

AFCP 2021 Grants Program Application Guide

1. Summary: The Cultural Heritage Center (“the Center”) in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is pleased to announce the start of the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) 2021 Grants Program. Note: The Center is implementing several important changes to the program during this cycle:

- a) The Center is combining the small and large grant programs into a single program. Pending availability of funds, awards will range from \$10,000 to \$500,000.
- b) To ease the administrative burden on embassies and potential grantees, the Center is dividing the application process into two rounds and reducing the amount of information required up front. The first streamlined round will collect project ideas from embassies in the form of concept notes, due November 30, 2020. In Round 2, the Center will invite embassies with promising ideas to submit full project applications, due March 22, 2021.
- c) The Center is posting a global Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on Grants.gov. Doing so satisfies the full and open competition requirement for grants awarded through the AFCP program. Embassies may still conduct their own local competitions if they wish to attract additional project ideas.
- d) The Center is making the following adjustments to the review process. It will obtain regional bureau input early in the process and prioritize public diplomacy impact. In consultation with the regional bureaus, ECA and the Center will determine which ideas advance to Round 2 based on a project’s potential to advance U.S. public diplomacy, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and host-country or community objectives or aims.
- e) The Center has expertise in cultural preservation and is available to work with embassies and their prospective implementing partners to help them refine project concepts for resubmission to future cycles of the AFCP grants program or to help them transform promising ideas into effective project designs in preparation for a Round 2 submission. The Center’s team of cultural heritage preservation experts can provide direct, hands-on guidance and support or organize design workshops for embassy implementing partners, including new or small organizations with limited experience. (End Summary)

2. AFCP Program Objectives: The Department of State established the AFCP in 2000 at the request of Congress (Conference Report 106-1005 accompanying H.R. 4942). At the time, the Senate noted that the preservation of cultural heritage “offers an opportunity to show a different American face to other countries, one that is non-commercial, non-political, and non-military.” The projects recommended for funding advance U.S. foreign policy goals and show respect for other cultures. Cultural preservation is effective public diplomacy that resonates deeply with opinion leaders and local communities, even in countries where ties may be otherwise limited. AFCP projects strengthen civil society, encourage good governance, and promote political and economic stability around the world.

3. Competition Format: Beginning with FY 2021, the Center is combining the AFCP small and large grant programs into a single program. Eligible embassies will propose projects for funding. The Center will select from among them using a process with two rounds. During Round 1, embassies will submit a concept note focused on the public diplomacy objectives that may be accomplished through the proposed project. Embassies invited to participate in Round 2

will flesh out the technical aspects of the proposed project and submit a full application. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$500,000. The Center anticipates funding 30 to 40 projects.

4. AFCP 2021 Application Guide: Refer to this AFCP 2021 Application Guide for additional information on country eligibility, program funding areas, project design assistance, concept note and application requirements, ineligible activities, unallowable costs, and the application review process. This 2021 Guide is available at <https://usdos.sharepoint.com/sites/ECA/Pages/CulturalHeritageCenter.aspx>

5. Eligible Countries: The AFCP 2021 Grants Program is open to embassies in countries based on ranking in the 2019 U.N. Human Development Index. Constituent posts should consult their embassy public affairs section. The eligible countries for the AFCP in FY 2021 are:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic of the), Congo (Republic of), Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Note: Embassy Antananarivo may apply for Comoros; Bridgetown for Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines; Colombo for Maldives; Dakar for Guinea-Bissau; Libreville for Sao Tome & Principe; New Delhi for Bhutan; Port Louis for Seychelles; Port Moresby for Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; Suva for Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu.

6. Funding Areas: The AFCP Grants Program supports the preservation of archaeological sites, historic buildings and monuments, museum collections, and forms of traditional cultural expression, such as indigenous languages and crafts. Appropriate project activities may include:

- a) Anastylis (reassembling a site from its original parts);
- b) Conservation (addressing damage or deterioration to an object or site);
- c) Consolidation (connecting or reconnecting elements of an object or site);
- d) Documentation (recording in analog or digital format the condition and salient features of an object, site, or tradition);

- e) Inventory (listing of objects, sites, or traditions by location, feature, age, or other unifying characteristic or state);
- f) Preventive Conservation (addressing conditions that threaten or damage a site, object, collection, or tradition);
- g) Restoration (replacing missing elements to recreate the original appearance of an object or site, usually appropriate only with fine arts, decorative arts, and historic buildings);
- h) Stabilization (reducing the physical disturbance of an object or site).

