

Notice of Funding Opportunity

PAS-CHISINAU-FY17-06

U.S. Department of State
Embassy of the United States of America in Chisinau, Moldova
Public Affairs Section

Funding Opportunity Number: PAS-CHISINAU-FY17-06
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.900
CFDA Title: AEECA PD Programs
Program: Democracy Commission Small Grants Program
Announcement Type: Open Competition
Announcement Date: January 17, 2016
Deadline for submission of proposals: 11:59 PM, Moldova Time, April 28, 2017
Agency Contact: Stelian Rusu, rusus@america.gov

I. Funding Opportunity:

The purpose of this announcement is to inform interested parties about funding opportunities through grants. Organizations that submit applications in response to this announcement acknowledge and accept all of the requirements contained herein. This announcement serves as notice to select interested parties to have equal opportunity to submit project proposals for funding consideration. All submissions in response to this announcement are voluntary and do not obligate the Department of State to fund any proposal or proposal preparation costs.

II. Background Information

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program was initiated in 1994 as a flexible mechanism to enable American embassies to support initiatives that contribute to more open and competitive political and economic systems and the protection of human rights.

The Democracy Commission Grants Program has been implemented in Moldova since 1996, providing support to Moldovan NGOs and mass media to carry out projects throughout Moldova.

III. Program Objectives:

Democracy Commission grants support a wide range of democratic and market economy themes. However, this call for proposals will focus on promotion of civil society.

Grants may not be used for partisan political activity.

Applicants are encouraged to develop partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the public and/or private sectors as well as local organizations, where applicable.

In identifying the specific target populations, proposals must demonstrate a commitment towards the support and inclusion of marginalized communities (including disability status, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, whether they live in rural or urban settings, etc.).

IV. Eligibility Information

Eligibility is limited to not-for-profit organizations (NGOs, CSOs, Think-Tanks) officially registered in the Republic of Moldova.

Direct funding for U.S. and third-country institutions is not available under this funding opportunity. The organizations without Moldovan registration can apply only as partners through an eligible organization.

Organizations submitting proposals must meet the following criteria:

- Organizations should have existing, or demonstrate the capacity to develop, active partnerships with in-country entities and relevant stakeholders including the public sector, private sector, and civil society, as relevant to the proposed program objectives.
- Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined proposal. However, one organization should be designated as the lead applicant.
- Organizations may submit more than one proposal.
- Public Affairs Section reserves the right to request additional background information on applicants that do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards, and these applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.
- Please note: the Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to for-profit or commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The permissibility of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31, Cost Accounting Standards, and Part 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.
- Please note: no entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM) is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities under an award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR Part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR Part 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM (www.sam.gov) to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program **cannot** fund:

- Organizations with affiliation to elected officials, political parties, or religious groups;
- Humanitarian or charitable activities, including direct social services to populations;
- Fundraising campaigns;
- Career development;
- Political or partisan activities;
- Scientific research;
- Individual trips abroad;
- Trade activities; or
- Health projects.

V. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Grants

Funding per grant: \$1,000-\$20,000

For the entire 2017 Fiscal Year the Democracy Grants Program has a total budget of \$650,000.

Expected award date is July 1.

The Department also reserves the right to award more or less funding as deemed in the best interest of the U.S. Government. The performance period for funded projects will be for up to 12 months. Recipients of funding under this announcement will be subject to the Department of State terms and conditions found at:

<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/TermsandConditions.aspx> and the terms set forth in this announcement. Additional terms and conditions may apply as warranted. Quarterly or Semi-annual technical and financial reports may be required during the term of the project. A final assessment at the end of the project is mandatory for all grants.

Award recipients must comply with Executive Order 13224, Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons who Commit, Threaten to commit, or Support Terrorism. Information about this Executive Order can be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2001-09-25/pdf/01-24205.pdf>.

VI. Cost Sharing or Matching

Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-U.S. Government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and greater cost effectiveness.

Cost sharing may be a certain percentage or amount, or may be in the form of contributions of specified items or activities (e.g., provision of equipment).

VII. Proposal Submission and Deadline

Applicants are requested to submit a completed proposal package that includes all mandatory documents, per the solicitation instructions below.

Note: Unsolicited appendices will not be read and should not be submitted for this award.

To meet the announcement deadline, complete proposals with attachments must be emailed to rusus@america.gov and MoldovaGrants@state.gov. Applications submitted after April 28, 2017 11:59 PM Moldova Time will not be accepted.

The U.S. Embassy will determine if the application has been submitted before the deadline by checking the “received date” on the email message. Please take into consideration any possible delays that may occur between the sent and received time.

