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USAID'S JUSTICE MATTERS ACTIVITY
GRANTS COMPETITION JUSTICE MATTERS ACTIVITY-2020-002-GRANTS

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (REA)
CONTRACT NO.: 72016718C00002

Issuance Date: October 5, 2020

Submission Closing Date: October 26, 2020

Submission Location

Electronically: info@ncsc-ks.org

Physically: USAID's Justice Matters Activity
Andrea Gropa
98/1, 10000 Pristina
Kosovo.



Dear Applicants,

USAID's Justice Matters activity is seeking applications from qualified local Non-Governmental Organizations – NGO for projects that will focus on strengthening informed demand to improve legal literacy and empower citizens, especially vulnerable individuals and groups, by providing actionable legal information, leveraging existing information platforms, and activating a network of CSOs, grassroots organizations, and young people to deliver information. As a result of these interventions, citizens will have access to better information on their legal rights that is actionable enabling them to seek the enforcement of those rights within the justice system. In addition, through this RFA disadvantaged and marginalized groups will benefit integrated services that address their legal and non-legal needs through innovative ideas for free legal aid service delivery.

For the purposes of this program this RFA is being issued and consists of the following:

- Section I - Funding Opportunity Description;
- Section II - Award Information;
- Section III - Eligibility Information;
- Section IV - Application Review Information;
- Section V - Application Submission Information;
- Section VI - Attachments.

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

BACKGROUND/ INTRODUCTION:

Under its Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Kosovo has identified “Improved Rule of Law and Governance that Meet Citizen’s Needs” as its first Development Objective. USAID’s Justice Matters Activity, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) began in June 2018 and aims to improve access to justice for all, inclusive of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, by strengthening systems and services for legal aid and legal information. Justice Matters strengthens systems for legal aid service delivery, increases supply of quality legal aid services, and increased informed demand for legal aid through three inter-connected objectives:

- (1) Strengthen the Capacity of Kosovo’s Legal Aid System**
- (2) Enhance the Quality and Responsiveness of Legal Aid Services**
- (3) Strengthen Legal Literacy and Citizen Empowerment**

Justice Matters activity assistance for grantees is based on two thematic areas:

(1) Youth-led literacy initiatives targeting vulnerable communities

Anticipated results under this theme include:

- School based education activities for future “educators”;
- Local street actions and town halls facilitated by clinics students and high school students;



- Traveling students of Justice Matters legal clinics for legal information, advice, assistance with complaint drafting, etc.

(2) Informing data-driven Access to Justice

Anticipated results under this theme include:

- Data on understanding and measuring the accessibility of the legal aid system by vulnerable and marginalized communities;
- Data on how different communities are navigating the legal aid system (i.e the use of technology in navigating the legal aid system);
- Data on the responsiveness of the legal profession, and pro bono services.

Section II: Award Information

Proposed projects should last no less than three (3) months and no more than five (5) months. A total fund of up to \$40,000 is available under this RFA to fund projects of a value not to exceed \$20,000 for any individual project. USAID's Justice Matters activity intends to fund two (2) to four (4), including at least one (1) project for each thematic area. The activity reserves the right to fund none or all pre-selected applications.

Interested organizations are requested to submit a concept paper, together with a cost estimate and basic supporting application information within the specified deadlines in both hard copy and electronic copy. Annex A provides guidelines for preparation of the application. The application should be written in English, using Times New Roman font size 12. The concept paper shall not exceed four (4) pages, excluding the Authorized Annexes and cover page.

Justice Matters Activity will award two types of grants for each of two thematic areas: Medium-Scale Grants and Small-Scale Grants. Grant opportunities will be offered multiple times during the course of implementation of this program, this is the second and final call for grants under the program.

Medium-scale grants are expected to range from \$ 15,000 up to \$ 20,000, Small-scale grants are expected to range from \$ 1,000 up to \$ 6,000.

