

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY PRISTINA / PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: The BRIDGE Program: English Language for Cross Cultural Communication

Funding Opportunity Number: PAS-PRISTINA-FY21-01

Deadline for Applications: February 25, 2021

CFDA Number: 19.900

Total Amount Available: \$400,000

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy in Pristina announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out a program to provide after-school English language instruction and enhancement activities to ethnically diverse groups of youth age 14-18 in six (6) Kosovo's municipalities. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Priority Region: Kosovo

Background to Program:

The BRIDGE (Building Respect, Inclusion, Diversity, and Good will through English) program is built upon the success of the Access English Language Microscholarship Program. The BRIDGE program seeks to gather 30-40 students per program site from various ethnic communities, majority and minority, together in a classroom setting. Through English learning instruction, students will improve their communication skills, cultivate tolerance, and overcome their linguistic and ethnic divides. Selected students, as the future leaders of Kosovo, will help build a multicultural, multiethnic, religiously diverse and tolerant society in Kosovo, reinforcing a common Kosovo identity. Furthermore, the BRIDGE program aims to develop marketable technical, career development and leadership skills. In addition to regular after-school English classes, students of the BRIDGE program will learn about development opportunities available to them, and come to understand how they can contribute to the local community and economic development. Examples may include English for Business and Tourism for regions known for tourism development, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) courses, and other relevant ideas.

Program Goal:

This two-year program provides Kosovo's youth with a common language, English, in which to communicate – a key tool in overcoming the deep ethnic divisions in Kosovo that those

seeking to undermine Kosovo's sovereignty, as well as political and economic potential, seek to exacerbate and exploit. This English language program removes roadblocks to inter-ethnic communication and facilitates inclusion.

The BRIDGE program will bring between 30-40 youth per program site for at least 4 hours of after-school classes, no less than three times per week, for a two-year period. In addition to English learning, the lessons will be accompanied by enhancement activities including such topics as: critical thinking and media literacy, STEAM and makerspace activities that introduce students to the modern innovation economy. Activities must also include outdoor civic activities, intensive summer schools, camps, etc., that directly introduce participants to the American values of inclusion and interethnic harmony. Potential applicants are expected to propose a rich and innovative list of activities to achieve the objectives laid out below.

As English is a key skill in the global marketplace, the program additionally seeks to align education with employment opportunities, reducing Kosovo's economic vulnerabilities and developing Kosovo's human capital.

Program Objectives:

Potential applicants should clearly address in their proposals how they intend to reach the below objectives one by one.

Objective 1 – Before September 2021, the winning applicant will set up at least six (6) regional classes in following cities: Kamenica, Mitrovica, Gracanica, Peja, Prizren, and Sterpce, as evidenced by the number of classes established.

Explanatory note 1 for Objective 1: Applicants are asked to propose and budget for 6 regional English instruction programs. Depending on their budget plans, applicants are allowed to reduce their regional programming to five (5) cities at minimum, or increase them to 7 (seven) at maximum. Note that reducing or adding will have very little weight in the evaluation of a successful application as the focus should be on the quality of instruction and reaching the objectives laid out here.

Objective 2 – By the start of project implementation, the winning applicant will have reached out to rural areas to recruit at least 50% of participating students, as evidenced by the number of participants from rural areas.

Objective 3 – By the start of the project implementation, the winning applicant will have recruited no less than 50% females, as evidenced by the number of males and female participants.

Objective 4 – By the start of project implementation, the winning applicant will have recruited for all regional classes, depending on the municipality's ethnic composition, a diverse group of student participants from no less than two of the following communities: Kosovo Albanian (K-Albanian), K-Bosnian, K-Turkish, K-Roma, K-Ashkali, K-Egyptian, K-Gorani and K-Serbian student participants, as evidenced by the number of participants from various ethnicities participating in a class.

Explanatory note 1 for Objective 4: for project purposes, we define 'minority' as a group that has a different ethnicity from the majority population in the specific implementing

municipality. For example, K-Albanian may be the main population in one municipality, and K-Serbian may be the minority in that specific municipality. Therefore, if the majority community in one municipality is K-Albanian, and the minority communities are K-Serbian and K-Roma, then the class ethnic composition should definitely include K-Albanian and K-Serb students, and potentially K-Roma students.

Explanatory note 2 for Objective 4: The program size in each municipality should be no less than thirty (30) and no more than forty (40) participants. The potential applicant should budget to divide the class into two groups. The composition of each group should have an approximately equal percentage of students from different ethnicities. The wide range of the number of participants, i.e. 30-40, is made on purpose to allow applicants to propose the optimal number to allow for a quality program.

