

Department of State
Public Notice

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Request for Statements of Interest: The Global Equality Fund: Programs to Promote and Protect the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons.

I. Requested Statements of Interest Objectives

The Global Equality Fund (GEF), managed by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) announces a Request for Statements of Interest (SOIs) from civil society to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTI persons. LGBTI persons face violence and discrimination in all regions. Violence targeting any vulnerable group undermines collective security. This request is seeking creative and new ideas to address violence and discrimination targeting LGBTI persons, which undermine society's collective security, and programs that provide LGBTI communities with the tools to prevent, mitigate and recover from violence.

The GEF supports civil society organizations working to protect and advance the human rights of LGBTI persons globally. Partners of the Global Equality Fund include the governments of Argentina, Australia, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Uruguay, as well as the Arcus Foundation, the John D. Evans Foundation, FRI: the Norwegian Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity, the M·A·C AIDS Fund, Deloitte LLP, the Royal Bank of Canada, Hilton Worldwide, Bloomberg LP, Human Rights Campaign, Out Leadership, and USAID.

Programs supported by the GEF are part of DRL's overall marginalized populations program, which aims to support the human rights of persons with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, women and girls, LGBTI persons and other marginalized groups.

PLEASE NOTE: DRL strongly encourages applicants to immediately access www.grantsolutions.gov or www.grants.gov in order to obtain a username and password. **GrantSolutions.gov is highly recommended for all submissions and is DRL's preferred system for receiving applications.** To register with GrantSolutions.gov for the first time, Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions for Statements of Interest at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>.

The submission of a SOI is the first step in a two-part process. Applicants must first submit a SOI, which is a concise, 3-page concept note designed to clearly communicate a program idea and its objectives before the development of a full proposal application. The purpose of the SOI process is to allow applicants the opportunity to submit program ideas for DRL to evaluate prior to requiring the development of full proposal applications. Upon review of eligible SOIs, DRL will invite selected applicants to expand their ideas into full proposal applications.

REQUESTED STATEMENT OF INTEREST PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Approximately \$2 million in funds are available for programs of the Global Equality Fund, pending funding availability. To support direct and indirect costs required for implementation, DRL anticipates making award amounts of \$250,000 - \$500,000.

The Global Equality Fund invites organizations to submit SOIs outlining program concepts and organizational capacity to manage programs that will protect and advance the human rights of LGBTI persons. Applicants may submit no more than one (1) SOI. SOIs may address one focus area only, or may respond to a combination of focus areas. SOI focus areas, include, but are not limited to:

- **Freedom from Violence:** Individuals, organizations and communities are safe and secure from all forms of violence, including threats, intimidation, harassment, abuse, sexual violence, and psychological or physical harm.

Objectives may include, but are not limited to: increased capacity to document and advocate against violence and other violations of human rights targeting LGBTI persons, as well as investigation processes (or lack thereof); increased and proactive engagement from national authorities, including police and other law enforcement agencies, to prevent, mitigate, or respond to violence against LGBTI persons; increased protection, safety and support for LGBTI persons and their advocates at-risk of violence or who have experienced violence, including sexual violence and hate crimes; and, establishment of or support to broad-based advocacy coalitions.

- **Access to Justice:** The human rights of LGBTI people are acknowledged and protected through inclusive and affirming laws and policies, which are fairly and consistently implemented and enforced.

Objectives may include, but are not limited to: increased political and public will for legal and policy reform; improved capacity of judicial officials, lawyers and CSOs to leverage existing domestic and international legal frameworks to advance the human rights of LGBTI persons; increased efforts by government to repeal, reform and replace discriminatory legislation and policy and develop inclusive legislation and policies; and increased access to secure and culturally competent legal services.

- **Social Inclusion:** The LGBTI community is included in economic and human development equally with other members of society particularly as a means to reduce violence and discrimination.

Objectives may include, but are not limited to, increased acceptance and tolerance of LGBTI persons from family members, employers, community leaders and broader society; reduced discrimination against and exclusion of transgender and LGBTI persons in access to employment, housing, education, family and relationship-based legal protections; improved access to work and efforts to reduce discrimination in the workplace for LGBTI persons; increased respectful and accurate media (new and traditional) reporting to increase awareness

of the human rights of LGBTI persons; and positive action and engagement from faith and business communities, as well as other key stakeholders in support of the human rights of LGBTI persons.

