



**Albanian-American
Development Foundation**

Request for Tender (RFT) #00197

**Implementation Services for the AADF MIP Professional Internship Program
(2026–2028)**

Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF)

Submission Deadline: 14/04/2026

1. About AADF

Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF) is the legacy organization of the Albanian-American Enterprise Fund (AAEF), a foreign assistance initiative of the United States government targeting the development of a strong private sector in post-communist Albania. Established in 2009, the AADF is the largest non-for-profit organization in Albania. As an American institution operating in the country, AADF strongly follows the most advanced, modern philanthropic approaches in the U.S., while focusing entirely on contributing to building, helping, and developing models on a national scale and impact.

2. Background and rationale

In 2017, AADF established the prestigious MIP Internship Program to provide Albanian young professionals and future leaders with a unique opportunity for professional internships in U.S. companies and organizations. The MIP Internship program is designed for young and mid-career professionals who are committed to addressing the challenges of the future and contributing to Albania's development upon their return in the field of Education, Technology & Innovation, Business & Entrepreneurship, Tourism & Ecotourism, Culture, Law, Health Education, Journalism, Architecture, Engineering, Agriculture, IT, etc.

The MIP Internship program targets young professionals who are permanent residents and citizens of Albania that are willing to gain a 6-month professional experience in the USA. This program aims to contribute to the country's advancement and EU integration through the academic and professional development of Albanian youth; therefore, MIP Fellows are required to return to Albania after the completion of the 6-month program.

AADF has created, designed and owns the AADF MIP Professional Fellowship Program, a fellowship that provides an opportunity for the most talented young professionals and Albanian future leaders to enhance their management and technical capacity, improve their individual career prospects and therefore contribute to the development of Albania. So far, the MIP Internship has chosen and completed the placement of 125 fellows. Since end of 2017, 14 cohorts have been selected.

For more details about our program please visit the MIP Internship website: <https://mip-aadf.org/internship/internship/>

3. Purpose of this RFP

To support the implementation of the MIP Internship Program for an additional four (4) cohorts with a total of thirty-two (32) fellows during 2026-2028, AADF is looking for an implementing partner (IP) to administer and manage the program in line with the objectives and requirements set out in this document.

4. Eligibility and mandatory requirements

- J-1 sponsorship is mandatory. The Implementing Partner must be a designated J-1 visa sponsor authorized by the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and able to issue Form DS-2019.
- The Implementing Partner must be able to meet all DoS regulations during the period of sponsorship, including SEVIS-related reporting and 24-hour emergency support.
- If any J-1 compliance functions are outsourced, the Implementing Partner remains fully responsible for compliance; proposals should clearly describe the sponsorship structure and designated compliance roles.

5. Key personnel (minimum profiles)

The proposal must include CVs for the key personnel listed below. Replacement of key personnel after award requires prior AADF approval.

5.1 Required functions

- Program Director / Senior Responsible Officer: overall responsibility; at least 7 years of experience in international mobility/exchange programs; experience with J-1 sponsorship compliance.
- J-1 Visa Compliance Officer: direct experience with DS-2019 issuance; knowledge of SEVIS reporting and U.S. Department of State regulations.
- Placement Officer: experience securing host organizations; demonstrated network in multiple U.S. states; ability to ensure on-site placements (not fully remote) to protect program quality.
- Case Manager: responsible for fellows during internship; experience with 24-hour emergency protocols; monitoring and reporting to protect AADF reputationally.

Note: One proposed personnel can cover more than one function at the same time as long as the quality of the service is not negatively impacted.

6. Description of services and deliverables

The Implementing Partner will administer and manage the program for four (4) cohorts (2026-2028). Key services include, at minimum:

6.1 Application and selection

- AADF will review application packets to identify applicants deemed qualified and eligible to participate and will produce a shortlist.
- The Application Tracking System (ATS) is already existing and functional and is managed by AADF.
- A representative of the Implementing Partner will travel to Albania to participate in interviews of short-listed applicants.

- Three (3) business days are expected for the designated representative of the Implementing Partner to complete the interviews in collaboration with AADF Co-CEOs and the AADF staff in charge of the MIP Program.
- The average number of shortlisted candidates for the final interview is approximately 25; after interviews, approximately 7 winning candidates are selected.
- All costs related to the Implementing Partner's travel to Albania must receive prior approval from AADF and be documented with relevant invoices.

