



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES
Bern, Switzerland

Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Embassy Bern Public Affairs Section Grants Program

Grant Award Amounts: up to \$10,000

Deadline: Proposals will be accepted until 31 March 2016; 17:00 Central European Time

Contact: BernPA@state.gov

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Who we are. The Public Affairs Section of [U.S. Embassy Bern](#) is pleased to announce that funding is available through the Embassy's Public Diplomacy Grants Program for projects in Switzerland or Liechtenstein that further relations with the American people. The embassy carries out multiple public engagement roles such as helping Swiss and Liechtensteiner pupils and students find study abroad programs in the United States, facilitating business relationships between American and Swiss and Liechtensteiner companies, increasing scholarly exchange, and generally helping the populations of Switzerland and Liechtenstein gain a more nuanced, complex view of the United States.

Grant program goals. Through this grants program, we seek to promote mutual understanding among the American, Swiss, and Liechtensteiner people. Traditionally, U.S. Embassy Bern has funded projects such as cultural programs where an American artist participates or is celebrated. For example, we have previously contributed to these programs:

- [Jazzwerkstatt](#): U.S. Embassy Bern has funded American participants in this jazz festival which introduces young Swiss musicians to contemporary and non-mainstream American jazz. An American official such as the Ambassador has spoken at the event at each year.
- [HackZurich](#): Organized by students from the ETH and the University of Zurich, this hackathon takes place once a year. U.S. Embassy Bern funded the travel for Facebook engineer Bob Baldwin to judge the competition because it supports the mutually shared value of innovation in technology. The embassy also facilitated the participation of Ben Huh (former CEO of The Cheezburger Network) who delivered remarks at the event.
- [Pink Cross](#): Through activism and advocacy, this Swiss non-governmental organization works prevent discrimination against LGBTI individuals. U.S. Embassy Bern funded the Pink Cross's social media campaign to reduce anti-LGBTI sentiment. This project supported the embassy's goals of engaging youth and fostering diversity.

The embassy welcomes proposals on these themes as well as new ones such as refugee/migrant integration and digital innovation, but is not limiting grant awards to these areas.

Engaging young people (ages 15-25) is a top priority. All projects should either focus on youth or include youth components.

What we look for in a proposal. U.S. Embassy Bern seeks proposals with a clear narrative demonstrating what need or problem the project addresses, the change that the project seeks to affect, a clear articulation of the activities that will lead to this change, a monitoring plan for keeping the project on track, and an evaluation plan for examining whether or not the project achieved the change it sought, and a reasonable budget. Characteristics of successful proposed projects are as follows:

- **Maximum impact:** Projects should have multiple components (not be stand-alone events) to increase the project's reach. For example, a project could take place in multiple cantons. It could include a round table discussion, webinar, workshop for students, or take places in stages throughout the year. We invite applicants to think creatively about how to maximize a project's impact.
- **Funding rationale:** Proposals should demonstrate why the U.S. Embassy Bern is uniquely positioned to fund the project, as opposed to sponsors that may be more appropriate such as local governments or corporations.
- **Communications plan:** Projects should include a media outreach strategy such as social media, interviews with media outlets, etc.
- **Cost share:** We encourage applicants to provide cost-sharing from additional sources in support of their project, such as the use of highly skilled volunteers or partner organizations.

We do not support projects that have no discernable American contribution, such as an event or training that has no clear connection to American culture, shared values, or the relationship between the United States and Switzerland or Liechtenstein.

II. Eligibility Information

U.S. Embassy Bern welcomes applications from both individuals and organizations based in Switzerland or Liechtenstein, whether public or private. Not-for-profit, civil society/non-governmental organizations, think tanks, educational institutions, and companies are all eligible.

Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of Federal and Public Diplomacy regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other State Department elements. Proposals will be funded based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and embassy priorities.

III. Proposal Requirements

Due to the volume of applicants and inquiries, PAS does not accept letters of intent, concept papers, or requests for meetings prior to application. However, applicants may address questions to BernPA@state.gov and should allow 24 hours for a response.

Format. Proposals must include the items listed below:

- a. Summary of Project
- b. Organizational Description and Capacity
- c. Project Narrative: Needs Statement, Goal, Participants, Activities, and Timeline
- d. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- e. Budget

Proposals must be under 15MB. For larger files, please send via postal mail to this address:

U.S. Embassy Bern
Public Affairs Section
Sulgeneckstrasse 19
3007 Bern, Switzerland

IV. Application Deadline and Submission

Deadline: Applications may be submitted at any time for consideration before the closing date of this annual program statement on 31 March 2016 at 17:00 Central European Time.

Submission: All application materials must be submitted to BernPA@state.gov with “PAS FY16 RFP: Your Organization’s Name” in the subject line of the email. Proposals sent to the embassy via postal mail must be received on 31 March.

Once the deadline has passed or an application has been submitted, State Department officials and staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is complete.

V. Review and Selection Process

Each application will be evaluated based on criteria designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. Applications will be reviewed based on the project narrative (see section I), monitor and evaluation plan, budget, and overall quality of the written proposal.

Past performance and timely reporting on grants awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other United States government entities, or international donor agencies may also be considered.

VI. Award Notification

A final award cannot be made until proposals have passed through the required review and approval process, and funds have been allocated. U.S. Embassy Bern reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets.

Applicants will be notified via email whether or not they received funding within 60 days of application submission.

VII. Other Information

Issuance of this RFP 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.

The information contained in this solicitation is binding and may not be modified by any embassy or U.S. State Department representative. Explanatory information provided by the embassy that contradicts this language will not be binding.