7. Sites and Objects Having a Religious Connection: The establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution permits the government to include religious objects and sites within an aid program under certain conditions. For example, an item with a religious connection (including a place of worship) may be the subject of a cultural preservation grant if the item derives its primary significance and is nominated solely on the basis of architectural, artistic, historical, or other cultural (not religious) criteria. ECA encourages embassies considering preservation projects with a religious connection to contact the AFCP Program Director (see para 25).

8. Funding Priorities: Some of the most impactful AFCP projects have been designed as part of a greater PD programming arc promoting specific U.S. policy goals and host-country or community objectives. Accordingly, in FY 2021, ECA will give preference to projects that do one or more of the following:

- a) Directly support U.S. treaty or bilateral agreement obligations;
- b) Directly support U.S. policies, strategies and objectives in a country as stated in the Integrated Country Strategy or other U.S. government planning documents;
- c) Support disaster risk reduction for cultural heritage in disaster-prone areas or post-disaster cultural heritage recovery;
- d) Support conflict resolution and help communities bridge differences;
- e) Partner, connect with, or feed into other ECA or public diplomacy programs.

9. Eligible Project Implementers: The Center defines eligible project implementers as reputable and accountable non-commercial entities that are able to demonstrate they have the requisite capacity to manage projects to preserve cultural heritage. Eligible implementers may include non-governmental organizations, museums, educational institutions, ministries of culture, or similar institutions and organizations, including U.S.-based educational institutions and organizations subject to Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. The AFCP will not award grants to individuals, commercial entities, or past award recipients that have not fulfilled the objectives or reporting requirements of previous awards.

Potential implementers must have a unique entity identifier, such as a DUNS number, and be registered and active in SAM.gov to receive U.S. federal assistance. If an embassy's project idea is advanced to Round 2 and the anticipated implementer is not registered in SAM.gov, the embassy should initiate the registration process immediately so it is in place in the event the project is ultimately selected for an award. See paragraph 23 below for information on how to register. The registration process can take several weeks to complete so it is important to avoid any delay. If a project is selected for an award and the registration is not completed, the award could be delayed to the next FY, pending the availability of funding.

Embassies must vet potential implementers for eligibility, suitability, and reputable performance in cultural preservation or similar activities and ensure the potential grantees are able to receive U.S. federal assistance.

10. Project Design Assistance: The Center has expertise in cultural preservation, an area where FSOs and LESs might not have experience, and is available for technical guidance. The Center is also open to working with interested embassies to help them or their prospective implementing partners:

- a) Refine ideas before they submit Round 1 concept notes;
- b) Transform promising ideas into effective project designs in preparation for Round 2 applications;
- c) Refine project ideas for resubmission during future AFCP grant cycles when a longer project development period may be warranted, particularly with new or small organizations with limited experience.

The Center's team of cultural heritage preservation experts can provide direct, hands-on guidance and support or organize design workshops for embassy implementing partners, including new or small organizations with limited experience.

Additionally, during the Round 1 review process, the Center may identify specific projects as promising candidates for possible design enhancements, which it may propose to an embassy and its prospective implementing partners. The Center may, for example, recommend an English language learning or exchange component (virtual or in-person) or suggest pairing the applicant with another ECA program or organization to amplify a project's public diplomacy impact. It may identify elements that could be strengthened to achieve public diplomacy goals more effectively, including contributions to host-government or community aims. In such cases, and with the embassy's permission, it can work with the relevant embassy staff and implementing partners to build the enhancements into the project designs and Round 2 submissions.

