

Department of State – U.S. Embassy, Cotonou

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Federal Awarding Agency name: Political and Economic Section, U.S. Embassy Cotonou,
Department of State
Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund
Announcement Type: Fixed Amount Award
Funding Opportunity Number: 0002FY15
Deadline for Applications **5 August 2016** at 17:30 (Cotonou time)
CFDA Number: 19700– **Self-Help Program**
Anticipated Award Amount: **The award ceiling is set at \$10,000.00**
Anticipated Award Period: Six months
Anticipated Start Date: Upon award signing
Anticipated Completion Date: Six to twelve months from the Award Signing Date

CONTACT INFORMATION

*For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact Mr. Cosme Quenum,
Special Self-Help Program Coordinator, Political and Economic Section, by email:
CotonouPOLGrants@state.gov*

U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund

The U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund (ASSHF) assists Beninese community groups to develop lasting, self-sustaining projects that benefit entire communities. ASSHF grants in Benin have contributed to agricultural modernization, economic development, improved sanitation, and greater educational access.

Each year, the ASSHF supports approximately six to ten projects with grants averaging \$3,000. To qualify for an ASSHF grant, **projects must involve significant community contribution in the form of funding, materials, and/or labor.** Applicants must have the ability to manage ASSHF projects independently and complete their project within twelve months of signing an ASSHF contract.

Eligibility

ASSHF projects are for community-based groups or organizations, initiated locally, administered at the local level, and include significant community contributions in cash, labor, or materials.

Selection Criteria

The ASSHF focuses on projects with the following qualities:

- Foster community self-reliance;
- Have significant community participation and contributions - volunteer time and labor, donated land, equipment, and/or materials;
- Deliver measurable results (e.g. number of people served);

- Help improve basic economic and/or social conditions at the local community or village level;
- Fall within the ability of the local community to implement and maintain into the future.
- Respect environmental norms for small projects and will not adversely affect protected or other sensitive environmental areas nor jeopardize threatened and endangered species and their habitat.
- Can be completed within one year; and
- Are viable and sustainable in terms of finance, support, and necessary expertise and services.

The Selection Process

Your group will be notified when we receive your application and supporting documents, and we will contact your group if any clarifications are needed. A Review Committee will meet **by Mid-August** to determine winning awards. Your group will be notified in August. The cutoff date for applications is **August 5, 2016**. Applications received after this will be kept for the next funding cycle. If selected, your group will be notified and representatives from your group will be invited to attend a workshop, sign an agreement contract, and participate in an awards ceremony **before September 30**. Funds will be available several weeks following.

Examples of Funded Project Proposals

ASSHF is always interested in receiving proposals for innovative projects, so please consider new ideas. Below are examples of projects that have been successful:

- Water Projects - boreholes; irrigation or water collection systems; storage tanks
- Health and Hygiene Projects - improve sanitary conditions, pit latrines at schools and clinics.
- Solar Energy/Energy Efficiency/Environmental Projects - energy-saving and recycling; environmental protection; solar panels
- Income Generating Projects - weaving looms; carpentry tools; brick-making machine, etc.
- Education Projects - vocational training, nursery school supplies equipment, community libraries, school laboratories.

ASSHF CANNOT be used for the following:

Start-up projects	Vehicles
Property purchases	Individual or single family projects
Government offices, military or prisons	Projects with political or religious objectives
School tuition or exam fees	Operating costs such as rent, salaries, etc.
Musical instruments	Advocacy or research projects
Fertilizers or perishable food program	Credit/revolving loan/micro-finances

Instructions for submitting the U.S. Ambassador's Special Self-Help application

Please read the instructions carefully and gather all supporting materials when submitting your group's application.

1. Applications must be submitted in English.
2. Along with the attached application provide scan of all supporting materials and documentation, which will include the following:
 - **Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM).** Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp> or calling 1-866-705-5711.

Organizations must also maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The U.S. Embassy to Benin may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements by the time the U.S. Embassy to Benin is ready to make an award. Embassy Cotonou may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use this determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.
 - Minutes from group meetings that discuss and approve this project with details of plan and request. Please include names of all members present;
 - Complete and detailed budget in U.S. dollars - Provide a detailed budget with 3 columns - Request from USG, Cost Share by applicant and Total Project funds needed. Include a budget narrative. Grant funds cannot be used to pay for salaries, ongoing administrative costs or perishables such as food. VAT must be paid by the group;
 - Detailed work plan (i.e. timeline);
 - Pro forma invoices (with vendor name and current cell number) for all items listed in the budget, including brand name of item;
 - Detailed directions to group's office and activity location from nearest large town;
 - Registration Certificate like «*Récépissé de déclaration d'association*» or «*Extrait du Journal Officiel*» in French ;
 - Groups organizational chart including member names and contact information;
 - One letter of support from a relevant local official;
 - Business plan if the project is an income generating activity (Please provide a detailed budget that demonstrates an understanding of the product or service to be produced, and customers to be served, and include a marketing plan);
 - Electronic Funds Transfer information of the Recipient Entity (clearly stated, **not the personal bank information of any representative individual**). **CLCAM accounts are not accepted;**
 - Please do not provide more materials than what is requested here, unless relevant such as photos of current issue.

Please label each attachment clearly and individually.

3. Provide reliable contact information. Assure that all contact persons have a cell or land phone and/or email address which is current.

4. Request the minimum amount of funding required. **Projects which show the most efficient use of funds are the most likely to receive a grant.** If your project can be completed with fewer funds than requested, the application will not be funded.
5. Show your groups contribution clearly. The application must include specific details of your group's contribution to the project.

Please note that application forms and materials will not be returned so please keep a copy for the group's records. Do not send original documents which you need returned (for example a certificate of registration).

Applications shall be submitted by email to CotonouPOLGrants@state.gov .