DEMOCRACY COMMISSION SMALL GRANTS

Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Embassy Skopje, Macedonia

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Grant Applicant

Name of the organization, address, phone/fax number/e-mail address, name and title of director and other significant staff members, particularly those who will be involved in the project.

Applicants should also attach a CV, resume or personal history of the people who will be engaged in the project. No one CV should exceed one page.

Background on Applicant

When was the organization founded, what are its principle activities, significant achievements, etc. A copy of the registration papers of the organization as issued by host country authorities should be attached.

Program Description/Purpose

What does the applicant propose to do? The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do and why. The more specific, detailed, and clear the program description, the better. Remember that the Democracy Commission will only award funds to the best proposals, those that can clearly show how the proposed project will help the development of democratic, free market society in the host country.

Project Justification

This is a very important aspect of the proposal and applicants should pay particular attention to it. What is the importance of the project? Why should it be funded? Who will be affected by this project? What difference does it make for your country? Remember that the Democracy Commission will only support those projects that will make an important contribution.

Applicants may also attach letters of endorsement attesting to the seriousness of the proposal.

Project Sustainability

Describe the expected long-term effects of the project. If the project is intended to continue after the funding from the Democracy Commission ends, the proposal must also contain a very thorough explanation how the organization will fund the activity in the future. If a convincing explanation is not included, this will disqualify the project from consideration for Democracy Commission support.

Proposed Program dates

When will the project be carried out, if it is funded? Be realistic about dates. Remember that, even if approved, funds from the Democracy Commission may not be available for as long as two or three

months from the time the application is submitted. (For example, if the applicant submits the proposal in September, but states that the project must begin in September, the Commission may reject the proposal as unrealistic on this basis alone.)

Detailed Budget, including supporting narrative

In order to be sure that the Commission understands why there is a need for money, the applicant should prepare **a line-by-line list of expenses** that will be generated by this project. The budget should be prepared in a logical manner and offer enough detail that a reviewer will be able to understand exactly what the figures mean and how that figure was determined.

ALL PROJECT EXPENSES SHOULD BE CALCULATED IN ADVANCE AND BE REALISTIC. THE DEMOCRACY COMMISSION MEMBERS WILL NOT AUTHORIZE ANY FUNDS IF THERE IS ANY QUESTION ABOUT THE BUDGET.

The budget narrative should follow the actual budget presentation itself and describe in some detail the costs presented in the budget. In other words, the narrative explains, line by line, what the numbers mean and how they were determined. (For example, “Travel: $3,000." Explanation: Two day conference in (location) for 30 participants with a 2X$50 travel grant to each participant for room, board and transportation costs.)

If the proposal seeks funding to purchase a service or equipment, the application must include three pro-forma estimates from the service or equipment vendor. Simply listing “Computer and printer: $4,000" is not sufficient. The Commission will want to know what kind of computer, what kind of printer and how much three different vendors will charge for this equipment.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Program expenses should cover all costs for the project activities. They may include all honoraria to specialists or associates; travel/per diem/lodging expenses for trips; and all expenses for seminars or conferences (speakers’ fee, preparation of materials and room rental).

Salaries could be paid only to the people who will spend a majority of their time on the project and have signed contracts. The salary should be calculated on the total number of hours worked for the duration of the project. Salary levels should be reasonable and **no higher than other local salaries**, and should include all local taxes.

Equipment means computer, copying machine, printer or other technical devices necessary for the fulfillment of the project (for example, the purchase of a computer for organizing a conference is not a justified expense).

Administrative expenses include communication expenses (phone, fax, e-mail, postage); bank taxes; copying and print services; office materials (paper, toner, envelopes, etc.).

Bank charges should be pre-calculated and included in the budget. Please note that any interest earned on the grant sum must be returned to the U.S. Government.
The use of “miscellaneous expenses” as a budget item is unacceptable.

Cocktail parties and meals not integral to a program event are not acceptable grant expenses. An effort should be made to secure funding from other sources for food costs.

Entertainment costs (amusement, diversion, social activities, ceremonials, alcoholic beverages, cocktail parties) **are not allowable expenses**.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE BUDGET ITEMS CANNOT BE CHANGED DURING THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROJECT.

Dos and Don'ts for Budget Items

What you **must** do:

- Get three bids for services or items with a cost over $2,500.

Things you must **NOT** do with a grant:

- Support charities or charitable activities
- Support fund raising campaigns;
- Give humanitarian aid;
- Buy tickets on non US airlines when travel to the US is involved and a US carrier provides this flight.
- Buy alcohol;
- Buy flowers;
- Hold more than one "food event" at a conference (unless you can prove in writing exactly why there must be);
- Buy daily lunches for conference participants (unless you can prove in writing exactly why there must be);
- Providing honoraria in excess of $200 per person per day;
- Provide honoraria to employees of the US Government, (they are already paid);
- Pay for entertainment (unless specifically for an American performer to perform mostly American music for the purpose of educating the host country about American culture, not entertainment);
- Pay for the purchase of property or land, even if it is done in the form of rent that may be credited towards eventual purchase;
- Fund a project, purchase or activity representing a need that will only arise next fiscal year;
- Pay debts of any kind;
- Fund organization or activities supporting a narrow political interest, party or view;
- Pay for expenses incurred before the specified dates in the contract;
- Fund production of materials intended for distribution in the US.

Reporting Requirements

If you receive funding from the Democracy Commission, you will be required to submit a detailed program and financial report on the outcomes of the project. Please describe when you will submit the report on the outcomes and who will prepare the financial report (e.g. an accountant).

Other sources of support for this project, including the in-kind contribution of the applying organization

Please describe the possibilities for co-funding of the project by other organization.

Please describe the in-kind contribution of your organization - it can be voluntary work, use of premises, vehicles, classroom supplies, equipment or payment of a program event from your own funds (e.g. rental of a hall, printing of announcements, meals, travel, etc.).

Please state which other organizations you have applied to for funding with the same project, and the status of those applications.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN THE APPLICATION BEFORE YOU:

* Read once again the Democracy Commission Guidelines that describes the Small Grant Program. Make sure you understand those guidelines and that your proposal fits the purposes it discusses.
* Carefully review the application to make sure it is complete and free of errors.
* Ask someone who does not know anything about your project to read your proposal to determine if it is understandable. Remember that the members of the Democracy Commission will not know anything about your proposal until they read it. If they cannot understand it simply by reading what you have written, it will not be approved.
* Ask someone with experience applying for grants to look at the application and provide advice on improving it.

* Make sure the application is neatly typed and easy to read **in English**. Perfect English is not required but the proposal must be understandable to an English speaker.

Applications which do not include the required information or do not comply with the requirements of the Program guidelines will not be reviewed.

SEND THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM - [Suggested Format] TO:
Attn: DEMOCRACY COMMISSION SMALL GRANTS
Public Affairs Section
U.S. Embassy Skopje
Str. "Samoilova" Nr.21
1000 Skopje

Tel: (02) 310 2000
Fax: (02) 310 2499

e-mail: EmbSkoWebM@t-home.mk