

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. Embassy Belgrade, Serbia
Public Diplomacy Section (PDS)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

Funding Opportunity Title (Grant Program): Democracy Commission Small Grants (FY2022)

Funding Opportunity Number: SRB10021FO004

Deadline for Applications: February 1, 2022

Assistance Listing Number: 19.900

Total Amount Available: \$265,000

Please note that this notice is subject to availability of funding.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade announces an open competition for local, non-profit civil society or non-governmental organizations (CSOs or NGOs) to submit applications for the **Democracy Commission Small Grants Program**.

Please check for information on other PAS funding opportunities on the U.S. Embassy website at: <https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/>.

Priority Region: Serbia.

Program Objectives:

Proposals should align with the U.S. Embassy's objectives to strengthen democracy and protect human rights and empower local organizations to advance these changes and reforms throughout Serbia.

Grant activities may take any number of forms, including trainings, conferences, workshops, courses, academic competitions, summer camps (focused on language study, sports, etc), cross-border exchanges, curriculum development, exhibits, hackathons or app development, online projects, mock trials or moot court competitions, simulations and role-playing activities (e.g., Model Congress, Model United Nations), film or theater festivals, performances, or other activities.

Democracy Commission small grants proposals should be crafted with a S.M.A.R.T. logic model. The objective of your activity should be: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant to the problem or challenge, and Time-based, meaning that you will meet them by a certain date.

In accordance with the [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Underserved Communities](#), proposals should demonstrate how the program advances equity with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, income, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

The proposal should also demonstrate how the program will further engagement in underserved communities and with individuals from underserved communities. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing racial equity and underserved communities will enhance the program's goals and objectives, as well as the experience of participants.

In light of social distancing measures, and to limit the spread of COVID-19, we welcome proposals that utilize video conferencing, distance learning tools, etc. If your proposal includes in-person activities, please consider the inclusion of contingency plans, if the health situation requires that social distancing measures be implemented during the grant period.

Grantees are expected to: publicize your activities, including through social media and/or traditional press outlets; and highlight U.S. Embassy support, with our logo included on project-related materials.

Program Themes: The Embassy seeks applications focusing on the themes below. We have included ideas about what your project could do, but we welcome creative approaches and activities.

1. **Participatory Democracy:** Promoting increased civic participation by informed citizens in the democratic process. Supporting effective advocacy on behalf of communities or groups, promoting government responsiveness to constituents, strengthening transparency, and combating corruption. Education of voters and young people, even if they cannot yet vote, about policy choices and the decision-making processes. Public debate over matters of public interest or concern.
2. **Human Rights:** Promoting tolerance of, understanding of, and equality for vulnerable populations, particularly, but not limited to, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), ethnic and religious minorities, the LGBTQ community, migrants and refugees, victims of gender-based violence or human trafficking, etc. Furthering gender equality and women's empowerment.

Participants and Audiences: Primary audiences for proposals should be youth, students, teachers and administrators, young professionals, and/or others related to your program theme.

Depending on focus, projects may have secondary audiences or beneficiaries including media, civil society organizations or wider professional audiences, which you may note in the proposal.

Participants or audiences for the proposal should be citizens or legal residents of Serbia.

If your project idea might involve citizens of other countries, please see C.4. below, to understand restrictions on funding.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: Any length of time up to a maximum of 15 months (including the 3-month evaluation period).

Number of awards anticipated: 9 awards (dependent on dollar amounts of the grants)

Award amounts: awards may range from a floor (minimum) of \$10,000 to a ceiling (maximum) of \$50,000.

Total available funding: \$265,000.

Type of Funding: FY21/22 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act.

Anticipated program start date: Your project should start no earlier than July 1, 2022, and no later than December 1, 2022.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 15 months or less (including the time you have built in for project assessment and evaluation).

The U.S. Department of State may 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.

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

While filling out the application, you will be required to tell us whether you are also receiving funding from other donors for your project. Please be aware, however, that you must be able to carry out all the activities described in your application with the funding you receive, even if the contributions from other donors or other funding sources fail to materialize.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must receive a unique entity identifier (UEI) from Dun & Bradstreet called Data Universal Numbering System or

DUNS number, as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations.

If an applicant has already received a grant from the U.S. Embassy and the older project and the new one would overlap, or if an organization has submitted more than one project proposal, please use section “y” in the application form to explain how you will manage more than one project and describe your capacity to do so.

4. Funding Restrictions:

You may NOT apply for a grant from PDS if your project:

- a. involves partisan political activity.
- b. funds 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.
- k. involves the provision of health care or services, childcare, food subsidies, or other social services to populations.

This funding opportunity aims to support specific projects with objectives, which can be achieved within a set timeframe. We will not accept applications which are aimed more broadly at supporting your organization’s usual or typical daily activities and operations. Those will be deemed technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding by the review committee.

As a general rule, participants or audiences should not be charged for taking part in any PDS-funded activity. If you envisage that your project activity will not be free for some reason, please contact PDS while you are in the process of completing the application to see whether that could be allowed. Depending on the funding source, PDS might be able to support your project, but only if you can demonstrate how the revenue generated will be used to support the larger objectives and explain that your organization will profit from the modest entrance fee.

See also “Guidelines for Budget Justification” under Section H below for more information on budget items.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Requesting the Application Package

All the mandatory application forms required below are available online at <https://rs.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants-programs/> and on Grants.gov. We do not send out hardcopy versions of the application packages.

2. 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.

Please ensure that:

- 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 formatted either to A4 or 8 ½ x 11 paper.