11. Round 1 Concept Note Requirements (Deadline: November 30, 2020): Eligible embassies, in collaboration with their prospective implementers, will submit completed concept notes electronically using the AFCP application website (<http://www.afcp.us>). The Center cannot accept concept notes or applications submitted via cable, fax, e-mail, or pouch. Concept notes must be submitted by Monday, November 30, 2020, 11:59 p.m. EST. Embassies may submit more than one concept note. Each concept note submitted must include:

- a) Project basics, including working title, anticipated project length (in months), location/site, and project cost estimate (amount requested from AFCP; in U.S. dollars);
- b) Project implementer information, including name and SAM registration status;
- c) Project purpose that summarizes the objectives, proposed activities, and desired results
- d) Rationale for AFCP support, explaining:
 - i. why it is in the interests of the U.S. government to fund the project;
 - ii. how the project relates to Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) goals, existing bilateral agreements, or other U.S. foreign policy objectives;

- iii. the projected public diplomacy benefits and impacts of the project;
- iv. whether it contributes to broader host country or community aims or objectives;
- e) Embassy Front Office (FO) clearance;
- f) Five (5) high quality digital images (JPEGs) or audiovisual files that convey the nature and condition of the site, collection, or tradition and show the urgency or need for the proposed project (collapsing walls, water damage, etc.).

12. Round 2 Full Application Requirements (Deadline: March 22, 2021): The Center will invite embassies selected in Round 1 to submit full applications by no later than Monday, March 22, 2021, 11:59 p.m. EDT, using the AFPCP application website. The applications must fully satisfy the program objectives, funding areas and priorities, and eligibility requirements.

Furthermore, to be considered complete, they must include:

From the implementer:

- a) Project dates;
- b) Project activities description and timeframe that present the project tasks in chronological order and list the major milestones with target dates for achieving them (Note: Applicants may propose project periods of up to 60 months [five years]);
- c) Theory of change that describes how the project activities and outputs will help achieve any broader host country or community aims or objectives (For example, if a broader goal is economic development, how will the activities and outputs directly contribute towards achieving that goal?);
- d) Statement of importance highlighting the historical, architectural, artistic, or cultural (non-religious) values of the cultural heritage;
- e) Proof of official permission to undertake the project from the office, agency, or organization that either owns or is otherwise responsible for the preservation and protection of the site or collection;
- f) Implementer public awareness plan describing how the applicant intends to highlight and amplify AFPCP-supported activities through print, electronic, and social media platforms;
- g) Maintenance plan outlining the steps or measures that will be taken to maintain the site, object, or collection in good condition after the AFPCP-supported project is complete; or, in the case of forms of traditional cultural expression, to preserve and disseminate the documentation, knowledge, or skills gained from the project;
- h) Résumés or CVs of the proposed project director and key project participants;
- i) Detailed project budget, demarcated in one-year budget periods (2021, 2022, 2023, etc.), that lists all costs in separate categories (Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel [including Per Diem], Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Other Direct Costs, Indirect Costs); indicates funds from other sources; and gives a justification for any anticipated international travel costs;
- j) Budget narrative explaining how the costs were estimated (quantity x unit cost, annual salary x percentage of time spent on project, etc.) and any large budget line items;
- k) Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), including Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A), Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B), and, if applicable, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL);

- l) Relevant supporting documentation, such as historic structure reports, restoration plans and studies, conservation needs assessments and recommendations, architectural and engineering records, etc., compiled in preparation for the proposed project;
- m) As requested by the Center or as appropriate, additional high quality digital images (JPEGs) or audiovisual files that convey the nature and condition of the site or museum collection and show the urgency or need for the proposed project (collapsing walls, extensive water damage, etc.).

From the embassy:

- n) Theory of change that describes how the project activities and outputs will help the embassy achieve the public diplomacy outcomes, broader foreign policy goals, and community aims stated in the Rationale for AFCP Support (For example, if the foreign policy goal is economic development and diversification—a common ICS Goal—how will the activities and outputs directly contribute towards achieving that goal?);
- o) Embassy media plan describing how the embassy intends to highlight and amplify AFCP-supported activities (Note: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how embassies plan to use mobile and online technologies strategically to amplify U.S. support for cultural heritage preservation locally and to share compelling project-related content with both targeted and broad audiences. ECA strongly encourages embassies to include one or more virtual components, in coordination with the applicant’s public awareness plan, to complement the proposed project. Doing so can extend engagement beyond the project’s duration, increase its long-term value, and expand the audience for such work);
- p) Risk assessment and monitoring plan evaluating the risks posed by applicant or project and describing how the embassy intends to monitor project progress and awardee performance;
- q) Embassy Front Office (FO) clearance.

