

Active Communities Project Request for Applications (RFA) on Women's Leadership Grant Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

FHI 360 is seeking applications for funding from prospective grantees to support initiatives aimed at developing the capacity of elected Local Council female officials in local politics and community life. The grants will be issued under the Active Communities (AC) Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Issuance date:

May 12, 2022

Closing date:

June 02, 2022

Closing time:

18:00 Bishkek Time

Applicant profile: Registered civil society organizations (CSOs) with proven experience in the area of promoting women's active engagement in political processes and decision-making at the national and local levels.

Number of grants: Maximum two grant awards

Duration: 12-18 months (August, 2022 – February, 2024)

Grant award amounts: Total amount of this RFA is up to 8,500,000 Kyrgyz Som (KGS). The funding amount per grant will depend on number of grants awarded, types of activities and geographical coverage.

DISCLAIMER

The applicant shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its application. The AC Project is hereby informing potential applicants that this RFA is not a contract or financial obligation by the AC Project to the parties that respond to this solicitation. The AC Project reserves the right to cancel the entire process without any obligation to inform the applicants of the reason for its actions.

THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) IS THE EXCLUSIVE, CONFIDENTIAL, AND PROPRIETARY PROPERTY OF FAMILY HEALTH INTERNATIONAL (FHI 360). IT MAY NOT BE COPIED, TRANSMITTED, OR DISCLOSED BY ANY MEANS WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN CONSENT OF FHI 360. BY ACCEPTING A COPY HEREOF, THE RECIPIENT AGREES TO USE THE RFA (AND ANY RELATED DOCUMENTS) SOLELY FOR RESPONDING TO THIS RFA AND DESTROY THE RFA (AND ANY RELATED DOCUMENTS) UPON YOUR DECISION NOT TO RESPOND TO THIS RFA.

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

This RFA is part of the AC Project, a five-year initiative funded by USAID and implemented by FHI 360 and its main partners - the Ferghana Valley Lawyers Without Borders (FVLWB) and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL).

The overall goal of the AC Project is to enable interaction and collaboration of individuals and organizations to advocate for and bring about change across issues that resonate with local communities and increase government responsiveness and accountability in Kyrgyzstan. The AC Project achieves these goals by designing and implementing programming relating to the following major sub-purposes (SP):

- SP 1:** Improved collaboration between civic, government and private sector actors to address issues of local concern including linkages between diverse actors with common goals.
- SP 2:** Increased access of networks to financial, human, and intellectual assets.
- SP 3:** Applied ongoing learning and adaptation for more effective civic participation that resonates with people, particularly at the local level.
- SP 4:** Strengthen citizens' understanding of their rights and increase demand for rule of law.

PURPOSE OF RFA

This grant aims to strengthen women's participation and representation in public life, with a focus on municipal governance and the role of women's leadership, especially as Local Council members (Deputies), and their collaboration across municipalities and districts. This support will also focus substantively on the AC Project's priority areas linked to waste management, GBV reduction, access to justice and civic engagement more broadly. The AC Project plans to select two CSOs, one each from the northern and southern regions of Kyrgyzstan to work in 20 AC Project's selected municipalities located throughout the country.

While formal legal and institutional barriers to female leadership in Kyrgyzstan are gradually being reduced, informal barriers remain strong. Traditional gender roles dominate many facets of contemporary Kyrgyzstani society, limiting women's access to decision-making processes in the public sphere. A window of opportunity to address these limitations is provided by the August 2019 law mandating 30% women's representation in Local Councils. The elected Local Council female officials, some of whom have benefitted from this quota, have expressed a need for strengthened knowledge, skills and confidence related to their roles as elected officials. Especially in rural areas, women face restrictive social norms that undermine their access to decision making and weaken self-confidence. Without adequate systematic support, the elected Local Council female officials struggle on an ad hoc basis to fill gaps in their knowledge and abilities, taking up valuable time in their attempting to perform their public duties effectively and confidently over their four-year terms.

The AC Project's target municipalities:

Potential candidates are expected to outline their project activities based on the region (s) they choose from the list of AC's target coverage area below.

#	Region (Oblast)	District (Rayon)	Local Self Government (LSG)
South Region			
1	Osh	Uzgen	Akjar
2			Kurshab
3		Nookat	Kara Tash
4	Batken		Isfana
5		Leilek	Toguz Bulak
6			Sumbula
7	Jalal Abad	Suzak	Yrys
8			Kok Jangak town
North Region			
9	Chui	Sokuluk	Kyzyl tuu
10		Kemin	Orlovka town
11		Tokmok	Burana
12	Issyk Kul	Ton	Ton
13			Tort Kul
14	Talas	Kara-Buura	Bakiyan
15			Kara-Suu
16		Talas	Talas
17	Naryn	At-Bashy	Ak-Moiun
18			Ak-Muz
19		Naryn	Uchkun
20		Kochkor	Kochkor

PROGRAM DESIGN ELEMENTS

Project Description

Applicants should submit an outline of the proposed goals, objectives, activities, timeline and geographical coverage of municipalities for their individual grant projects based on the table provided in this RFA. The sequence of activities should be clear as should be the timing of each main activity. Applicants must use the application template attached to this RFA. Other templates will not be accepted.

