**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EUR/Tirana**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**Funding Opportunity Title:***Democracy Commission Program Round 2 FY2023*

**Funding Opportunity Number:***TIRDEMCommR2FY23*

**Deadline for Applications**: *April 18 - May 17, 2023*

**Assistance Listing Number:***19.900*

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

1. **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Embassy Tirana announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications under the Democracy Commission Program. Please follow all instructions below.

**Priority Region:***Albania*

**Eligible Program Themes:**

•             Anti-Corruption

•             Good Governance

•             Cyber-security

•             Energy Security

•             Human Rights/Minority Rights

•             Reforms

•             Empowerment of Women and Youth

•             Environment/Climate change

•             Combatting Human Trafficking

•             Independent/Investigative Journalism

*The Democracy Commission does NOT fund projects such as the following:*

*· Fundraising campaigns*

*· Humanitarian assistance projects*

*· Scientific research projects*

*· Projects that duplicate existing projects being implemented by an organization*

*· Projects submitted by for-profit, commercial organizations*

*· Projects that support partisan political and/or religious activity*

*· Conferences and individual trips abroad*

*· Trade activities*

**Participants and Audiences:**

Describe who the intended target audiences should be for the various activity categories.

1. **FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: *6 to 12 months*

Number of awards anticipated: (dependent on amounts)

Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of *$30,000* to a maximum of *$50,000*

Total available funding: *(dependent on requests)*

Type of Funding: *Assistance funds (AEECA)*

Anticipated program start date: *August-September 2023*

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

**Funding Instrument Type:**Grant Contract

**Program Performance Period**: Proposed programs should be completed within a year from the starting date determined in the grant contract.

**C. ELIGILIBITY INFORMATION**

1. Eligible Applicants
* Albanian not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations.
* U.S. organizations and individuals are not eligible for grants under the program.
* Cost Sharing or Matching is not required and is not part of the evaluation criteria. However, the applicants are encouraged to explore the possibility of cost-sharing whenever possible.
1. Other Eligibility Requirements
* In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued at www.SAM.gov, as well as a valid registration on SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.
* Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application forms required below are available at the U.S. Embassy Tiranawebsite: <https://al.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grant-programs/one-time-funding-opportunities/?_ga=2.127645455.345181246.1678277375-444578980.1664262029>

and at grants.gov

1. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

**Content of Application**

Please ensure:

* The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
* All documents are in English
* All budgets are in U.S. dollars
* All pages are numbered
* All documents are in their original format

The following documents are **required**:

**1. Mandatory application forms**

* SF-424 *(Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)*
* SF-424A *(Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at*
* SF-424B (*Assurances - Non-Construction programs*)

**2. Proposal (Application Form):**The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. The format must include all the items below.

* Project title
* Name, address, telephone/fax number, e-mail address of the organization and name of contact person
* Project goal
* Project theme (select from the drop-down menu, if “other” use next tab)
* Project justification
* A description of the project and who the target audience is
* Key project activities
* Project dates (approximate time from the beginning to the completion of the project)
* A description of the expected results
* A brief description of how the success of the project will be measured and evaluated
* A list of name and title of team members
* A brief description of what the organization does
* A summary of the budget (based on the detailed budget form in the Excel format)

**3. Budget Justification Narrative**: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use the Excel document to describe each of the budget expenses in detail.

*Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

**4. Attachments** *:*

* 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
* Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
* If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
* Official permission letters, if required for program activities

**5. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)**

**Required Registrations:**

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

**Note**: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

**Note**: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

* Organizations based in the United States or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

* Organizations based outside of the United States and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
* Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities. If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket (“incident”) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain a CAGE or NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the Department of Defense should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

* An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
* For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

1. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than *May 17, 2023*

1. Funding Restrictions

*Award funds can be used only for activities occurring only in Albania and for payments only to Albanian citizens.*

1. Other Submission Requirements

**All application materials must be submitted by email to: pdgrantstirana@state.gov**

Please do not modify the application forms. Submissions in WinZIP, WinRAR, WeTransfer, Google Drive, etc., are not allowed.

Applications that do not meet any of the above requirements and/or submitted after the deadline will be ineligible.

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea**: The program idea is well developed, with details about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grant:** The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds.  This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

**Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives:** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and the program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

**Budget:** The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

**Monitoring and Evaluation plan:** Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.

**Sustainability:** Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

**Support of DEIA and Underserved Communities:**  Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), as well as engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation.

1. Review and Selection Process

The U.S. Embassy has established the Democracy Commission which is the body that reviews and evaluates proposals for this program. It will take the Commission up to a month after the application deadline to complete its review process. Applicants may be contacted with additional questions during this review process and will be informed whether or not their proposal was selected via e-mail.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, if the Federal awarding agency anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold on any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity may include, over the period of performance (see §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold), this section must also inform applicants:

i. That the Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

ii. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

iii. That the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

**F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

* 1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO 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. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**Payment Method:** *pending award specifics*

* 1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

 These include:

* [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.170&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.175&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.182&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.183&rgn=div5)
* [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2chapterVI.tpl)
* [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget’s guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

* [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81a5f41de81c46a9844617d93a9db081&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register’s 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
	+ Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
	+ Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
	+ Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
	+ Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
	+ Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

.

* 1. Reporting

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=027fb85899500d580fc71df69d11573a&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML%20-%20ap2.1.200_1521.i#ap2.1.200_1521.xii).

**Foreign Assistance Data Review:** As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

**G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: pdgrantstirana@state.gov

**H. OTHER INFORMATION**

**Guidelines for Budget Justification**

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least $5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than $5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages:  Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.