



U.S. EMBASSY DAKAR

“Ndimbal na ca fékk loxol borom”
“Help yourself, before seeking other’s help”

The Ambassador's Special Self Help Fund Guidelines

The Ambassador’s Special Self-Help (SSH) program is a grass-roots assistance program that allows U.S. embassies to respond quickly to local requests for small community-based development projects. The purpose of the Special Self-Help Program is to support communities through modest grants that would positively impact communities. The SSH program was first initiated in Togo in 1964 and gradually developed to become one of the most visible and successful assistance programs in Africa. The SSH philosophy is to help communities ready to help themselves. This is why SSH Senegal has adopted the Wolof (most common spoken local language) proverb *“Ndimbal na ca fékhh loxol borom”* meaning **“Help yourself before seeking others’ help”**.

I. Who can apply for the Special Self-Help grant?

Any legal person or organization / group / community development association may request funding for a public utility or community activity approved by the competent Senegalese authorities. The project must be submitted by an organized group, motivated, who has a real need, and has already dealt with communities.

The project should be feasible based on the socio-economic context and should include the necessary information and documentation indicated in the form.

II. How does an organization apply for the Special Self-Help grant?

Interested organizations can obtain [the SSH application](#) from the Office of Self-Help or on Embassy Website at: <http://dakar.usembassy.gov/> under the Grants tab. The organization may also send its own drafted project provided that all needed information in the SSH application were answered in their proposal.

The applicant should fill the form carefully with special emphasis on the following critical aspects of the proposed project:

- Objectives, impact and key activities
- Implementation strategy
- Monitoring mechanisms
- Itemized budget



Depending on the nature of the project, the following documents must be attached to the file:

- Agriculture related activities: proof of land ownership issued by the rural community
- Water system connection: an authorization from the National Hydraulic Service
- Medical equipment: requested equipment should come from certified Ministry of Health employee assigned to the project
- A brief market research to show the profitability of the project
- At least two or three pro forma invoices / quotations issued by two or three different suppliers

III. Special Self-help Fund Selection & Criteria:

A Selection Committee is invited to assist in the selection of SSH projects for recommendation to the Ambassador. The final decision on projects to be funded is made by the Ambassador. Any project approved by the Selection Committee can be financed. The Self-Help Selection Committee meets once a year. The committee aims at funding a variety of projects with a wide geographical distribution.

Each grant has a 12 month limit to be completed.

1. Self-help project proposals need to:

- Foster community self-reliance;
- Be in direct response to the initiative and aspirations of the local community (the local sponsors of the project, who will also be its prime beneficiaries);
- Have community participation and contribution -- volunteer time and labor, donated land, equipment and materials -- and the U.S. contribution must be on a one-time basis only;
- Have a significant impact, benefiting the greatest number of people possible. Projects that directly benefit a small number of people are excluded;
- Improve basic economic or social conditions at the local community or village level; the program should avoid financing those that have only short-lived value;
- Be viable and sustainable in terms of finance, personnel support and necessary expertise and services;
- Fall within the ability of the local community to implement. Activities that are too complex should be avoided;



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- Respect environmental norms for small projects;
- Be completed in one year or less.

An organization can receive funds multiple times but only once for any particular project. Priority will be given to applications that describe clearly how the project will improve the community's quality of life.

2. Expenditure not eligible for funding:

- The Self-Help Program cannot fund religious or military activities, nor as those related to police, prisons, or other law enforcement.
- Funds cannot be used for administrative costs, transportation, consumable items, vehicles, or to finance repairs.
- Funds cannot serve as institutional support (trainings, scholarships, conferences, seminars, research).
- Funds are not provided to government agencies.
- Funds are not provided to individual business

NB: CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ARE NOT FUNDED THIS YEAR

IV. Requesting Organization's contribution & Grant amount:

1. Local Contribution:

Local involvement of the organization or group must be within a range of 20 to 25 % in cash or in-kind of the total project costs.

The personal contribution of funding may be crucial to make a choice between two viable requestors.

The local contributions could be: labor (wages of masons and workers), food, accommodation for qualified labor, carts of sand or gravel, bricks for construction, sand, fence, water supply, transportation costs, donations of materials etc..

To calculate the rate of local participation, requestors need to divide the amount of local participation by the total project cost.



2. Grant Amount:

The maximum grant award for any one project is \$25,000 and represents a one-time U.S. Government contribution. However, due to limited available funding, most grants awarded are between \$1,000 and \$10,000. Grants are awarded for a one year period.

V. Submission deadline & Contact:

1. Deadline

The U.S. Embassy accepts grant applications for the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program throughout the year. Funding decisions and grant awards are made as money is available throughout the year.

Applicants interested in being considered for the next round of funding for the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program are encouraged to submit their application by close of business (13:00) on **Friday February 28th, 2014.**

2. Contact:

The application should be sent to:

Special Self-Help Coordinator
U.S. Embassy, Dakar
Route des Almadies
B.P. 49, Dakar, Senegal
Tel: 221-33.8794668 (direct line)
Tel: 221-33.8794000 (standard)
Fax: 221-33.879.4100
E-mail: SelfHelpS@state.gov