13. Cost Sharing and Other Forms of Cost Participation: There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost participation required. When an implementing partner offers cost sharing, it is understood and agreed that the partner must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the budget of the application and later included in an approved agreement. The implementing partner will be responsible for tracking and reporting on any cost share or outside funding, which is subject to audit per 2 CFR 200. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs.

14. Ineligible Activities and Unallowable Costs: AFCP does not support the following activities or costs, and the Center will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- a) Preservation or purchase of privately or commercially owned cultural objects, collections, or real property, including those whose transfer from private or commercial to public ownership is envisioned, planned, or in process but not complete at the time of application;

- b) Preservation of natural heritage (physical, biological, and geological formations, paleontological collections, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, fossils, etc.);
- c) Preservation of hominid or human remains;
- d) Preservation of news media (newspapers, newsreels, radio and TV programs, etc.);
- e) Preservation of published materials available elsewhere (books, periodicals, etc.);
- f) Development of curricula or educational materials for classroom use;
- g) Archaeological excavations or exploratory surveys for research purposes;
- h) Historical research, except in cases where the research is justifiable and integral to the success of the proposed project;
- i) Acquisition or creation of new exhibits, objects, or collections for new or existing museums;
- j) Construction of new buildings, building additions, or permanent coverings (over archaeological sites, for example);
- k) Commissions of new works of art or architecture for commemorative or economic development purposes;
- l) Creation of new or the modern adaptation of existing traditional dances, songs, chants, musical compositions, plays, or other performances;
- m) Creation of replicas or conjectural reconstructions of cultural objects or sites that no longer exist;
- n) Relocation of cultural sites from one physical location to another;
- o) Removal of cultural objects or elements of cultural sites from the country for any reason;
- p) Digitization of cultural objects or collections, unless part of a larger, clearly defined conservation, documentation, or public diplomacy effort;
- q) Conservation plans or other studies, unless they are one component of a larger project to implement the results of those studies;
- r) Cash reserves, endowments, or revolving funds (funds must be expended within the award period [up to five years] and may not be used to create an endowment or revolving fund);
- s) Costs of fund-raising campaigns;
- t) Contingency, unforeseen, or miscellaneous costs or fees;
- u) Costs of work performed prior to announcement of the award unless allowable per 2 CFR 200.458 and approved by the Grants Officer;
- v) International travel, except in cases where travel is justifiable and integral to the success of the proposed project or to provide project leaders with learning and exchange opportunities with cultural heritage experts;
- w) Individual projects costing less than US \$10,000 or more than \$500,000;
- x) Independent U.S. projects overseas.

15. Embassy Staff Registration: All embassy staff involved in submitting applications must register online at <http://www.afcp.us>. Staff will receive more detailed instructions via e-mail after they have registered with the site. Returning users may request a password reminder message on the site. Use of this site is strictly limited to U.S. Department of State employees. The Center will not process any non-Department registration requests.

16. Application Review Process: The Center will conduct its review process in late 2020 and early 2021. It will review and select Round 1 project concept notes and full project applications (Round 2) in consultation with the regional bureaus and taking into consideration the program objectives, funding areas and priorities, ineligible activities and unallowable costs, and other application requirements. The Center may deem concept notes and full applications ineligible if they do not fully adhere to AFCP 2021 Grants Program objectives, requirements, and other criteria stated herein.

- a) Concept note review and selection (Round 1): In consultation with the regional bureaus, ECA and the Center will determine which project ideas advance to the Round 2 application stage based on the following criteria:
 - i. anticipated preservation and public diplomacy impacts;
 - ii. potential contributions to U.S. foreign policy;
 - iii. potential contributions to host-country or community objectives and aims.

- b) Regional bureau input will include guidance to ECA and the Center on how it prioritizes and ranks proposed projects from the countries in its region. The Center may forward concept notes to other State Department or federal agency personnel with relevant experience for advisory peer review. The Center may identify specific projects as candidates for additional or enhanced project design. On or around January 13, 2021, the Center will notify embassies of the Round 1 results and invite a subset to submit full project proposals to Round 2.

- c) Full application review and selection (Round 2): The Center will review and rate the full project proposals to confirm the feasibility of the projects, ensure outlined activities and budget lines support stated goals, validate monitoring plans and identify any remaining shortcomings, questions or concerns. The Center will then convene a review panel to recommend applications for funding.

