

Small Grants Program – FAQs & Simplified Instructions

U.S. Embassy Prague, Public Affairs Section (PAS)

Summary

The Small Grants Program funds projects that strengthen social and cultural ties between the United States and the Czech Republic, and support U.S. Embassy Strategic Goals. Projects must target Czech audiences living in the Czech Republic.

We have a two-step process to select proposals for Embassy funding. First, applicants submit a brief Statement of Interest (SOI) anytime between October 20, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Each month, we review the submitted SOIs, and if we think yours is a good fit, we will invite you to submit a Complete Grant Application. We evaluate Complete Grant Applications and make funding decisions in January, April, and August.

Below, you can find more details and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about how the Embassy makes decisions and what we are looking for. This document also gives simplified instructions about what to include in your SOI and Complete Grant Application. Last, it includes information about reporting and monitoring requirements, and our contact information for other questions.

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THE BASICS:

Purpose

The U.S. Embassy helps fund civil society projects to advance our key strategic goals (see below). Projects we fund strengthen social and cultural ties between the United States and Czech Republic, highlight our shared values, and promote bilateral cooperation. Successful projects *clearly* support at least one Embassy Strategic Goal (see list below) and include a clear American component. Sometimes this includes direct collaboration with American experts, organizations, or institutions.

Our Strategic Goals: Shared Prosperity, Shared Security, and Shared Values

- Promote economic prosperity, entrepreneurship, and innovation during COVID
- Encourage philanthropy and community development
- Promote energy security, cyber security, and/or our NATO security alliance
- Strengthen civil society
- Strengthen rule of law, government accountability, and anti-corruption efforts
- Strengthen independent media, journalism, and/or counter disinformation
- Promote human rights, support marginalized groups, and foster a culture of integration
- Encourage greater gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We encourage innovative proposals that promote American arts and culture, or support English language learning in the Czech Republic, when it clearly advances one or more of the above objectives.

Examples of successful PAS Small Grants Program projects include, but are not limited to:

- Academic and professional lectures, seminars, and speaker programs
- Youth leadership and skills development projects
- Artistic and cultural workshops, joint performances, and exhibitions
- Projects and outreach activities that highlight our shared democratic values

Target Participants and Audiences

We seek geographically and demographically diverse audiences within the Czech Republic and prioritize proposals with a significant programming component outside of Prague. Projects focused on Ustecky Region and Moravskoslezsky Region are *strongly* encouraged.

Deadlines

SOIs are welcome for submission until June 30, 2021.

The following deadlines apply:

Process	1st round	2nd round	3rd round
STEP #1: Submit Statement of Interest (SOI)	October 20 – November 30, 2020	December 1, 2020 - February 28, 2021	March 1 - June 20, 2021
STEP #2: (by invitation only) Complete Grant Applications Deadline	December 18, 2020	March 19, 2021	July 16, 2021
Funding Decisions Announced (approximately)	January 15, 2021	April 15, 2021	August 15, 2021

FUNDING INFORMATION:

How much is each grant? \$3,000 to \$20,000

How long does the grant continue: Usually no more than 1 year. In some cases, up to 24 months.

Who is eligible?

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a strong connection to the Czech Republic
- Public and private educational institutions with a strong connection to the Czech Republic
- Czech governmental institutions and international organizations operating in the Czech Republic
- Individuals with a strong connection to the Czech Republic

For-profit or commercial entities are not eligible to apply.

What can't you fund?

We can't fund the following types of projects:

- Projects relating to partisan political activity or promoting specific religious beliefs
- Charitable or development activities not supporting an Embassy strategic goal
- Humanitarian aid
- Investment costs, including construction projects and vehicle purchases
- Fundraising campaigns or for-profit projects
- Scientific research
- Projects whose primary goal is capacity building for the applicant or funding its ongoing operations
- Projects without a public outreach component, such as stand-alone surveys

Cost Sharing is not required, but projects not entirely funded by the U.S. Embassy may be more competitive.

HOW DO I APPLY?

We have a two-step process to select proposals for Embassy funding. *Please follow all instructions below carefully. We won't consider proposals that don't meet all the requirements below:*

STEP #1: SUBMIT YOUR STATEMENT OF INTEREST (SOI)

Download our **Statement of Interest Form** at <https://cz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/small-grants-program/>

You must email your SOI to grantsprague@state.gov by 11.59pm CET on **June 30, 2021**. Late submissions won't be read.

We will confirm that we received your SOI within two business days. If you don't receive a confirmation email, contact us at grantsprague@state.gov or +420 257 022 002

We evaluate SOIs **monthly**. If we think yours is a good fit, we will invite you to submit a complete grant application and will tell you the deadline.

