

Fall 2015

**Notification of Funds Available to USAID Missions
FY15 DISABILITY FUNDING
Public Announcement**

I. Purpose Statement

The Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG), within the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is inviting all interested USAID Missions to apply for FY15 Disability Funding to:

- Increase the participation of people with disabilities in USAID programs/activities; and
- Strengthen the capacity and leadership of civil society organizations run by and for people with disabilities; herein referred to as Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs).

Approximately \$6 million in funding is available for this Mission-wide, competitive program.

Projects may be stand-alone, targeted programs to benefit persons with disabilities, or they can be projects/activities that seek to mainstream persons with disabilities within larger Mission programs. Projects should reflect the most pressing needs in the country and/or align with the Mission's development priorities. Specific areas of programming may vary based on local needs and priorities. All proposals must be guided by the values and provisions set forth by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

All awards (grants or cooperative agreements) under this request for concept papers will be administered through and managed by Missions. Funding will be provided from USAID/Washington to Missions for this purpose and they are responsible for all obligation requirements, award management and project oversight. Please note this announcement is NOT a USAID/Washington issued Annual Program Statement (APS) or Request for Proposals (RFA). Rather USAID Missions have been informed that these funds are available should they wish to participate in applying for them.

Qualified organizations interested in this funding opportunity should contact their local USAID field Mission for more information on this program. Mission contact information can be found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work> or <http://www.usaid.gov/mission-directory>

II. Background

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 15% of any population has some form of disability, with a higher incidence of disability in countries that are post conflict or affected by natural disasters. The prevalence of disability is expected to rise in coming years due

Fall 2015

to an ageing global population and an increase in chronic health conditions. Of the estimated 1 billion people throughout the world with a disability, 80% live in less resourced nations.

People with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty. Women and girls with disabilities often experience heightened discrimination on account of gender and disability. Due to stigma, discrimination and inaccessibility, people with disabilities are less likely to access basic services such as education, employment and healthcare. The lack of access to vital services and programs contributes to their marginalization and exclusion, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Societies that are inclusive of their diverse populations are more likely to be democratic, participatory and equitable. They are more likely to meet their development goals. In spite of this, and although disability is a cross-cutting development issue, people with disabilities often remain invisible in the global development agenda.

USAID's [Disability Policy](#) states that USAID will not discriminate against people with disabilities and will work to ensure the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in USAID-funded programs and activities. To this end, USAID has mainstreamed disability in several of its key policies and sector strategies, such as the Education Strategy (2011), Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012) and Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (2013).

The USAID Disability Policy also calls on Missions to reach out to partners, host country counterparts and other donors to lead a collaborative effort to end discrimination against and promote equal opportunity for people with disabilities. In response, several USAID Missions have addressed disability in their Country Development Cooperation Strategies.

Disability rights are human rights. As noted in the Agency's Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance: "... a deliberate human rights lens should be applied across USAID's portfolio to ensure that the Agency's programs are not inadvertently contributing to marginalization or inequality. By using a human rights lens, potential beneficiaries who are most at risk of having their rights neglected or abused – such as LGBT persons, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples – will be better recognized and included in USAID programming."

In July 2009, the U.S. signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affirming its commitment to the human rights of people with disabilities around the world. To date, most of the countries in which USAID operates have also signed and ratified the Convention signaling a global movement towards the full realization of the rights of people with disabilities and their role in the international development community.

Fall 2015

For more information about USAID and Disability Inclusive Development, visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/protecting-human-rights/disability>

III. Areas of Interest

USAID/Washington seeks applications for projects that integrate people with disabilities in USAID Mission programs and strengthen the capacity and leadership of DPOs.

Projects may be stand-alone, targeted efforts to benefit persons with disabilities, or they can be projects that seek to mainstream persons with disabilities within larger Mission programs. Projects should reflect the most pressing needs in the country and/or align with the Mission's development priorities. Interested organizations are encouraged to engage in dialogue with their local Missions to learn of Mission priorities. In addition, organizations may also access copies of Mission Country Development Cooperation Strategies, which outline strategic development objectives, via the www.usaid.gov and Mission websites.