Areas of Intervention and Illustrative Activities

The following areas are illustrative of potential activities under this grant. Cutting across each of these activities is the need for the applicant to integrate their strategies within the broader AC program, especially the focus on waste management, GBV reduction, access to justice, and civic engagement more generally. This integration will ensure that opportunities for synergies and mutually strengthening activities are identified and optimized for results. In addition, applicants able to take into account the participation of men in various institutional settings in advancing women's participation will be viewed favorably. Innovative methods for achieving specific and measurable leadership results are also welcome.

Area 1: Support women’s leadership with a focus on Local Council representatives (Deputies).

Illustrative activities:

1.1. Develop and implement a training curriculum with related pedagogical tools for Local Council male and female elected Local Council members (Deputies) in all 20 AC selected project municipalities. **Content may include, but not limited to:**

- Legal environment, including constitutional amendments, legislative reforms affecting public administration and Local Self- Government (LSG) bodies, and any relevant regulatory changes.
- LSG procedures, including public hearings on budgets, tariffs, local development programs and regulatory reform. The LSG procedures should include a component on gender-responsive budgeting and budget literacy, effective approaches to interaction and partnership among state bodies and the relationship between LSGs and local communities.
- Tools to conduct gender analysis of local strategic development documents and incorporate gender equality social inclusion principles into local strategic documents and gender-responsive budget development.

Area 2: Contribute to improving the positive image of women’s leadership and participation in public life at national and local levels.

Illustrative activities may include, but not limited to:

- 2.1 Support/provide consultations to Local Council female elected officials to lead the process of incorporating into Social Economic Development Programs and action plans prioritized public initiatives in cooperation with existing initiative groups, as well as non-government organizations (NGOs/CSOs):
- 2.2 Organize experience exchange visits to other municipalities where similar local public initiatives were successfully resolved in compliance with all legislation requirements.

Area 3: Facilitate coordination and cooperation between NGO/CSOs, Local Council members and female members of legislative bodies both at the local and national levels, in key areas of legislation related to women’s political participation and gender equality.

Illustrative activities may include, but not limited to:

- 3.1 Provide capacity building (i.e., training, mentorship, building dialogue) for Local Council female elected officials and NGO/CSOs on new models of lobbying mechanisms. Engage local council elected officials in a discussion on legislation related to women’s political participation, GBV/DV issues, gender equality, the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2030 and the National Action Plan (2022-2024) and advocacy activities.
- 3.2 Through a mentorship program, support Local Council female elected officials to build communication and cooperation with the Women Members of the Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) and learn the procedures of advocacy and lobbying processes at the national level.

Funding

The AC Project will award up to two grants for the implementation of activities within the above-mentioned areas of intervention. Total amount of this RFA is up to 8,500,000 Kyrgyz Som (KGS). The funding amount per grant will depend on number of grants awarded, types of activities and

geographical coverage. The expected period of performance is from August, 2022 - February, 2024.

The grant to be awarded under this RFA will be a standard grant. Under this grant funding, FHI 360 will reimburse costs incurred by a grantee for implementing project related activities to achieve the planned objectives. To receive this grant, the grant recipient procures its own goods and services, as well as manages implementation of all grant activities. The grant recipient also must demonstrate adequate and established systems and processes to manage procurement.



Grant Type

Standard



Grant Duration

12-18 months



Number of Grants

Maximum 2 grants



Grant Amount

Depending on number of awarded grants, proposed activities, and geographical coverage

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Applicants must be registered as a CSO in accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Applicant must have at least three years of experience working in the area of promoting women’s leadership and their active participation in politics and decision-making processes.
- Applicant must have experience cooperating with key institutions contributing to women’s political participation through their work activities;
- Applicant must have at least three years of experience in conducting trainings on such topics as women’s leadership, gender-responsive budgeting and gender analysis;
- The applicant’s current statute and mission are in line with AC objectives and the purpose of this grants program.

Only applicants that meet the eligibility criteria and submit a complete application and budget in the specified format will be considered. Organizations may not submit more than one application.

