

## U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia

**Program Office:** Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** **Student-run Media Lab Development Program**  
**Announcement Type:** Grant  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** DOSGEO-12-GR-002-GEO-053012  
**Deadline for Applications:** July 13, 2012  
**AECCA** \$ 150,000.00

### ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to Georgian Academic Institutions (Georgian University Journalism Programs).

The Department encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. Government to apply under this announcement. Program intends to develop a media lab for one of the Georgian University's journalism program, which will serve as training and learning facility for undergraduate and graduate journalism students. Applicant must have a developed media department, demonstrated expertise in journalism instruction, students training studio/facility basis, and a clear vision of rapidly changing needs in journalism education matching to the modern media production standards using multiple media-platforms.

Knowledge of the Georgian higher education system, established relationships with Georgian and U.S. educational and media organizations will be favorably considered.

#### Cost Sharing or Matching

This program requires cost sharing: in-kind financial and/or equipment contribution will be favorably considered.

#### Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) On program requirements of this solicitation, contact **Mr. Michael TURNER**, Grants Officer, or **Ms. Sofia GEGECHKORI**, Grants Program Coordinator, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, at: Email: [turnermr@state.gov](mailto:turnermr@state.gov) ; [gegechkoris@state.gov](mailto:gegechkoris@state.gov) (*Preferred method of communication*) Phone: +995 32 2277 601

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Request for Proposals (RFP) for a **Student-run Media Lab Development Program**. The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia invites Georgian Academic Institutions (Georgian University Journalism Programs) to submit proposals for a one- to two-year project to develop a media lab serving as training and learning facility for undergraduate and graduate journalism students, and to improve the standard of journalism instruction matching to the modern media production standards using multiple media-platforms. The means for achieving this objective may include: media lab/studio development, equipment purchase, and curricula and materials development. (Sustainability, maintenance plan) The direct beneficiaries of this program will be selected Georgian University Journalism Program, and its academics and students. PAS will award \$150,000 for this one-to-two-year project.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Georgia is a transitional democracy undergoing major political, social and economic reforms. Media has the responsibility not only to keep pace with these rapid and sometimes painful changes, but also to report on and analyze these changes in a highly professional manner and often right from the scene of developments. Journalists and independent media play a critical role in ensuring the free flow of information necessary to develop and maintain democratic systems.

Often university journalism programs in Georgia continue to face serious challenges: the lingering influence of Soviet education and journalism traditions, theory-based tuition and curriculum, lack of adequate training facilities and access to modern media equipment where students can gain hands-on experience. The Student-run media lab should address the needs by providing students with the opportunity to work in multiple media platforms using the latest media tools as they begin their education. The new approach to journalism education will allow students to transfer their skills smoothly to jobs in professional media. The program will support development of new cohort of professionals open to innovative ideas and dedicated to the accurate reporting.

The Student-run Media Lab Development Program is designed to enable Georgian journalism students to improve skills necessary to develop and maintain free media. Pending the availability of funds, the project will award \$150,000 for a one- to two-year project to defray the costs of refurbishing media lab with the needed equipment and furniture; operational needs of the lab; integrating practical work/training into courses; ongoing assessment of the competencies and skills developed by students(optional); purchasing resource materials (optional); etc..

## **Objectives**

Journalists and independent media professionals play a critical role in ensuring free flow of information necessary to maintain democratic systems. Institutions of higher education, as the training ground for future journalists and media practitioners, play a critical role in setting the standards and providing the skills necessary to develop and maintain independent media in new democracies. This project is designed to assist Georgian academic institution to increase its capacity to deliver journalism programs meeting the highest international standards for instruction and training in journalism.

The Student-run Media Lab Development Program will provide funding for one- to two-year program to enable Georgian Academic Institution (Georgian University Journalism Programs) to develop a media lab which will serve as training and learning facility for undergraduate and graduate journalism students. Pending the availability of funds, the project will award \$150,000 to defray the costs of: refurbishing media lab with the needed equipment and furniture; operational expenses; integration of practical work/training into courses; ongoing assessment of the competencies and skills developed by students (optional); purchasing resource materials (optional); etc..

The purpose of this project is to assist the Georgian Academic Institution (Georgian University Journalism Programs) in improving the standards of its journalism instruction program by developing the student-run media lab. Below is a sample list, though not exhaustive, of the types of objectives to include:

- Develop student-run media lab similar to convergence news-room by upgrading and/or purchasing needed equipment (video and still cameras, recorders, laptops, editing computers, etc), furniture, other technology;
- Improve practical skills and experiential learning opportunities for students in the media lab;
- Update and introduce approaches to journalism teaching in new media using multi-platform technology. Bring new and traditional media together in advancing cross-platform information production;
- Introduce students to the new standards in reporting: introduce new technologies and trends in broadcast/online/convergence media;
- Supplement material resources for student-run media lab;

## **Expected Results**

The program should enhance the Georgian Academic Institution (Georgian University Journalism Programs) faculty's ability to provide journalism students with the skills necessary to practice journalism at an international standard, as required in a democratic society. Program intends to develop a media lab for one of the Georgian University's journalism program, which will serve as training and learning facility for undergraduate and graduate journalism students. Activities should lead to the achievement of project objectives in providing the students with advanced training facility/studio where they can build up their skills in using multiple media-platforms responding to the fast-changing international standards of modern media production. Program should develop selected

institution's capacity to support skills component in their curricula and integrate practical work into journalism education, thus strengthening their overall institutional capacity.

### **Funding Priorities**

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia seeks to fund Georgian academic institution (Georgian University Journalism Programs) for a one- to two-year project to develop a media lab serving as training and learning facility for undergraduate and graduate journalism students. Georgian universities with advanced journalism programs and those which offer in-kind financial and/or equipment contributions will be favorably considered.

