

proposals that address programs and activities that foster democracy, human rights, press freedoms, and the rule of law in the Western Hemisphere.

Awards are contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2003 funds. The Bureau anticipates awarding between 2–4 grants in amounts of \$250,000–\$500,000.

### Background

The Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) supports innovative, cutting-edge programs which uphold democratic principles, support and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights, and build civil society in countries and regions of the world that are geo-strategically important to the U.S. HRDF funds projects that have an immediate impact but that have potential for continued funding beyond HRDF resources. HRDF projects must not duplicate or simply add to efforts by other entities.

### Additional Information

The Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor has identified the following issues and countries as priorities.

1. Support to civil society and democratic institutions, including advocacy groups for human rights and the protection of vulnerable populations. (Priority Countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru, Venezuela)

2. Promotion of an unrestricted, unbiased and responsible press and protection of freedom of the press, especially in regard to use of threats, intimidation and defamation suits to control the media and stifle investigations into official corruption, incompetence and abuse. Support to enhance public awareness of human rights issues and broaden civic education, including identification of and debate on democratic values and processes through print, radio, television and the Internet. (Priority Countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Venezuela)

3. Promotion of labor rights and protections, particularly in connection with trade agreements, and especially in non-democratic or transitional regimes and countries suffering from civil conflict. (Priority Countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Venezuela)

4. Reconciliation, including support for human rights investigations of abuses during military dictatorship and other non-democratic governments.

(Priority Countries: Argentina, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela)

5. Political party building, including support to democratic institutions and promotion of minority and indigenous population inclusion and representation in political processes. (Priority Countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela)

### Project Criteria

- Project implementation should begin no earlier than March 2004.
- Projects should not exceed two years in duration. Shorter projects with more immediate outcomes may receive preference.
- Project activity should take place abroad. U.S.-based or exchange projects are strongly discouraged.
- Projects that have a strong academic or research focus will not be highly considered. DRL will not fund health, technology, environmental, or scientific projects unless they have an explicit democracy, human rights, or rule of law component. Conferences likewise will not be highly considered.
- Projects should include a follow-on plan that extends beyond the grant period ensuring that Bureau-supported programs are not isolated events.

In order to avoid the duplication of activities and programs, proposals should also indicate knowledge of similar projects being conducted in the region and how the submitted proposal will complement them.

### Applicant/Organization Criteria

Organizations applying for a grant should meet the following criteria:

- Be a U.S. non-profit organization meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3). Applicants must submit proof of its non-profit status in the application at the time of submission.
- Have demonstrated experience administering successful projects in the region in which it is proposing to administer a project.
- Have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with in-country organization(s).

**Note:** Organizations are welcome to submit more than one proposal, but should know that DRL wishes to reach out to as many different organizations as possible with its limited funds.

### Budget Guidelines

Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

### Deadline for Proposals

All proposals must be received at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, September 17, 2003. Please refer to the PSI for specific delivery instructions.

### Review Process

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the PSI. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements.

### Review Criteria

Eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. Further explanation of these criteria is included in the PSI. These criteria are not rank-ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation: quality of the program idea; program planning and ability to achieve program objectives; multiplier effect/impact; institution's record/ability/capacity; cost-effectiveness.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The Office for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL/PHD). Please specify Cathy Stump (202) 647-3322 on all inquiries and correspondence.

Please read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

### To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet

The Solicitation Package includes this RFP plus the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) which contains detailed award criteria, specific budget instructions, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The entire RFP and PSI may be downloaded from the HRDF section on the Bureau's Web site at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/>.

### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by