*FAQs*



**General Information**



What are the **major sectors** for grants under the Alumni Small Grants Program? The major sectors for the Alumni Small Grants Program (ASG) include:

* Education
* Health
* Energy
* Agriculture
* Economic Growth
* Governance
* Volunteerism
* Arts
* Culture
* Social Assistance (rehabilitation and reconstruction after floods and other disasters)

What are the **main project areas** under ASG?



Project proposals focused on the areas below will be deemed more competitive but not limited to:

* Community service projects that encourage volunteerism and benefit the community
* Public education projects that promote better understanding between Pakistan and the U.S.
* Proposals that support the dissemination of tolerant voices on important issues related to minorities or women
* New media concepts aimed at reaching wider audiences
* Media training projects
* Democracy and human rights
* Economic opportunity, prosperity, and entrepreneurship
* Women’s empowerment
* Promoting a better environment
* Food security
* Health awareness
* Regional level engagement between Pakistan and other South Asian neighbors
* Youth recreation, leadership, and education programs; cultural programs

What is the **geographical coverage** of ASG?



ASG is open to applicants from all four provinces of Pakistan as well as Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Do applicants need to have **experience** implementing this project?



No. Experience implementing donor-funded projects will be considered positively, but the lack of such experience will not be considered as a disadvantage.

How **many applications** can an applicant submit at one time?



Applicants are strongly encouraged to develop their proposal in consultation with previous alumni small grants awardees. Applicants should invest time in developing their project proposal to ensure that the standards of quality are maintained. Therefore, an applicant may only submit one application at a time. A second application will not be considered until the applicant is informed about the status of its first application.

I forgot to attach a few documents with the application. Can I resubmit it?



Once online proposal is submitted, it can’t be accessed again. However, if proposal is returned after review, applicant can add new material before resubmitting proposal.

I don’t have a DSLR to record my 60-second video. Will this affect my application?



No. We encourage you to record your video using your cellphone’s camera. However, we do request alumni to follow the guidelines provided [here.](http://www.pakusalumninetwork.com/grants/grantvideos/)

Are applicants, whose original application was turned down, **allowed to apply again**?



Applicants who have not been successful in receiving an award are welcome to apply again. These applicants may, if interested, contact ASG officer at **ASG@USEFPAKISTAN.ORG** to discuss the reasons why their original application was rejected and receive suggestions on how a new proposal could be strengthened.

An applicant will have to wait until the next application cycle to reapply for a grant in case his/her application was initially turned down.

Can I apply for more than one project with **multiple applications** simultaneously in the same grants cycle?

No, you may apply for only one small grant per cycle.

Can I apply for a small grant on **individual** basis or do I have to constitute a **group** of multiple people in order to apply for it?

Alumni can apply as a team for a single project. The team must identify a single person who will lead the project as a coordinator.

How to apply for **PUAN membership**?



Please register at [www.puan.pk/AlumniRegistration](http://www.puan.pk/AlumniRegistration)

**Grant Purposes**



What **types of proposals** can be submitted under ASG?



A valid proposal under ASG must meet the following criteria:

* be innovative and unique
* be independently originated and developed by the applicant
* be consistent with and supportive of Public the alumni exchange experience
* be able to meet a specific community need

What can be classified as a **purpose** of ASG?



* Enhance community engagement
* Support and develop new Pakistani voices and leaders
* Provide educational or economic opportunities for Pakistani youth and the general public
* Create opportunities for engagement between the people of Pakistan and regional neighbors
* Advance the public good and promote community service in Pakistan
* Increase understanding about the United States, the American people, and mutual understanding
* between the U.S. and Pakistan
* Invest in people by funding programs that: support improving educational opportunities in
* Pakistan

Are there any **specific forms** for applying for ASG?



No. All proposals must be submitted online. Only PUAN members registered with PUAN MIS will be able to apply online. For online registration and proposal submission please visit [www.puan.pk/AlumniRegistration](http://www.puan.pk/AlumniRegistration)

How can alumni **apply**?



Alumni should read documents such as General Information Document - RFP and Grant General Guidelines for SG before filling and submitting online proposal.

Only online application will be accepted for review.



What are the **key prerequisites** for an applicant to qualify for ASG funding?

Applicants must be:

* Pakistani Alumni from U.S. government-funded exchange programs
* Registered and confirmed members of the Pak- U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN)
* Must be 18+ years of age.

To become a member, please fill out the form on

 [www.puan.pk/AlumniRegistration](http://www.puan.pk/AlumniRegistration)

Which U.S. government funded **exchange program alumni** can apply for ASG? Applicants from all U.S. government funded exchange programs can apply for ASG.



