



U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND
for CULTURAL PRESERVATION

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Cultural Heritage Center**

U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation Grants Program 2025

Deadline for Round One Applications: **JANUARY 14, 2025**

1. Summary: The U.S. Embassy to Romania is pleased to announce the start of the 2025 grants cycle for the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

The application process involves two rounds:

In Round 1, the Embassy will collect project ideas from eligible institutions in the form of **concept notes**, due **January 14, 2025**.

In Round 2, the Embassy will invite the selected participant entity/entities to submit full project applications, due April 15, 2025. Full implementation of the AFCP 2025 Grants Program is pending the availability of Fiscal Year 2025 funds.

All applicants must also have an active and valid registration on www.SAM.gov (System for Award Management), the official U.S. Government system for entities interested in conducting business with the U.S. Government.

To apply for grants through AFCP, all applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). As of April 2022, each entity registering or renewing in SAM.gov is automatically assigned a UEI through that system.

SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Application form template should be requested at the following e-mail address: alexandrescui@state.gov

Concept notes should be sent in **high level proficiency English** at the following e-mail address: alexandrescui@state.gov

If applicants will not receive confirmation e-mails within 24 hours during work week, they should call the following phone number 0721 288 797, between 10 – 15 hrs.

All inquiries related to the AFCP Grants Program must be sent in writing at the following e-mail address: alexandrescui@state.gov

We do not provide any pre-consultation for **application related questions that are already addressed in this document.**

IMPORTANT!! All documents must be sent as attachments to the email. Please **DO NOT** send .rar, zip, google docs, we transfer, or similar.

Selected applicants for Round 2 must obtain a formal agreement/approval with a national/regional/local cultural authority to conduct cultural heritage preservation activities.

Selected and non-selected organizations will be informed via e-mail about the results of both rounds of this competition. Annual program results are typically announced in **July**.

2. AFCP Program Background: The State Department established the AFCP in 2001 at the request of Congress. At the time, the Senate noted that preserving cultural heritage offers an opportunity to showcase a different aspect of America—one that is non-commercial, non-political, and non-military. AFCP projects can contribute to the development of civil society, promote cultural diversity and good governance, create economic opportunity, and help foster political stability around the world.

3. Competition Format: In Round 1, embassies will accept concept notes; those invited to Round 2 will submit a full application, including technical details of the project. Depending on available funds, awards will range from \$25,000 to \$500,000.

4. The eligible countries for the AFCP program in FY 2025 are:
a) Sub-Saharan Africa (AF): Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Note: Embassy Antananarivo may apply for Comoros; Dakar for Guinea-Bissau; Libreville for Sao Tome & Principe; Port Louis for Seychelles.

b) East Asia & the Pacific (EAP): Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam. Note: Embassy Port Moresby may apply for Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; Suva for Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu.

c) Europe & Eurasia (EUR): Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine.

d) Middle East & North Africa (NEA): Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen.

e) South & Central Asia (SCA): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Note: Embassy New Delhi may apply for Bhutan.

f) Western Hemisphere (WHA): Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, The Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

5. 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 using 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 the condition and important features of an object, site, or tradition in analog or digital format, but only as a part of a larger conservation/preservation project

e) Inventory: Listing objects, sites, or traditions by location, feature, age, or other unifying characteristics, but only as a part of a larger conservation/preservation project.

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 for fine arts, decorative arts, and historic buildings.

h) Stabilization: Reducing the physical disturbance of an object or site.

6. Funding Priorities:

In FY 2025, the Department of State will prioritize projects that are designed as part of a greater bilateral exchange programming arc promoting specific standards of democracy goals such as: rule of law, human rights, minority inclusion, women empowerment, civics education and participation, community strengthening and empowerment, contributing to a more stable economy, contributing to regional stability, youth leadership and empowerment, entrepreneurship promotion, as well as projects that support risk reduction and resilience for cultural heritage in disaster-prone or economically disadvantaged areas and that also support post-disaster cultural heritage recovery.

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 from and is nominated solely based on architectural, artistic, historical, or other cultural (not religious) criteria.

8. Award Announcement: Embassy will announce the results of the AFCP 2024 Grants Program via e-mail when application review and selection are complete and the Department's Fiscal Year 2025 funding levels are established. Annual program results are typically announced in **July**.

9. Disclaimer: Notification 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.

10. Eligible Project Implementers: Eligible project implementers are defined as reputable and accountable **non-commercial** entities that demonstrate they have the 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.

