

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (MEPI)
LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Funding Opportunity Title: MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement

CFDA Number: 19.500

Date Opened: November 30, 2017

REVISED: December 4, 2017 **Please note revised items are highlighted in green.*

Key Information: Reference the [Country Specific Proposal Submission Instructions](#) for links to more specific priority areas and contacts to answer questions you have about applying to the MEPI Local Grants Program. Note that organizations may only apply to opportunities within the country that they operate, and each country has specific requirements and funding priority areas. Please review the submission instructions for your country of interest for more information.

Funding Opportunity Synopsis: The Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) announces the Annual Program statement for local grants. The Local Grants Program serves as MEPI's most direct means of supporting partnerships with and among the people of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), providing direct support to develop and promote innovative, locally driven solutions to problems, build and expand inclusive local networks, and help civil society organizations represent the needs of their citizens through collective action.

Eligible Countries and Territories: In this announcement, we seek to support projects in **Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.** *Please note: Applications that focus on countries and territories other than those discussed will not be considered.*

All applications must be submitted in English. *Applicants may submit only one application per country.*

Background Information about NEA/AC: The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the MENA region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with

governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

MEPI's mission is to empower partnerships between citizens, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and government institutions to promote common shared solutions for the people of the Middle East and North Africa. For more information about the MEPI Program visit: <https://mepi.state.gov/>.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Local Grants program seeks projects that build links between and among citizens, civil society, government, and the private sector, and are responsive to emerging opportunities at the local level in the region. The program supports projects that align with U.S. foreign policy goals and promotes U.S. interests in the region, enhancing stability and increasing prosperity across MENA.

These grants are designed to support two areas of the MEPI Strategic Framework:

- *Participatory Governance:* Enable civil society to effectively interact with government officials to increase responsiveness to citizen needs. Enhance citizens' ability to actively participate in their governments and develop a more informed citizenry. Enable government officials' engagement with, and responsiveness to, their citizens to resolve issues of shared concern.
- *Economic Reform:* Enable citizens, policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector with the skills and resources to provide economic opportunity, foster economic growth, and promote improved business enabling environments.

Problem Statement: The MENA region is dynamic with various political, economic and social challenges on the national and local levels. Today, nearly three-quarters of the region's population identifies worsening economic conditions as the single most important challenge facing their countries. Other major concerns include financial and administrative corruption, disenfranchised citizens and marginalized communities, large public sectors, limited opportunities for innovation, and high unemployment rates, especially of youth. Yet many people still believe that democracy is the most suitable political system for their countries despite recognizing that civil society in the region is fragile and not effectively engaged in decision-making or allocation of resources. Finally, gender inequalities persist despite recent gains in countering gender-based violence. Women have surpassed men in their educational attainment in many countries, yet their participation in the labor force remains two to four times lower than men, and their participation in political processes is the lowest in the world.

Key Objectives: Working primarily on the local level, and using an evidence-based approach, one of the following results will be achieved:

1. Develop and promote locally designed solutions to environmental, economic or social problems.
2. Foster inclusive economic growth that reaches marginalized communities, youth and women.

3. Encourage citizens' engagement in participatory governance and decision-makers' willingness to work with citizen groups and civil society organizations.
4. Work towards gender parity as primary and secondary focus.
5. Increase youth engagement in meaningful economic and civic activities.
6. Foster innovative approaches and solutions.
7. Increase civil society's representation of the needs of citizens through collective action on the local level.

Activities and Restrictions:

*Activities that typically are **NOT** considered competitive include:*

- Social welfare and health care projects;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns (e.g., specific political party activities);
- Agriculture;
- Polling/Surveying;
- Handicrafts;
- Scholarships and student exchange programs;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off roundtables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Cultural presentations, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
- Language training courses.

*Award funds absolutely may **NOT** be used for the following:*

- Cash awards/prizes;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Foreign travel, unless specifically justified within the project;
- Entertainment costs (receptions, social activities, alcoholic beverages, cocktail parties, guided tours);
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Costs related to renovation, remodeling, or purchase or lease of real-estate beyond usual office rent;
- Purchase of equipment (tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and is \$5,000 or more per unit); and
- Purchase of office décor.

Award Information:

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement, Grant, or Fixed Amount Award

Maximum Award Amount: \$250,000

Minimum Award Amount: \$50,000

Estimated Total Funds Available: \$7,000,000

Length of Project Period: 12-24 Months

We anticipate projects with a period of performance of 12 months to 24 months, but the project and budget periods can be extended if a longer time period would yield more significant or better results. The MEPI Program can award a grantee additional funding and extend the period of performance beyond the initial project and budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress, and the favorability of local conditions. The MEPI Program reserves the right to award less or more than the amounts described above according to the needs of the project as determined by the MEPI Program.

