

DEMOCRACY COMMISSION SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM U.S. EMBASSY-MOSCOW

FY-2012 APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please read carefully the following instructions before completing your application. It is important that you accurately convey all aspects of your proposal. Proposals must be submitted in the format provided. Proposals that are not submitted in this format will be deemed technically ineligible. Please note that space for each response is limited to a specific number of characters. When you have completed the application, submit it by the application deadline and retain a copy for your records.

Applications will be reviewed for technical eligibility using the following criteria:

1. Project falls under one of the 2012 Project Themes.
2. Applicant is registered NGO or non-commercial organization.
3. Applicant only submitted one application.
4. Amount requested is less than \$50,000.
5. Proposal was submitted before the published deadline.

Following this review, all proposals will be scored and then ranked according to the following criteria:

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1. Project has concrete, relevant, and realistic goal that advance Democracy Commission objectives.
2. Objectives are related conceptually to each other and to the overall goal of the project.
3. Project addresses a theme, or is based in a region, that has not received Democracy Commission support in the past.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

4. Project activities are clearly described and support the goal and objectives.
5. The project does not include the following activities: political or partisan activities, festivals, international travel, direct social services, or academic research.
6. The participants (beneficiaries) are clearly identified.

APPLICANT

7. Applicant has experience relevant to the proposed project.
8. Applicant demonstrates an ability to successfully implement the project.

BUDGET

9. Budget is clear and is justified by the project activities.
10. Budget does not contain unallowable costs; salaries and benefits do not exceed 30% of total costs.

Top-ranked proposals will be forwarded to a selection committee for their review. The selection committee consists of representatives of various sections of the U.S. Embassy, Moscow. The selection committee can recommend funding a project, recommend not funding it, or recommend funding on condition that specific changes be made to the proposal. If a proposal is recommended for funding with conditions, the Embassy will communicate the conditions to the applicant in writing and request a response in writing. Final recommendations for funding will depend on the responses received and/or revised proposal. All decisions regarding technical eligibility, scoring, and committee recommendations are final.

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: Provide a brief project name

Requested Amount (USD): not to exceed \$50,000

Duration: Start Date: in order to allow time to process the application, projects should plan to start no sooner than three months after the application deadline.

End Date: not to exceed one year from the start date of the project.

Theme: Projects must fall under one of the eligible themes. If the proposal relates to more than one theme, please choose the primary theme that is most relevant to the project.

II. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Contact Information

This section is self-explanatory.

III. PROJECT DETAILS

Executive Summary: Provide a brief summary of the project, explaining why it is important, the goal, key objectives, activities, and outcomes (maximum 2,000 characters including spaces).

Project Goal: Describe the overall goal of the project. Your project goal should be broader and less tangible than the objectives. For example, a goal might be: “to raise the awareness among local citizens, NGOs, and local administration officials on the problems of human trafficking.” Project goals are less tangible than objectives and activities; however, your project goal must be easy to understand. What, in essence, is this project hoping to accomplish? It should also be realistic, even if more general in nature. For example, the goal should not be “to eliminate human trafficking” (maximum 1,000 characters including spaces).

Project Objectives: Describe all of the main objectives, numbering each one. All objectives should support the goal of your project. Each objective should be *Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)*. Objectives can answer such questions as Who, What, When, Where, and How? For example, an objective might be: “to educate through a series of training programs ninety representatives of business associations on current laws and regulations affecting small and medium-sized businesses.” You don’t need to get into too much detail forming each objective, but they should be clear and specific enough to understand what your vision is for attaining the goal of your program. Be wary of including too many objectives, such that your project becomes too scattered or large in scope. Try to stick to a few, clearly defined objectives that each serve as related steps toward achieving your goal (maximum 3,000 characters including spaces).

Project Activities: Describe all specific *activities* that support each objective (referencing the number of each objective). When describing activities, be very detailed and specific. Don’t assume the reader will understand how an activity will be carried out. *Show* the reader clearly that you have thought everything through! For example, if you are organizing a series of town-hall events in local communities to raise their awareness of important local issues, provide all of the information needed to fully understand how it will be implemented. What are the specific topics that will be addressed? When it will be held? Who will attend? How many people will attend? How will you identify them? How will you inform them of the event? The list of activities under each objective should be extremely specific. (maximum 5,000 characters including spaces).

