substantial activities in the priority region will also be considered.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Total available funding: Amount pending funds availability

Type of Funding: Public Diplomacy funds

Anticipated program start date: Variable, (upon signature of award documents.)

Number of awards anticipated: to be determined pending availability of funding

Award amounts: awards of up to \$30,000 per project. Applications must justify required costs; there is no expectation that applications should require the maximum award.

Budgets must be commensurate with the applicant’s capacity and be sufficient to accomplish the goals as expressed in the proposal.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, fixed amount award, or cooperative agreement. A Cooperative agreement “is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award.”

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 12 months or less.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following are eligible to apply:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, and individuals carrying out programs supporting of civil society. museums, parks, reserves, and community organizations. Corporate entities and individuals may only receive funding in limited circumstances.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

While not required, otherwise competitive applications that provide cost sharing or cost matching that substantially increases the reach of the proposed program will be selected over equally competitive applications that lack this element of cost-sharing or matching.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals who are to receive awards are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

Expertise and established relationships with Chinese institutions/organizations and local officials in the area where the proposed project/program(s) will be conducted is strongly preferred.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at:

<https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/education-culture/grant-opportunities/> and <http://www.grants.gov> .

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.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English

- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

1. Mandatory application forms

- **SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)**
- **SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)**
- **SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov)**

2. Summary Page: Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

3. Proposal: The proposal should contain sufficient information so that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary: Brief** narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present activities or operations, demonstrating the ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants received from the U.S. Embassy and/or other government agencies or international organizations.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed.
- **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?

- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

Proposals may **NOT**:

- Solely benefit one Chinese or American entity, business, or university.
- Generate income. All income generated from grant projects must be used to further the goals of the programs. For example, income earned through a demonstration project must be used to extend the duration of the project or fund more participants.
- Should not primarily focus on academic or scientific research.
- Programs that extend and deepen relationships between the United States and China in Southwest China will be given preference during review.

4. Budget Justification Narrative: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions below for further information.

5. Attachments:

1. 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 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.
2. Official permission letters, if required for program activities
 - Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

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

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (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%20NCA%20GE.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.

3. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than June 31, 2021

4. Other Submission Requirements

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

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

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

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 25 points: The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget – 10 points: The budget justification is 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.

Monitoring and evaluation plan – 15 points: Applicant demonstrates it can measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

Sustainability – 10 points: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

Cost sharing and/or Matching: Otherwise competitive applications that *also* provide cost sharing or cost matching thereby substantially increasing the effectiveness and impact of the program will be selected over equally competitive applications that lack cost sharing or matching.

Review and Selection Process:

A review committee will evaluate and score all eligible applications.

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: Payment will be made via electronic transfer whenever possible. Payment period and amounts will be described in the award terms agreed with the applicant.

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.

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: NOTE:

- 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).

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. Grantees are expected to keep the GO or Grants Officer Representative (GOR) updated on progress throughout the project period. The GO or GOR is also responsible for site visits to some or all the activities supported by the award as stated in the award agreement. The grantee should notify the GO or GOR of any problems or issues that might make it difficult for the grantee to comply with the terms of the award within the project period.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

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

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

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. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

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