



**U.S. Department of State
U.S. Embassy, Lusaka
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

The Embassy of the United States in Lusaka is pleased to announce an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2023 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2023). We seek proposals from teams of **at least two alumni** that meet all program eligibility requirements listed below. Pending availability of funds, AEIF 2023 will consider proposals between \$5,000 and \$35,000.

Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2023 should submit proposals to ZambiaAlumni@state.gov by **Friday, January 31, 2023 at 08:00 a.m.**

Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AEIF is designed to increase the impact of the U.S. government’s investment in exchange participants and programs by helping alumni develop and implement projects that support U.S. foreign policy objectives, promote shared interests, and benefit local communities. Proposals must address one of the themes listed above. Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible.

The U.S. Embassy will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support themes such as:

- i. Promoting accountability and transparency;
- ii. Building civic participation and good governance;
- iii. Advancing women and girl’s empowerment;
- iv. Promoting media professionalism, responsibility, and independence;
- v. Promoting environmental preservation and addressing climate change; and
- vi. Other areas where alumni can use their expertise to respond to a community need.

AEIF 2021 Project Examples: Please find several examples of successful AEIF 2021 projects below. Visit <https://alumni.state.gov/aeif/congrats-2021-aeif-competition-winners> to read more about these projects.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Funding type: Small Grant Award(s)

Expected size of individual award: \$5,000 to \$35,000

Program Performance Period: Between June 2023 and June 2024

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligibility Information

The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>) or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team members in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries.
- Proposals should be in the range of U\$5,000 to U\$35,000.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni. Not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions are not eligible to apply in the name of the organization but can serve as partners for implementing project activities.
- Inclusion of cost sharing is encouraged for this opportunity.

2. Grant Program Area

U.S. Embassy Lusaka will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support program areas that may include, but not limited to:

- vii. Promoting accountability and transparency;
- viii. Building civic participation and good governance;
- ix. Advancing women and girl's empowerment;
 - x. Promoting media professionalism, responsibility, and independence;
 - xi. Promoting environmental preservation and addressing climate change; and other areas where alumni can use their expertise to respond to a community need.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Interested applicants should submit the following documents:

- a) 2023 [AEIF Proposal Form found here](#).
- b) 2023 [AEIF Budget Form found here](#).
- c) Proposal Forms and Budget Forms should be submitted via emailed to:
ZambiaAlumni@state.gov

E. BUDGET RESTRICTIONS

AEIF 2023 does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments, or entertainment
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria: The U.S. Embassy will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. The selected proposals will then be reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of regional and exchange program experts located at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

<p>Relevance to Application Theme</p> <p>The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the theme(s) of the competition. The narrative explains any relevant local context the D.C. Selection Committee may not be aware of in relation to this project. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy in nature (i.e. not development or military).</p>
<p>Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan</p> <p>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 will participate? How will they be selected?</p>
<p>Degree of Alumni Involvement</p> <p>Projects must include the involvement of at least two (2) exchange alumni. They may be the project team leaders or collaborate directly with PAS in formulating the project. More than two alumni may comprise the team, however, the minimum is two. 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.</p>
<p>Participation and Support from Local Partners</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement 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.</p>

Evaluation and Impact of the Project

A monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how that data collection will be accomplished. Well-crafted indicators should be used to understand a program's progress toward the desired results. An M&E plan should be reviewed for the following:

- Completion
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART criteria
- Feasibility of baselines and targets
- Data quality plan
- Capacity to implement plan

Sustainability

Have the applicants considered how the project will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan

The project should include a clear plan and timeline for how and when the team will share information about the project. It is important to ensure that the U.S. Embassy gets recognition throughout the process, if circumstances permit.

Budget and Budget Narrative

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.

***Disclaimer:** This notice is subject to availability of funding. U.S. Embassy Lusaka does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Only successful applicants will be contacted.*

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

If a proposal is selected for funding, the alumni team should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include: 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>. Please note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

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, 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.

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 ZambiaAlumni@state.gov