

Department of State
Public Notice

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Request for Statements of Interest: The Global Equality Fund: Programs to Protect the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Persons

SUMMARY

The Global Equality Fund, managed by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) announces a Request for Statements of Interest (SOIs) from civil society to protect the human rights of LGBT people. Launched in December 2011, the Global Equality Fund aims to support the work of civil society organizations working to protect and advance the human rights of LGBT persons globally. Partners of the Global Equality Fund include the governments of Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden as well as the Arcus Foundation, the John D. Evans Foundation, LLH: the Norwegian LGBT Organization, the M·A·C AIDS Fund, Deloitte, and USAID.

This solicitation is the first step in a two-part process. After reviewing SOIs, selected organizations will be invited to expand their ideas into full proposals at a later date. The intention of requesting SOIs first is to provide organizations with time to focus on submitting creative and new ideas to address human rights challenges facing LGBT persons and their advocates.

The Global Equality Fund is part of DRL's broader initiative to support at-risk and vulnerable populations, including women, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and religious minorities.

PLEASE NOTE: DRL strongly urges applicants to immediately access www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov in order to obtain a username and password. It may take up to a week to register with grants.gov. Please see the section entitled, "DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS" below for specific instructions.

REQUESTED STATEMENT OF INTEREST PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Global Equality Fund seeks to support programming ideas that will have a direct and lasting impact by promoting reforms and structural changes that take advantage of changing social and political dynamics.

The Fund invites organizations to submit Statements of Interest (SOIs) outlining program concepts and organizational capacity to manage programs that will protect and advance the human rights of LGBT persons. Statements of interests could focus on areas including, but not limited to:

- **Strengthening Legal Protection:** Objectives may include, but are not limited to, law and/or judicial system reform that enables LGBT persons to exercise their universal human rights; increased legal assistance for LGBT persons; equitable legal gender recognition for transgender persons; and strategic and positive engagement from regional and international human rights mechanisms.

- **Protection from violence, including sexual violence and hate crime, and combating impunity:** Objectives may include, but are not limited to, increased capacity to document violence targeting LGBT persons as well as investigation processes (or lack thereof); increased and proactive engagement from national authorities, including police and other law enforcement agencies, to prevent, mitigate, or respond to violence; increased protection, safety and support for LGBT persons and their advocates at-risk of violence or who have experienced violence; and establishment of or support to broad-based advocacy coalitions. Statements that address the specific needs of transgender persons, lesbians, and others who are particularly marginalized by violence are strongly encouraged.
- **Organizational Development and Capacity:** Objectives may include, but are not limited to, increased capacity of local or regional organizations to develop and implement strategic plans, work plans, budgets, communication strategies, risk assessments, security plans and increased capacity of organizations to mobilize community members and build constituencies.
- **Combating societal discrimination and negative social attitudes:** Objectives may include, but are not limited to, respectful media (new and traditional) reporting to increase awareness of LGBT persons and their human rights; increased acceptance and tolerance of LGBT persons from family members, employers and broader society; and positive action and engagement from faith communities in support of LGBT persons and their human rights.

Other objectives which support the broad goals reflected above may also be considered.

Organizations are welcome to either submit SOIs that include a range of objectives from those listed above or submit SOIs that focus exclusively on one objective area. As appropriate and relevant, SOIs are encouraged to include provisions on how they will develop institutional responses to security incidents and protection of staff and LGBT community members as activities are implemented.

SOIs from all geographic regions are welcome. When assessing the geographic and thematic scope of SOIs, organizations are strongly encouraged to consider where they have demonstrated expertise and existing relationships with local partners. SOIs that take advantage of existing opportunities for change in national contexts or respond to acute human rights violations or human rights backsliding are also encouraged.

Approximately \$3 million in funds are available for programs of the Global Equality Fund, pending funding availability. To support direct and indirect costs required for implementation, DRL anticipates making award amounts of \$100,000-\$500,000.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

An organization may submit no more than four (4) SOIs of two (2) pages each. SOIs that do not meet the requirements of the announcement may not be considered.

For all application documents, please ensure that:

- 1) All pages are numbered,
- 2) All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and

3) All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and with 1-inch margins.

SOIs must include:

- 1) Brief description of the organization, including the organization's mission statement and previous work advancing the human rights of LGBT persons. Due to page limitations, a general organizational history is not recommended. Information should clearly demonstrate an institution's record and capacity and may include previous grant management experience, whether funded through private or United States Government resources.
- 2) Description of how the project supports DRL's policy priorities and how the project is innovative, sustainable, and does not duplicate current efforts.
- 3) Project description, including project duration and objectives. Outputs and outcomes should also be provided. Outputs and outcomes should clearly link to project objectives and include target benchmarks.
- 4) Brief statement on the methodology to be used in the project evaluation.
- 5) An estimated budget figure. The budget should include intended Primarily Headquarters-Based Costs, Primarily-Field Based Costs, Indirect Costs, and Cost-Share. Please note that while a detailed budget is not requested at this time, organizations invited to submit full proposals must not exceed the estimated SOI budget figure.