- **Empowered & Inclusive Movements & Organizations:** The LGBTI movements – alongside other grassroots movements – reflect the full diversity of the communities that it engages, as well as diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. The movement is capable of effective activism, and is connected with broader human rights movements, allied communities and movements, and other key stakeholders. LGBTI organizations are well-managed, strategic and effective.

Objectives may include, but are not limited to: increased cooperation, shared strategies and understanding within and among LGBTI communities; strengthening LGBTI movements and leadership that reflects community diversity, including women, transgender and intersex individuals, as well as LGBTI persons from rural areas; increased engagement and collaboration between LGBTI individuals and organizations to promote human rights; increased development and use of evidence-based strategies; strengthened communication and messaging capability; and, strong financial and organizational management.

Other objectives which support the broad goals reflected above may also be considered.

Additionally, strong proposals are guided by the following cross-cutting values:

GENDER EQUALITY: Projects should consider the perspectives of individuals and communities based on actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity must be considered. Interventions should be designed in ways that seek to mitigate gender inequality and discrimination. Integrating gender involves targeted gender programming, as well as gender analysis. Projects should have strong support from and participation by women, transgender and intersex individuals, and should develop the leadership and build the capacity of these communities.

LOCALLY-LED: “Nothing about us without us.” Projects should be led by or have strong support from and participation by local organizations and communities. They should involve local organizations, focus on activities at the local and community level, and make grants or sub-grants to local organizations where possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY: With the aim of creating and broadening access to marginalized populations, projects should focus on increased capacity of local or regional organizations to develop and implement strategic plans, work plans, budgets, communication strategies, risk assessments, security plans and increased capacity of organizations to mobilize community members and build constituencies.

Projects should have the potential to have an immediate impact leading to long-term sustainable reforms, and should have potential for sustainability beyond DRL resources. DRL's preference is to not duplicate past efforts, but instead support new and creative approaches. This does not exclude from consideration projects that improve upon or expand existing successful projects in a new and complementary way. DRL also strives to ensure its projects advance the rights and uphold the dignity of the most vulnerable or at-risk populations.

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

- The provision of large amounts of humanitarian assistance;
- English language instruction;
- Development of high-tech computer or communications software and/or hardware;
- Purely academic exchanges or fellowships;
- External exchanges or fellowships lasting longer than six months;
- Off-shore activities that are not clearly linked to in-country initiatives and impact or are not necessary for security concerns;
- Theoretical explorations of human rights or democracy issues, including projects aimed primarily at research and evaluation that do not incorporate training or capacity-building for local civil society;
- Micro-loans or similar small business development initiatives;
- Initiatives directed towards a diaspora community rather than current residents of targeted countries.

II. Eligibility Information:

Organizations submitting SOIs must meet the following criteria:

- Be a U.S.-based or foreign-based non-profit organization/non-governmental organization (NGO), or a public international organization; or
- Be a private, public, or state institutions of higher education; or
- Be a for-profit organization or business, although there are restrictions on payment of fees and/or profits under grants and cooperative agreements, including those outlined in 48 CFR 30 ("Cost Accounting Standards Administration"), 48 CFR 31 ("Contract Cost Principles and Procedures"); and
- Have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with thematic or in-country partners, entities, and relevant stakeholders including private sector partner and NGOs; and
- Have demonstrable experience administering successful and preferably similar programs. DRL reserves the right to request additional background information on organizations that do not have previous experience administering federal awards. These applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.

Applicants may **form consortia** and submit a combined SOI. However, one organization should be designated as the lead applicant with the other members as sub-award partners.

DRL's preference is to work with non-profit entities; however, there may be occasions when a for-profit entity is best suited. For-profit entities should be aware that its application may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process, and that the Department of State generally prohibits profit under its assistance awards to for-profit or commercial organizations. 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 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the program's total allowable costs in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

DRL is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. DRL welcomes SOI submissions irrespective of an applicant's race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status. DRL strongly encourages applications from organizations working with the most at risk and vulnerable communities, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, members of ethnic or religious minority groups, and LGBTI persons.