6.2 Professional internship placement

- Following selection, the Implementing Partner will assign a representative to all selected applicants (Participant(s)/Fellow(s)) to provide guidance on refining internship training objectives, researching internship opportunities, preparing a professional resume, and interviewing.
- Simultaneously, the Implementing Partner will research potential host organizations able to provide the desired training experience and match selected candidates with potential host organizations to conduct interviews and ensure they are accepted by one.
- The Implementing Partner is expected to provide opportunities for fellows to be placed in reputable/prestigious hosting companies or organizations.
- Host organizations should allow no more than 1-2 days of hybrid working days per week; each host organization should provide a job description for the fellow and appoint a supervisor for each fellow.

6.3 J-1 visa sponsorship, compliance, and participant support

- Once a suitable host organization has been identified and the Participant has been offered an internship, the Implementing Partner will obtain the Training/Internship Placement Plan (**Form DS-7002**) and monitor compliance with other host organization regulatory requirements relevant to hosting an intern through the J-1 visa program.
- Following placement, the Implementing Partner will prepare the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (Form DS-2019) and all other documentation required for the Participant to obtain a visa through the U.S. Embassy in Albania.
- While Participants will be issued Form DS-2019 provided all relevant eligibility requirements are met, neither the Implementing Partner nor AADF can guarantee that the U.S. Consulate will issue a J-1 visa; any visa-related decision is solely the responsibility of the U.S. Consulate.
- Visa sponsorship includes all support procedures required to meet U.S. Department of State regulations during the period of sponsorship, including 24-hour emergency support.
- Throughout the training period, the Implementing Partner will work with the Participant's host organization supervisor to monitor that the training plan is being followed and that the training plan meets mutually satisfactory objectives.
- The Implementing Partner will provide a single point of contact for program support issues and inquiries and will maintain a 24-hour emergency phone service.

6.4 Executive education / professional development support

- As part of the AADF internship, the Implementing Partner will support Participants during the application for an executive education or professional development training.
- Once training has been approved by AADF/Implementing Partner, the Implementing Partner will provide Participants with the required funds via an electronic bank transfer (ACH).
- The Implementing Partner will approve and monitor the fellows' progress to obtain Executive Education Certification (Executive Education).

6.5 Health and travel insurance

- Participants must be covered under a plan that meets or exceeds the standards set by the U.S. Department of State for J-1 visa holders. The Implementing Partner will provide accident and sickness insurance to all Fellows for the duration of the fellowship, at least as per minimum J-1 health insurance requirements.
- Coverage limits must be USD 1,000,000 in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in published insurance materials. Participants are expected to review the published insurance materials and are bound by limitations therein.
- Coverage is required for the entire time a Participant is allowed to stay in the U.S. (up to ten days prior to the start of training and 30 days after the end of the training period). Coverage shall not be prorated.
- Before travel to the U.S., the Implementing Partner will provide each Participant with an insurance identification card to be presented whenever medical attention is sought.

6.6 International travel support and logistics

- As soon as Participants enter the U.S., they will have access to Implementing Partner 24-hour support.
- The Implementing Partner will organize all travel to and from Albania and the host institution in the United States.
- The Implementing Partner will guide Participants to arrange their placement logistics, including accommodation, transportation, and facilities.

6.7 Logistics and pre-departure orientation (PDO)

The Implementing Partner, in cooperation with AADF, will provide a comprehensive online pre-departure orientation (PDO) to all fellowship recipients, designed both to prepare them for their fellowship and life in the U.S., and to facilitate their successful return to Albania after completion of the 6-month internship period.

- Orientation topics will include: health and safety; U.S. working culture; managing personal finances; cultural shock; visa regulations; and career planning.
- During orientation, all participants must be informed about the mandatory return to Albania upon completion of the program as required by J-1 visa regulations.
- Fellows in breach of J-1 regulations will be reported to the Department of State.

6.8 Enrichment trips (Intercultural Training / Regional Culture Excursion)

The Implementing Partner will organize an enrichment trip twice a year (one for each cohort), during which the current cohort fellows gather in one specific location in the USA. Suggestions from the Implementing Partner are expected.

- Purpose: support professional development through meetings with entrepreneurs and business executives and provide knowledge about various sectors of the American economy; fellows also spend time together, share experiences, and learn more about American culture and history.
- Duration: 5 days (check-in Monday, check-out Friday).
- Timing: organized within the first half of March and the first half of November.
- AADF participation: two to three AADF staff will be present on each enrichment trip.
- IP responsibilities: hotel bookings for all participants; restaurant reservations; organization of business meetings/conferences/trainings; volunteering activities; welcome and farewell gatherings.

