

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY BELGRADE
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

Funding Opportunity Title: *Democracy Commission Small Grants*
Funding Opportunity Number: *SRB10020FO003*
Deadline for Applications: *05/24/2020*
CFDA Number: *19.900*
Total Amount Available: *\$275,000*

THIS NOTICE IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Belgrade announces an open competition for local, non-profit civil society or non-governmental organizations (CSOs or NGOs) and independent media outlets to submit applications to take part in the Democracy Commission Small Grants program in Serbia. The U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section is setting aside funds in the amount listed above.

Program Objective. The overall goal of the Democracy Commission Small Grants program is to strengthen democracy, protect human rights, and support economic development in the Republic of Serbia, including in local municipalities outside Belgrade.

Priority Themes. The following list represents the project priority themes.

- **Participatory Democracy:** Promoting increased participation by informed citizens - including young people and vulnerable populations, i.e., the disabled, ethnic and religious minorities, the LGBT community -- in the democratic process. Supporting effective advocacy on behalf of communities or groups. Promoting government responsiveness to constituents. Education of voters about policies and processes. Public debate over matters of public interest or concern.
- **Rule of Law:** Strengthening the rule of law. Promoting legal reform. Increasing transparency in government.
- **Anti-Corruption:** Combating corruption, in the workplace, in education, in the delivery of healthcare, in the legal system, in government offices, etc.
- **Human Rights:** Promoting tolerance of, understanding of, and equality for vulnerable populations, including the disabled, ethnic and religious minorities, the LGBT community, etc. Furthering gender equality and women empowerment.
- **Economic Development:** Establishing or strengthening business associations. Educating youth and other audiences about entrepreneurship, innovation, and the market economy. Training for disadvantaged groups in society, e.g., ethnic

minorities, women, the disabled, refugees and migrants, etc. **Note:** Democracy Commission grants cannot be used to support business start-up costs or materials.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

- **Number of awards anticipated:** Approximately 20.
- **Award amounts:** awards may range from \$10,000 to a maximum of \$50,000. (Smaller grants preferred.)
- **Type of Funding:** FY19/20 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act
- **Anticipated program start date:** Depending on availability of funds.
- **Funding Instrument Type:** Grant or Fixed Amount Award.
- **Program Performance Period:** Proposed programs should be completed in 12 months or less.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants:** To be eligible for consideration, applicants must be a local, non-profit civil society or non-governmental organizations (CSOs or NGOs) or an independent media outlet legally registered in Serbia.
2. **Other Eligibility Requirements: DUNS and SAMS registration.**

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations involved in the grant activity must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS number) and valid registration on file on the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM) website (www.sam.gov). Please see Section D.6 for information on DUNS and SAMS, as well as how to register.

Any applicant organization listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) system is **not** eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity (including partner organizations and contractors) listed on the EPLS can participate in **any** activities under a grant award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included in their project activities.

3. Number of Applications

Applicants are only allowed to submit **one** proposal for this program.

If more than one proposal is submitted from an individual or organization, all proposals from that person or institution will be considered **ineligible** for funding.

If an individual or organization currently has another grant from the U.S. Embassy and that project and this one would overlap, the review committee will examine whether the applicant has the capacity to handle both grants concurrently.

4. **Restrictions:** You **CANNOT** apply for a Democracy Commission Small Grant from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade if your project:
 - a. involves partisan political activity.
 - b. fund attendance at overseas conferences or trips abroad.
 - c. international travel to/from the U.S. or countries outside the Balkan region.
 - d. involves giving charitable activity and humanitarian aid.
 - e. involves fundraising.
 - f. is commercial in nature, i.e., you are making money.
 - g. focuses on academic or scientific research.
 - h. is focused on arts, culture, or any other areas beyond the themes listed above.
 - i. is focused on skill learning or training programs unless the activity is specifically aimed at promoting the integration of disadvantaged groups into society.
 - j. duplicates an already existing project.

5. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** Cost sharing is allowed but **not** required and will **not** impact funding decisions.

