

# Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE U.S EMBASSY, NIAMEY Notice of Funding Opportunity

**Funding Opportunity Title:** *Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund*

**Funding Opportunity Number:** *NIGER-SSH-FY2021*

**Deadline for Applications:** *May 31, 2022*

**Assistance Listing Number:** *19.220*

### A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The *U.S. Embassy Niamey / Bureau of African affairs* of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications for the **Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH)** to carry out a program to support the Socio-Economic development of communities in Niger. The Ambassadors' Special Self-Help (SSH) program is a grass-roots assistance program that allows U.S. embassies to respond quickly to local requests for small community-based development projects. Special Self-Help projects are community-based, initiated locally, administered at the local level, and include significant community contributions in cash, labor or materials. The Special Self-Help program is structured to encourage communities to be self-reliant and undertake similar activities on their own in the future. Please follow all instructions below.

**Priority Region:** Applicants can submit project proposals to be implemented in any area of the eight regions of Niger

#### **Program Objectives:**

Despite significant strides made by Niger over the past decade, the country's extreme poverty rate remained high at 42.9% in 2020, affecting more than 10 million people. Niger's economy depends primarily on subsistence agriculture, and hence faces with multiple development issues. The most crucial is a rapid population growth (a fertility rate of over seven live births per woman) contrasted with low economic growth. Consequently, population growth outpaces the government's ability to offer sustained basic services. In such situations, community members often organize themselves for community development and improvement.

The Self-Help fund provides small, short-term grants to community groups that are working to improve the basic economic and social conditions of their communities. In other words, the fund provides groups with resources to implement projects that improve living and social conditions in their communities. The Niger 2022 Ambassadors' Special Self-Help (SSH) program aims at improving basic economic or social conditions at the local community or village level.

#### **Specific results could include the following:**

- Improved educational facilities (Example: Classroom construction, Library construction, Acquisition of student materials, Construction of latrines at school)

## Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund

- Improved health facilities (Example: Construction of community health centers, provision of medical equipment to community health centers)
- Improved access to clean water and sanitation facilities (Example: well or borehole construction, latrine construction)
- Youth employment opportunities (Example: Income generating activities, vocational training, Construction of a workshop for vocational skills learning)
- Social and economic empowerment of women and girls (Example: Provisions of grain mills in rural communities, provision of oil extraction machines, other income generating activities)
- Reduction in gender gap for education benefits (Example: girls' education, literacy classes)
- Increased household food security (Example: community garden, livestock breeding, crops storage)
- Increased household income (Example: Livelihood Development, improving farmers' productivity and profitability)
- More opportunities for people living with disabilities (Example: craftsmanship skill, special education, creation of job opportunity)
- Reduction in environment degradation (Examples: Provision of environmentally friendly cooking stoves, land restoration, production of natural fertilizers, recycling)

The Self Help Program may only pay for items and technical assistance that are absolutely necessary for the completion of the project. **The Self Help Program cannot be used:**

- for administrative costs and salaries.
- to buy equipment like vehicles and office equipment.
- Activities with a purely police, military, or cultural emphasis.
- Religious projects unless they genuinely assist the whole community without regard to religious affiliation.
- Personal businesses.
- Scholarships, donations, or honorariums.
- Office supplies such as pencils, paper, forms, and folders.
- For projects that focus on refugees or displaced persons.

To be eligible for funding the project must meet the following criteria:

- The project should help improve basic economic or social conditions at the local community level, and have long-term value.
- The project should be high impact, benefiting the greatest number of people possible.
- Substantial community participation in the activity is required. Contributions may include labor, materials (bricks, sand, gravel, seeds, etc.), land, buildings, or money that is given to ensure the success of the project.

**Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization.**

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award.

### **Participants and Audiences:**

Community members/groups with a real need should benefit from SSH project activities. Organizations that want to submit a proposal must collaborate with local authorities and community leaders to assess the need and plan for activities.

# Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

Length of performance period: *03 to 12 months*

Number of awards anticipated: *5 to 10* awards (dependent on amounts)

Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of *\$3000* to a maximum of *\$10000*

Type of Funding: *FY2021 Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act*

Anticipated program start date: *July 2022*

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

Funding Instrument Type: **GRANT**

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in *12 months or less*.