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 implementing partners must be registered and active in the U.S. government's System for Award Management (SAM) to receive U.S. federal assistance. The registration process can take several weeks to complete, so it is important to avoid any delay.

11. Application and submission information:

Content and Form of Application Submission: Please follow all instructions below carefully. Applications that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be deemed ineligible.

Round 1 Concept Note Requirements (Deadline: January 14, 2025):
From the Implementer:

a) Project Basics: Include the implementer's name, a working title of the project, anticipated project length (between 12-60 months), project, location, and a project cost estimate (amount requested from AFCP, in U.S. dollars).

b) Project Summary Description: Provide a summary (3,000 characters maximum) that outlines the project activities, deliverables (outputs), and intended results (outcomes).

c) Visual Documentation: Submit five (5) high-quality digital images (JPEGs or PNGs) that convey the nature and condition of the site, collection, and show the urgency or need for the project (e.g., collapsed walls, water damage).

d) Rationale for AFCP Support: Explain why the U.S. government should fund the project (urgency, priority, importance, relevance at city/county/national level)

12. Round 2 Full Application Requirements (Deadline: April 15, 2025): The CHC will invite embassies selected in Round 1 to submit full applications by no later than April 15, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. EDT. The applications must fully meet the program objectives, funding areas and priorities, and eligibility requirements.

Additionally, to be considered complete, they must include:

From the Implementer:

a) Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424): Include Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A), Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B), and, if applicable, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL).

b) Updated Project Description: Expand on the project summary provided in the Round 1 concept note. Clearly describe the goals of the project. Explain the outputs and outcomes the project will produce to achieve each goal, and the activities that will generate these outputs and outcomes. Do this for both primary goals (such as restoring a part of a monument) and secondary goals (such as improving economic opportunities). Successful AFCP Round 2 applications describe a clear, logical pathway from activities to goals, including the necessary steps in between. Unsuccessful applications state broad goals but omit details on how they will be achieved. In addition to the description, applicants may include a

list, table, or Gantt chart of activities in chronological order, along with major outputs and outcomes and target dates for achieving them.

c) Key Personnel: Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project.

d) Statement of Importance: Highlight the historical, architectural, artistic, or cultural (non-religious) values of the cultural heritage.

e) Maintenance Plan: Outline the steps or measures that the applicant will take to maintain the site, object, or collection in good condition after the AFCP-supported project is complete; or, in the case of forms of traditional cultural expression, preserve and disseminate the documentation, knowledge, or skills gained from the project.

f) Implementer Public Outreach Plan: Implementer has to describe how it will build awareness and engage communities and stakeholders. Awareness-building activities typically include social media posts, ribbon-cutting events, and news stories. Community and stakeholder engagement activities may include community-led or community-produced workshops, short videos, documentary films, oral histories, storytelling or interpretive exhibits, and educational or enrichment events tailored for specific audiences, such as young people. Successful Round 2 applications feature strong and innovative public outreach activities.

g) Data and Information Access Plan: Outline how the implementing partner will share, as appropriate, raw data or processed information, such as publications, generated from the project with the public and the State Department.

h) Detailed Project Budget (embassy will provide an xls template): Provide a detailed project budget that lists all costs in separate categories (Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel [including Per Diem],

Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Other Direct Costs, Indirect Costs) and indicates funds from other sources.

i) Budget Narrative: Explain 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.

j) Resumes or CVs: Provide resumes or CVs of the proposed project director and other key personnel in English, in Word.

k) Support Letters: If applicable, letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

l) Proof of Official Permission: Official permission letters, if required for project activities.

m) Relevant Supporting Documentation **in English or with English translation, in a comprehensible version**: Provide 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.

n) Additional Visual Documentation: As appropriate, provide additional high-quality digital images (JPEGs or PNGs) that convey the nature and condition of the heritage and show the urgency or need for the proposed project (e.g., collapsing walls, extensive water damage).

o) Strategic Outreach Plan: Implementer has to describe how it plans to highlight and amplify AFCP-supported activities. Department of State welcomes innovative ideas on how to use mobile and online technologies to promote cultural heritage preservation and to share compelling project-related content with both targeted and broad audiences.

q) Connection to Other State Department Programs: If applicable, explain how the proposed project or project team is connected to

other State Department/embassy educational, cultural, or exchange programs.