Specific areas of programming may vary based on local needs and priorities. All proposals must be guided by the values and provisions set forth by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Projects that address the needs of marginalized groups, such as women and girls, individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, those with developmental or psychosocial disabilities, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) community are encouraged. All programs, regardless of implementing partner, must verify significant involvement of men and women with disabilities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Illustrative areas for Disability Funding support include, but are not limited to:

1. Increase participation of people with disabilities in new or existing USAID programs

Examples:

- Promote the participation of people with disabilities in democratic processes and elections as voters and political candidates
- Improve national laws and policies to better reflect international human rights standards
- Support disabled people's organizations, human rights institutions and national bodies to respond to disability rights needs and to monitor implementation of legal frameworks
- Promote quality, inclusive education for learners with disabilities
- Integrate youth and adults with disabilities in the competitive workforce

2. Strengthen and Support Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs)

Examples:

Fall 2015

- Improve the organizational capacity, financial management, human/material resources, strategic planning, fundraising, leadership and coordination of DPOs.
- Support the development and/or strengthening of national and regional cross-disability networks and coalitions.
- Support linkages between DPOs and local women's groups, human rights institutions and mainstream NGOs.
- Support the establishment and/or strengthening of consumer-controlled disability resource centers (often referred to as "Independent Living Centers" in the U.S.) that promote the full independence and participation of people with disabilities in society.

IV. Review Criteria:

USAID/Washington will review applications based on the following criteria:

1. **Represents a pressing need in country and/or demonstrates a clear linkage with USAID Mission priorities:** The proposed project responds to a pressing need in country that has yet to be adequately addressed; and/or demonstrates a clear linkage with an existing Mission initiative.
2. **Sound technical approach and likely to contribute to sustainable and institutional change:** The proposed project demonstrates a sound technical approach based on promising practices, lessons learned and/or international standards in the relevant project area; and demonstrates how and to what extent it will contribute to sustainable and institutional change either at the person-level or country-level. The project goes beyond addressing the symptom of a problem and seeks to identify and mitigate the root causes of inequality and persistent exclusion.
3. **Substantial involvement of and direct benefit to persons with disabilities:** The proposed project demonstrates meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The overall direct benefit to individuals with disabilities and disabled people's organizations offers the best value for the amount of funding requested.
4. **Thoughtful integration of gender equality and women's empowerment:** The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment must be thoughtfully integrated into the main objectives, activities, and monitoring and evaluation plans of all applications, in accordance with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy and USAID ADS 205. If the application is successful, gender considerations must likewise be integrated into the resulting program design.
5. **Sound monitoring, evaluation and opportunities for learning:** The proposed project includes relevant and meaningful indicators to measure success in meeting the stated objectives, and realistic targets. At the very least, 3-5 illustrative indicators should be provided. The proposed project should also demonstrate how project learning will be captured and shared with a broad audience, including USAID.

Fall 2015

In addition to the criteria above, applications will also be reviewed for geographic diversity and meeting the Congressional intent of the Disability funds.

V. Activities and Programs Excluded

The following activities and programs will **not** be considered for funding:

- Programs with a significant budget for infrastructure or construction activities
- Programs focused on the provision of assistive devices or physical rehabilitation (note, other funding sources have been established for this purpose).
- Programs supporting institutionalization of or segregated, residential institutions for children or adults with disabilities
- Employment programs promoting sheltered workshops or income generating activities that perpetuate negative stereotypes of people with disabilities and that do not provide for meaningful employment
- Programs with a primary focus on awareness raising

In addition, due to the availability of significant funding through PEPFAR, the DCHA/DRG disability funding may not be used to support HIV/AIDS-related activities.

VI. Available Funds

Subject to the availability of funds, the total estimated level of funding available for awards under this **worldwide** request is approximately \$6,000,000 over a 12-36 month period.