SOI Guidelines

Your SOI must clearly explain what you're trying to achieve. Make sure:

- Your SOI clearly addresses one or more of our strategic goals
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All documents are formatted for A4, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font
- The proposal must not exceed two (2) pages. (No, really!)
- Not to send any other attachments.

Your SOI must include:

- Name of your proposed project
- Your name, or the name of the organization applying
- Type of organization (e.g. NGO, educational institution, government institution, individual)
- Contact person's name and email
- When and where the project will take place
- How many people will benefit from your project (beneficiaries)
- How much your project will cost in total (total budget)
- How much of that total budget you need from the U.S. Embassy (in dollars and in percent of total budget)
- Other sources of funding or project partners

It should also include:

- **Clear and Concise Problem Statement, Aim and Justification:**
 - What is the problem you're trying to solve?
 - Why the proposed project is needed?
 - How your project will help meet this goal?

- Which Embassy strategic goal(s) the proposal supports?
- **Project Audience and Beneficiaries:** Tell us about your target audience(s) or group(s) who will benefit
- **Proposal Summary, Design & Methods, Goals & Objectives:**
 - Brief summary of your project
 - Your specific objectives and the anticipated impact
 - How each project activity helps achieve those objectives.
- **Proposed Activities, Schedule and Timeline:** Describe step by step what you'll do, and when and where each activity will take place
- **Budget Justification Narrative:** Why do you need this amount of money to achieve your goals? Explain any large or unusual project expenses

Please note: We evaluate SOIs **monthly**. If we think yours is a good fit, we will invite you to take Step #2 of our grant selection process: submit a Complete Grant Application. We will also tell you the deadline. If we ask you for a Complete Grant Application, you will also need to send additional documents described in Step #2. **Do not submit the Step #2 documents unless you are asked by the Embassy.**

STEP #2: BY INVITATION ONLY: SUBMIT A COMPLETE GRANT APPLICATION

Note: These forms can be a little tricky. We have a how-to guide we will send you, and if you still can't find your answer, we are happy to help answer your questions.

- If you are an *organization*, use the SF-424 application form
- If you are an *individual*, use the SF-424-I application form.
- Everyone: SF-424A budget spreadsheet
- Everyone: Grant Request Form

You can download all three **SF-424** forms and the **Grant Request Form** at <https://cz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/small-grants-program/>

If you have been asked to submit a complete grant application, you must email the above documents to grantsprague@state.gov by the date we request in our email to you.

We will confirm that we received your Statement of Interest within two business days. If you don't receive a confirmation email, contact us at grantsprague@state.gov or +420 257 022 002

Grant Request Form Guidelines

The Grant Request Form should contain all the information from your SOI, as well as additional background to help the Embassy evaluate your proposal. You should include all important information in the Grant Request Form, instead of using separate attachments.

Make sure:

- Your grant request clearly addresses one or more strategic goals
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All documents are formatted for A4, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font
- The proposal must not exceed six (6) pages, including the budget. (No, really!)
- All pages are numbered.
- Not to send any other attachments.

Your Grant Request Form must include:

- **Any Previous USG Funding:** Has the U.S. Embassy funded your projects in the last five years? If so, give us a brief summary.
- **Problem Statement, Aim and Justification:** Clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed. What is the overall aim of the project and how does it support the Embassy's strategic goals?
- **Audience and Beneficiaries:** Who will benefit from this project?
- **Proposal Summary:** Broadly speaking, what does your project *do*? What measurable impact do you hope for?
- **Methods and Design:** How will your project help solve the stated problem and achieve your goal? Include a logic model as appropriate.
- **Goals and Objectives:** "Goals" are what the project intends to achieve. "Objectives" are the intermediate steps on the way to your goals. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).

- **Activities:** What events or steps will you take to achieve each objective?
- **Schedule and Timeline:** When and where, specifically, do you expect those events or steps to take place?
- **Partners:** Do you have any partner organizations or individuals, either as funders or implementers?
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** How will you measure success? How will you determine if each step or event is on time and moving you closer to your goal? *This is a crucial part of all successful applications – please spend some time developing this section.*
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Can this project continue in some way after Embassy funding ends? How?
- **Introduction of the organization or individual applying:** Tell us about what you or your organization have accomplished in the past, and demonstrate your ability to successfully complete this project, based on past experience.
- **Key Personnel:** Name, title, role, experience, and qualifications? How much of their workday will they focus on this project?