ACCESS English Micro-scholarship Program students graduates can apply but ACCESS program teachers are not eligible

What is "**cost share**" and how can an applicant include it in its application for a project? "Cost Share" means the applicant's contribution which it will provide for the proposed project.



Cost share is not mandatory under the ASG. However, the Program strongly encourages applicants to contribute, either in cash or in-kind. Greater weightage will be given to applications which include a cost share. Alumni may count their time as cost share.

What are the **“eligible” activities** under ASG?



All expenses incurred must be direct costs.

*Typical Costs*

* Project supplies
* Publications
* Travel
* Materials
* Room Rental
* Networking activities

What are the **“ineligible” activities** under ASG?



A list of ineligible activities that cannot be funded is given in the applicant's guidelines. Activities that are not typically funded include, but are not limited to:

* Indirect costs or overhead
* Training
* Salary
* Conference
* Individual travel to conference
* Academic research/projects
* Out of country travel
* Administrative fees
* Mixing with other funds
* Continuous project without a defined project end date
* Lobbying for political parties
* Religious activities
* Book launches
* Projects that solely benefit alumni or their work(s)

What are the **application requirements**?



Applications will be accepted only if the following conditions are met:

* Complete and submit online proposal form
* Upload 60-second video detailing your project proposal
* Detailed project budget
* Short Resume
* Submission of all requirements via online portal

Which other **supplementary documents** are essential for submission along grant application? Depending on your project activities, following documents must be submitted along-with grant application:

* Training module/agenda
* Training curriculum/coursework
* No Objection Certificate(s) (NOCs) from local government
* Letters of consent or MOUs from other organizations involved
* Bio of trainers
* CVs of team members (key personnel)
* Details of other partner organizations

What should be a small grant project on **training workshop** look like?



Trainings should be focused on business development and entrepreneurial skills enhancement (marketability) instead of just equipment-based skill enhancement.

How can I reduce my **budget cost** on **venue**?



You can talk to your university/organization administration for subsidized venue arrangement. You can also get in touch with your respective alumni coordinator who can connect your with senior faculty members (alumni) in this regard. Moreover, State-Department-funded Lincoln Corners or Helen Keller Centers can support alumni activities with minimal expense.

What is the most pertinent information I need to provide with regard to the proposed **target audience**?



Proposals should clearly explain the selection criteria for your target audience e.g. students, widows, teachers etc. Also, mention the number of people you plan to select for your workshop/training.

How important is the role of **senior alumni** in a small grant project?



Senior alumni can assist and guide you as a mentor on volunteer basis with regard to running your project effectively and efficiently. They can also volunteer as a trainer in your project hence saving you time and budget cost.

Are cash prizes allowed under ASG program?

No, cash prizes and donations are strictly prohibited. You can give certificates, shields or other stationery items to your winning participants as a token of appreciation.

How important is submitting a CV with my application?



Submitting your CV along-with your grants application is extremely important and is beneficial for the ASG evaluation committee to assess your skills and expertise related to your academic and professional background.

**For Grantees**



Can alumni get **funding for new projects** after the completion of an awarded project?



Yes, but preference will be given to new applicants to maximize outreach of the program to other deserving communities.

What is **waiting period** for a Grantee to re-apply for a new or ongoing small grants project? An applicant will have to wait until three (3) months after a successful project implementation to reapply for another grant.



What are the **reporting requirements** for the ASG?



After the award of a project, the Grantees will be required to submit provisional/final report(s) that must contain a narrative as well as financial elements. Project reports shall be submitted congruent to the duration of the Project. Sharing of reporting templates with alumni is subject to project proposal approval.

Will the **unused funds**, if any, be returned to ASG upon completion of a project?



Yes. Any unused funds should be promptly returned to ASG upon the completion of a project.

Will ASG **monitor** the project implementation?



Yes. Project monitoring will be carried out through:

* Progress reports by the Grantees
* Monitoring visits by ASG staff

The purpose of such monitoring visits will be to assess the progress vis-à-vis agreed targets and to monitor the operational transparency, documentation and other obligations as envisaged in the Grant Agreement.

Can the ASG funds be used for **other** than approved project/activities?



No. The ASG funds cannot be used for any project/activities that have not been approved.

What are the **consequences of fraud/corruption/embezzlement/misappropriation** of ASG funds by the Grantees?



In such cases, USEFP-PUAN will terminate the Grant Agreement and the Grantee will return all the disallowed costs. In addition, USEFP-PUAN may take other legal action as deemed appropriate.

If awarded a small grant, when could I expect to receive the **funding**?