Services provided to the grantees:

- 1. Provision of Grants**
- 2. Training and Technical Assistance**

The Program shall provide training and technical assistance to Grantees as needed to ensure the successful implementation of the grant, the use of appropriate methodologies, effective monitoring and evaluation, and sound financial management. The scope and manner of training and technical assistance will be defined in the Grant Agreement and tailored to the needs of the Grantees.

Please refer to the following annexes to this RFA for additional information and instructions:

- Annex A - Concept Paper Guideline
- Annex B - About Justice Matters Activity
- Annex C – Selection Criteria and Process
- Annex D – Grants Frequently Asked Questions



Section III: Eligibility Information

Eligibility: Justice Matters activity will issue grants to organizations that are legally registered and recognized under the laws of Kosovo and not prohibited from receiving USG funding.

Applicants are required to register for a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

To be eligible for funding, an organization must:

- Have a valid registration to operate in Kosovo.
- Have an established track record of successful work in areas related to the goals of the Program.
- Refrain from activities that violate applicable U.S. laws, directly or indirectly.

In selecting Program for grants funding, the Program will pay particular attention to the following criteria:

- The organization has the capacity to receive and administer funding.
- The organization has the capacity to operate without the grant.
- The organization has a track record of successful work in implementing advocacy, monitoring, and/or public education activities.
- The proposed program is unique, creative, likely to yield impact, and sustainable.
- The proposed program does not duplicate programs previously or currently implemented in Kosovo.
- Activities that partner local organizations with government agencies or offices (including FLAA, Legal Aid Council, etc.) in a public-private partnership are strongly encouraged.
- Joint activities (consortium) of different civil society organizations and partnership with law firms are looked upon favorably.

To be eligible, an applicant must:

- Show proof of a valid registration under the Kosovo Law on Freedom of Association in Non-Governmental Organizations;
- Show proof of a valid bank account at a bank in Kosovo;
- Demonstrate it is in good standing with Tax Administration of Kosovo; and
- Provide DUNS Number (if you do not have one, Justice Matters can assist you to obtain one).

Section IV: Application Review Information

Grants will be awarded on the basis of a competition in response to a published RFA and a two-step RFA procedure will be used:

- (1) Submission of a concept paper, together with a cost estimate and basic supporting application information.
- (2) Applicants submitting a successful concept paper will be invited to submit a detailed application for a potential grant.

Evaluation of applications submitted during the open grant competition round will proceed as follows:

1. Justice Matters activity issues a RFA.
2. Justice Matters activity organizes an Applicants' Conference.



3. The Program receives concept papers and basic supporting application information, including, but not limited to, information enabling the Justice Matters activity to vet the organization on the Special Designated Nationals (SDN) List.
4. The Justice Matters activity conducts initial evaluation of submissions (administrative and organizational compliance, eligibility, vetting on the SDN List).
5. The Justice Matters activity vets applicants using the SDN List.
6. Eligible organizations are invited to submit full proposals within the prescribed deadlines. Proposals will include necessary supplementary information, including the accounting questionnaire.
7. The Justice Matters activity reviews the accounting questionnaires and other financial data submitted and evaluates financial management capacity of applicant organizations.
8. The Justice Matters activity works with applicants to finalize all aspects of proposals (programmatic, financial, etc.).
9. The Justice Matters activity announces awards/non-awards.

Pre-award application capacity review: All applicants that meet the eligibility criteria will undergo a pre-award capacity review. The purpose of the review is to ascertain whether the applicant has the administrative and managerial capacity required to carry out the proposed activities in a competent, accountable, and transparent manner. The capacity review will be comprised of interviews and documentation reviews, preferably at the applicant's premises.