The grant application includes the following documents:

- **Application Form** with attachments (see the Application Form for more details)
 - Copy of the Registration Certificate
 - Copy of the Organization’s Statute
 - Obtain Unique Entity ID (UEI), if not yet received*

** All entities need a unique identifier (UEI) for federal awards processes. Since April 4, 2022, that identifier is changing from the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number to the Unique Entity ID (SAM), issued by SAM.gov. If the applicant already has a DUNS number, it should be included in their application. In addition, applicants will be expected to get a UEI*

using their existing DUNS number before an award is made or newly obtain UEI if earlier did not get a DUNS number. FHI 360 will assist successful applicants with this process. Learn more about the transition from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (SAM).

- **Budget Table and Budget Narrative:** The Applicant's cost proposal shall include a detailed budget table and budget notes. The detailed budget table should include a complete breakdown of the cost/price elements associated with each line item. The budget shall include costs or prices of labor, travel or transportation, and other direct costs related to various implemented activities. The budget notes should justify these expenses in terms of the reasonableness of the cost and the relevance to project activities. All project expenses should be detailed in Kyrgyz Som (KGS). Please note that project budgets should reflect the full implementation period (August, 2022 – February, 2024). **If selected, Applicants will be expected to provide supporting documentation for all proposed salaries, consultant rates, any rent and any budgeted items that are not common market goods.**
- **Optional documentation:** other material such as brochures, research reports, samples of publications and results of past programs are welcome.

FHI 360 may request additional information related to the application.

EVALUATION PROCESS.

All interested applicants that meet the eligibility criteria above are invited to submit an application responding to the requirements, terms and conditions, and evaluation criteria of this RFA, in English, Kyrgyz or Russian. Applicants must use the provided Application Form and Budget template for submission along with required attachments as indicated in the Application Form by June 02, 2022 (18:00 Bishkek Time).

Upon receipt, the AC Project will review all applications for conformity to project eligibility and evaluation criteria described in the table below. Incomplete or late applications will be considered non-responsive and ineligible for consideration. Applications are confidential and will be treated as such.

An independent Selection/Review Committee, consisting of independent experts, representatives of AC Project and/or other donors active in Kyrgyzstan, will be created to review the applications. The following criteria will be used to evaluate each application. The number of points assigned to each criterion represents its weight in the evaluation process.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Technical Approach	
<p>Project Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed activities are consistent with the goals of the grants program. The application includes sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The application provides a reasonable timeline for the implementation of activities. Proposed activities are likely to produce measurable results. The application includes sufficient detail about how the implementer will establish cooperation with other CSOs and government stakeholders. The grant project will establish a practice or approach that can be replicated by other groups or institutions. The proposed activities will reach a significant number of elected local council women officials. 	40 points
<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How likely is it that the benefits of the project and/or its activities will continue after the period of performance of the grant? 	15 points
<p>Organizations' Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has sufficient capacity to manage the project/grant and to achieve the goals of the Developing the Capacity of Local Council Female Elected Officials in Local Politics and Community Life Initiative. The applicant has sufficient staff (full-time, part-time, associates) and /or volunteers to complete the proposed activities. The applicant has sufficient skills, expertise, and experience to implement the proposed activities. Experience in promoting the gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches/policies at the local level, especially for members of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, youth, and others. Applicant has demonstrated ability to reach a broad range of stakeholders at national, regional, and local levels. Experience cooperating with LSG bodies in GBV, gender-responsive budgeting etc. 	30 points
<p>Budget (see additional budget requirements below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost Effectiveness (costs have been reasonably set in the budget and are the most economical amount to allow achieving the project objectives). Budget summary, detailed budget and budget notes included. Proposed costs reflect a clear understanding of the requirements stated in this RFA; Proposed prices are reasonable in comparison with prices with the independent cost estimate. Proposed planned costs ensure optimal delivery of the proposed activities. A detailed line-item budget, budget narrative and supporting documentation that clearly describe how the budgeted amounts are calculated must support the applicant's budget. 	15 points

TOTAL**100 points**

Pre-Award Requirements

The Review Committee-recommended finalists to implement the project will be required to pass a pre-award assessment process in order to receive funding. All final selections will be contingent upon USAID approval.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications may be submitted in English, Kyrgyz or Russian **electronically** by email (with scanned attachments of all required forms and materials stated in the Application Form) to: info.dlcpa@fhi360.org

All applications must be submitted by June 02, 2022. FHI 360/AC will send a confirmation email after receiving applications.

Note: The English language version of the RFA will be the controlling version. English will be the controlling language of any grants and any supporting award documents.

