



U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)
Local Grants Program
<http://mepi.state.gov/>

**Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)
for Applications to the 2018 MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement published on
November 30, 2017**

U.S. Embassy Amman

PLEASE REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT WHEN PREPARING AN APPLICATION

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Local Grants Overview

The Office of Assistance Coordination's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Program seeks single-country proposals for its Local Grants Program. The Local Grants Program serves as the MEPI Program's most direct means of supporting organizations in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Local Grants Program seeks projects that build links among citizens, civil society, government, and the private sector in response to emerging opportunities. The Local Grants 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 North Africa and the Middle East.

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.

The MEPI Program's Regional Offices, located in the Middle East and North Africa, manage the Local Grants Program. Applications are reviewed and evaluated on the criteria outlined within these Proposal Submission Instructions. For this PSI, U.S. Embassy Amman seeks to support projects that will contribute to the following Key Objective areas identified by the MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement (APS), published November 30, 2017 under CFDA number 19.500:

Objective 1: Develop and promote locally-designed solutions to locally identified environmental, economic or social problems.

Objective 2: Foster inclusive economic growth that reaches marginalized communities, youth and women.

Objective 4: Work towards gender parity as primary and secondary focus.

Objective 7: Increase civil society's representation of the needs of citizens through collective action on the local level.

The specific project focus areas that this PSI seeks to support are outlined in the section below.

U.S. Embassy Amman Priority Areas

In addition to the overarching objectives identified above, U.S. Embassy Amman has identified

specific project priority areas as outlined below, and sets forth the following guidance for applicants:

Problem Statement:

Jordan has made significant legislative progress in recent years; as with legislative reform anywhere in the world, the next challenge is to see these laws implemented so all Jordanians can benefit. Jordan's Parliament passed a new juvenile justice law in 2014 that prioritizes alternatives to detention and diversion from the legal system, adopting a rehabilitative approach for youth in conflict with the law. However, reports indicate that for the law to be maximally effective at reducing vulnerability and incarceration of youth, further expansion of service center locations throughout the country, as well as specialized training on techniques and approaches to working with children in emergencies, will be needed. A landmark package of judicial reforms passed in 2017 commits to minimizing pretrial detention and establishing alternative penalties for adults. Also in 2017, Parliament passed legislation that explicitly prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and calls for their inclusion into all areas of life. Amendments to Jordan's domestic violence law in 2017 aim to expedite case processing, improve settlement mechanisms, and create alternative penalties. Despite such positive legal reform, more work is needed to ensure that women in communities throughout Jordan may fully benefit from such reform, as women are more likely than men (26 percent versus 17 percent) to avoid court due to financial and social norm constraints. Further, according to the Justice Center for Legal Aid, nearly 70 percent of requests for legal aid assistance come from women. In addition to advancements in domestic violence and personal status law, Jordan's Cabinet issued flexible work bylaws in 2017 in an effort to boost female participation in the workforce. While rates of education among women in Jordan are relatively high, employment rates continue to fall much lower. This moment presents opportunities for civil society to pilot projects in their communities that could later be scaled up to a national level, and to develop strategic partnerships with government institutions to assist in addressing implementation challenges.

Project Priorities:

We seek proposals addressing the need for successful implementation of legal reform in three focus areas:

(A) juvenile justice; (B) women's rights; and (C) rights of people with disabilities.

In particular, we seek projects that will support one of the following priorities:

- A. **Implement juvenile justice reforms** through the establishment of alternative sentencing and expansion of services for at-risk youth, including a focus on employment and economic empowerment, community engagement, and the provision of psychosocial support (Objective 1, 2 and 7);
- B. **Advance women's rights** by promoting employment and entrepreneurship and combating labor discrimination, or preventing domestic violence and addressing cases of abuse through education and partnerships with law enforcement (Objective 2 and 4);
- C. **Increase labor opportunities for disabled people** through expanded accessibility and improved workplace integration (Objective 2 and 7).

Applicants should illustrate in their proposals how their approach to targeting one of the above project-specific objectives (A, B, or C) will contribute to at least one of the MEPI Key Objectives (1, 24, and 7) referenced above.

