

DEMOCRACY COMMISSION SMALL GRANTS

RELEASE IN FULL

Democracy Commission Small Grants Program

The United States Embassy in Tirana, acting through the Public Affairs Office, is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this **NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) for DEMOCRACY COMMISSION SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM.**

Purpose of the Program

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program supports initiatives of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in, building the social and intellectual foundations of democracy, the democratic resolution of problems, strengthening civil society watchdog activities, and the institutionalization of open, pluralistic political processes. The Democracy Commission Program seeks to support initiatives throughout Albania in a variety of fields, including those related to: anti-corruption, participatory and good governance, investigative journalism, respect for human rights/minority rights, women's empowerment, dispute reconciliation, environmental awareness, and combatting human trafficking.

The call for proposals has closed. The next call will be announced in Spring, 2016.

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

- Fund-raising campaigns
- Humanitarian assistance projects
- Scientific research projects
- Projects with budgets that exceed \$24,000 and take more than a year to implement
- Projects that duplicate existing projects being implemented by an organization
- Projects submitted by for-profit, commercial organizations
- Projects that aim to support partisan political and/ or religious activity
- Conferences and individual trips abroad
- Trade activities

Evaluation Process:

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

Evaluation Criteria:

The Democracy Commission will assess the following when evaluating grant proposals:

- The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills and human resources to implement the project.
- The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue that the project is aiming to address and is able to articulate it with specificity and clarity.
- The organization has consulted relevant resources, experts and potential partner organizations during the project's design phase.
- The organization has identified appropriate beneficiaries or target groups in a way that maximizes project outputs and outcomes and the project has a clear focus and manageable scope.
- The project's idea and approach are innovative, yet capable of being completed with the program period. Proposed project activities must be concrete, detailed, and supported by a reasonable work plan.
- The project's budget is well-organized, detailed and reasonable. There are no budget lines labeled "miscellaneous expenses." Entertainment and alcoholic beverage expenses are not included in the budget. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to plan for and assess actual expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates.
- The organization has clearly articulated how it will assess and measure its own performance throughout the project implementation phase using concrete quantitative and qualitative assessment tools.
- The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability of the project's results after its completion.
- Past performance, including U.S. government funded grants, indicates reliability, responsible use of resources, and an ability to follow through with project aims.

Specific Guidelines:

IMPORTANT! Organizations may only submit one proposal per program

- The maximum grant amount is USD 24,000.
- Grants are made on a one-time basis. A successful applicant may re-apply for a second grant, but the second proposal must be for a distinctly different project than the first project funded by the Democracy Commission.
- Organizations are eligible to receiving funding from this program not more often than once in two years.
- U.S. organizations and individuals are not eligible for grants under the program.

The application requires a detailed description of the activity for which grant funds are being requested and a budget proposal broken down by expenditure category; otherwise it will not be considered.

How to Apply?

All applications are required to be in English. You must use an official application form, which together with the application guideline package can be obtained by e-mailing PDgrants@state.gov

Your application should include:

- Name, address, telephone/fax number, e-mail address of the organization and name of contact person
- The court decision registration number of the organization
- The bank account number of the organization
- A brief description of what the organization does
- A description of the project: how the grant will be used and who the target audience is

Executive summary of the project (no longer than a paragraph)

- A detailed description of why the project is necessary
- The approximate time from the beginning to the completion of the project
- Description of the project's goals, and how this can be measured at the conclusion of the project
- Previous grants by various donors (name of donor, goal of project, and amount)
- A detailed budget, listing all component items
- The amount of cost-sharing by the grantee

Copies of the court decision registration, statute of the organization, and CVs of the main staff of the project must be included in the application package. Any application that does not cover all the above points will not be considered.

Please send your application package to the following address:

Democracy Commission Small Grants Program
Embassy of the United States of America
Rr. Elbasanit, Nr. 103
Tirana, Albania

Submission of the electronic version (Word and Excel format) of the application form to PDgrants@state.gov is also mandatory.

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