Bidders' Conference

A Bidders' Conference will be organized by FHI 360 and conducted online on May 17, 2022 at 14:00, where bidders will be instructed regarding the project, budget details, support offered and application requirements and Q&A session. Prospective applicants should confirm their participation by sending an email to info.dlcpa@fhi360.org by May 16, 2022 at 18:00. The link to virtual participation is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81158491417?pwd=cjFtdzNvWkp6R2c1UU16UXp5REdMZz09>

Meeting ID: 811 5849 1417

Passcode: 393939

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As a USAID-funded project, AC is required to follow the provisions of the United States Foreign Assistance Act and other United States Government laws and regulations. For non-U.S. organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Grantees will apply. 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 will also apply to any sub-awards under this award. It is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments.

For non-U.S. organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Grantees, and the applicable cost principles (2 CFR 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles) will apply.

- 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles:
<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1.5&rgn=div6>
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Grantees:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

A. Activities that will not be considered for funding

- Activities related to the promotion of specific political parties;

- Reconstruction or building rehabilitation projects that are not accompanied by plans for wide community use and maintenance;
- Distribution of emergency/humanitarian assistance or funds;
- Religious events or activities that promote a particular faith;
- For-profit business activities that benefit a small select group, rather than providing increased opportunities to the larger community;
- Unrelated operational expenses.

B. Prohibited Goods and Services

Under no circumstances shall the recipient procure any of the following under this award, as these items are excluded by the Foreign Assistance Act and other legislation which govern USAID funding:

- Military equipment;
- Surveillance equipment;
- Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities;
- Abortion equipment and services;
- Luxury goods and gambling equipment;
- Weather modification equipment.

C. Restricted Goods

The following costs are restricted by USAID (primarily due to higher-level restrictions imposed by U.S. regulatory bodies or through specific legislation) and require prior approval from FHI 360 and USAID:

- Agricultural commodities;
- Motor vehicles;
- Pharmaceuticals;
- Pesticides;
- Fertilizer;
- Used equipment; and
- U.S. Government-owned excess property.

D. Grant Agreement

A standard grant agreement will include the approved final project description, reporting requirements and relevant provisions. Once executed it is a legally binding agreement between FHI 360 and the recipient CSO. Once the grant agreement is signed, it cannot be modified without prior written approval from FHI 360.

E. Grant Disbursement and Financial Management

Recipients of funds under this grant will need to open a separate bank account before any funds are transferred from FHI 360. The grants will be disbursed in KGS and transferred only through bank transactions.

F. Reporting

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the grant agreement. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will be provided.

DISCLAIMERS

1. FHI 360 may cancel this solicitation and not award.
2. FHI 360 may reject any or all responses received.
3. Issuance of solicitation does not constitute award commitment by FHI 360.
4. FHI 360 will not compensate offeror for responses to solicitation.

5. FHI 360 reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow solicitation instructions.
6. FHI 360 may choose to award only part of the activities in the solicitation, or issue multiple awards based on the solicitation's activities.
7. FHI 360 reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.
8. FHI 360 will be contacting all offerors to confirm the contact person, address, and that a bid was submitted for this solicitation.
9. FHI 360 also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received without explanation.
10. FHI 360 has the right to issue amendments to the RFA at any time.

Withdrawals of Proposals

Applicant may withdraw proposals by written notice via email received at any time before award. Proposals may be withdrawn in person by an applicant or his/her authorized representative if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the proposal before award.

Right to Select/Reject

FHI 360 reserves the right to select and negotiate with those organization it determines, in its sole discretion, to be qualified for competitive proposals and to terminate negotiations without incurring any liability. FHI 360 also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received without explanation.

RFA Not an Offer

This RFA represents only a definition of requirements. It is merely an invitation for submission of proposals and does not legally obligate FHI 360 to accept any of the submitted proposals in whole or in part, nor is FHI 360 obligated to select the lowest priced proposal. FHI 360 has no contractual obligations with any organization based upon issuance of this RFA. It is not an offer to award. Only the execution of a written agreement shall obligate FHI 360 in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such agreement.

Discussions and Award

FHI 360 reserves the right to seek clarifications, enter into discussions or negotiations, or to make award on initial submissions without discussions or negotiations of any kind. FHI 360 reserves the right to exclude from further consideration any proposal at any time, including after discussions or negotiations have been entered into.

Pre-Award (Due diligence)

FHI 360 reserves the right to conduct pre-award review of the selected applicant before making a final decision to award.

Proposal Validity Date

All information submitted in connection with this RFA will be valid for three (3) months from the RFA due date. This includes, but is not limited to, cost, pricing, terms and conditions, service levels, and all other information. If your organization is awarded the contract, all information in the RFA and negotiation process is contractually binding.

Offer Verification

FHI 360 may contact organizations to confirm contact person, address, bid amount and to confirm that the bid was submitted for this solicitation.

False Statements in Offer

Applicant must provide full, accurate and complete information as required by this solicitation and its attachments. At any time that FHI 360 determines that an applicant has provide false statements in the proposal, FHI 360 may reject the proposal without further consideration.