Applicants' Conference

Following the publication of a grant opportunity and prior to the submission of the concept paper, the Program will hold an Information' Conference or pre-application conference to answer questions that interested persons may have regarding the RFA and the application process. To be eligible to participate in the Applicants' Conference, an interested person must have previously obtained a copy of the Application Form and must have expressed an interest in the Grants Program by completing a brief form identifying the organization, and its director, business address, and phone or email contact information of its authorized representative. This form may be completed at the time of picking up the copy of the Application Form or at any time before the Applicants' Conference. The completed form should be submitted electronically at: info@ncsc-ks.org. The time and location of the Conference will be communicated to interested applicants via email or telephone. Due to COVID-19 measures, the Conference is most likely to be held virtually,

Section VI: Application Submission Information

The Concept Paper must be submitted in both hard copy and electronic copy at the following addresses within the deadline for submission. No applications will be accepted after the closure time and date. Failure to submit both hard copy and electronic copy within the deadline will result in immediate disqualification.

Three (3) hard copies of the Concept Paper must be submitted by four (4) o'clock in the afternoon on **October 26, 2020** to:

Attention: Justice Matters activity-2020-002-Grants
USAID's Justice Matters Activity
Andrea Gropa, 98/1, 10000 Pristina



Kosovo.

One (1) electronic copy must be submitted by email by four (4) o'clock in the afternoon on **October 26, 2020** with "Justice Matters activity -2020-002-Grants" as the subject line at info@ncsc-ks.org.

Notice: The following conditions apply:

- a. Concept papers that do not contain basic information required under Annex A will be immediately rejected.
- b. Concept papers that do not contain the reference number for this call for RFA will be immediately rejected.
- c. Any kinds of persuasion and phone call will be treated as disqualification for participating in the NGO selection process.
- d. Concept papers must be submitted in English, using Times New Roman font 12.

This call for RFA will not result in immediate grant awards. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full Project Application by further notification followed by a bidders' conference.



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ANNEX A. CONCEPT PAPER GUIDELINES

The Concept paper must be written in English using Times New Roman font size 12.

1. COVER PAGE (MAXIMUM 1 PAGE)

The cover page must include the following information:

- Project title
- Thematic area as specified in RFA (e.g., Youth-led literacy initiatives targeting vulnerable communities; etc.)
- Geographic area (e.g., Municipality or village)
- Duration of proposed project
- Short description of proposed project in two-three sentences
- Applicant information including name, postal address, telephone, fax, and website (as applicable)
- Contact person information including name, postal address, telephone, fax, and email (as applicable)

See page 3 for a template.

B. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (MAXIMUM 4 PAGES)

1. Information on the Applicant (MAXIMUM 1 PAGE)

- a. Legal status (registration and affiliation with government agencies)
- b. Vision, Mission, Goal and Objectives of the organisation; organisation's constitution/structure (including number of staff)
- c. Main working areas and experience, including RFA-related projects carried out in the past 3 to 5 years (in Annex D, please include the three most relevant project with their name, budget, funding agency, duration, and a short description of the types of services provided and impact)

2. Context and Background (MAXIMUM 1 PAGE)

- a. Core problem/issue that the project will address
- b. Context and background to the core problem
 - Analyse the current situation including socio-political dynamics etc. (including women, ethnic minorities, low-income citizens, LGBTIQ community and other socially-excluded groups) as relevant to the core problem;
 - Explain how proposed project implementation contributes to sustainably addressing the core problem;

3. Concept Note (MAXIMUM 2 PAGES)



- a. Project goal, objective(s), and output(s);
- b. Expected outcomes and anticipated changes;
- c. Implementation strategy and activities;
- d. Involvement of other stakeholders (national and local government, civil society/community-based organisations, Universities, Free Legal Aid Agency, Lawyers etc.);
- e. Project target groups; target size and how they will benefit;
- f. Location of the project (and rationale for selecting these locations);
- g. Project time frame;
- h. Sustainability;
- i. Gender interpretation on the proposed project;
- j. If relevant, please explain how your organization plans to work in partnership with key stakeholders (government/beneficiaries) and/or to build capacity of community-based/civil society organizations in order to maximize quality and outreach with your proposed project;

C. AUTHORIZED ANNEXES

The following Annexes are required. No additional annex may be submitted. Annexes are not counted in the page limitation for the RFA. Applicants can submit their forms for the following annexes.