Project Justification: Describe what problems or issues the project addresses and how it represents an effective means to address them. Describe why the project is important and relevant, citing specific information, such as published reports or statistics that will support the justification. Please justify why Democracy Commission funding is necessary to carry out this project. For example, if your organization is involved in similar activity as part of its usual work, how do project activities in this proposal differ from its usual work (maximum 2,000 characters including spaces)?

Personnel: Provide a list of the people who will be working on the project and a description of their roles in the project, tied to key objectives and activities. If volunteers are involved, include that information here as well (total number of volunteers and role in the project). Prioritize the list of personnel, starting from the most significant people in the project (e.g., Project Director). This is not intended to be a detailed description of the qualifications or experience of each person (that should be included in the resumes); rather a brief overview of each person's involvement in the project (maximum 3,000 characters including spaces).

Sustainability: Describe how you envision the project's continuation over time, after the period and funding of the project has concluded (maximum 2,000 characters including spaces).

IV. WORK PLAN

In the chart, list the order of the main activities that you will conduct during the project. The purpose of this section is to communicate clearly how you will carry out the project activities, from beginning to end. Are the activities provided in the narrative happening simultaneously or successively? You may choose to group a few related activities into one row of the chart.

V. BACKGROUND OF ORGANIZATION

Date Founded: self explanatory

Description of Organization: Describe your organization, including information such as mission or principle work that the organization conducts, prime audience it serves (NGOs, business groups, children etc.), the number of employees, and other information you feel is relevant and should be communicated (maximum 1,000 characters including spaces).

Previous Grants Received: Provide information on previous grants your organization has received, starting with the most recent working backwards. List the year, name of grant provider, amount, and very brief description of the program. If you run out of room, please focus only on the most relevant projects (maximum 2,000 characters including spaces).

VI. BUDGET

In the chart, indicate all costs you expect to incur under this project. Review carefully your key activities and make sure that a) you have included costs to support your activities and b) you have *not* included costs that are not related to activities mentioned in your proposal. For example, the budget may include the purchase of equipment only if it is justified by the project needs.

The budget item is the name of the expense (Project Director, Travel to Kazan, paper for printer). The description should break out the costs, as appropriate (\$1,000 monthly salary x four months @ 50%). Provide the total in the final block.

The budget can include salaries and fees to specialists. Salaries should be calculated on the basis of the percentage of working time spent on the project and should include social taxes. As a general rule, salaries should not make up more than 25 percent of the budget. Salaries may not exceed 30% of the budget under any circumstances. Every individual working on the project can be paid either a salary or an honorarium, but never both. For instance a project coordinator receiving a salary cannot be paid an honorarium for conducting training.

Grant funds should support the project activity rather than the administrative needs of the organization. The budget may include administrative expenses linked to the project needs, such as communication (phone, fax, e-mail, postage), copying and print services, office materials (paper, toner, envelopes, etc.) needed to implement the project. The following expense items relating to sustaining the operation of the organization are not fundable: office rent, payment for utilities, regular payment for the use of the phone, and furniture.

If conferences are planned as part of the project, please note that cocktail parties, receptions, and entertainment are not allowable expenses.

The use of "miscellaneous expenses" and "contingency expenses" as budget items is unacceptable.

Budget Narrative: Provide any information here that you would like to communicate in order to clarify any aspect of your budget. For example, use the budget narrative section to justify the purchase of equipment. Mention cost share that you will be providing – what kind and how much. The program encourages grant recipients to look to partners and other sources for the use of space for conferences and other program activities. Requests to rent space for these activities should be accompanied with specific justifications for why other no-cost spaces are not available or suitable.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Attach the required documents. If you are submitting the application electronically, please scan the documents and name them accordingly (e.g., Attachment 1: Registration Certificate).

IX. CERTIFICATION

Certify the application by checking the box and providing the required information.