No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities under an award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

Organizations are not required to have a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, formerly referred to as a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number, and an active SAM.gov registration to apply for this solicitation through GrantSolutions.gov. However, if a SOI is approved, these will need to be obtained before an organization is able to submit a full application.

III. Application Requirements, Deadline, and Technical Eligibility

All SOIs must conform to DRL's posted Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for Statements of Interest, as updated in August 2016, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>.

Complete SOI submissions **must** include the following:

1. Completed and signed SF-424 and SF424B, as directed on GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov (please refer to DRL's PSI for SOIs for guidance on completing the SF-424); and,
2. Program Statement (not to exceed three [3] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:

- a) A table listing:
 - i. The target country/countries;
 - ii. The total amount of funding requested from DRL, total amount of cost-share (if any), and total program amount (DRL funds + cost-share); and,
 - iii. Program length;
- b) A synopsis of the program, including a brief statement on how the program will have a demonstrated impact and engage relevant stakeholders. The SOI should identify local partners as appropriate;
- c) A concise breakdown explicitly identifying the program's objectives and the activities and expected results that contribute to each objective; and,
- d) A brief description of the applicant(s) that demonstrates the applicant(s) expertise and capacity to implement the program and manage a U.S. government award.

Technically eligible SOIs are those which:

- 1) Arrive electronically via GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov by **11:30 p.m. ET on October 27, 2017 under the announcement title "Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons" funding opportunity number "DRLA-DRLAQM-18-011"**;
- 2) Are in English;
- 3) Heed all instructions and do not violate any of the guidelines stated in this solicitation and the PSI for Statements of Interest.

For all SOI documents please ensure:

- 1) All pages are numbered;
- 2) All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- 3) All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables can be reformatted to fit within one page width.

Grants.gov and Grantsolutions.gov automatically logs the date and time a submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether it has been submitted on time. Late submissions are neither reviewed nor considered unless the DRL point of contact listed in section VI is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors caused by www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov that is outside of the prospective applicants' control and is the sole reason for a late submission. Prospective applicants should not expect a notification upon DRL receiving their SOI. It is the sole responsibility of the prospective applicant to ensure that all of the material submitted in the SOI submission package is complete, accurate, and current. DRL will **not** accept SOIs submitted via email, fax, the postal system, or delivery companies or couriers. DRL strongly encourages all prospective applicants to submit SOIs before October 27, 2017 to ensure that the SOI has been received and is complete.

IV. Review and Selection Process

The Department's Office of Acquisitions Management (AQM) will determine technical eligibility for all SOI submissions. DRL and Partners of the Global Equality Fund will review all SOIs for eligibility. All technically eligible SOIs will then be reviewed against the same three criteria by a DRL Review Panel, which includes quality of program idea/inclusivity of marginalized populations, program planning, and ability to achieve objectives/institutional capacity. Additionally, the Panel will evaluate how the SOI meets the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the priority needs of DRL overall. Panelists review each SOI individually against the evaluation criteria, not against competing SOIs. To ensure all SOIs receive a balanced evaluation, the DRL Review Panel will review the first page of the SOI up to the page limit and no further. All Panelists must sign non-disclosure agreements and conflict of interest agreements.

In most cases, the DRL Review Panel includes representatives from DRL policy and program offices. Applicants should be aware that Partners of the Global Equality Fund, which include USAID, like-minded governments and foundations listed above, may participate in the proposal review process. Once a SOI is approved, DRL and Partners of the Global Equality Fund will solicit for full proposal applications based on their SOIs. Unless directed otherwise by the organization, DRL may also refer SOIs for possible consideration in other U.S. government related funding opportunities.

The Panel may provide conditions and/or recommendations on SOIs to enhance the proposed program, which must be addressed by the organization in the full proposal application. To ensure effective use of limited DRL funds, conditions and recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and program activities.

DRL's Front Office reserves the right to make a final determination regarding all funding matters, pending funding availability.