## **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

An SSH project must be submitted by an organized group that is motivated, has identified a real need, and has already successfully implemented projects in the community. The project should be feasible and based on the socio-economic context of the local community. All applicants must be registered Non-Profit Organizations. We welcome proposals from Community and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that work directly with communities. Organizations must be able to demonstrate that they have adequate internal controls and financial systems in place.

### **2. Local Community Involvement**

All Special Self-Help projects are community-based, initiated locally, administered at the local level, and include significant community contributions in cash, labor or materials. Substantial community participation in the activity is required. Contributions may include labor, materials (bricks, sand, gravel, seeds, etc.), land, buildings, or money to ensure the success of the project. Local involvement of the organization or group must be at least 10% in cash or in kind of the total project costs. The personal contribution of funding may be crucial to make a choice between two viable requestors.

Additionally, community leaders must also sign the statement of interest. Community leaders include local municipal leaders, religious leaders, tribal or clan leaders, or any governing body that has oversight over where the project will be implemented. At least one community leader must sign the statement of interest, however, multiple signatures are strongly encouraged. Community leaders may also submit letters of support for the project, so long as they specifically mention the project by title.

### **3. Other Eligibility Requirements**

Organizations are encouraged to have a unique entity identifier (UEI), as well as a valid registration on [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). Please go to [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov) to register your organization. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

# Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund

## D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. Address to Request Application Package

This Notice of Funding Opportunity will be posted on the *US Embassy, Niamey website*: <https://ne.usembassy.gov/embassy/embassy-solicitations/>, and on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Application forms required to submit a proposal are available upon request at [Niameygrants@state.gov](mailto:Niameygrants@state.gov)

### 2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

#### Content of Application

Please ensure:

- Completed SSH Proposal Template
- Completed Budget package:
  - Budget spreadsheet: detailed line-item budget (in Excel)
  - Budget Justification Narrative: use a separate sheet of paper (Word) to describe each of the budget expenses in detail.
- Mandatory application forms to be downloaded at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>
  - SF-424 (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)
  - SF-424A (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*) or SF-424C (*Budget Information for Construction Programs*)
  - SF-424B (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*) or SF-424D (*Assurances - Construction Programs*) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov)

#### Format

- All documents are in English (a French version of the proposal template could be joint to support the English version)
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

### 3. Attachments:

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners (if available) describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Official permission letters (if required for program activities)
- A copy of the organization's registration certificate.
- A letter of approval for proposed project from the local authority, and/or local town or district council.

## Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund

**Note: Applications that do not follow this format or are incomplete will not be considered.**

### 4. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to [Niameygrants@state.gov](mailto:Niameygrants@state.gov)

## E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### 1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below. The total possible score is 100 points.

**Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea** – 25 points *(Is the project idea communicated well and feasible? Does the project adequately fulfill a stated need within a community? Does the project show strong community support? Does the project benefit the broadest numbers of beneficiaries possible? Is there a substantial impact on the affected community?)*

**Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants** – 10 points *(Is the organization well-known by the public? has the organization carried out similar activities in the targeted area?)*

**Number of Beneficiaries** – 10 points *(The project needs to be able to quantify and report on the number of beneficiaries served with the funding received. Is the beneficiary number significant in relation to the proposed project activities and funding?)*

**Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives** – 10 points *(Are the project objectives clearly stated? Does the proposal include a reasonable implementation timeline?)*

**Budget (spreadsheet and narrative)**– 10 points *(Is the budget complete, and well defined? Is the budget reasonable?)*

**Monitoring and evaluation plan** – 15 points *(has the organization set a well-defined M&E mechanism?)*

**Sustainability** – 20 points *(Is the project sustainable in the long term? Will the project be able to continue without additional investment? Are the suggested measurements of success adequate?)*

### 2. Review and Selection Process

The U.S. Embassy's Grants Committee will review all submissions and short-listed candidates will be contacted with requests for additional information and may be asked to submit additional information.

## F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program

## Ambassadors' Special Self Help Fund

expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

### **2. Reporting**

**Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.