6.9 Stipends and disbursements

- The Implementing Partner will distribute monthly living stipends.
- The Implementing Partner will disburse budgets needed for each participant.

6.10 Program evaluation and reporting

- The Implementing Partner will provide an Excel report every month describing the progress of each participant/fellow, starting from the placement process until the return to Albania (AADF will advise regarding the template to be used).
- The Implementing Partner shall submit: an annual report to support AADF reporting to its Board of Directors.
- Reports must contain information on Participants' progress in meeting internship objectives, professional achievements, and the benefits of additional activities conducted by the Implementing Partner.
- AADF Monitoring and Evaluation staff will provide support in selecting measurement tools relevant to the program.

6.11 Organizational liaison

The Implementing Partner and AADF will each designate a representative (Implementing Partner Contact Person and AADF Contact Person) to carry out the provisions of the requested services.

7. Program costs and expenses

7.1 Direct Program Costs (paid by IP and reimbursed by AADF)

The Direct Program Costs described below may be adjusted according to U.S. Department of State regulations or market conditions as agreed in advance with AADF. When an adjustment is

necessary, the Implementing Partner will provide AADF with documentation to support the adjustment and obtain prior approval from AADF. Where estimates are provided, the actual cost documented by appropriate receipts will be reimbursed by AADF.

The Participant’s entire award, including all Direct Program Costs detailed below, is subject to the Participant’s individual contribution of 10%. This contribution will be calculated by the Implementing Partner and approved by AADF. Participants’ scholarship awards will be detailed in individual award reports, which Participants will be asked to sign, acknowledging the amount of their award and their individual contribution.

Direct Program Costs will be incurred and payable only to selected applicants who have accepted internship placements in U.S. host organizations.

Reimbursable Direct Program Costs	Cost (per Participant)
J-1 Visa Application Fee	\$185
SEVIS Fee	\$220
Participant Health and Travel Insurance, per Participant per Month	To be proposed by IP
R/T Airfare between Tirana and Participant's Host Organization (nearest airport estimate)	Max \$1,600
Arrival Per-Diem	\$2,000
Monthly Stipend (maximum - varies by location)	Max \$3,593
Intercultural Training and Regional Culture Excursion (maximum - varies by location)	To be discussed with IP after contract signature
Executive Education (estimate, with prior approval for individual proposals)	Max \$5,000
Co-working space (estimate, yearly cost, if needed - If a host organization does not provide adequate workspace)	Max \$6,000

7.2 Program Operating Expense (paid by AADF to the Implementing Partner)

Detailed estimation to be received by Implementing Partner.

7.3 Payment to the Implementing Partner by AADF

Reimbursement of direct program costs and program operating expenses and payment of allocated expense and administrative fee shall be paid quarterly, within 30 (thirty) days of presentation of an invoice and appropriate receipts by the Implementing Partner.

8. Proposal requirements

The Implementing Partner should draft a business proposal that includes: a letter of interest; a description of experience in managing similar programs; and an implementation methodology aligned with the required deliverables.

- The business proposal must include a financial proposal, detailed per deliverables and activities, for four (4) cohorts, totaling thirty-two (32) fellows.

- Administration/overhead costs must not be presented as a percentage of direct expenses; they must be presented as a fixed fee.
- CVs must be submitted for proposed key personnel (see Section 5).

9. Proposed timeline (2026-2028)

The contract will cover the implementation of four (4) cohorts over the period 2026-2028.

9.1 Cohort I (Pre-selected Participants)

The first cohort (11 fellows) has already been selected. The Implementing Partner shall ensure that the host company placement finding process commences no later than May 2026. All participants must be placed no later than December 2026, with a strong preference for placements to begin before October 2026 to allow for the timely organization of the Enrichment Trip within the first half of November 2026.

9.2 Cohort II

The call for applications for the second cohort is currently open and will remain open until mid-April 2026. The evaluation of applications will take place from mid-April through late May 2026. A representative of the Implementing Partner shall travel to Albania to conduct final interviews by late June 2026. Internships for this cohort are expected to commence no later than December 2026-January 2027.

9.3 Cohort III

The application window for the third cohort will open in early September 2026 and close in late October 2026. The evaluation of written applications will be conducted through the end of December 2026. The Implementing Partner's representative shall attend final interviews in Albania in late January 2027. Internships for this cohort are expected to commence between June and August 2027.

9.4 Cohort IV

The fourth cohort application window will open in mid-January 2027 and close in mid-April 2027. The evaluation period will run from mid-April through late May 2027. The Implementing Partner's representative shall travel to Albania for final interviews by late June 2027. Internships for this cohort are expected to commence no later than December 2027-January 2028.