Project success may be measured by evidence of implementation of legal reforms at the local level, at a minimum. Through these instructions, U.S. Embassy Amman seeks to support initiatives

that have the potential to develop best practices to be replicated more broadly, improving implementation.

Geographic Focus:

Project beneficiaries should be located in either:

(a) Southern Jordan (Aqaba, Ma'an, Tafilah, and Karak governorates)

(b) East Amman and Central Badia (Amman governorate)

These areas were chosen based on the relative scarcity of resources and services available, and priorities for Post outreach. Projects for other governorates may be submitted, but will not receive priority.

Previous MEPI Connections:

MEPI Alumni are encouraged to apply, and should note their MEPI connection on the application, as per APS instructions. We also welcome new partners.

Deadlines and Other Information

Proposals must be submitted to U.S. Embassy Amman no later than midnight, local time, on February 15, 2018. (The initial deadline of January 15 has been extended.)

Please use the email subject line "MEPI Local Grant Application for Jordan: Objective #" For example: "MEPI Local Grant Application for Jordan: Objective B" for a project on preventing domestic violence.

Completed applications with all relevant attachments should be emailed to U.S. Embassy Amman at MEPIAmman@state.gov.

For further inquiries, applicants may contact the U.S. Embassy Amman MEPI Office at: +962 6 590 6892.

Eligibility

Applicants should have prior experience working in Jordan on the issues their projects address. For detailed information on the eligibility for the MEPI Local Grants Program, please reference the Annual Program Statement (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=299178>)

Required Registrations

As detailed in the MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement, all organizations must have active registrations of the following:

- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
- NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code
- System for Award Management (SAM)

Per U.S. law, valid and active registration in the relevant systems is a requirement to receive grant funds.

For detailed information on registering for the MEPI Local Grants Program, please visit the following link(<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=mepi%2520local>)

Application Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the project narrative and budget templates provided in the APS. If an organization chooses not to use the provided template, documents submitted still must capture all the requested information outlined in the template and clearly label each section for clarity.

Complete applications must include the following:

1. Project Narrative (not to exceed ten [10] pages in Microsoft Word). Project narratives should articulate a logical relationship between proposed activities and desired outcomes – presenting the cause and effect “chain of results” that a project hopes to achieve.

Please note the ten page limit does not include the other required application documents, including Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF file.

2. Detailed Line-Item Budget and Narrative (preferably in Microsoft Excel): Includes three [3] columns including the request to MEPI, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see Budget Template for more information on budget format). A summary budget should also be included using the OMB approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample). **Costs must be in U.S. dollars.** Detailed line-item budgets for sub-grantees should be included in additional tabs within the excel workbook. The budget template includes a section which allows for substantive explanations and justifications for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, MEPI recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the SF-424A. Personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff, base salary, and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should provide additional information that might not be readily apparent in the detailed-line item budget, not simply repeat what is represented numerically in the budget, i.e. salaries are for salaries or travel is for travel. A line item budget template and additional budget guidance is provided with the APS.

3. Roles and responsibilities of key project personnel (2 pages maximum): Please include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.

4. References: Full names and contact information (email, phone) of beneficiaries or partners involved in a project your organization conducted within the past two years, whom we might contact to ask about your work.

5. MEPI Alumni Status Form: Please complete the MEPI Alumni Status Summary template, which is provided along with all other recommended templates and guidance with the APS.

6. Forms: Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A, and SF424B; completed and signed SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (if applicable). See APS for more details.

7. Audit: Your organization’s most recent financial audit statement (A-133 audit or 2 CFR 200 Part F, if applicable, or standard audit). See APS for more details.

Optional Additional Materials

Additional optional attachments may include timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding/agreement, etc. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the project implementation (e.g., from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

8. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as an Adobe PDF file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by program and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding and does not count towards the page limit. If your proposal involves sub-awards to organizations charging indirect costs, please also submit the applicable NICRA as an Adobe PDF file.

Please note: The MEPI Program may request additional documents not included in this PSI should your project be considered for funding.