Review Criteria

Quality of Program Idea/Inclusivity of Marginalized Populations

SOIs should be responsive to the solicitation, appropriate in the country/regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to DRL's mission of promoting human rights and democracy. DRL prefers creative approaches that do not duplicate efforts by other entities. This does not exclude from consideration programs that improve upon or expand existing successful programs in a new and complementary way. DRL strives to ensure its programs advance the rights and uphold the dignity of the most at-risk and vulnerable populations, including women, youth, people with disabilities, members of racial and ethnic or religious minority groups, and LGBTI persons. To the extent possible and appropriate, applicants should identify and address considerations to support and/or include these populations in all proposed program activities and objectives. Strong justification should be provided if the most at-risk and vulnerable populations will not be included in the proposed activities and

objectives. Otherwise, SOIs that do not address the above will not be considered highly competitive in this category.

Program Planning

A strong SOI will include a clear articulation of how the proposed program activities and expected results (both outputs and outcomes) contribute to specific program objectives and the overall program goal. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable, results-focused, and achievable in a reasonable time frame.

Ability to Achieve Objectives/Institutional Capacity

SOIs should address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners are identified, applicants should describe the division of labor among the applicant and any local partners. The SOI should include a brief description of the organization, including the organization's mission statement and previous work advancing the human rights of LGBTI persons. Due to page limitations, a general organizational history is not recommended. Information should clearly demonstrate an institution's record and capacity and may include previous grant management experience, whether funded through private or United States Government resources.

For additional guidance, please see DRL's posted Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for Statements of Interest, as updated in August 2016, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>.

V. Additional Information

DRL will not consider SOIs that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization.

Project activities whose direct beneficiaries are foreign militaries or paramilitary groups or individuals will not be considered for DRL funding given purpose limitations on funding.

DRL requires U.S. government Risk Analysis Management vetting of all individuals programming in certain countries, which may include the board of directors from grantee and sub-award organizations, program staff, and any program participants receiving direct assistance through grant funds. Depending on the type of vetting, the required information requested may include for each individual: The required information for each individual submission includes full name, date of birth, place of birth, nationality, a government issued ID number (drivers licenses are not accepted for any country; if the individual is a U.S. person, a SSN is required), and one piece of contact information (phone number, email address, or Skype account (if Skype is submitted an email must accompany it)). **Please keep these vetting requirements in mind when designing each program.**

Restrictions may apply to any proposed assistance to police or other law enforcement. Among these, pursuant to section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), no assistance provided may be furnished to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country when

there is credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. In accordance with the requirements of section 620M of the FAA, also known as the Leahy law, program beneficiaries or participants from a foreign government's security forces may need to be vetted by the Department before the provision of any assistance.

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

Organizations should also be aware that if ultimately selected for an award, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Please note that as of December 26, 2014, 2 CFR 200 (Sub-Chapters A through E) now applies to foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all for-profit entities. The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed on DRL's Resources page at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c72333.htm>.

The information in this solicitation and DRL's PSI for SOIs, as updated in August 2016, is binding and may not be modified by any DRL representative. **Explanatory information provided by DRL that contradicts this language will not be binding.** Issuance of the solicitation and negotiation of SOIs or applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. DRL reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements.

This solicitation will appear on www.grants.gov, www.grantsolutions.gov, and DRL's website <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>.

Background Information on DRL and general DRL funding

DRL is the foreign policy lead within the U.S. government on promoting democracy and protecting human rights globally. DRL supports programs that uphold democratic principles, support and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights, prevent atrocities, combat and prevent violent extremism, and build civil society around the world. DRL typically focuses its work in countries with egregious human rights violations, where democracy and human rights advocates are under pressure, and where governments are undemocratic or in transition.

Additional background information on DRL and the human rights report can be found on www.state.gov/j/drl and www.humanrights.gov.

VI. Contact Information

GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk:

For assistance with GrantSolutions.gov accounts and technical issues related to using the system, please contact Customer Support at help@grantsolutions.gov or call 1-866-577-0771 (toll charges for international callers) or 1-202-401-5282. Customer Support is available 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET, Monday – Friday, except federal holidays.

Grants.gov Helpdesk:

For assistance with Grants.gov accounts and technical issues related to using the system, please call the Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

See <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/> for a list of federal holidays.

For technical questions related to this solicitation, please contact The Global Equality Fund Management Team at DRL/GP at GlobalEquality@state.gov.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss this competition until the entire review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.