### ***III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS***

Eligibility is limited to Georgian universities (Georgian University Journalism Programs).

Applications that include additional in-kind financial and/or equipment contributions from non-U.S. Government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be considered to show great cost effectiveness.

### ***IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION***

**Award Period:** One to Two years

**Award Amount:** \$150,000 is available for this grant program.

**Application Submission Process:** Applicants must submit proposals electronically to Sofia GEGECHKORI, Grants Officer Representative (GOR), U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, E-mail: [gegechkoris@state.gov](mailto:gegechkoris@state.gov); Phone: (995-32) 2277-601.

**Application Deadline:** All applications must be submitted on or before **July 13, 2012, 18:00 p.m.** (Tbilisi Time). Applications submitted after July 13 will be ineligible for consideration. If receipt of application is not confirmed within two work days, please contact Sofia Gegechkori at the above e-mail address.

Telegraphic or fax applications are not authorized for this RFA and will not be accepted. The total size of each attachment should not exceed 3 MBs. Every page of the proposal must be numbered. The application must have a table of contents. Large graphic files are discouraged. The format of any attachments must be in Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF. Attached files should be printable on US letter size paper (8½ X11”).

If submitting hard copies in addition to the required electronic submission, hard copies and all attached documents should be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages with the RFA number, the name and address of the applicant to:

Sofia Gegechkori  
Grants Officer Representative  
Public Affairs Section  
11 George Balanchine Street  
Tbilisi 0131, Georgia

**Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

All applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

**Application Content:** Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

## **THE PROPOSAL MUST CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING:**

### **Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):**

This form can be found on-line at:

[http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68)

### **Section 2 – Executive Summary:**

The executive summary is limited to 300 words in length. It must provide a summary of the identified need, proposed activities, and expected results.

### **Section 3 – Project Goals/Implementation Plan:**

The applicant must specify the proposed activities that will be undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives of this RFA. The proposed activities should be described in

sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. The narrative should be brief, concise and provide a clear description of what the Applicant proposes to do, where, why, when, how and by whom.

This section should also include a structured monitoring and evaluation plan or matrix that will demonstrate how success will be measured against objectively verifiable performance indicators. The matrix should also include: sources/means for verification, risks and assumptions for goals and objectives, and expected results and activities.

Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

#### **Section 4 - Organizational Capability:**

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's organizational and management structure, and previous experience with similar projects as these relate to the proposed activities. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project.

#### **Section 5 - Appendices:**

The proposal submission must include two appendices listed below:

- (a) **Budget (Required)** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested from U.S. Embassy, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: equipment; supplies; materials; personnel (if any); consultants/contracts (if any); other direct costs; and indirect costs.

The budget should include a cost-share/in-kind contribution estimated cost as well.

Include a budget with an accompanying budget narrative which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. Detailed budget notes and supporting justification of all proposed budget line items should be included. In addition, a summary of the budget must be submitted using Standard Form SF-424A. This form can be found on-line at:

<http://aopefa.a.state.gov/Content/documents/SF424A-V1.0.pdf>

<http://aopefa.a.state.gov/Content/documents/SF424Instructions.pdf>

- (b) **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed 3 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff person who will be in charge of the project implementation at the selected institution.

## V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Consistent with the federal grant regulations, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia reserves the right to give priority for its funds to the Georgian Academic Institution which best meets most of the objectives stated at the program announcement.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The US Government (USG) will award grants to the applicants whose offers represent the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of the Department of State and Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Project Goals/Implementation Plan (50 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly relate to meeting the goals and objectives. Applicants should demonstrate a. Understanding of the issue; clear definitions of the program and a vision of what will be accomplished at the end the agreement; b. Clarity of proposed objectives; c. Technical soundness of approach, including clarity in scope and focus of activities to be carried out; feasibility of achieving results and objectives; d. Detailed analysis of potential obstacles, risks and problems that could be encountered during the project implementation; e. Clarity of expected achievements/outcomes of the project, and a brief description of the proposed monitoring and evaluation plan.  
The review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the overall relevance of the goals and objectives, feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the project will continue beyond the conclusion of the funding period.
- **Organizational Capability (30 points):** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to implement the Student-run Media Lab Development Program. Applicants must demonstrate how their managerial, programmatic and technical capacity, resources and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how they will collaborate with PAS/U.S. Embassy to meet project goals.
- **Appendices (20 points):**
  - **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficiency. Review committee must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project

activities. This will consist of a review of the Budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by OMB Circular A-21, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_a021\\_2004](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a021_2004)

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr;sid=da0fd6f5ca4807cea49d4792239d6505;rgn=div5;view=text;node=2%3A1.1.2.10.4;idno=2;cc=ecfr>

- **Resume:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project focal point; in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Award Notices:** The grant award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified of the final decision within 90 days after the submission deadline. Following this the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia staff will provide information at the point of notification about the requirements for the final application, which may include revisions to the activities. The final applications will not be subject to further competition, but must incorporate any suggested changes made by the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Applicants should be aware that there may be a delay between the time that applications are submitted and awards are made. Successful applicants can expect to receive their first tranche of grant funds no later than October 1, 2012. This delay is primarily due to the extensive clearance process that must be undertaken prior to grant awards being made.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

## **VII. DISCLAIMER**

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.

### **NOTE:**

Applicants may send program related questions by to Sofia Gegechkori at [gegechkoris@state.gov](mailto:gegechkoris@state.gov) by July 1, 2012. The answers will be posted on U.S. Embassy web-site (<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/>) as an amendment within one week.