10. Strategic guidance to take into consideration

- The Implementing Partner should have a geographically vast database of potential host companies to be assigned to Fellows. Please refer to the existing list of Host Companies where Fellows have been placed so far: <https://mip-aadf.org/internship/fellows/>
- The Implementing Partner should have a diverse and rich host company database which can accommodate different professional backgrounds of the MIP fellows.

- In a future scenario where, remote work becomes more common, the Implementing Partner should consider limiting fully remote arrangements for fellows. Hybrid work could be acceptable, but more than one or two days per week from home could risk reducing the intended in-person learning and networking experience.

APPENDIX

<i>Project Phases</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>AADF</i>
<i>Selection and</i>	1. Interview process	a. After the administrative evaluation, the Implementing Partner receives a file of applications to evaluate in the	a. Opens applications b. Conducts administrative check

Project Phases	Outputs	Implementing Partner	AADF
Placement Process		<p>ATS system.</p> <p>b. The Implementing Partner sends a representative in Albania to participate in the selection process. All costs related to the trip should receive prior approval from AADF and be documented with relevant invoices.</p>	c. Does a simultaneous pre-selection of short-listed candidates
	z. Pre-placement	<p>a. The Implementing Partner offers coaching for selected candidates. The purpose of coaching is to provide guidance on refining internship training objectives, of how to improve their CV, conduct successful interviews and sell their skills in the marketplace.</p> <p>b. Matches selected candidates with potential host organizations to conduct interviews and ensure they are accepted by one</p>	Ensures candidates are receiving a tailored coaching and are being placed in a U.S. host organization.
	3. Placement	<p>a. Once accepted by a host organization, the Implementing Partner will provide all forms and documents related to J-1 visa for each intern. Some of the documents include: "Training/ Internship Placement Plan" (Form DS-7002); "Certificate for Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status" (Form DS-2019) and all other documentation required for the Participant to obtain a visa through the U.S. Embassy in Albania.</p> <p>b. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will ensure compliance with other host organization's regulatory requirements based on J-1 visa.</p>	Ensure all applicants are able to submit their visa to U.S. Embassy in Albania
Internship Period	1. Internship documents and logistics	<p>a. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will provide each intern with health and travel insurance. Furthermore, the IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will issue an insurance ID card for each participant that must be presented whenever they seek medical attention.</p> <p>b. As J-1 visa sponsor, the IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will provide participants with pre-arrival information and orientation.</p> <p>c. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will guide interns to arrange their placement, including accommodation, transportation, facilities etc.</p> <p>d. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will provide 24-hour emergency support to all participants.</p>	<p>a. AADF will maintain direct communication with each participant to ensure internship is being implemented correctly.</p> <p>b. AADF will approve all expenses related to living costs.</p>
	2. Internship Monitoring	a. Work with host organizations to prepare internship objectives for each selected intern, ensure coaching is happening and progress is monitored.	
	3. Expense disbursement (IMPLEMENTING PARTNER to participant)	<p>a. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will disburse budget needed for each applicant.</p> <p>b. Disbursement of the stipends should happen monthly based on the number of applicants</p>	AADF will provide approval for all relevant costs.
	4. Additional activities	<p>a. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will organize one Intercultural Training & Regional Culture Excursion (Enrichment Trip)</p> <p>b. Facilitate Professional Development Seminar or Conference Attendance during Enrichment Trip</p> <p>c. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will approve and monitor the fellows' progress to obtain Executive Education Certification (Executive Education).</p>	AADF will send representatives to participate in the Enrichment Trips.
Payment, Reporting and Evaluation	1. Payment installments	<p>a. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER shall ask for prior approval</p> <p>b. The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER shall provide all relevant back-up documents to justify expenses.</p>	a. Direct Program Costs and Program Operating Expense will be paid by AADF to the IMPLEMENTING PARTNER quarterly upon presentation of an invoice by IMPLEMENTING PARTNER to AADF and approval by AADF.
	2. Financial and	The IMPLEMENTING PARTNER will provide update	AADF will advise regarding the

<i>Project Phases</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>AADF</i>
	technical reporting to AADF	reports once every month related to each participant's progress.	template to be used.
	3. Program Evaluation and final Report	A final narrative report shall be submitted by the end of the project. This report shall contain information regarding participants' progress in meeting their internship objectives, their achievements professionally and benefits of additional activities conducted by the IMPLEMENTING PARTNER.	AADF Monitoring and Evaluation person will provide support in selecting the best measurement tools relevant to the program.