

The U.S. Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund

Guidelines

Dear Self-Help Applicant,

This document provides information related to the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund, including program guidelines, application instructions, and contact information. We have also included an application form for your convenience. Please read the information carefully. If you think that you have a project which fulfills the requirements of the fund, complete and submit your application for consideration to the following address:

**Self-Help Fund
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817 Yaoundé**

Selection Timeline

Application deadline: Open season. Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.

We receive a high number of proposals each year and we try to respond to each applicant. If you have not heard from us within one (1) year of submitting your application, please request the status of your application via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Important reminders

- **The Self-Help Application Form is FREE of charge and the Embassy DOES NOT request any payment to receive and evaluate a project.**
- Limit your answers in the application form to the lines provided.
- Sign the application.
- Do not submit any documents not requested in these instructions.
- If your project is chosen for consideration, someone will visit the site to talk to you about the proposal and verify the information on the application. Please remember to include a sketch and/or a description of how to locate your project's site. Include also a current mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address, if these are available. Tell us if there is someone in Yaoundé who knows about the project and can answer any questions.
- Make a copy of the application and all supporting documents for your records.
- Send the original completed application to the Embassy.

Contact Information

Address: **Self-Help Fund**
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817 Yaoundé

Email: grantsyaounde@state.gov

Telephone: 2220-1500 Ext. 4235

Fax: 2220-1503

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm and Friday 7:30 am - 12:30 pm

Thank you for your interest in the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund. We look forward to hearing from you.

Introduction

The Special Self-Help Fund (SSH) provides small-scale assistance to Cameroonian communities as part of the U.S. Government's commitment to support development activities in Cameroon. Since 1983, the U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon has funded small community projects under this program in all ten regions of Cameroon. The maximum support available for most projects is USD 10,000 (or about 4.5 million francs CFA). A single community/group cannot receive more than one grant in a given funding period.

Basic Project Requirements

- Initiated by the community and benefits the community by increasing income, or improving living conditions;
- Benefits a large number of people;
- Involves a significant local contribution such as labor, materials, land, equipment, or money;
- Within the ability of the community to operate and maintain;
- Completed within one year without requiring further Self-Help Fund assistance; and
- Respects environmental norms.

Project Categories and Acceptable Activities and Items

- ❖ **Water Supply and Sanitation:** Ensures broadly accessible, reliable and economically sustainable water and sanitation services to bolster healthy, secure, and prosperous communities.
 - **Safe Water Access:** implementation of pumps and distribution systems, well drilling, bore holes, shower stalls, sinks, spring capping.
 - **Basic Sanitation:** Increases access to and use of sanitation services for safe human waste disposal to protect human health and environmental quality. Innovative approaches to building demand for sanitation-related products and services are encouraged.
- ❖ **Small construction projects** (less than 10,000 sq. ft.): school rooms, community centers, health facilities, foot bridges, workshops, grain storage, and rural airstrip for a hospital.
- ❖ **Social Services:** Improves the life and living conditions of special populations which may be vulnerable or at-risk on a temporary or chronic basis. These could include groups such as the disabled; orphans, children and at-risk youth; victims of gender-based violence; ethnic minorities, internally displaced or other socially excluded groups; the elderly; and female heads of household.

Projects under this category could include but are not limited to:

- **Activities for Special Populations:** Creating income-generating activities; providing assistance for education and purchase of school equipment.
 - **Activities for Vulnerable Children:** Strengthening the capacity of families and communities to provide care, support, and protection for orphans and unaccompanied minors.
 - **Activities for Victims of Torture:** Addressing the physical and psychological effects of torture on victims, families and communities. Activities could be cross-cutting and include treatment, rehabilitation, re-integration, and advocacy.
 - **Activities for Other Targeted Vulnerable Groups:** Removing barriers to enable the full participation of vulnerable people in supportive communities. Activities could be cross-cutting and range from community advocacy and strengthening family reunification/foster care, to apprenticeship programs, and the integration of disabled or socially excluded workers into the workforce.
- ❖ **Social Assistance:** Provides financial or technical support for reforestation, and soil conservation in post-conflict or post-disaster settings. Provides assistance to those suffering from temporary shocks resulting from economic reform.