Annex A – Copy of current and valid registration

Annex B – Audit reports for the last three (3) years

Annex C – Summary Budget (MAXIMUM 1 PAGE)

Applicants should include a tentative budget, by budget category (staffing, equipment, administration, training, monitoring, project activities, etc.) The budget summary should be presented in a manner that highlights the total funds expected from Justice Matters activity and any contribution from the organisation (projects which propose contribution viewed favourably).

Annex D – Past Performance (MAXIMUM 1 PAGE)

Applicants should include the name, budget, funding agency (with contact information), duration, and a short description of the types of services provided and impact for up to three (3) projects that show relevant working areas and experience of the Applicant.



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Concept paper for Justice Matters Activity Funding

Project Title: _____

Thematic Area:

Geographic Area:

Duration:

Short Description:

Submitted by

Name of Organisation:

Postal Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Website:

Contact Person

Name:

Designation:

Telephone:

Email:



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OD AMERIČKOG NARODA



JUSTICE MATTERS ACTIVITY

The Justice Matters Activity is a three-year project working in improving access to justice for all, inclusive of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, by strengthening the institutions, actors, and processes for providing legal aid services and legal information. The Justice Matters Activity is aiming to achieve three main objectives:

STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF KOSOVO'S LEGAL AID SYSTEM

The Justice Matters Activity is focusing on strengthening the capacity of the Kosovo's legal aid system in a manner that is holistic and sustainable. Our interventions are improving financial management, developing the institutional capacity of the Legal Aid Council and Free Legal Aid Agency (FLAA), enabling legal aid provider accreditation and mobilization, and facilitating inter-institutional coordination.

ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF LEGAL AID SERVICES

The Justice Matters Activity is improving the supply of legal aid services by enhancing their availability, quality, and responsiveness to the justice needs of communities. Our interventions are developing a coordinated needs assessment methodology; integrating legal aid work into law school curriculum through live clinics; increasing access to services across Kosovo; and increasing the professionalism of legal aid practitioners.

STRENGTHEN LEGAL LITERACY AND CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

The Justice Matters Activity is increasing informed demand for legal aid services by improving legal literacy and empowering citizens, especially those from vulnerable groups. Interventions are providing actionable legal information to communities and vulnerable groups, leveraging existing informational platforms and activating a network of civil society organizations (CSOs), grassroots organizations, and

young people to deliver information. In addition, our interventions are supporting coalition building to conduct effective budget advocacy on behalf of the legal aid system.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The first two years of activity implementation have featured the following achievements:

- The number of low-income and marginalized communities who received *legal aid or victim's assistance increased 64%* through the support to First Response Hubs established in partnership with local CSOs.
- Increased legal literacy through *79 advocacy and outreach initiatives*, in a variety of in-person, online and television mediums, such as information sessions with low income citizens, women, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and LGBTI communities, television programming addressing marginalized communities, online videos highlighting students' engagement in community, promoting pro-bono culture among lawyers etc.
- FLAA regional offices trained to address emerging trends and needs in legal aid, training needs for legal officers, case intake guidelines, and online service provision during COVID-19 office closures.
- FLAA financial personnel mentored and trained in needs-based budgeting for the Agency's annual budget request to the Ministry of Finance. Budget mentoring and training has resulted in a *20% increase* in budget allocation to the Agency.
- 4 CSO grantees developed and disseminated outreach and advocacy materials targeting vulnerable communities, including the *development of mobile apps* to connect women and the LGBTI communities to legal information and resources remotely.
- 302 students took part in live legal clinics at universities in Kosovo that included standardized curricula, site visits to justice institutions and legal education outreach events, all emphasizing practical skills for legal professionals as well as exposure to legal aid career paths. *40% of these clinic students participated in Justice Matters organized outreach or legal assistance events.*
- *98.6% of legal aid recipients reported satisfaction* with services and support received from the FLAA and legal officers.
- *71 interns* placed in a broad range of partner organizations including with Equal Rights for All Coalition (ERAC) CSO member organizations, FLAA regional offices, the KBA, the Ombudsperson Institution, partner universities and with the Justice Matters Activity Office.

