

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Title: DEMOCRACY COMMISSION SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM
Opportunity Number: PAS-CHISINAU-FY19-02-DEMCOM
CFDA Number: 19.900
CFDA Title: AEECA PD Programs
Program: Democracy Commission Small Grants Program (AEECA)
Announcement Type: Open Competition
Announcement Date: Friday, February 01, 2019
Submission Deadline: Monday, March 04, 2019
Anticipated Award Date: Wednesday, May 01, 2019
Agency Contact: Stelian Rusu, RusuS@state.gov

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program was initiated in 1994 as a flexible mechanism for U.S. embassies to support initiatives that contribute to 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.

The U.S. Embassy invites Moldovan non-profit and non-governmental organizations to submit project proposals to the Democracy Small Grants Program. This program supports projects that foster the development and education of civil society in Moldova. It is a focused yet flexible mechanism that provides seed money for unique and sustainable projects, particularly projects that help develop the capacity of non-governmental organizations in Moldova. The selection of the projects is based on the applicants' ability to demonstrate concrete achievements that can show impact in a given field or in a specific community.

Project proposals must address at least one of the following themes:

- Strengthening and promotion of civil society, democratic institutions.

- Institutionalization of open, pluralistic, and democratic political processes at the local level.
- Civic education
- Public participation in decision making;
- Free flow of information, freedom of speech, transparency in government and good governance;
- Confidence building

This funding opportunity is authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

The U.S. Embassy will consider awarding grants ranging from \$5,000 up to \$25,000. Any requests outside of these limits will not be considered. Please read section **C. Eligibility Information** about requirements and criteria for different funding levels.

Total budget for the competition: \$100,000
 Assistance Instruments: *Grants or Fixed Amount Awards*
 Maximum period of performance: 12 months

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligibility is limited to not-for-profit organizations (Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO's), Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), Think-Tanks) officially registered in the Republic of Moldova.

American or other donor country organizations and individuals are not eligible for grants under this program. The organizations without Moldovan registration can apply only as partners through an eligible organization.

Additional Eligibility criteria by funding level:

Level I: \$5,000-\$9,999

Only organizations without prior grants from the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government Agencies may apply for this funding level.

Level II: \$10,000-\$25,000

Applicant organizations requesting grants above \$10,000 must have:

- At least one successfully implemented grant from the U.S. Embassy
- A functioning board of directors
- Proven national visibility (Program will check internet presence, social profiles and media coverage for information about the activities implemented by the applicant)
- A publicly accessible Annual Activity Report for 2018 (Containing both narrative and Financial information)

Other general criteria:

- Organizations should not have implemented another Democracy Commission grant from the U.S. Embassy in the last 12 months.
- Grants are made on a one-time basis. No repeat grants will be issued.
- 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 only 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.

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).

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A complete application must contain the following mandatory elements:

1. **Application Format** in MS Word format (All Funding Levels)
2. **Detailed Budget** in MS Excel format (All Funding Levels)
3. **Budget Narrative** (All Funding Levels)
4. **2018 Annual Activity Report** in English, Romanian or Russian (mandatory for Level II)
5. **List of board members** (mandatory for Level II)

Unsolicited attachments will not be read and should not be submitted for this award.

Do not archive/compress documents. The documents should be attached as individual files and sent in one email before the deadline. Do not send the application package more than once.

Please send the application electronically to moldovagrants@state.gov including the Funding opportunity Number and Name of the Organization in the subject of your email.

Example: *PAS-CHISINAU-FY19-02-DEMCOM Asociatia Moldova*

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

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.

Please use only Microsoft Word to fill out the project form. If you do not have Microsoft Office software, feel free to use the computers at the America House (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@state.gov if you experience technical problems or are unable to submit an electronic version of the application.

Successful applicants may be required to register in SAM.GOV (System for Award Management) before an award can be made.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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 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.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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.

G. FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACT(S)

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H. OTHER INFORMATION

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.