

**Kosovo United States Alumni (KUSA)  
Notice of Funding Opportunity/Call for Concept Ideas**

**Funding Opportunity Title: Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund 2023 and AEIF 2023 TechCamp Special Opportunity**

**Funding Opportunity Number: AEIF2023**

**Deadline for Applications: February 5, 2023**

Grant Funding Amount per AEIF 2023 Project: **5,000- 35,000.00USD**

Grant Funding Amount per TechCamp Project: **5,000 - 20,000 USD**

On behalf of the U.S.Embassy Prishtina, Kosovo United States Alumni (KUSA) announces an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications for two funding opportunities:

- 1. 2023 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2023) and**
- 2. AEIF 2023 TechCamp Special Opportunity**

We seek proposals for both calls from teams of at **least two alumni** that meet all program eligibility requirements below. All exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2023 should submit concept ideas to [info@kusalumni.org](mailto:info@kusalumni.org) between **Jan 23 – Feb 5, 2023**.

## **I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

AEIF provides alumni of U.S. government-sponsored and facilitated exchange programs with funding to expand on skills gained during their exchange experience to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their community. Since its inception in 2011, AEIF has funded nearly 500 alumni-led projects around the world through a competitive global competition. This year, AEIF 2023 will support United States’ commitment to improve Kosovo’s relations with its neighbors and contribute to regional stability; improve rule of law and accountable and effective governance, inclusive human development and sustainable economic growth that supports Kosovo’s stability.

### **Program Objectives:**

AEIF provides alumni of U.S.-sponsored exchange programs with funding to expand on skills gained during their exchange experience to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their community. This year, AEIF 2023 will support alumni in developing and implementing projects that support U.S. foreign policy objectives, promote shared interests, and benefit local communities.

1. **2023 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2023)** projects must address at least one of the following:
  - 1) Bring alumni together from different exchange programs to build or expand an alumni network capable of working together on common interests and increase regional and global collaboration of alumni.
  - 2) Strengthen the relationship between alumni and the U.S. government to work together on activities that address mutual goals and challenges.
  - 3) Support alumni as they develop their leadership capacity and implement projects in their communities.

AEIF 2023 proposals should be between the funding range of **\$5,000 to \$35,000**.

2. **AEIF 2023 TechCamp Special Funding Opportunity** should continue to build on alumni's skills gained during their TechCamp experience and focus on shared policy priorities such as:
  - Media Literacy and Countering Disinformation.
  - Encouraging Economic Development.
  - Developing Technology for Social Change.
  - Addressing Climate Challenge.

When submitting a **[2023 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2023)]** or **[AEIF TechCamp Special Funding Opportunity]** proposal, please specify this in the submission form and subject line.

Project proposals will be evaluated based on their potential for impact on the local community.

## II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

**Announcement posted:** January 23, 2023

**Closing date for applications:** February 5, 2023, 4 pm GMT+1

**Funding type:** Small grant awards

**Decision date:** no later than March 31, 2023

**Expected size of individual awards:**

Grant Funding Amount per AEIF 2023 Project: **between 5, 000 to 35,000.00USD**

Grant Funding Amount per TechCamp Project: **between 5,000 - 20,000 USD**

**Program Performance Period:** Proposed programs should be completed in twelve months timeframe or less.

### III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

#### 1. Eligible Applicants:

The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded or sponsored 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.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni or alumni associations of USG 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.

Eligible to send an **AEIF TechCamp Special Funding Opportunity** project proposal are:

- Alumni of the TechCamp Program only.

#### 2. Cost Sharing

The inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

#### 3. Grant Program Area:

Proposals must address the abovementioned objectives/goals. Proposals that do not address the theme outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

### IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All applying alumni must submit a concept idea, and the committee consisting of U.S. Embassy representatives will evaluate the submitted ideas. The concept ideas that:

1. Align with the above-mentioned AEIF-supported goals.
2. Provide sufficient information on how the activities will support those goals and bring a relevant local context to them.
3. State the number of U.S. Government Alumni involved in the project. More than two alumni may form a team; however, the minimum is two alumni. Alumni should mention in the proposal their roles in the project.

4. Include participation and support from a local partner (i.e., community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc).

Specific requirements are described below.

- A one-pager of the project concept idea (max. 700 words)
- Estimated funds requested to support this project implementation.

### 1. Submission Dates and Times

All concept idea applications must be submitted by email before **February 5, 2023**, at [info@kusalumni.org](mailto:info@kusalumni.org). Applications submitted after that time will be ineligible for consideration. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

### 2. What to Consider Prior to Submission

**AEIF 2023 is an internal funding opportunity, not a public competition.** Proposals directly from alumni will not be accepted. The proposals will be selected by the U.S. Embassy in Prishtina and will be submitted to the State Department, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

## V. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

**Evaluation Criteria:** Kosovo United States Alumni (KUSA) and U.S. Embassy Pristina will use all of criteria' outlined below to evaluate all final applications and some of them to evaluate the concept ideas. The proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of U.S. Embassy representatives and exchange program experts. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

<p><b>Relevance to Application Theme</b> (<i>Concept Idea/Final application criteria</i>) 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 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>
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<p><b>Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan</b> (<i>Concept Idea/Final application criteria</i>) 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>
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**Degree of Alumni Involvement** (*Concept Idea/Final application criteria*)

Projects must include the involvement of at least **two (2) exchange alumni**. They may be the project team leaders or other substantial role 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.

**Participation and Support from Local Partners** (*Final application criteria*)

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.

**Evaluation and Impact of the Project** (*Final application criteria*)

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

**Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan** (*Final application criteria*)

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 KUSA and U.S. Embassy get recognition throughout the process, if circumstances permit.

**Budget and Budget Narrative** (*Concept Idea/Final Application Criteria*)

For concept idea KUSA will not require detailed budget submission, only the approximate amounts. The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed for final evaluation. 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. KUSA does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Only successful applicants will be contacted.