Additional information that successful applicants must submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- 1) Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the MEPI Selection Committee;
- 2) Submission of required documents to register in any applicable U.S. government grant systems, if receiving MEPI Program funding for the first time, unless an exemption is provided;
- 3) Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award.

All submissions must be submitted in English.

We regret that we cannot consider proposals in Arabic.

Submitting an Application

To submit your application, please follow the steps below:

1. **Review the completed application documents** (Application for Federal Assistance Form (SF-424), Project Narrative, Budget, Budget Narrative, and Budget Information Forms (SF-424A)) for accuracy and make any necessary changes, making sure you have all required materials. **Please note: A signature is required on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).**
2. **All application materials must be in English and all costs must be in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language,**

an English translation must be provided. For any documents provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version. (Please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents.)

3. **Send all documents via email to U.S. Embassy Amman at MEPIAmman@state.gov.** The application materials must be submitted electronically by the designated due date and time noted in these Instructions (page 5). It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all materials submitted in the grant application package are complete, accurate, and current. The MEPI Program strongly encourages all applicants to submit their materials before the designated due date to ensure that the application has been received and is complete.

Award Notices

Applicants who do not advance to the Technical Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

MEPI expects to notify applicants about the status of their application by April 30, 2018. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. **MEPI reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.**

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from U.S. Embassy Amman.

Proposal Review Criteria

Applications should address the evaluation criteria outlined below. Selection Committee members will evaluate each application against the following criteria, totaling in 100 possible points:

Approach & Responsiveness to Priority Areas (25 points)

- Proposal addresses one of the three objectives outline in these instructions (Option A, B, or C).
- Project activities target one of the two priority geographic regions.
- Approach is clearly outlined and takes into account the unique context of the country.
- Approach is innovative and realistic, and takes into account other previous or ongoing efforts so as to not be duplicative.
- Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners have been identified, applicants should include letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Applicants who propose specific partners but do not provide letters of support may lose points. If

applicable, the specific roles of any subawardees should be defined.

Project Design & Achievable Objectives (25 points)

- Proposal provides a clear articulation of how proposed activities will contribute to the project objectives AND in turn will also contribute to overall MEPI Key Objectives (1, 2, 3, 4, 7).
- Activities are clearly developed and detailed, including estimated timeframe.
- Proposal clearly explains how activities will achieve desired results, and the overall project design is realistic in terms of feasibility and expectations.
- Proposal includes an articulation of a theory of change or logic model to demonstrate how the project will achieve desired impact.
- Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable, results-focused and achievable in a reasonable time frame.
- Project beneficiaries are clearly defined, and selection criteria for identifying specific beneficiaries are provided if applicable.
- In particularly challenging operating environments, applications should include contingency plans for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan and address any operational or programmatic security concerns and how they will be addressed.

Institution's Record and Capacity (25 points)

- Proposal demonstrates that applicant meets the eligibility requirements stated in these instructions regarding time period in operation and previous funding thresholds.
- Proposal includes examples of successful past programming that illustrate responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants.
- Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives.

Cost Effectiveness (15 points)

- Budget indicates reasonable cost estimates based on local standard rates.
- All costs are clearly defined in terms of purpose, as well as detail indicating how amounts have been calculated. Budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate its necessity, its appropriateness, and its link to the project objectives and activities.
- Project design takes into account opportunities for cost-savings, and budget does not include expenses that are not essential to effective project implementation.

Please note: While cost-share is NOT a requirement, MEPI does encourage applicants to leverage organizational and/or other external resources where possible. If cost-sharing is included in the budget, the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-sharing, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, the MEPI Program's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

MEPI Alumni Status (10 points)

MEPI Alumni are encouraged to apply, but we also welcome new partners. Applicants may qualify for preference based on the status of at least one individual at the organization.

MEPI Alumni are defined as:

- a) former participants of the exchange programs;
- b) beneficiaries in previous MEPI training programs lasting more than 5 weeks;
- c) or individuals who have held a leadership role supporting MEPI programming at an organization that has received a previous MEPI grant.

Additional Information

The MEPI Program will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization or armed actors.

Applicants should be aware that the MEPI Program understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that the MEPI Program cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.