The following documents are **required**:

- a. **SF-424 (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)** if the applicant is an organization;
- b. **SF-424A (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*)** and
- c. **SF-424B (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*)** if the applicant is an organization whose registration in SAM.gov is still pending.
- d. **Grant Application Form for FY2022 (Fiscal Year 2022).** Note: Detailed directions for filling out the form may be found in Appendix A.
- e. **Budget Justification Narrative (Excel Spreadsheet):** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use the Excel spreadsheet template to describe and explain each of the budget expenses in detail. See *section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.
- f. **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 applicable.
 - 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.
 - If you still have not completed SAM.gov registration, a screenshot from SAM.gov reflecting that you have started the process.

Again, please do follow all the instructions in Appendix A when filling out the Application Form.

3. **Required Registrations:** Registration for a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), obtaining an NCAGE/CAGE code, and registering within the System for Award Management (www.SAM.gov) is not optional for organizations, i.e., it is mandatory.

Please be aware that SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Please be aware that if an applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#), the organization 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 listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

Again, all organizations applying for grants must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- Unique entity identifier (UEI) from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number, which is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

NCAGE application: Application page here:
<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:
<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20N SPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423
For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766
Email NCAGE@dliis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The registration process can take some time and past applicants have, in fact, run into difficulties. Please do not wait until the last minute to start the registration process. If in the end you are unable to complete the SAM registration by the application submission deadline, check the appropriate box in section “h” of the

application form after “SAM.gov Registration,” and attach a screenshot from SAM.gov as proof that you have started the registration process. Let us know as soon as you have completed your SAM registration. Until that step is complete, the review panel will not read or consider your application. If you are unable to finish the SAM registration process, we unfortunately will be unable to support your project.

4. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications are due February 1, 2022, at 15:00h

5. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to DemComSerbia@state.gov.

If PDS does not receive a complete project proposal at the above address by the deadline, it will be considered technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

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

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 Diplomacy Section (PDS), U.S. Embassy
Bulevar Kneza Aleksandra Karadjordjevica 92
11040 Belgrade

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

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

- **Quality of the project proposal.** The proposal is well-developed, clear, and innovative. It offers a creative approach and/or solutions to deal with the stated problem or challenge, focused on specific audiences or participants, with an approach that is likely to achieve results and have an impact. The application includes sufficient details that spell out exactly what the project activities will entail, and how and when elements will be carried out, with a reasonable implementation timeline and clear milestones provided. Appropriate partners, if applicable, have been identified and have agreed to take part in the activity. **(40 points)**
- **Organizational capacity and (if applicable) record on previous grants.** The individual or organization submitting this application has the qualifications, skills,

talent, drive, and/or demonstrated ability, perhaps with the assistance of an identified partner organization or contractor, to carry out the grant activities (outputs) with the participants, which will provide a good chance of achieving the goals and objectives laid out in the proposal. Applicant has sufficient internal controls in place to monitor activities, track spending, etc. If the applicant has received a grant (or grants) in the past from PDS or others, those were carried out in line with the project proposal[s], reports were filed in a timely manner, etc. **(20 points)**

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan.** The project has a clearly identified, S.M.A.R.T. objectives (in addition to outputs), with a good approach to measure the impact of the grant activity on target audiences and/or to bring about some change. (S.M.A.R.T. stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.) The proposal outlines in sufficient detail how activities will be monitored or tracked. The applicant also has a plan for how to measure or evaluate impact or results, giving the organization the ability to explain in a report or what has changed as a result of the project, where the project succeeded, where it might have fallen short, and to discuss lessons learned. **(15 points)**
- **Support of Underserved Communities.** The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the program will support and advance equity and engage underserved communities in program administration, design, and implementation. **(5 points)**
- **Budget.** The figures, narrative, and justification are complete and reasonable in relation 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. **(20 points)**
- **Potential for Multiplier Effect/Longer-term Impact/Sustainability.** The proposal includes a discussion of the follow-on impact of the funded activity even after the end of the program through the multiplier effect or through expected follow-on activities by the applicant and/or partners and/or primary or secondary audiences. **(Up to 10 points extra)**

2. Review and Selection Process

A grants review committee will evaluate all eligible applications. You may be asked to submit additional information and/or a revised budget. Please also be aware that, depending on the availability of funding, PAS might be able to fund only part of the budget you have requested.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

PDS anticipates that final funding decisions will be made by July 1, 2022. If more funding becomes available later in the fiscal year (which goes until September 30), however, we might be able to support additional projects even after that date.

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: PDS will discuss payment method and frequency with you before issuance of the award.

2. 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](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

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](#) (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).

3. 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.

The final report to PDS must be submitted no later than 120 days after the project end date.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

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

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the fees -- 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. Total fees for any staff

who might be engaged in the implementation or execution of the project (e.g., project manager, project assistant, accountant, etc.) cannot exceed 30% of the total project budget. Fees should be reasonable, in accordance with expected levels in the locality where the grant activity is taking place.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. Costs for international travel is not allowed.

Honorarium: Honorarium is limited to a maximum of \$250 per day. Compensation for time spent preparing for a presentation, workshop, or other activity, however, can be included in Personnel and Fringe Benefits, including hours spent in preparation based on a realistic hourly rate.

Equipment: The budget cannot include purchase of any equipment, which is defined by the USG as property costing \$5,000 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 items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, see entry for “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, such as rent, salaries for personnel not directly involved in the project, etc. 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. If you do this, you are obviously not allowed to include itemized indirect costs in your budget request.

Cost Sharing. The term “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.

Food and Beverages: Costs for food and other drinks cannot exceed 10% of the total amount of the award. This includes meals for organizers, experts, and participants during in country travel.

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

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