

# NOFO 2021

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**  
**U.S. EMBASSY *San Jose, Costa Rica***  
**Notice of Funding Opportunity**  
**For Costa Rica only**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Funding for English Language, STEAM, Entrepreneurship, and Digital Media Literacy/Countering Disinformation Programs  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** *4112-FY21-01*  
**Deadline for Applications:** April 15, 2021  
**CFDA Number:** 19.040 Public Diplomacy Programs  
**Total Amount Available:** \$100,000

## **A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out a program (or project) in one or more of the following focus areas:

- Improve the quality of English language education at the preschool, elementary, secondary and higher education levels;
- Improve the quality of, and access to, science, technology, engineering, arts and design, and mathematics (STEAM) education for girls at the elementary and secondary education levels;
- Inspire entrepreneurship in under-represented communities particularly among migrant, women, Afro-descendent, and indigenous communities.
- Increase awareness of disinformation and build digital media literacy skills to better identify reliable information.

### **Project Objectives:**

The Public Affairs Section (hereafter, PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica (hereafter, Embassy) works with government and non-government partners throughout Costa Rica to improve mutual understanding between the people of Costa Rica and the United States, and to expand and improve educational opportunities (including English language, STEAM, and entrepreneurship, and digital media literacy/countering disinformation, among other priorities) in order to promote economic development and democracy. The goal of the projects solicited through this Notice of Funding Opportunity is to complement Embassy initiatives to promote mutual understanding through cultural, educational, and professional development programs. Proposals should address one or a combination of the following areas: English, entrepreneurship, STEAM education, and/or digital media literacy/countering disinformation.

**English language projects should improve English education and empower young English learners** by increasing their exposure to educational opportunities or improving the skills of English language teachers. Proposals may include classroom instruction, but priority will be given to projects that include beyond-the-classroom enhancement activities and/or demonstrate coordination with NGO or Government of Costa Rica initiatives, including the Ministry of

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Education (in particular, bilingual schools). Priority will be given to projects that incorporate under-represented communities, including but not limited to migrant, women, Afro-descendent, and indigenous communities as well as populations residing outside the San Jose metropolitan area.

**STEAM education projects should improve the quality of and/or access to STEAM education for girls** and encourage girls to enter STEAM fields. Projects may also focus on improving the skills of teachers to enhance STEAM education for girls. Priority will be given to projects that include beyond-the-classroom enhancement activities in coordination with private sector partners and/or the Ministry of Education (in particular, public schools implementing the national STEAM curriculum). Priority will be given to projects that incorporate under-represented communities, including but not limited to migrant, women, Afro-descendent, and indigenous communities as well as populations residing outside the San Jose metropolitan area.

**Entrepreneurship projects should promote exposure to and knowledge of basic business skills**, for example, creation of business plans/strategies, access to finance, business pitches, digital marketing, scaling, resilience, etc. Priority will be given to projects that aim to respond challenges and opportunities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Priority will also be given to projects that incorporate under-represented communities, including but not limited to migrant, women, Afro-descendent, and indigenous communities as well projects that deepen the entrepreneurship ecosystem across Costa Rica.

**Digital media literacy/countering disinformation projects should build critical thinking skills in consuming and disseminating fact-based information, especially on social media, to bolster resilience against disinformation.** Priority will be given to projects that enhance digital media literacy among populations vulnerable to spreading disinformation and/or build skills among journalists and media professionals working to counter disinformation. Projects should incorporate innovative educational approaches, including the use of digital technology, to identify and limit the spread of disinformation, especially during elections when disinformation campaigns may be more prevalent.

**Project activities should comply with health and safety regulations established by Costa Rican authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants should consider activities that can be implemented virtually and/or demonstrate that in-person activities could be shifted to a virtual format as local conditions require.**

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: *1 to 18 months*

Number of awards anticipated: *5-10 awards (dependent on amounts)*

Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of *\$10,000* to a maximum of *\$25,000*

Total available funding: *\$100,000*

Type of Funding: *FY21 Smith Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds*

Anticipated project start date: *August 2021*

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

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**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant, Fixed Amount Award

**Project Performance Period:** Proposed projects should be completed in *18 months* or less.

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply: Costa Rica-based:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions (cannot be for-profit organizations)
- Individuals
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

### 2. Cost Sharing or Matching

No cost sharing is required

### 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](http://www.SAM.gov), when submitting grant proposal. Failure to have one will result in technical disqualification. 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.

## D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at: <https://cr.usembassy.gov> or <https://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

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- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper
- 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**. *Failure to do so will result in technical disqualification.*

1. **Mandatory application forms can all be found at <https://www.grants.gov>**
  - SF-424 (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*) or SF-424-I (*Application for Federal Assistance --individuals*)
  - SF424A (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*)
  - SF424B (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*)

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

**3. Proposal (5 pages maximum):** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format (following the previously stated guidelines under *content of application*), but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed.
- **Project 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.
- **Project Activities:** Describe the project activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project 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 project. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this project?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** Throughout 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.

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**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-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the project
- Letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for project 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](http://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@dliis.dla.mil](mailto:NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil) for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

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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 April 15, 2021.

## 4. Funding Restrictions

None

## 5. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to [PAgrantapplications@state.gov](mailto:PAgrantapplications@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 project activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

**Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 25 points:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

**Monitoring and evaluation plan – 20 points:** Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The project includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

**Organizational or Individual Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 10 points:** The organization or individual 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.

**Budget – 10 points:** The budget justification is detailed including quantity descriptions of each budget item included. 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.

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**Sustainability – 10 points:** Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

## 2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee convened by the U.S. Embassy San Jose Public Affairs Office will evaluate all eligible applications.

## 3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, 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), 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 §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

## 4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates August 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 project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

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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:**

**All expenditures paid with funds provided by this Agreement must be incurred for authorized activities, which take place during the grant period, unless otherwise stipulated.**

Payment of funds under this Agreement will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2CFR 200.300 – 200.303.

The Standard Form (SF) 270 Request for Advance or Reimbursement Payments may be requested in the amounts required by the recipient to carry out the purpose of this award. The SF-270 must be certified by the appropriate person, numbered consecutively and identified for the period which payment is claimed. Each payment must be the amount of expenditures anticipated or actually incurred during the requested period less any unexpended funds remaining from prior payments. Recipients should request funds based on immediate disbursement requirements and disburse funds as soon as possible to minimize the Federal cash on hand in accordance with the policies established by the U.S. Treasury Department and mandated by the OMB Circulars. This information must be reflected on the SF-270 submitted for payment.

Send payment requests to: Grants Officer Lauren Garza

Requests for payments must be submitted in sufficient time to allow at least ten (10) working days for processing.

## 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](#)



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- [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: NOTE:

- 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. A final certified financial report and program report must be submitted to the Grants or Principal Officer within ninety (90) days after the award period end date.

The first page of the Performance Progress Report Form (PPR) must be submitted with all program reports. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted for all financial reports. These forms can be accessed at: <https://www.grants.gov>.

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As appropriate in accordance with above mentioned information collections, these reports will contain, brief information on the following:

- A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives of the Federal award established for the period.
- The reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate.
- Additional pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

**Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future awards and/or delays in payments.**

## **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact [PAgrantapplications@state.gov](mailto:PAgrantapplications@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 project, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the project.

**Travel:** Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this project, for both program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the project 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 project, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), 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 project. 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 project activities.

**Other Direct Costs:** Describe other costs directly associated with the project, 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.

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Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the project 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.