All organizations must be registered on either www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov. Organizations that currently do not have a DUNS number or active CCR registration can still register on grantsolutions by:

1. On the grantsolutions homepage, click on "Login to GrantSolutions" on the upper right of the screen
2. On the login page, click "Register" under "First Time Users"
3. On the next page, click on "Continue the GrantSolutions registration process without a DUNS number".

All organization should be aware that if invited to submit a full proposal, all organizations must have an active DUNS and CCR registration. All organizations are strongly encouraged to begin this process of obtaining a DUNS number and an active CCR registration.

Organizations must also fill out and submit SF-424 and SF-424B forms as directed on www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov.

Please use the following guidelines for completing the SF-424:

- 1. Type of Submission: Application
- 2. Type of Application: New
- 5b. Federal Award Identifier: Please enter zeros or leave blank
- 8a. Please enter name of organization
- 8b. Please enter the organization's EIN or TIN number or leave blank for non-U.S. based organizations
- 8c. Please enter the organization's DUNS number (without dashes) or leave blank if you do not have a DUNS number yet. A DUNS number will be required when submitting a full proposal.
- 8d. Please enter the organization's address

- 8f. Please enter the name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the primary contact person for this SOI
- 9. Please select type of applicant from pull down list
- 11. The CFDA number is 19.345
- 12. Please enter the Funding Opportunity Number (similar to DRLA-DRLAQM-14-006) and Title (similar to The Global Equality Fund: Programs to Protect the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Persons).
- 15. Please enter descriptive title of project
- 16a. Please enter congressional district of applicant organization or leave blank for non-U.S. based organizations
- 16b. Please enter N/A or zeros
- 17. Please enter the approximate start and end dates of the proposed activities
- 18. Please enter the amount requested from the USG under “Federal,” any cost-share under “Applicant,” fill in the total, and otherwise use zeros.
- 19. Please enter “c”
- 20. Complete as indicated
- 21. Complete as indicated

Please fill in the following fields of the SF-424B:

Page 2 - Complete applicant organization and title of authorized official sections.

APPLICANT/ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

Organizations submitting SOIs must meet the following criteria:

- * Be a non-profit organization or an international organization; or
- * Be a university or research institution; or
- * Be a for-profit organization or business, although there are restrictions on payment of fees and/or profits to the prime recipient under grants and cooperative agreements.
- * Have demonstrated experience administering successful projects, preferably targeting the requested country and/or region, or a similarly challenging program environment. DRL reserves the right to request additional background information on organizations that do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards. These applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.
- * Have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with in-country entities and relevant stakeholders including industry and non-governmental organizations.
- * Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined SOI. However, one organization should be designated as the lead applicant.

REVIEW PROCESS

DRL and Partners of the Global Equality Fund will review all SOIs for eligibility. Eligible SOIs will be subject to compliance of Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the

Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Department's Grants Division.

DRL and Partners of the Global Equality Fund will solicit for full proposals based on an evaluation of how the SOI meets the solicitation review criteria. A State Department Review Committee will evaluate proposals submitted under this request. Applicants should be aware that Partners of the Global Equality Fund, which include USAID, like-minded governments and foundations listed above, may participate in the proposal review process. Standard review criteria include:

1) Quality of Program Idea

SOIs should be responsive to the solicitation and appropriate in the country/regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission of promoting human rights and democracy. The bureau prioritizes innovative, stand-alone programs. In countries where similar activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities.

2) Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

A strong SOI will include a clear articulation of how the proposed program activities contribute to the overall program objectives and demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable and achievable. SOIs should address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders and should demonstrate an institutional record of successful democracy and human rights programs within the context of the proposed program.

3) Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

SOIs should clearly delineate how elements of the program will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant (e.g. participants trained under a grant go on to train other people, workshop participants use skills from a workshop to address local concerns that are relevant to a wider national audience). A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project or garnering other donor support after DRL funding ceases.

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants must submit SOIs using www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov by **11:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Friday, January 10, 2014**. DRL will **not** accept SOIs submitted via email, the U.S. postal system, FedEx, UPS and similar delivery companies, or courier. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time.

No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps to post applications on www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov.

Direct all questions regarding www.grantsolutions.gov registration and submission to:

GrantSolutions Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 888-577-0771

Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 8AM – 6PM Eastern Standard Time

Email: help@grantsolutions.gov

Direct all questions regarding www.grants.gov registration and submission to:
Grants.gov Contact Center
Phone: 1-800-518-4726
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Email: support@grants.gov

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that SOIs have been received by www.grantsolutions.gov or www.grants.gov in their entirety. DRL bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The information contained in this solicitation is binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements.

This request for SOIs will appear on www.grants.gov, www.grantsolutions.gov, and DRL's website, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT

For questions related to SOI submissions please contact Jesse Bernstein at BernsteinJ@state.gov.

Once the SOI deadline has passed, U.S. Government officials - including those in the Bureau, the Department and at embassies/missions overseas - must not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.