Explanatory note 3 for Objective 4: The potential applicants should plan and budget for outreach activities with students' parents and the community to help them understand the program. The applicants should plan for national and local televised outreach activities by creating featured TV stories about The BRIDGE program, and participating in various free or sponsored TV shows to increase the target population's awareness of the program.

Objective 5 – By end of the two-year program, at least 80% of participating students will team up to learn and communicate with each other in English, learn about the U.S. culture and values, as well as each other's culture, and engage together in innovative and creative activities and networking opportunities, as evidenced by the retention levels of students throughout the program.

Objective 6 – By the end of the program, the ethnically mixed classes of students will have built a stronger sense of Kosovar identity and inclusion, and a stronger sense of the phrase “Kosovo is my home”, as evidenced by their inclusive individual and group narratives.

Objective 7 – By the end of the program, at least 90% of participating students will have embraced American values of diversity, inclusion and inter-ethnic harmony, as evidenced by their shared views on these specific topics.

Objective 8 – By end of the two-year program, at least 90% of participating students will have built a sense of solidarity with one another and an appreciation of each other's culture and differences through joint regional networking events and activities, as evidenced by the number of joint activities participated in.

Explanatory note to Objective 8: potential applicants should plan and budget for joint regional activities for all participants, such as student exchange trips, joint camps, joint field visits, and other innovative joint activities that increase communication among participants.

Objective 9 – By the end of the program, all participating students will have improved their English communication skills through their participation in after-school activities, as evidenced by their English communication test skills.

Objective 10 – By the end of the program, at least 10% of participating students will have made an attempt to enter a U.S. educational institution, as evidenced by the number of participants who either apply or take college admission tests.

Objective 11 – By the end of the program, at least 80% of participating students demonstrate an increase in their media literacy and critical thinking skills, as evidenced by their narratives of social media use.

Objective 12 – By the end of the program, at least 50% of participating students demonstrate an increase in their employment skills through participation in job interviewing role-playing activities, business writing and business field visits, as evidenced by the quality of such skills improved.

Types of Potential Activities:

As indicated above, we are looking for proposals that include a wide variety of program activities to reach the above objectives. Potential applicants should consider the following potential activities, not listed in the order of importance, in their program design. However, this list should not limit potential applicants from proposing additional or more robust activities that they feel will better achieve the above objectives. Potential applicants should detail a plan of their activities throughout the project duration.

- Regular English language learning classes
- English for Specific Purposes. E.g. English for Business, English for Tourism, English for Hotel Management and Catering.
- Site visits to businesses, minority and majority ethnic restaurants, etc.
- Potential internship placement
- Project-based learning activities (e.g. Kosovo tourism promotion projects, tech-related projects, etc.)
- Camps
- Cross-cultural activities
- Activities which build awareness of the importance of diversity
- Innovative STEAM and maker space activities
- Job interviewing exercises
- Entrepreneurship activities
- Leadership activities
- Diverse expert and guest speaker talks
- Civic activism
- Creative writing activities
- Oral history exercises
- Slam poetry writing and competitions
- Critical thinking activities
- Media literacy activities

As indicated, students should learn together for a period of at least two years. This period does not include the preparatory period of the potential applicant, i.e. to set up their regional sites and the like.

Mode of Program Delivery:

The U.S. Embassy Pristina is looking for proposals that show flexibility in their mode of delivery. Potential applicants should plan and budget for in-person activities. However, they

should show flexibility to adapt to changes and be able to implement this program virtually or through a blended format. It is required to have a Plan B or C if the current pandemic continues through the program start date, or if a similar situation should arise during program implementation.

Partnerships:

Potential applicants are required to formally partner with local NGOs, especially those focused on working with minority groups in the respective municipalities, to implement this program. Proficiency in English language is required for all applying organizations. Organizations and instructors with knowledge of two or more additional local languages will receive evaluation preference.

Cooperation:

Potential applicants are encouraged to work with other U.S. Embassy supported projects and platforms to accomplish BRIDGE Program goals. Such platforms include, but not limited to, American Corners in Kosovo, Kosovo United States Alumni Association (KUSA), and the American Advising Center. For example: to reach the Objective 10, it is advisable to cooperate with the American Advising Center, as they specialize in promoting the U.S. education.