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. 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 it will consider applications requesting AFCP support for any of these activities or costs ineligible:**

a) Privately or Commercially Owned Property: 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. Even though many cultures have long traditions of family ownership of cultural heritage, that heritage is still privately owned and thus not eligible to receive support from the AFCP program. This prohibition applies even to privately owned heritage that is accessible or made available to the public.

b) Natural Heritage: Preservation of natural heritage (physical, biological, and geological formations, paleontological collections, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, fossils, etc.) unless the natural heritage has a cultural heritage connection or dimension.

c) Human Remains: Preservation of hominid or human remains.

d) News Media: Preservation of news media (newspapers, newsreels, radio and TV programs, etc.).

e) Published Materials: Preservation of published materials available elsewhere (books, periodicals, etc.).

f) Mandated Educational Materials: Development of curricula or educational materials for required classroom use.

g) Archaeological Research: Archaeological excavations or exploratory surveys for research purposes.

h) Historical Research: Historical research, except in cases where the research is justifiable and integral to the success of the proposed project.

i) New Exhibits or Collections: Acquisition or creation of new exhibits, objects, or collections for new or existing museums.

j) New Construction: Construction of new buildings, building additions, or permanent coverings (over archaeological sites, for example).

k) (New) Works of Art: Commissions of new works of art or architecture for commemorative or economic development purposes.

l) New or Modern Adaptations: Creation of new or modern adaptation of existing traditional dances, songs, chants, musical compositions, plays, or other performances.

m) Conjectural Reconstructions: Creation of conjectural reconstructions of cultural objects or sites that no longer exist.

n) Relocation: Relocation of cultural sites from one physical location to another unless under imminent threat of irreversible damage or destruction.

o) Removal: Removal of cultural objects or elements of cultural sites from the country for any reason.

p) Digitization: Digitization of cultural objects or collections, unless part of a clearly defined conservation, documentation.

q) Conservation Plans or Studies: Conservation plans or other studies, unless they are one component of a larger project to implement the results of those studies.

r) Cash Reserves or Endowments: 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) Fund-Raising Campaigns: Costs of fund-raising campaigns.

t) Contingency Costs: Contingency, unforeseen, or miscellaneous costs.

u) Pre-Award Costs: Costs of work performed prior to the announcement of the award

v) International Travel: International travel outside the project country, 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) Project Cost Limits: Individual projects which cost less than US \$25,000 or more than \$500,000.

x) Independent U.S. Projects: Independent U.S. projects overseas.

y) **Projects that do not have a formal agreement/approval with a national/regional/local cultural authority to conduct cultural heritage preservation activities.**

15. Application Review Process: The CHC will start its formal review of concept notes in early 2025. It will review and select Round 1 concept notes and Round 2 full project applications (Round 2) program goals, funding areas and priorities, and other application requirements. The Department of State may deem concept notes and full applications ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the AFCP 2025 Grants Program objectives, requirements, and other criteria stated here.

a) Concept Note Review and Selection (Round 1): In consultation with the regional bureaus, ECA and the CHC will determine which project ideas advance to the Round 2 application stage based on embassy and implementer responses to the Round 1 Concept Note requirements.

b) Full Application Review and Selection (Round 2): The Department of State will review and rate the full project applications to confirm the technical feasibility of the projects, ensure that the outlined activities and budget lines support the stated goals, and identify any remaining shortcomings, questions, or concerns

Full Application Scoring System (Round 2): Full applications will be rated using the following point-based system:

Activities Description and Timeframe (20 points max)

Importance (10 points max)

Project Maintenance Plan (10 points max)

Implementer Public Outreach Plan (25 points max)

Data and Information Access Plan (5 points max)

Budget and Budget Narrative (20 points max)

Supporting Materials (resumes, assessments, reports, images, etc.) (10 points max)

Innovative integration, collaboration, or coordination with other Department of State and embassy programs (5 bonus points max)

17. Award Announcement: Embassy will announce the results of the AFCP 2025 Grants Program via e-mail when application review and selection are complete and the State Department's FY 2025 funding

levels are established. This announcement is not authorization to begin performance. The period of performance begins once a countersigned DS-1909 form is signed by the implementer and received by the Embassy or Consulate.

18. Award Information:

a) Instrument Type: Grant, Cooperative Agreement, Fixed Amount Award

b) Program Authorization: Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended (P.L. 87-256, § 102(b)(5))

d) Award Floor: \$25,000 per project

e) Award Ceiling: \$500,000 per project

19. Award Administration Information:

SAM Registration: An AFCP award recipient must be registered in the U.S. government's System for Award Management (SAM) prior to receiving U.S. federal assistance. The SAM will assign a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) automatically to any entity registering or renewing its record in the system. Registration in SAM is free: <https://sam.gov/>.