6. **Budget Item Restrictions.** Please see “Guidelines for Budget Justification” below.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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 considered technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

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.

The required application forms listed below are available on the U.S. Embassy website at <https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/democracy-commission-small-grants-program/>.

1. **Mandatory Application Forms.** The following forms are **absolutely required**:
 - SF424 (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)
 - SF424A (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*).
 - SF424B (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*). However, the SF-424B is required **only** for those applicants who:
 - have never registered in SAM.gov; or
 - have not recertified in SAM.gov prior to February 2, 2019.
 - Democracy Commission Small Grants Application Form
 - Most recent CV (curriculum vitae) or résumé of applicant(s)

- Detailed Budget in an Excel Spreadsheet

2. Submission Instructions:

All application materials must be submitted by email to DemComSerbia@state.gov no later than May 24, 2020, at 23:59.

As a backup, we strongly recommend that you also send a paper copy via post (postmarked before the deadline) to the following address:

Democracy Commission
Public Affairs Section (PAS), U.S. Embassy
Bulevar Kneza Aleksandra Karadjordjevica 92
11040 Belgrade

3. Guidelines for Completing the Democracy Commission Small Grants Application Form: Your full proposal or application should contain sufficient information and be explained clearly enough so that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. It must include all the items below.

MAXIMUM LENGTH IS 10 (TEN) PAGES (NOT INCLUDING ATTACHMENTS).

At the end of the application are detailed instructions on how to fill out the different sections. Follow those directions carefully!

I. Project Theme: List which priority theme the project covers. If your project covers more than one, then please list all of them with one sentence explanation.

II. Grant Applicant Details: Name of the organization, address, phone/fax number/e-mail address, name and title of director and other significant staff members, particularly those who will be involved in the project.

III. A. Background the Main Representatives and Key Personnel:

Key Personnel and Partners: Give the names, titles, roles of key personnel in this project, including any organizational staff and trainers, and 1-2 sentence about each person's qualifications. What partner organizations or individuals will be involved in and in what capacity?

Note: Partner organizations will need DUNS numbers, but contractors delivering goods or services – including suppliers, trainers, webs developers – will not.

Applicants must also attach a CV, resume or personal history of the people who will be engaged in the project. No one CV should exceed one page.

III. B. Background on the Organization: When was the organization founded? what are its principle activities and significant achievements?

Again, please attach a copy of the organization's registration papers issued by host country authorities.

IV. Previous U.S. Government funding: Please list all previous U.S. Government funding which will include previous grants from the U.S. Embassy (including Democracy Commission) as well as USAID- or NED-funded projects. Please list year, amount of project and name of project.

V. Proposed Program Dates: When will the project be carried out, if it is funded? Be realistic about dates. Remember that, even if approved, funds from the Democracy Commission may not be available until two or three months from the time the application is submitted. Please let us know, too, what kind of flexibility you have regarding dates.

VI. Amount Requested: List exact amount request from Democracy Commission for this project.

VII. Executive Summary: Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives, concrete activities, and anticipated impact or results. In 5-10 sentences describe the project. This paragraph should be very concise and very clear. You do not need to provide a justification for the project here.

VIII. Problem Statement: Briefly explain what problem or challenge this project addresses. Feel free to provide some basic background. This should help answer the question: Why have you decided to do this project? What is the purpose behind your project?

XI. Overall Approach: What approach are you taking to solving this problem or challenge? Who are you trying to help? Are you going to provide some training, run workshops, develop some curriculum, create opportunities of some sort for participants, create a traveling exhibit or a website, host an event, etc.? Will you be partnering with any other organizations or institutions? How will all this help fix the problem or overcome the challenge, and make a positive contribution to your community or to Serbian society more broadly?

X. Project Beneficiaries: Who are the specific target audiences for your program activity? What specific groups of people – from what professions, from what socio-economic class, from what age ranges – will benefit from the project? In what town(s) will the activity take place? Please list the towns where the project will take place, even if that is tentative.