Awards are evaluated on a variety of criteria which are outlined in each [Country Specific Proposal Submission Instructions](#).

A MEPI Program committee at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate within each country or territory reviews all Local Grant Program proposals. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate in each country or territory will inform organizations if their proposals will or will not be shortlisted for further consideration. Only the most competitive proposals received by MEPI Program committees will be selected for further consideration by the MEPI Program's Regional Offices, which will process and negotiate the awards. The issuance of a grant award by a MEPI Regional Office is contingent on the availability of funds and the negotiation and finalization of an approved budget and award package.

The MEPI Program's Regional Offices located in the Middle East and North Africa manage the Local Grants Program. The Regional Office in Morocco or Kuwait will issue and administer the federal assistance awards.

Eligibility Information: A key objective of the Local Grants Program is developing the capacity of local CSOs to effectively and efficiently manage assistance. Eligible applicants include local organizations of civil society, non-profit organizations, community groups, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, private sector organizations, and universities based in **Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.**

Individuals are not eligible to apply to this announcement.

Location Requirement: Only organizations that have an established local office in the country or territory in which they propose to implement their project will be eligible to apply. Awards will be issued to the local office and not any partner or affiliate office that may be located outside of the country of implementation.

Collaborations and Partnerships: A strong preference will be given to MEPI Alumni and former grant recipients that have previously participated in a MEPI project. Alumni are defined as former participants of the exchange programs; or beneficiaries in previous MEPI training programs lasting more than 5 weeks; or previous recipients of MEPI local grants. For more information, please see the [Country Specific Proposal Submission Instructions](#).

Country Specific Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI): For further information on applying including the specific eligibility requirements, priority areas, and evaluation criteria, please refer to the [Country Specific Proposal Submission Instructions](#) that are linked below. Please note all applications must be submitted in English per U.S. Government regulations.

Applicant Registration: All applicants must have the following registrations:

1. **Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)** number;
2. **NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE)** code;
3. **System for Award Management (SAM.gov)**; and
4. **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**, if applicable.

Please apply for the D&B DUNS Number and NCAGE Code at the same time to reduce waiting time. The Legal Business Name and Address must MATCH EXACTLY when entering it into the D&B DUNS, NCAGE, SAM.gov, and IRS websites – this includes spaces, parentheses, capitalization, small letters, punctuation, etc. Self-registration in D&B DUNS, NCAGE, and SAM.gov is **free of charge**.

1. DUN & BRADSTREET (D&B) DUNS/UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI) NUMBER

The DUNS/UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

- (i) Log onto the D&B website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
- (ii) D&B will then require an Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) SIC Code. For US- based organizations/entities, to determine the type of industry which fits your business type please log onto: https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic_manual.html
 - i. *Some countries do have a local D&B office – please conduct research to learn of local D&B offices for technical assistance*

For assistance, contact D&B at the following web address: SAMHelp@dnb.com.
While acquiring the D&B DUNS/UEI Number, please register to receive an NCAGE Code Number with NCS at the same time. See instructions below.

2. NATO COMMERCIAL AND GOVERNMENT ENTITY (NCAGE) CODE

NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) codes are required for Commercial and Government Entities located outside the United States. NCAGE codes are assigned internationally as part of the NATO Codification System (NCS), and are required for all foreign

entities to create an account in SAM.gov. The Code is a five-character ID number, and can take, at a minimum, 4-5 business days to create.

Steps to register: *(Please use the Internet Explorer web browser)*

- (i) Foreign registrants must log into: CAGE Code Request at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>
- (ii) Once in the NATO Codification Tools website, scroll to the right-hand corner and click the “Magnifying Glass,” which will open a new page.
- (iii) Scroll down the right-hand side until you see “Request New,” click on this link and it will take you to the next page to apply for an NCAGE Code Number.
- (iv) When asked if the entity to be registered is a supranational organization please click “No” (if you are not part of a member state).
 - i. *Member states transcend national boundaries or interest to share in the decision-making across national boundaries which vote on issues pertaining to the wider group such as the European Union (EU) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). NATO nations Points of Contacts website: <http://www.nato.int/structur/AC/135/main/links/contacts.htm>*
- (v) Validate the newly assigned NCAGE Code via the Business Identification Number Cross-Reference System (BINCS) at https://www.dlis.dla.mil/bincs/begin_search.aspx.