Unacceptable Activities and Items

- Repair of existing facilities that are in poor shape as the result of neglect or lack of funds.
- Payment of recurring operating costs such as rent, salaries, administrative or operating costs, ongoing training/education needs, medications, fuel, animal feed, or seeds.
- Religious, political, or military activities, as well as those relating to police, prisons, or law enforcement.
- Revolving credit schemes.
- Office equipment and supplies such as computers, film projectors, stereos, pencils, paper, forms, folders, etc.
- Equipment or uniforms for national sport teams or national musical or dance groups.
- Land.
- Vehicles, luxury goods, gambling, or surveillance equipment.
- Abortion-related equipment and services.
- Pesticides, fungicides, or herbicides.

Selection and Award Process

The program is highly competitive; historically, less than ten percent of the applications received each year are selected. 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.

How to Apply for the Fund

- Complete the application form. The application form is available online. It can also be requested by mail or in person through the SSH Office.
- Type or write clearly and answer every question as best as possible.
- Include a specific budget with cost estimates and a timeline.
- Include a sketch or a description of how to find the project's site.
- The project's representative must sign the application form and give it to a local administrative authority for his or her signature. Examples of local administrative authorities are: the Community Development Officer, the Senior Divisional Officer, the Divisional Officer, or the Mayor.
- Make a copy of the application and all supportive documents for your records.
- Send the original completed application to the U.S. Embassy. Applications can also be sent by email to: grantsyaounde@state.gov.

The U.S. Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund

Application

The Self-Help Application Form is FREE of charge and the Embassy DOES NOT request any payment to receive and evaluate a project.

Date: _____

1. Community or Group Information (If legally registered, please provide copy of certificate)

Name of group or association: _____

Address or P.O. Box: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

2. Group Representative or Contact Person Information

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address or P.O. Box: _____

Telephone: _____

3. Description of Group or Community

- How long has the group existed? _____
- How many members? _____
- How often do you meet? _____
- How are you organized? _____

4. Title of Project: _____

4.1. Location of Project: _____

Village or Quarter: _____ Sub-Division: _____

Division: _____ Province: _____

Every project considered for funding will be visited before final approval. Please include a sketch or description with this application showing how to find you.

5. Project Description

- Approximately how many people will benefit from this project?

Men _____ Women _____ Boys _____ Girls _____ Total: _____

- Describe the project: _____

- What is the purpose? _____

- Why is this project necessary? _____

- What is the expected impact of the project? (Describe the new situation that will arise because of the project)

- If applicable, include sketches or drawings of any buildings. (These do not need to be formal blueprints.)

- What have you already done? Explain both planning and any construction. (Examples: foundation laid, walls raised to roof level, funds raised, etc.)

- When did work on the project begin or when do you anticipate it will begin?

- Explain how much work has to be done to complete the project and how long it will take. (You must attach an activity timeline like the sample on the last page of this form.)

6. Project Financial Summary. Attach a detailed budget or cost estimate to your application. For equipment purchase, include pro forma invoices from at least two different sources.

- What is the total cost of this project?
- How much money have you already raised for this project and has it been used? FCFA: _____

- Who provided this money? _____
- Are other embassies, donors, or government agencies providing money or support for this project?
Yes _____ No _____ . If yes, please provide details. _____

6.1. Community Contribution. What is the community contributing to this project? (Examples: 400 hours of volunteer labor per week; 1,300,000 million Francs CFA; 4 truckloads of sand; etc.)

- Labor: Yes _____ No _____ Describe: _____
- Equipment: Yes _____ No _____ Describe: _____
- Materials: Yes _____ No _____ Describe: _____
- Money: Yes _____ No _____ How much? _____
- Other: Yes _____ No _____ Describe: _____

6.2. Income Generation. When completed, will the project produce income? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how much? Who will control any income generated? How will the income be used?

7. Embassy Grant

- How much money are you requesting from the United States Embassy? FCFA: _____

Signature of Sponsor
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

Signature of Local Authority
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

Applicant Check List

- Include a budget similar to Sample A on the following page or the Excel sample file provided.
- Include a timeline similar to Sample B on the following page.
- Include a sketch and/or a description of how to locate your project's site.
- Verify that you have provided a correct and current mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address, if these are available.
- Sign the application.
- Make a copy of the application and all supportive documents for your records.
- Do not submit any documents that have not been requested.
- Send the original completed application to the Embassy.

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