XI. Description of Project Activities: What does the applicant propose to do? The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar

with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do and why. The more specific, detailed, and clear the program description, the better.

What will be the specific “outputs” of your project, i.e., what specific activities will take place and how many times will you carry out? How many individuals will be directly involved in these activities? What is the project schedule? What events are taking place at what points in time, or what are milestones during the lifetime of the project? How and when will you publicize what you are doing through public events, press coverage, media interviews, social media, or other means of communication?

XII. Project Justification: This is a very important aspect of the proposal and applicants should pay particular attention to it. What is the importance of the project? Why should it be funded? Who will be affected by this project? What difference will it make for your country?

XIII. Measuring Outcome: What are your anticipated outcomes? Make sure that your goals or objectives for what you want to accomplish by the end of program are S.M.A.R.T., i.e., ensure that they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Don’t tell us you are going to achieve an unrealistic goal or will impact 1 million Serbian citizens.

What is the impact you hope to achieve by the time the program activities are completed? What changes in attitude or perceptions or awareness are you seeking? What actions do you want individuals to take as a result of this program? How will you measure how successful you were? Will you conduct a before and after survey or quantify progress in some other way?

Do you have a plan to measure or track longer-term outcomes, e.g., conducting a survey or maybe tracking activities by participants in the project months after the main activities come to an end? Have you worked that evaluation process into your planning and perhaps into your budget?

XIII. Sustainability: How might this activity continue in some form or fashion even after the grant project formally comes to an end? What kind of “multiplier effect” will this project have? (For example, if your participants include instructors, journalists, youth leaders, or others with significant reach into their communities or professions, they could potentially share their experiences in some way with others and magnify the impact of your project.) What actions do you predict your participants or audiences might take on their own in the weeks or months after the grant is finished? What are your possible follow-on plans after this project ends? Do you have a budget or funding for follow-up activities? Do you have an idea for ways to make sure further progress is made – by you, your partners, or other like-minded organizations – to solve the problem or challenge you are addressing in this proposal, even after this project finishes?

XV. Detailed Budget Including Supporting Narrative: In order to be sure that the Commission understands why there is a need for money, the applicant should prepare a line-by-line list of expenses necessary to pay for the implementation of this project, prepared in a logical manner, and offering enough detail that a reviewer will be able to understand exactly how that figures were determined.

XVI. Reporting Requirements: If you receive funding from the Democracy Commission, you will be required to submit interim reports and a detailed report on project activities and financial expenditures. The Embassy will discuss with you when exactly you will be required to submit the reports. Please tell us the name of the person who will submitting the program reports and who will be preparing the financial reports (e.g., your accountant).

XVII. Cost-Sharing: Please describe the in-kind contribution of your organization. That can be volunteer work, use of premises, vehicles, classroom supplies, equipment or payment of a program event from your own funds, e.g. rental of a hall, printing of announcements, meals, travel, etc.

XVIII. Other sources of support for this project: Please list all other organizations to whom you have applied or might apply to fund this same project, and tell us the status of those applications.

4. **Details on Required Registrations:** Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS Number) and System for Award Management (SAM)

As mentioned above, in order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System, or DUNS number), as well as have a valid registration on file on the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM) website (www.sam.gov).

The applicant's partner organizations in the project will need DUNS numbers, too.

Contractors delivering goods or services required in the implementation of this project – including suppliers, trainers, web developers, etc – will **not** need a DUNS number.

Individuals involved in a grant are **not** required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

Again, these registrations are **required** for organizations applying for funding. It is **not** optional.

All registrations are free of charge.

NOTE: SAM registration must be renewed **annually**.

5. **Registrations Instructions:**

All organizations applying for grants must undergo the following registration:

- Duns & Bradstreet: to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.
- NCAGE Code Request Tool website: to obtain an NCAGE/CAGE code.
- System for Award Management (SAM) website (www.sam.gov): to register with the U.S. Government.

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number.

- Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> to complete a DUNS application.
- You can also call +1-866-705-5711.