After approval of the grant, it will take 3-4 week to disburse funds to a Grantee. The grant shall be disbursed in installment(s) in the amounts.

Can a Small Grant pay **salary** for me and/or personnel involved?



No. Salary costs are not allowable expenses.

What is ASG’s policy on the usage of **logo(s)** during the promotion of a small grants project?



For detailed branding guidelines, please visit http://www.pakusalumninetwork.com/grants/branding-guidelines/

It is compulsory that the alumni should take prior written consent from the U.S Embassy Islamabad, the U.S Consulates and the Pakistan-U.S Alumni Network’s office at USEFP, before the publication of any promotional material.

What information should I provide in section **2.11 Security Narrative**?

Based on your project description, note any particular security concerns with your event. For instance, does it involve travel to high crime areas? Does it involve late night, overnight, or long-distance travel? Does the event address sensitive issues in your community? After describing any potential security concerns for alumni and participants, describe what steps you will take to address these concerns. Will you advertise the event openly or only via invitation? Did you choose a venue that provides security guards and screens attendees? Will you adjust your schedule to travel during the day? Does your budget include hiring additional security staff? The committee prefers applications that show a clear consideration of security issues, and creative solutions to minimize any security risk.

**Selection Procedure**



What is the ASG **Evaluation Committee**?



The committee, chaired by the U.S. Embassy Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer responsible for alumni activities, will meet to review all grants. In addition, the committee will be comprised of one other officer from the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy, the USEFP Director of Alumni Affairs, and two representatives from PUAN.

How will applicants be **informed** whether or not their applications have been selected for an award? Applicants will be notified when their application for the ASG is received. The ASG committee will communicate the approval of as well as denial of awards over email.



What is **USEFP-PUAN** Office?



In collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) established a separate alumni small grants office in November 2012. This office works directly under USEFP’s Alumni Affairs department while coordinating closely with the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN). PUAN is a network of alumni of U.S. Government-funded exchange programs that acts on the national level as well as 13 different chapters across the country. USEFP has provided an office space for eight full-time employees who will be working on alumni specific small grants and PUAN chapter activities. The USEFP-PUAN office seeks to build on knowledge, skills, and mutual understanding learned during the alumnus’ participation in the exchange program, and to create an arena in which skills can be amplified to advance U.S. Embassy’s goal of increasing mutual understanding and supporting community service in Pakistan.

What happens after an application is **submitted**?



The applicant will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt via automated email when an application is successfully submitted online. The processing of an application may take 10-12 weeks at which point the applicant will be duly informed of the outcome.

What are the **steps involved** in processing an application? Who is involved?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step 1 | - | Read General Information Document - RFP and Grant General Guidelines |
| Step 2 | - | Submit online proposal |
| Step 3 | - |  ASG committee will notify applicants regarding application status in 10-12 weeks |
|  |  |  |
| Step 5 | - | Successful applicants will sign a Grant Award Document |
| Step 6 | - | Successful applicants will receive first installment one week after approval |

Once an application for the ASG is received, the USEFP-PUAN office reviews it to ensure that all the required information has been provided and to verify that the alumnus/alumna is eligible for funding. The USEFP-PUAN office may contact applicants to request additional information, if necessary. Once the review process is complete, the ASG committee meets to review and score the application and make a recommendation as to whether it should be awarded the grant or not. This information is then sent to the U.S. Embassy for further review. Staff from the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad as well as the Consulates in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar review the proposal and the ASG's recommendation before taking a decision. These decisions are then communicated to the applicant.

What does the ASG evaluation **committee like**?



The ASG evaluation committee likes:

* Lots of details
* Clarity
* Focus on single idea
* Rational budget
* Applying your exchange experience
* Demonstration and justification of expertise
* Team work - Personnel including alumni, non-alumni and equal gender ratio
* Volunteerism

**Miscellaneous**



Can I view a sample of a previous application?



For privacy reasons, we cannot allow you to view previous applications. The USEFP-PUAN office can answer any specific questions you may have about required format and level of detail.

My proposal was funded for 6 months, but I haven't completed the work yet. Can I get an extension?



Extensions will not be regularly granted. In order to receive an extension, grant recipients must show significant progress towards completing the work and sufficiently explain the delay in completion. Extensions longer than one month will not be approved. Please contact **ASG@USEFPAKISTAN.ORG** immediately if you believe you will require an extension. In thecase of an extension denial, you will have to immediately return all unused project funds.

Where do higher budget applicants go?



Information about other grant programs offered by the U.S. Mission in Pakistan is available at http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/al\_network.html.