

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



**MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (MEPI)
LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

Funding Opportunity Title: MEPI Regional Office Annual Program Statement

Funding Opportunity Number: NEAPI-10-AW-022-MENA-032910

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available through the Regional Offices' Local Grants program. Please follow all instructions below carefully.

Purpose of Grant: Local Grants are intended for local representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and universities. They support projects to expand and develop civil society and encourage indigenous efforts to create societies based on pluralism, participation, and prosperity. Funding is available for projects that increase the scope and capacity and participation of civil society, create new economic opportunities, enhance access to and quality of education systems, and/or empower women. Local Grants proposals should aim to create or extend the community of reform-minded individuals and groups and should meet one or more of the following MEPI priorities:

1. Supporting local civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's groups, and professional associations at the grassroots level. These groups are committed to building civil society capacity, advancing political participation, and undertaking locally-initiated change in their societies toward communities reflecting pluralism of choice and participation in decision making and can be expected to play a role of growing importance and influence in the future.
2. Encouraging programs for youth, ages 12-17, and particularly those that provide youth with practical opportunities to experience democracy in action, participate in public service, volunteer and contribute to improving their local communities.
3. Fostering networks among local NGOs, civil society, governments, and the business community, as an avenue toward promoting political participation.

4. Encouraging women's participation in public life at the local, regional, and national levels.
5. Promoting good governance programs that include anti-corruption and transparency components.
6. Promoting the rule of law and legal reforms including legal rights education and professional legal education and a legal environment open to the development of a vibrant engaged civil society.
7. Promoting public awareness and involvement in current political issues, including voter education, and building advocacy skills among individuals and groups.

Activities that are typically funded include, but are not limited to:

1. Community service projects that practice democratic processes and encourage volunteerism;
2. Public education projects that practice democratic processes;
3. Task forces that will subsequently recommend and pursue a specific plan of action; and,
4. Workshops and meetings of a practical and professional nature, which are an integral part of a larger project and contribute to overall project goals.

Applicants are advised that MEPI/ local grants do not typically cover the following:

1. Social welfare projects;
2. Organizational start-up costs;
3. Ongoing operating costs or capital improvements;
4. Buying furniture and office decorations;
5. Buying vehicles;
6. Setting up a center unless part of a broader project;
7. Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
8. Projects that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to individual or single party electoral campaigns;
9. Academic or analytical research (if not part of a larger project);
10. Scholarships;
11. International travel, unless specifically justified within the project.
12. Citizen exchange programs with foreign countries;
13. Political party activities.
14. One-of-a kind events such as conferences and round tables (if not part of a larger project);
15. Medical and psychological research, and clinical studies;
16. Provision of health care services;
17. Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
18. Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, and festivals etc.;
19. Language training courses; and,
20. Entertainment costs (receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, cocktail parties, guided tours).

Background Information about MEPI: The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, supports efforts to expand political participation, strengthen civil society and the rule of law, empower women and youth, create educational opportunities, and foster economic reform throughout the Middle East and North Africa. In support of these goals, MEPI works with non-governmental

organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions, as well as governments. MEPI's representatives in the region are located at our regional offices in Abu Dhabi and Tunis. For a list of previously funded MEPI Local Grants Projects and more information on MEPI's regional offices in Abu Dhabi and Tunis can be found at: www.abudhabi.mepi.state.gov and www.medregion.mepi.state.gov. Information about MEPI can be found at: www.mepi.state.gov.

Electronic Link to Full Announcement: Go to <http://www.mepi.state.gov>, click on Funding and Project Opportunities, click on "Program Announcement Title" link.

II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement or Grant

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: \$25,000

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: \$100,000

NEA/PI reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as NEA/PI may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Project and Budget Periods: Local Grants projects generally must be completed in one year or less. NEA/PI will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the applicants, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

III. Eligibility Information: Unrestricted

NEA/PI encourages applications from committed and organized civil-society organizations.

NEA/PI encourages applicants to provide cost-sharing from additional sources in support of this project. NEA/PI also encourages projects that use highly skilled volunteers as an element of cost-sharing. Applications should explain clearly other likely sources of funding and how the volunteers will be used.

Additional Information on Eligibility: All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet Number prior to funds disbursement. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or requesting on-line at www.dnb.com.

IV. Application Submission and Deadline

Proposals should be submitted online via www.grants.gov or to the U.S. Embassy in your country: for more information on the appropriate U.S. Embassy contact information, please see www.abudhabi.mepi.state.gov and www.medregion.mepi.state.gov. Applications are accepted in

English, French, or Arabic, but final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

To submit a proposal via Grants.gov applicants will need to register with the site. Applicants are warned that Grants.gov requires a registration period of 10 days.

When submitting a proposal you are required to include the following:

____ (a) Federal Assistance Application (Standard Forms 424) available at: www.grants.gov or via email nea-grants@state.gov. Guidance for completing this form can be found by going to <http://www.mepi.state.gov>, click on Funding and Project Opportunities, click on “MEPI Guidance for Completing the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)” link. ;

____ (c) Proposal Narrative – Applicants should complete and submit the Local Grants Application form attached to this announcement.

____ (d) Budget and Budget Justification (Narrative) – Applicants should complete and submit the Local Grants Budget Template attached to this announcement.

V. Review and Selection Process

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria. The criteria are 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. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Applicants must submit a full project description in accordance with the following instructions and the specified evaluation criteria. The instructions give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria provide details of more program-specific information that is needed.

MEPI Cover Sheet: Provide a summary of the project description (no more than two pages) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.

Narrative: Outline a plan of action which describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors which might accelerate or decelerate the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than others. Describe any unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates. List

those organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

Results or Benefits – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results and the organization. The project addresses one or more of the MEPI priorities outlined in the local grants application form. Applicant demonstrates that it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward MEPI goals. (30points)

Innovation and Approach – Applicant clearly describes how its proposal will address the requested program within the proposed time frame and articulates an innovative strategy or plan. The project builds civil society leadership and capacity, and demonstrates that the capacity building will be sustainable. (30 points)

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise in one or more of MEPI priorities and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner’s respective role and provides CVs for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Each key person responsible for the proposed project and its financial administration is listed and a CV for these persons is provided. (30 points)

Budget and Budget Justification - The budget and narrative justification are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and the plan for services is realistic. (10 points)

VI. Award Administration

Award administration is described in the Local Grants Application form attached to this announcement