Step 2: Complete the NCAGE application:

- Go to <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx> to complete the application.
- Instructions are available at:
<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>
- For assistance in filling out the form:
 - call +1-888-227-2423 from within the U.S.
 - call +1-269-961-7766 from outside the U.S.
 - send an email to NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil

Step 3: Register on the System for Award Management (SAM) website .

- Go to: <https://www.sam.gov>.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION:

- 1. Criteria:** The U.S. Embassy has established the Democracy Commission Board, which reviews and evaluates proposals at least once per year. Project proposals are evaluated based on the theme of the project, the formulation of clear goals and target groups, project sustainability, and the ability of the applying organization to carry out the project aims.

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

- a. Quality, feasibility, and creativity:** Proposal is well-developed, innovative, and offers a creative approach and/or solutions to deal with the stated problem or challenge, with necessary details that spell out on how the project activities will be carried out with appropriate milestones in the timeline. (30 points.)

- b. Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants:** 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. (10 points.)
 - c. Project goals/objectives:** The project has a clearly identified, S.M.A.R.T. objectives, with a good approach to measure impact on target audiences. The alum or organization, if there is a past track record, has a demonstrated ability to achieve the goals and objectives. (20 points.)
 - d. Budget:** The figures, narrative, and justification are complete and reasonable in related to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget accounts for all necessary expenses and the justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable and realistic in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. (15 points.)
 - e. Measuring Effects and Impact:** The proposal outlines in sufficient detail how success, impact, or progress will be measured, with a plan (even a basic one) on how to evaluate impact upon the conclusion of the grant activity. (15 points.)
 - f. Sustainability:** Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program. (10 points.)
1. **Review and Selection Process:** Democracy Commission Board Committee will evaluate all eligible applications. You may be invited for an interview or simply asked to submit additional information.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award 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.

2. Reporting Requirements and Payments

Grant awards exceeding \$3,000 will be made in two or more installments in bank transfers. The first installment will be transferred to the bank account of the grantee organization prior to the beginning of the project. After that, the applicant must provide an interim report about the use of the first installment of funds before additional funds will be released. If no interim report is provided, no additional funds will be released. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

Upon completion of the project, all grantee organizations must submit a formal final report, which consists of a narrative and a financial report to the Democracy Commission. The form for the narrative for the report and guidelines for the financial report can be obtained from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

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

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. 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. Please note that fees for staff engaged in the implementation of larger grant projects (e.g., project manager, project assistant, accountant, etc.) cannot exceed 30% of the total project budget.

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 regional international travel, include a brief statement of justification explaining why that is essential for the project. No international travel to the U.S. or beyond the Balkan region will be funded.

- **Equipment:** The budget cannot include purchase of any equipment, which is defined as property costing \$5000 or more with a useful life of one year (or longer than the duration of the grant). Only rental of equipment is allowed. The rental should be listed under "Other Direct Costs."
- **Supplies:** List and describe all the supply items and materials that are needed for the program.
- **Contractors/Vendors:** 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: This refers to contributions from the applicant organization, partners, donors, or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It may also include in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time, donated venues, etc.
- Food and Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages. Costs for food and other drinks should not exceed 5% of the total amount of the award.

2. Before You Submit Your Application.

- Read through the Democracy Commission Guidelines which describe the Small Grant Program just one more time. Make sure you understand those guidelines and that your proposal fits the purposes it discusses.
- Carefully review the application to make sure it is complete and free of errors.
- Make sure the application is neatly typed and easy to read in English. Perfect English is not required but the proposal must be understandable to an English speaker.
- Ask someone who does not know anything about your project to read your proposal to determine if it is understandable. Remember that the members of the Democracy Commission will not know anything about your proposal until they read it. If they cannot understand it simply by reading what you have written, chances are it will not be approved.
- Try to ask someone with experience applying for grants to look at the application and provide advice on how to improve your application.
- Applications which do not include the required information or do not comply with the requirements of the Program guidelines will be considered technically ineligible and will not be reviewed by the Democracy Commission.

3. **Continuation Grants.** The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.