If the assigned NCAGE is not listed in BINCS, the recipient should call 269-961-4623 or send a message to NCAGE@NSPA.NATO.INT.

For assistance by telephone, please call: 1-888-227-2423 (inside the U.S.) OR 1-269-961-7766 (outside the U.S.). E-mail NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in obtaining an NCAGE code.

3. SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM.gov): *(Please use either the Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox web browser)*

SAM is a U.S.-government wide registry of vendors doing business with the U.S. federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides them with a central location to change their organizational information. More information about SAM.gov and useful guides for setting up a new account, updating an existing account, or renewing an expired account can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/233461.pdf>.

Please complete ALL of the above steps before attempting to register in SAM.

- (i) Log onto <https://www.sam.gov>
- (ii) If you have had an active record in The Central Contractor Registration (CCR), you may already have an active record in SAM. To check for an active registration, please conduct a search for your record using the organization name and/or DUNS Number in SAM. If you are not registered, your organization or entity will not be found.
- (iii) *If your organization does not have an active registration, you must create a user account and input all information in the exact manner as you have for the IRS, D&B DUNS, and NCAGE.*

- (iv) Complete and submit the online form.
- (i) If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand ([see the SAM User Guide](#)), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

If you encounter any error, please contact the SAM Federal Service Desk to report problem at <https://www.fsd.gov/clients>. There is a standard (not toll free) number that customers can use 334-206-7828.

4. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS)

- (i) Determine if it is necessary to apply to acquire either a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), or an Employer Identification Number (EIN), via the IRS (EIN is for employers; TIN is for taxpayers).
- (ii) If you are located outside of the U.S. and do not pay employees within the U.S., you are not required to provide a TIN. Neither a federal TIN nor EIN are required in order to register with D&B. However, this IS a requirement to register in SAM.gov.
 - i. *If you are not required to provide a TIN, leave the TIN/EIN information blank when registering in SAM.gov.*

For more information, view the Internal Revenue Service - U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens: <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p519/index.html>.

For assistance by telephone, please call:

1-800-829-4933 *EIN Assistance and Business Tax Questions*
1-800-829-4059 *TTY/TDD*

For assistance outside the U.S., please call 267-941-1000, select Option #4, then, select Option #3. They are available Monday - Friday, 6:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time. This is not a toll-free phone number.

Funding Limitations, Restrictions, and Other Considerations

Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

Audit Requirements

Foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in Department of State federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (Program-specific Audit means an audit of one Federal award program. Single Audit means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf>

For sub-non-Federal entities expending \$750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organization's established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget.

Administration Information:

A. Reporting Requirements

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports and Quarterly Financial Reports. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award task or goal noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the Grants Officer.

B. Branding and Marking Requirements for Recipients

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to mark all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote to foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not

limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with the MEPI Program Regional Office when negotiating an award.

C. UEI Number Requirement for Sub-Awardees

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see the "Applicant Registration" section above. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

D. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable):

Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget Narrative greater than the 10% de minimis rate must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

E. Cost-Sharing

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the MEPI Local Grants Program encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB 2 CFR 200.306 - Cost Sharing and Matching.

F. Sub-Awardee Reporting Requirement

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsrs.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

G. 10% Withholding

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be subject to a 10% withholding of federal award funds until receipt of required final financial and programmatic reporting.

Please select the relevant hyperlink below for the Country Specific Proposal Submission Instructions that corresponds to your respective U.S. Embassy or Consulate:

Algeria: <https://dz.usembassy.gov/embassy/algers/sections-offices/mepi/>

Israel: <https://il.usembassy.gov/education-culture/middle-east-partnership-initiative-mepi/mepi-local-grants/>

Jordan:	https://jo.usembassy.gov/current-mepi-funding-opportunity-2/
Kuwait:	https://kw.usembassy.gov/education-culture/mepi/
Lebanon:	https://lb.usembassy.gov/education-culture/grants/
Morocco:	https://ma.usembassy.gov/education-culture/mepi/
Tunisia:	https://tn.usembassy.gov/coming-soon-2018-middle-east-partnership-initiative-mepi-local-grants-program-tunisia/ .
West Bank/Gaza:	https://jru.usconsulate.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/mepi/?_ga=1.107424650.924874379.1398320305
Yemen:	https://mepi.state.gov/funding-opportunities/apply-for-a-grant/

Disclaimer

The information published in this APS is binding and may not be modified by any MEPI Program representative. Explanatory information provided by the MEPI Program that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of an APS and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government. The MEPI Program reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this APS.