

SELF-HELP GUIDELINES

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) Program is a grass-roots assistance program that allows U.S. Ambassadors to support to local requests for small community-based development projects. The purpose of the Special Self-Help Program is to support communities through modest grants that will positively impact communities. The SSH philosophy is to help communities ready to help themselves.

Application and Selection Schedule:

Application Period: March 15 – April 15

Project Evaluation: April 16 – May 31

Selection Period: June 1 – June 15

Grant Award: June 16 – August 30

To be eligible for funding your project must meet the following criteria:

1. The project must promote social cohesion and reconciliation.
2. The project should be high-impact, benefiting the greatest number of people possible.
3. Substantial community participation in the activity is required. Contributions may include labor, materials (bricks, sand, gravel, seeds, etc.), land, buildings, or money to ensure the success of the project.
4. Funding is limited to one project, which must be completed within twelve (12) months or less.
5. Projects must be within the community's ability to maintain and operate. Requests for large-scale agriculture or construction projects, or for expensive equipment will not be priority projects.
6. Managers of a project should have evidence that they are financially responsible and will be able to account for funds sent to them. Having a bank account, or establishing credit with vendors, are examples of such evidence.
7. The requested amount for implementing activities cannot exceed 6,500,000 CFA.

Please Note: For 2016, only projects physically located in Bangui and the immediate surrounding area will be considered.

Certain projects, or portions of projects, do not qualify for this fund:

1. Requests to buy sophisticated equipment such as vehicles, computers, copiers, projectors or sound systems.
2. Proposals that have a purely police, military, or cultural emphasis.
3. Religious projects unless they genuinely assist the whole community without regard to religious affiliation.
4. Personal businesses.
5. Payment for pesticides, herbicides, labor, salaries, operating costs, printing material, fuel, or land.

6. Projects to remodel or renovate an existing facility that is in disrepair as a result of neglect or lack of money.
7. Office supplies such as pencils, paper, forms and folders.
8. Projects that are partially funded by another donor or by the Government of CAR. Funds cannot be commingled with funds from other donors, international organization or other U.S. government programs.
9. Projects that focus on for refugees or displaced persons. There are specific U.S. bilateral or multilateral assistance programs designed to address their needs.
10. SSH funds may not be used to buy previously owned equipment, luxury goods, or gambling equipment.
11. Salaries or supervision costs for the supervising organization. Contingency estimates also do not qualify.

Please note: We encourage you to contact SSH Coordinator Justin NARI with questions as you develop your proposal, as applications that include ineligible items may be disqualified.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Applications for Special Self-Help Funds should include the following:
 - a. Completed application form included with this packet
 - b. Comprehensive budget
 - c. Detailed building plan with dimensions (if necessary)
 - d. Copies of a bank statement and/or invoices (if available)
 - e. Map of the project location
 - f. Any additional information/literature you have about your organization and/or project.
2. Submit the complete application package to the Self-Help Coordinator by April 15 for consideration for this year. Contact Mr. Justin NARI at BanguiSelfHelp@state.gov or at 21 61 02 00 ext. 3230 to make arrangements to submit your application packet. Applications received after April 15 will be considered the following year.
3. Project selections will be announced beginning in July.

Local Community Involvement

Local involvement of the organization or group must be at least 25 percent in cash or in kind of the total project costs. The local funding may be crucial to make a choice between two viable requestors. The local contributions can be in cash or in kind. Examples of in-kind contributions may include labor (wages of masons and workers), food, accommodation for qualified labor, carts of sand or gravel, bricks for construction, sand, fence, water supply, transportation costs, or donations of materials.

Additionally, at least two community leaders must also sign the statement of interest. Community leaders include local municipal leaders, religious leaders, tribal or clan leaders, or any governing body that has oversight where the project will be implemented. Community leaders may also submit letters of support for the project, so long as they specifically mention the project by title.

This application will be evaluated on the following factors:

- **Completeness:** Did the applicant submit all of the materials requested, including but not limited to:
 - Complete responses to the Statement of Interest
 - Attachments A and B to the Statement of Interest
 - Applicable licenses, and ownership documents
 - Bank details and accounting procedures
 - Signatures
 - Pro forma invoices
- **Sustainability:** Is the project as described sustainable in the long term? Will the project continue without additional investment? Are measurements of success adequate?
- **Need:** Does the project adequately fulfill a stated need within a community?
- **Budget:** Is the budget complete, and well defined? Is the budget reasonable?
- **Completion within one year:** Can the project be completed in a single year?
- **Community support:** Does the project show strong community support?
- **Impact:** Does the project benefit the broadest numbers of beneficiaries possible? Is there a substantial impact on the affected community?
- **Contribution and Group Capabilities:** Does the group provide adequate resources and show commitment to the project? Is the group capable of administering the project as designed?

Selection and Award Process

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program is highly competitive. If a project is chosen for consideration, someone from the U.S. Embassy will contact the applicant, verify the information, and visit the site. The stages in the selection and award process are:

- The SSH staff review all the applications and select a preliminary list of projects.
- The SSH committee reviews the preliminary list and selects the finalist projects.
- The SSH staff conduct site visits and work with potential grantees on suggested updates to the proposals. During this phase, the SSH coordinator makes the final recommendation to the committee and submits a final list of projects for the Ambassador's approval.
- The Ambassador and the project's representative sign the agreements and the grants are awarded.

Publicity Campaign

It is expected that publicity will be given to the Ambassador's Special Self-Help program and its projects, including press and radio releases, photographs, and plaques at project sites to acknowledge the shared efforts of the Central African and American people.