- d) Full application rating schema: The Center will rate full applications using the following point-based system:
 - i. Purpose, Description, and Importance (20 points max)
 - ii. Rationale for U.S. Support (20 points max)
 - iii. Embassy Media and Applicant Outreach Plans (15 points max)
 - iv. Support for wider host country or community objectives (5 points max)
 - v. Maintenance Plan (15 points max)
 - vi. Budget and Budget Narrative (15 points max)
 - vii. Supporting Materials (resumes, images, etc.; 10 points max)
 - viii. Innovative integration, collaboration, or coordination with other ECA and public diplomacy programs (additional 10 points max)

17. Award Announcement: ECA will announce the results of the AFCP 2021 Grants Program via cable once the Department's FY 2021 funding levels are known and a congressional spend plan is approved. It will send a second cable describing the process for executing AFCP awards. Note: These cables are not authorization to begin performance. The period of performance begins once a countersigned DS-1909 is in hand.

18. Award Information:

- a) Funding Instrument Type: Grant
- b) Program Authorization: Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended (P.L. 87-256, § 102(b)(5))
- c) CFDA Number: 19.025
- d) Floor on Amount of Individual Awards: US \$10,000 per project
- e) Ceiling on Amount of Individual Awards: US \$500,000 per project
- f) Anticipated Number of Awards: 30-40

19. Award Administration Information: ECA will submit a comprehensive funding recommendation to the Department's Bureau of Budget and Planning (BP) and request that BP make funds available to the embassies through the Department's regional bureaus for the recommended AFCP projects. Only a warranted Grants Officer can negotiate and sign AFCP awards. If the proposed project budget exceeds the Post Grants Officer's warrant level, A/OPE/AQM/IP can provide a Grants Officer. A/OPE/AQM/IP charges the embassy a fee of 1.25 percent of the total award amount for this service. Contact SnearlyJP@state.gov for A/OPE/AQM/IP assistance. Embassies must obligate the AFCP project funds by September 30, 2021.

20. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Notices of Award for AFCP projects incorporate terms and conditions subject to OMB Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200): Cost Principles, Audit, and Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, et al.). All applicants should familiarize themselves with these requirements. Other requirements and guidance will appear as program-specific provisions or be incorporated by reference in the Notice of Award.

21. Period of Performance: The period of performance begins upon the Grants Officer's signature and the awardee's countersignature on a Notice of Award. A Notice of Award notifies an award recipient that an award has been made and that funds are available for use during the specified award period. Failure to produce a complete Notice of Award package may result in the nullification of the award.

22. Performance and Deliverables: AFCP 2021 award recipients must submit performance progress reports, federal financial status reports, and final reports on time as specified in the Notice of Award. Upon completion of an AFCP project, the Center will also ask implementers to respond to an online survey about their project and experience with the AFCP program. In cases where the proposed public diplomacy or other expected impacts may not be fully realized at the immediate conclusion of the project, the Center may request continued voluntary reporting on specific topics. The Center may compile this information into reports to Congress and other documents.

23. DUNS Number and SAM Registration: An implementing partner must have a unique entity identifier (UEI), such as a Dun & Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code, and be registered in the

System for Award Management (SAM) prior to receiving U.S. federal assistance unless they meet one of the exemptions specified in the Federal Assistance Directive (<https://usdos.sharepoint.com/sites/A-OPE/FA/SitePages/Policy.aspx>). The DUNS, NCAGE, and SAM.gov processes can take weeks or months, especially for non-U.S. applicants. Applicants may acquire DUNS numbers at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by requesting a number online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Non-U.S. based applicants may request a NCAGE code at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>. SAM.gov is the official, free on-line registration database for the U.S. government. SAM.gov replaced the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), the Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in July 2012. SAM.gov collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of federal agency acquisition and grant award missions. Registration in SAM is free: <http://sam.gov>.

24. Disclaimer: Issuance of this funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the AFCP program or the U.S. government. The Center reserves the right to waive program formalities and to reduce, revise, or increase project scopes and budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

25. Agency Contact: Please direct inquiries to Martin Perschler, Ph.D., AFCP Program Director, Cultural Heritage Center, at PerschlerMJ@state.gov. The Center has expertise in the preservation of cultural heritage and is available for technical guidance.