Guidelines for Budget Justification

- **Personnel and Fringe Benefits:** How much of the budget goes to wages, salaries, or benefits? What percent of their time will be focused on this project?
- **Travel:** Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for project staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the project involves international travel, briefly justify that travel.
- **Equipment:** Do you need to buy anything (machinery, furniture, etc.) that will work for, or last for, a year or more, and costs at least \$5,000? That's "equipment."
- **Supplies:** What items or materials, including computers, are needed. Each item under "supplies" must cost less than \$5,000. If over \$5,000, list it under "equipment."
- **Contractual:** Do you need to outsource any services? Will you give any sub-awards to other non-profits to help you complete the project?
- **Other Direct Costs:** This could include 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 project activities, such as overhead costs needed to keep your 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. Yes, this part is confusing!*
- **Cost Sharing:** Are other organizations or individuals helping fund this project? Are there in-kind contributions like volunteers' time or the donated use of locations and spaces?

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO GETS FUNDING?

CRITERIA

We will determine which projects are funded based on the criteria below:

Quality and Feasibility of the Project Idea: The project idea supports at least one of the Embassy's strategic goals, and is well developed, detailing how project activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. 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.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives: Goals and objectives are clearly stated, and project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results with the target audience(s) and includes public outreach components/activities.

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan and Sustainability: Applicant demonstrates it can measure project 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. Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

Budget: 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.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A review committee comprised of U.S. Embassy Prague staff and partners will evaluate all **SOI** forms submitted monthly. SOIs that don't meet all requirements in this announcement will not be considered. If your SOI proposal advances U.S. Embassy Strategic Goals, incorporates an American component, and is recommended for further review, you must submit additional required documents (complete grant application) described above.

A selection committee comprised of U.S. Embassy Prague staff will evaluate **complete grant applications** quarterly. Complete grant applications must include the SF-424 or SF-424I, SF-424A (budget) and Grant Request Form. The Embassy seeks to reach geographically and demographically diverse audiences in the Czech Republic. Proposals involving an American speaker, artist, performer, author, etc., may be more competitive.

If your proposal is funded, we will let you know via email **around January 15, April 15, or August 15, 2021**, depending on when you submitted your application. If we decide not to fund your proposal, we will also notify you via email.

HOW IS THE GRANT ADMINISTERED?

Note: The requirements below can be difficult to do right. We have a step-by-step, illustrated guide to walk you through this process. If you're an individual applicant, and you're not applying on behalf of an organization, you can skip this step.

PRE-REGISTRATION

If the Embassy decides to fund your organization's proposal, you must register (free) in three systems before we can provide funding:

- Get a DUNS number (Dun & Bradstreet "Unique Identifier Number")
- Get an NCAGE/CAGE code
- Register on SAM.gov

You **must** use the exact same information with all three, such as organization name, address, and phone number. Even one small change can make it impossible to successfully register. Registration is free of charge. These organizations may offer additional services; you are not required to sign up for them. This process can take a long time. You should start the registration process as soon as we approve your project. ***We cannot provide your organization any funding until registration is complete.***

STEP ONE: Apply for a **DUNS** number

Organizations (not individuals) must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, also called a Unique Identifier Number, from Dun & Bradstreet.

If your organization does not have one already, call +1.866.705.5711 or visit <http://www.bisnode.cz/produkt/duns-cislo/> (if a Czech organization) or <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/index.jsp> (if a U.S. organization).

STEP TWO: Apply for an **NCAGE** number

Apply here: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For help, call 1-269-961-7766 or email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil if having problems.

STEP THREE: Apply for **SAM** registration

After receiving your NCAGE Code, register in **SAM** at <https://www.sam.gov>. You must renew your SAM registration every year.

GRANT PAPERWORK

A U.S. Embassy officer (“Grants Officer”) will write, sign, award and administer your grant (“assistance award.”) You should carefully review the grant before signing it and ask the Grants Officer if anything is unclear. Do not sign anything you do not entirely understand and agree to. You cannot spend any U.S. grant funds until the start date shown on your grant, after it has been signed by the Grants Officer.

If we select your proposal for funding, this does not require us to provide additional future funding. You are expected to complete all grant activities with the money provided, in the time allotted.

We often provide **funding** in two or more installments. For example, we may provide 80% in advance, and 20% when the grant activities are completed. You should agree on a funding plan with the Grants Officer **before** signing the grant.

GRANT MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Grants Officer will propose an appropriate grant **monitoring plan** to observe the activities, events, or projects that we fund. You are required to submit financial and project reports **within 90 calendar days** of the end date listed in the grant.

Please use our **FINAL REPORT template**.

You must keep **financial records, supporting documents**, and any other relevant records **for three years** after you submit your Final Report.

Not meeting these requirements can mean you do not receive future funding from the Embassy, or that we halt payments on any current grants until the problem is resolved.

WHAT IF I NEED MORE HELP?

If you still have questions after reading through these FAQs and simplified instructions, please also review our official Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on our website <https://cz.usembassy.gov/notice-of-funding-opportunity/> or contact us by email at grantsprague@state.gov.

Note: We cannot provide individual consultations on grant proposals. After you submit your proposal, we cannot discuss your proposal with you until the entire review process is finished.