

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY COLOMBO PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY GRANTS PROGRAM**

Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Embassy Colombo Public Affairs Section Grants Program

Grant Award Amounts: \$2,000 to \$40,000

Deadline: Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until October 1, 2015; 5:00 p.m. EST

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Public Affairs section (PAS) of U.S. Embassy Colombo is pleased to announce that funding is available through the Embassy's Public Diplomacy Grants program for projects in Sri Lanka and the Maldives that focus on key audiences, including: youth (14-25 years old), women, entrepreneurs, innovators, and journalists. We are soliciting grant proposals from not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions that address one or more of the grant priority areas specified below.

Grant Priority Areas:

1. **Youth Development:** support youth education and professional development, including English language learning; IT skills training; entrepreneurship and leadership training; and science, technology, engineering, math and arts projects.
2. **Education:** promote educational institutional capacity building, teacher training, and English language learning
3. **Women's Empowerment:** support projects that address violence against women and girls, and economic and professional development.
4. **Reconciliation:** support mutual understanding and trust through cultural, educational and creative programs, e.g. sports diplomacy
5. **Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom:** enhance training to support professional and technical abilities for journalists and professional associations, including programs on ethics, social media, graphical design and investigative journalism.

The Public Affairs Section does not support development or humanitarian aid projects, e.g. agricultural projects, construction projects, maternal health, or engineering studies.

Grant projects generally must be completed in one year or less.

II. Eligibility Information:

PAS encourages applications from registered Sri Lankan and Maldivian not-for-profit, civil society/non-governmental organizations, think tanks and educational institutions with at least two years of programming experience. This experience should be documented in the organization's proposal. A copy of the organization's registration certificate should be provided with the proposal application.

PAS encourages applicants to provide cost-sharing from additional sources in support of their project, such as the use of highly skilled volunteers. Applications should explain clearly other sources of funding and how the volunteers will be used. Cost-sharing will weigh in favor of applicants for these grants.

Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of Federal and Public Diplomacy regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Proposals will be funded based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priority needs of PAS.

Due to the volume of applicants and inquiries, PAS does not accept letters of intent, concept papers, or requests for meetings prior to application.

III. Application Requirements

Please ensure:

1. All documents are in English
2. All budgets are in U.S. dollars
3. All pages are numbered
4. All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
5. All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are required:

1. **Cover Letter:** Applicants must submit a cover letter.
2. **Proposal:** Applicants must submit a complete proposal that includes the items listed below. The proposal must not exceed 15 pages.
 - a. Summary of Project
 - b. Organizational Description and Capacity
 - c. Past Grants and Grant Amounts (U.S. Embassy and other sources)
 - d. Project Justification/Needs Statement
 - e. Project Goals, Beneficiaries, Objectives and Activities
 - f. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
 - g. Key Personnel – resumes, CVs, or brief bios should be provided
 - h. Project Partners – letters of support from project partners should be included
 - i. Strengths and Innovation
 - j. Sustainability
3. **Budget:** Applicants must submit a detailed budget using the template provided on the RFP website announcement and following the budget categories below. Line item expenditures should be detailed in the lowest possible terms.
 - **Personnel:** Use this budget category for wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the project.
 - **Travel:** Use this budget category for the estimated costs of travel and per diem for this project. If the project involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel either in the Project Activities Description or as an attachment.

- **Equipment:** Use this budget category for all tangible, non-expendable (non-disposable) machinery, furniture, and other personal property having a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), and a cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.
 - **Supplies:** Use this category for building, conservation, and other materials that will be consumed (used up) during the course of the project. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.
 - **Contractual:** Use this budget category for goods and services that the applicant intends to acquire through a contract with a vendor, such as masonry repair and re-pointing services that include the costs of materials as part of a contract, or professional photographic services that include photographic prints as part of the contract.
 - **Other Direct Costs:** Use this budget category for other costs directly associated with the project, which do not fit any of the other categories. Examples include shipping costs for materials and equipment, and the costs of utilities (water, electricity, Internet) required for the project.
 - **Applicable taxes,** if any, should be included as part of your budget.
 - **"Other" expenses** must be explained.
 - **"Cost Sharing"** refers to contributions other than the Public Diplomacy Grants Program. It includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time, donated venues, admin support, etc. "Counterpart contributions" by the involved organizations are encouraged and funds or in-kind, such as staff time, space, etc, should be mentioned in the estimated value of contribution.
4. **Registration Certificate:** proof of registration under the appropriate government agencies must be provided.
5. **Official Permission Letters:** If applicable for project activities, official permission letters from the relevant authorities to carry out the project must be obtained. E.g. letter from provincial authorities or main organization if the applicant is affiliated to another organization, or if the applicant intend to work with educational institutions such as schools/universities, an official permission letter from the relevant educational institution/authorities/Principal of the school etc. to carry out the project.

Proposals that do not meet the requirements above will not be considered.

IV. Application Deadline and Submission

Applications may be submitted at any time for consideration before the closing date of this annual program statement on October 1, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time. Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received. Please note that review may take up to 60 days.

All application materials must be submitted to AmCenterSL@state.gov with "PAS FY15 RFP: Your Organization's Name" in the subject line of the email.

Once the deadline has passed or an application has been submitted, State Department officials and staff - both in the Department and at embassies overseas - may not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.

V. Review and Selection Process

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated based on a criteria designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail.

Past performance and timely reporting on grants awarded by the U.S. Department of State, other United States government entities, or international donor agencies may also be considered. The proposal submitted by your organization should comply with the requirements of the OMB Circulars relevant to your organization and the activities of your proposal.

VI. Award Notification

Successful applications will be notified within 60 days through e-mail. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified through e-mail.

A final award cannot be made until proposals have passed through the required review and approval process, and funds have been allocated. The Embassy reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements.

Applicants should be aware that there will be a delay between the time that full applications are submitted and awards are made.

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 increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.

VII. Other Information

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

The information contained in this solicitation is binding and may not be modified by any Embassy or U.S. State Department representative. Explanatory information provided by the Embassy that contradicts this language will not be binding.

More information about the Public Affairs Section can be found at:
<http://srilanka.usembassy.gov/index.html>.