Media Engagement Plan:

Applicants should propose a clear media plan in their proposal. This plan should include how the organization plans to promote the project, how and how often they plan to share project experiences, activities, and public media appearances with the Embassy's Public Affairs Section (PAS). Applicants should also detail their willingness to work regularly with the U.S. Embassy to shape and amplify their public messaging through the U.S. Embassy's public engagement platforms.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In their narrative proposal, applicants should submit a clear monitoring and evaluation plan, including a logic model, clear inputs, activities, outputs, short term and long-term outcomes, indicators and data collection methods and tools.

Participants and Audiences:

This program's primary audience is:

Youth in Transition (14-18 years old - upper secondary school students transitioning to higher education or the job market).

Applicants are encouraged to use emerging decision makers and established influencers in their program activities to support their targeted youth in transition audience.

Definitions:

Youth in transition are fundamental to Kosovo’s economic development and prosperity. It includes youth ranging from 14-18 year old. Specifically, youth in upper secondary school students transitioning to higher education or the job market.

Emerging decision makers are future leaders in business, technology, education, government, and public administration. They include entrepreneurs and social activists, teachers as well as civil servants with three to five years’ experience in a government position who have been identified as rising stars. Applicants may engage them as leaders, mentors, and examples of success.

Established influencers include alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, public figures at the top of their industry (e.g. innovators, tech leaders, teachers, business owners, and politicians), who are capable of exerting a positive influence on youth and society.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: two (2) years

Number of awards anticipated: one (1) award

Award amounts: \$400,000

Total available funding: \$400,000

Type of Funding: FY19/20 Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act

Anticipated program start date: July 2021

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in two (2) years or less.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Kosovo’s not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Kosovo’s public and private educational institutions

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required under this program.

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 are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

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

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

I. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at Grants.gov under Forms:
<https://www.grants.gov>.

II. 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 A4 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 2.5cm margins.
- The narrative proposal should be in Word document.
- The detailed financial proposal can be in Excel document.
- Application submitted in a zip format or through a cloud service will be rejected.

The following documents are required:

1. **Mandatory application forms**
 - SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) at:
https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_3_0-V3.0.pdf
 - SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at:
<https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V1.0.pdf>
 - SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at:
<https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf>

Instructions how to fill out these forms can be found here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>

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 (20 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, but it must include all the items below.
 - **Proposal Summary:** Short 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 operations, showing ability to carry out the program, 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 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. English teachers should be all qualified to teach English, and with a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program? Proficiency in English language is required for all applying organizations. Knowledge of two or more additional local languages will be an asset for the instructors as well.
 - **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
 - **Media Engagement Plan:** Applicants should propose a clear media plan in their proposal. This plan should include how the organization plans to promote the project publicly, how they plan to share project experiences, activities, and public media appearances with the Embassy’s Public Affairs Section (PAS). Applicants should also detail their willingness to

work regularly with the Embassy to shape and amplify their public messaging through the U.S. Embassy's public engagement platforms.

- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame 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? Applicants should submit a clear monitoring and evaluation plan, including a logical model, clear inputs, activities, outputs, short term and long-term outcomes, indicators and data collection methods and tools.
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

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 program, including those of English language instructors.
- Letters of support from program 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 program activities
- Organization's registration letter
- Proof of Unique Entity Identifier(DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

III. 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%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.

IV. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than February 25, 2021

V. Funding Restrictions

Award funding cannot be used for construction activities, or to purchase alcoholic beverages.

VI. Other Submission Requirements

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

Important note: Email subject line should include this element: The BRIDGE Program: English Language for Cross Cultural Communication.

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 – 20 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 – 20 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.
- **Media Engagement Plan – 5 points:** Applicants should propose a clear media plan in their proposal for their proposal.
- **Monitoring and evaluation plan – 10 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 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.

2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIS)

Applicants should be aware:

- 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 FAPIS) (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: March 2021

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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.

Payment Method: Payment shall be tied to program milestones or disbursed on an as-needed basis. Automated Clearing House Electronic Funds Transfer (ACH/EFT) method will be used for all payments. Payment shall be transferred via installments, and can include advance or reimbursements. Therefore, applicants should detail their cash needs in their proposal, which may be subject of pre-award negotiations.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: 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 200, 2 CFR 600, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions which are available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>.

Note the U.S. Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

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. In general, applicants should expect to submit consolidated quarterly narrative program reports, few of which may be tied to payment installments. In addition, final completion program narrative and financial reports must be submitted.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:

PristinaGrants@state.gov.

Pre-Application questions:

Deadline to submit pre-application questions is January 25, 2021. The U.S. Embassy's grants team will collect and post all responses by February 3, 2021 the latest.

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.