Partner: National Center for State Courts.

Project Duration: June 2018 - June 2021

Contact: Perihane Ustaibo-Ymeri

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ANNEX C. SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

This RFA is governed by the following evaluation criteria, in decreasing order of importance:

1. EOI PRE-SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Relevance of the proposed project (50%)
2. Mission, structure, human and technical capacity, and geographic reach of the applicant (25%)
3. Likelihood of impact (15%)
4. Cost reasonableness (10%)

2. FULL APPLICATION SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Soundness and relevance of proposed project to goals of the RFA (30%)
2. Relevant technical expertise and past performance in outreach, legal literacy, and community sensitization or legal aid service delivery (20%)
3. Relevant organizational structure and mission, including organizational human network and geographic reach (15%)
4. Measurability of impact and likelihood of successful outcome for target beneficiaries (15%)
5. Integration of pro-marginalized and pro-vulnerable approaches (10%)
6. Cost reasonableness, including external contributions (10%)

3. SCORING SCALE

Applications shall be reviewed on a scoring scale of 1 to 5 using the following standards:

- 5 = meets or exceeds all requirements;
- 4 = meets all requirements,
- 3 = meets most requirements,
- 2 = meets few requirements; and
- 1 = meets no requirements

4. SELECTION PROCESS

Applications under this RFA will be vetted through the following process and estimated timeline. Timeframes are indicative and do not represent a commitment of the Program to fund any submitted applications. Grant award is contingent upon receipt of USAID approval. Disbursement of grant funds is contingent upon completion of all formalities with the NGO Affairs Bureau.

Action	Deadline set on/around
Justice Matters activity issues a RFA.	October 5, 2020.
Justice Matters activity organizes an Applicants’ Conference.	October 8- October 12, 2020.
The Program receives concept papers and basic supporting application information, including, but not limited to, information enabling the Justice Matters	October 19, 2020.

activity to vet the organization on the Special Designated Nationals (SDN) List.	
The Justice Matters activity conducts initial evaluation of submissions (administrative and organizational compliance, eligibility, vetting on the SDN List).	October 20 - October 21, 2020.
The Justice Matters activity vets applicants using the SDN List.	October 22, 2020.
Eligible organizations are invited to submit full proposals within the prescribed deadlines. Proposals will include necessary supplementary information, including the accounting questionnaire.	October 22, 2020.
The Justice Matters activity reviews the accounting questionnaires and other financial data submitted and evaluates financial management capacity of applicant organizations.	October 26-27, 2020.
The Justice Matters activity works with applicants to finalize all aspects of proposals (programmatic, financial, etc.).	October 27- November 6, 2020.
The Justice Matters activity announces awards/non-awards.	November 9, 2020.



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ANNEX D. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who is funding the Justice Matters activity Grants Program?
2. What are the eligibility criteria for Justice Matters activity Grants funding?
3. How do I apply for Justice Matters Grants funding?
4. What if I cannot complete my project as agreed in the Grant Agreement?
5. If I receive a grant from the Justice Matters activity Grants program, will I have to undergo a financial audit?
6. What are examples of what I can and cannot ask for in the budget?
7. Can I receive other donor funding for my proposed activity?
8. Who is eligible for Justice Matters activity Grants funding – individuals, companies, or NGO's?
9. Is cost-sharing by the applicant required?
10. What happens if the applicant doesn't incur the full amount of cost-sharing included in the application budget?

1. Who is funding the Justice Matters activity Grants Program?

The Justice Matters activity Grants Program is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Kosovo. Approximately \$120,000 in grant funds may be distributed through the Justice Matters activity Grants Program, subject to the availability of funds and USAID or Justice Matters activity decision. USAID and the Justice Matters activity retain the right to terminate any grant or grant activity unilaterally for any reason at any time.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for Justice Matters activity Grants funding?