We strongly encourage applicants not to call to inquire about receipt of applications on the day of the deadline.

Do not archive documents in RAR, ZIP, or other archive formats. The documents should be attached as individual files and sent in one email before the deadline. Do not send the application package more than one time.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that proposals have been submitted on time to the emails specified above. The U.S. Embassy bears no responsibility for data errors during the transmission or conversion processes.

VIII. Proposal Requirements

This section outlines requirements for the proposal package and also includes detailed instructions on budget, budget narrative, and monitoring and evaluation plan submission.

All materials must be written in English.

We encourage the applicants to use the downloadable application form and project format. If Internet access is limited, please contact us to arrange an alternative way of receiving the application package.

A complete application must contain the following mandatory elements:

1. Signed SF424 Application Coversheet Form (pdf format)
2. Project Format in .doc format (original doc format)
3. Detailed Budget (Excel Spreadsheet)
4. Budget Narrative
5. Monitoring and Evaluation plan
6. Project Timeline
7. CVs of the paid staff and experts

Other Submission Requirements

Do not send any other documents except those required by the program (See Application and Submission Application).

Please use only Microsoft Word to fill out the project form. Using OpenOffice, LibreOffice, or other programs might break the format and render the forms unusable. If you do not have Microsoft Office software, feel free to use the computers at the American Resource Center (find address on the Embassy's website) or any other public access center (e.g., Novateca's nationwide library network, Internet cafés, etc.).

Please contact us at rusus@america.gov if you experience technical problems or are unable to submit an electronic version of the application.

IX. Application Review Information

Criteria

The Democracy Grants Program will fund proposals that best address the Commission's themes and that reflect the values of the United States and the mandate of the Embassy and the Democracy Grants Program. Successful proposals will contain accurate and well-developed implementation plans and clear explanations of how the project goals will be achieved.

Project selection is competitive. Proposals are judged on the following criteria:

1) Quality of Program Idea

Proposals should be responsive to the solicitation and exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Embassy's mission. The Commission usually does not fund continuation of existing programs, prioritizing instead innovative and stand-alone programs.

2) Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Long- and Short-Term Goals

A relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity of the organization. The work plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable and achievable. For complete proposals, applicants should provide a monthly timeline of project activities.

3) Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

Proposed programs should address long-term institution building with an emphasis on moving towards sustainability, garnering other donor support, or demonstrating capacity-building results.

4) Program Evaluation Plan

Programs should demonstrate the capacity for engaging in impact assessments and providing long- and short-term goals with measurable outputs and outcomes. Applicants also should identify long- and short-term project goals. Projects that propose an

independent evaluation with a clear plan will be deemed more competitive in this category.

5) Institution's Record and Capacity

The Embassy will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful program administration, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's goals. Roles and responsibilities of primary staff should be provided.

6) Cost Effectiveness

The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

Review and Selection Process

The Grants Program Review Committee is made up of heads of sections or their delegates of the U.S. Embassy in Moldova. The panel members have at least 10 working days to read the projects and then convene to review and discuss the project proposals and recommend selected projects for funding.

The expert panel usually includes representatives of the following sections:

- Public Affairs Section
- Peace Corps Moldova
- Political and Economic Section
- USAID Moldova
- Management Section

The selected awards of the committee is confirmed by the Front Office of the U.S. Embassy and sent to the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC for final approval.

X. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

Applicants will be notified electronically about selection results. An email message will be sent to the email account included in the application form. Grants Program Staff might also contact the applicants to request additional information or to clarify certain aspects of the application documents; therefore it is important to provide accurate contact information.

Successful program applicants must sign a Notice of Award (grant agreement) before receiving the funds. No costs should be incurred by the applicant prior to signing a Notice of Award. The Notice of Federal Award signed by the grants officer is the authorizing document for the grant.

Unsuccessful program applicants will receive an email notification. Grants Program Staff can provide a signed rejection letter upon request; however, the Grants Program will not provide

specific reasons for rejection. The Democracy Grants program is highly competitive and may not be able to fund every good application.

XI. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Reporting

During the grant implementation period the recipient must inform the Embassy about events and activities carried out under the grant.

The recipient must provide a final performance report (narrative) submitted in electronic format in English via email at the end of the project, however, often the Embassy may choose to request semiannual or quarterly reporting. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to request other proof such as photos from events, participants' lists, copies of publications, etc., as well as request access to financial information related to the grant.

Federal Awarding Agency Contact

Grants Specialist: Stelian Rusu
Email: Rusus@america.gov
Telephone: 022-851-706; 022-851-707

XII. Other Information

Disclaimer

Issuance of this Request for Proposals does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Furthermore, the U.S. Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. 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 U.S. Department of State.