DCHA/DRG may fund individual programs in two categories:

1. Small fund programs ranging from \$20,000 to \$300,000 (up to \$4.2 million); and
2. Large fund programs ranging from \$300,000 - \$600,000 (up to \$1.8 million)

NOTE. As per 2015 Appropriation's language, at least \$1,500,000 of available funding is recommended for the development, support, and strengthening of sports programs for people with disabilities in developing countries; and at least \$1,500,000 to support capacity building of DPOs in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

VII. Proposal Limit

USAID Missions are limited to the submission of up to two (2) small fund proposals (\$20,000 - \$300,000) and one (1) large fund proposal (\$300,000 - \$600,000).

VIII. Applicant Eligibility

Applications should be from qualified U.S. or non-U.S. entities, such as private, non-profit organizations (or for-profit companies willing to forego profits), including private voluntary organizations, universities, research organizations, professional associations, and relevant special interest associations. **Local DPOs are strongly encouraged to apply.**

Fall 2015

Mainstream (non-DPO) organizations applying for funds must include in their application letter(s) of signed support from local DPOs they intend to partner with for the purpose of the project.

Partners new to USAID may submit applications. However, awards to these organizations may be significantly delayed if USAID must undertake necessary pre-award reviews of these organizations. Organizations should take this into account and plan their implementation dates and activities accordingly.

Participation in this program is at the sole discretion of individual country Missions. To that end, please contact the relevant USAID Mission to understand specific eligibility requirements.

USAID will not accept applications from individuals. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. PIOs are not eligible to apply for funding under this program.

IX. Mission Eligibility

All USAID Missions are eligible under this funding program. However, participation is optional and therefore, interested organizations should contact their local Mission prior to submitting applications to verify their participation. Please note, DCHA/DRG in Washington does not keep a list of participating Missions. It is incumbent upon organizations to reach out to Missions directly.

X. The Process

A. General Guidance

USAID Missions have been informed that this funding is available to implement programs inclusive of people with disabilities. Interested and qualified organizations must apply for this funding directly through their local Missions. In rare cases where proposed programs are to take place in more than one country, organizations may choose to submit their application to regional or technical bureaus or offices in Washington.

- 1. Contact local Mission (or relevant bureau/office)** – interested organizations should contact their local Mission or the Mission representative who is responsible for managing activities in the proposed country to assess interest and ability to participate in this funding opportunity. The same process is recommended in rare cases where proposed projects are to take place in more than one country; in this case, applicants should contact the relevant Washington-based technical or regional bureau/office.
- 2. Submitting applications** - Organizations should follow appropriate Mission instructions for application submission. Please note it may take Missions one month or more to review applications before forwarding them to DCHA/DRG in Washington. Please allow

Fall 2015

adequate time and submit your application early, well in advance of the DCHA/DRG Washington deadline listed below. Applications submitted after this deadline may not be considered.

- 3. Review Process** –Missions will conduct the first review based on their established procedures. Selected applications will be forwarded to DCHA/DRG Washington for further review. Final determinations will be communicated to applicants by the local Mission.

B. Submission Deadlines

The deadline for Missions to submit applications to DCHA/DRG in Washington is no later than **February 26, 2016. Applications must be submitted by USAID Missions only. DCHA/DRG will NOT accept applications submitted directly by organizations.** Missions will establish their own internal deadline to receive applications under this call. Prospective applicants must check with their local USAID Mission to verify additional deadlines and plan accordingly.

C. Application Format

Applicants must utilize the required application format provided in **Attachment A - Required Application Format** below. Be sure to complete all information requested on the application form. The 10-page limit must be respected. The cover page, annexes to the budget and letters of cooperation between the Applicant and other partners are not subject to the page limit.

XI. Reporting Requirements

Reporting on the project is required. The exact format for, preparation of, and timing for submission of all reports will be determined by the Mission. Recipients will be required to report on standard indicators required by Washington and additional indicators as determined by Missions. Though not required, Recipients are encouraged to submit photographs, success stories and/or other media as part of their progress reports.

Attachments:

Attachment A - Required Application Format