Registered local organizations that have an established track record of successful work in areas related to the goals of this project will be eligible to submit proposals. Proposed projects should reflect new, innovative ideas that do not duplicate previously implemented projects in Kosovo. Justice Matters activity anticipates that the grants will be used to support Kosovo organizations working to improve access to justice, support the delivery of legal aid services and implement information, outreach, and sensitization campaigns. Full details about criteria can be found in Annex C under the Request for Applications.

3. How do I apply for a Justice Matters activity Grant?

Please visit USAID Kosovo website at <https://www.usaid.gov/kosovo> for open grants opportunities.

4. What if I cannot complete my project as agreed in the Grant Agreement?

If the Grantee does not fulfill the conditions outlined in the grant, the Justice Matters activity reserves the right to confiscate any equipment purchased under the grant and/or terminate the Grant Agreement after prior discussion with the Grantee. In extraordinary circumstances, and with strong justification from the Grantee, the Justice Matters activity may elect to extend the period of time for a project and a modification to the agreement will be signed by the Justice Matters Program and the Grantee. However, the period of any grant agreement cannot exceed five (5) months.



5. If I receive a grant from the Justice Matters activity Grants Program, will I have to undergo a financial audit?

Financial reports and expenditures for Justice Matters-funded projects will be reviewed regularly by the Grant Evaluation Committee. In addition, grantees agree to maintain their records for possible audit for a period of up to three years. As a matter of policy, the Justice Matters activity encourages organizations to commission annual external financial audits as evidence of sound financial management. In case a Grantee undergoes an external audit that includes a review of Justice Matters activity Grants funding, a copy of the final audit report should be forwarded to the Justice Matters activity.

6. What are examples of what I can and cannot ask for in the budget?

An organization's proposal may include only those items in the budget that are needed specifically to conduct the Justice Matters funded project (and not other routine activities of the applicant). Justice Matters activity **cannot**:

- Provide funding to active duty members of the military or police (this includes salaries, honorariums, transportation, lodging, funds for security service from the police, etc.).
- Pay honoraria or consulting fees for academics or professionals providing "intellectual products," such as expertise or acting as a facilitator or lecturer. We **cannot** provide any funding for salaries or honoraria for Kosovo government officials.
- Pay for an organization's routine operating costs, such as rent, electricity, overhead, telephone bills, etc. Justice Matters activity will only fund tasks and items associated with the particular Justice Matters activity project being carried out.
- Pay for any form of tax or value added tax associated with expenses incurred on the Justice Matters activity Grant project being carried out.
- Provide funding for construction costs.

Funding for staff salaries of an organization will be considered only for that portion of a staff person's time that is devoted exclusively to the Justice Matters funded project. The portion of each person's time listed in the budget must be specified (e.g. full-time, 20% of time, etc.)

7. Can I receive other donor funding for my proposed activity?

If other donor funding is agreed upon prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement, then details of the funds should be included in the proposal and financial statements. If, however, donor funding opportunities become possible after the signing of the Grant Agreement, then:

- a. All details must **be discussed with the Justice Matters Program** prior to the use of any such funds for activity on the Justice Matters activity-funded project, AND
- b. Such funding may be allowed if an increase in project output is expected and reasonable. The Grantee must demonstrate an ability to track each donors' funds separately and accurately.

10. Who is eligible for Justice Matters activity funding – individuals, companies, or NGOs?

Preference will be given to registered local organizations that have an established track record of successful work in areas related to the goals of this project will be eligible to submit proposals. NGOs should submit a copy of their registration.

11. Is cost-sharing by the applicant required?

No. However, cost-sharing by the applicant is **desirable** and will be looked up favorably in evaluating the proposed project. Such cost-sharing may be cash or in-kind contributions.



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12. What happens if the applicant doesn't incur the full amount of cost-sharing included in the application budget?

Failure to incur the full amount of cost-sharing included in the application budget will be note negatively in the performance record of the applicant and may impact future grant applications. In addition, the Justice Matters activity Program may adjust final payment to reflect the missing cost-share.