



Call for Grant Proposals

Promoting Civic Freedoms and Rolling Back Authoritarian COVID-19 Governance Measures

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) is pleased to invite proposals for grants as part of its ongoing project to safeguard civic freedoms and address democratic backsliding that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Grants of up to \$45,000 USD are available for up to six-month long projects meeting the criteria discussed below.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until available funds are depleted. For more details and application instructions, please see below.

Background

Three years on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, civic freedoms in the Indo-Pacific region remain under threat. Years of ongoing emergency measures, restrictions on freedom of expression, security-driven pandemic responses, and economic and geopolitical instability have weakened the non-profit sector and sapped its resources in many countries. Despite these challenges, civil society has persevered and proven its worth, not least through its integral role in COVID-19 response, often fulfilling critical service and humanitarian needs and compensating for state and private sector failures. And yet, governments continue to use COVID-19 as an excuse to restrict civic space, enforcing gathering bans and quarantining protesters, or introducing restrictive NGO registration laws in response to protests triggered by the pandemic.

Despite a hostile operating environment, civil society actors in the region continue their efforts to safeguard civic space and human rights, push back against restrictive government measures, and highlight best practices and better alternatives to governance than authoritarian repression.

Whether or not the pandemic is formally 'over,' many of the emergency and restrictive measures implemented by Indo-Pacific governments over the past two years are unlikely to be easily reversed, along with expansions of executive power.

In this context, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) seeks to support civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Indo-Pacific in undertaking forward-looking projects focused on 1) strategies for addressing COVID-19 authoritarian policies, including reviewing and repealing emergency measures; 2) activities to promote civic freedoms-oriented best practices around emergency, disaster response, and pandemic policies; and 3) efforts to highlight the innovative work of civil society in advocating against COVID-19 related encroachments on fundamental freedoms, as well as civil society's critical role in COVID-19 response.

In support of these objectives, applicants may select from a broad range of activities designed to achieve the grant's objective, including, but not limited to:

- Identifying points of leverage and specific strategies to repeal emergency and rights-impacting COVID-19 measures, and planning concrete activities to achieve these objectives;
- Researching and analyzing COVID-19 related technology, such as contact tracing apps and surveillance tools, and preparing advocacy activities to roll back the use of technologies that violate privacy and other freedoms, while promoting rights-respecting alternatives for crisis management;
- Developing toolkits, publicity materials, multimedia, or digital campaigns to highlight and promote the work of civil society in resisting authoritarian COVID-19 governance while continuing to provide critical services;
- Conducting research, fieldwork, or case studies to compare best and worst-case scenarios and practices around pandemic governance response, with recommendations for how to better address crises while respecting civic freedoms;
- Organizing national and/or regional convenings to disseminate successful civil society advocacy strategies to resist closing civic space stemming from COVID-19 approaches over the past two years;
- Identifying regional best practices for ensuring avenues for participation in public affairs during COVID-19, and developing recommendations for the institutionalization and wider adoption of such practices;
- Organizing national and/or regional dialogues with governments to advocate for best practices and reforms governments can undertake to create more enabling civil society environments.

*This list is illustrative, and ICNL strongly encourages applicants with innovative ideas and approaches not described above to apply. *Please note that **service-related or direct public health interventions** (e.g. providing health relief supplies or trainings on hygiene practices) are not relevant to this call and will not be considered. **Only civic space-related concerns are relevant to this call.** Due to the number of expected applications, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.*

***N.B:** Both ICNL and donor approval of project proposals and budgets will be required before grant activities for selected applicants can begin.*

Application Instructions

To apply for a grant, applicants must submit the following items **in English**:

- Proposal (see below).
- Line-item budget (no more than \$45,000 USD) **using provided template** (if unable to access, please email asia@icnl.org for a copy).
- Budget narrative, **using provided template** (available below).

- Resumes/CVs of staff to be engaged in the project.
- Background information about the applicant organization (e.g., website links or informational materials).

Content of Proposal

In *five pages or less*, please describe your proposal. The proposal should address the following topics:

- Identify a clear opportunity for CSOs or civic space in the COVID-19 era and explain how the proposed initiative will take advantage of this opportunity.
- Provide an overview of the proposed initiative and explain how it will assist other CSOs in overcoming, easing, or navigating COVID-19-related civic space challenges, including specific activities and anticipated outcomes.
- Describe applicant’s experience implementing similar activities proposed in this call.
- Identify CSOs, government bodies, and other stakeholders that will be engaged in the activities outlined in the application.
- Provide a proposed activity plan with specific goals and a timeline, recognizing that grant activities must be completed within a six-month period.

Eligibility Requirements

Open to any non-profit organization based in the Indo-Pacific region.¹ **Organizations must have already applied for and received a UEI (unique entity ID) number from sams.gov in order to be eligible for this grant.**

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures (including active [UEI](#)).
- Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to improving civic space.
- Quality of proposed project, including the project’s innovations, the proposed methodology/design, and feasibility of the project (e.g., activities are targeted to achieve stated results, and anticipated results are realistic and attainable).
- Likelihood that the proposed project will enhance civic space.
- Proposed budget and value for money.

¹ For the purposes of this call, the Indo-Pacific includes most countries in Asia (East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia) and the Pacific Islands; Pakistan and Afghanistan are **not** included. To verify eligibility, please email asia@icnl.org. Not-for-profit organizations are preferred applicants. For-profit organizations carrying out public benefit activities, civic space work, or with relevant expertise interested in applying should contact ICNL to verify eligibility.

- Inclusion of reasonable indicators to measure project success.

How to Apply

Interested applicants can apply by submitting all required documents by email to asia@icnl.org. Please ensure that the subject of your email is “COVID-19 Grant Application 2023.” Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until available funds are depleted. Due to the number of expected applications, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Questions about the grant opportunity may also be sent to asia@icnl.org.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Please explain each line item in the budget and how the amounts were derived. For ease of review, please list in the same order as presented in the detailed budget. Budget Narrative shall include substantive explanations and justifications for each line item, as well as the source and a description of all cost share offered (if any).

Budgetary Assumptions

- Budget is stated in U.S. dollars.
- Estimates for personnel costs are based on current salaries. Estimates for non-personnel costs are based on quotes from vendors, online market research and prior experience implementing similar programs within the region.

A. PERSONNEL

List roles and responsibilities for key staff, base salary, and percentage devoted to the project (level of effort)

- **Title, Name #1** –
- **Title, Name #2** –
- **Title, Name #3** –

B. FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe Benefit Costs set according to **XXX**.

C. TRAVEL (Staff, Consultants and Meeting Participants))

Travel costs are expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence and related items incurred by employees or consultants who travel on official business for **XXX**.

- International airfare rates are estimates, based on
- Lodging rates are based on
- Per Diem rates are based on
Note: lodging and per diem rates cannot exceed those listed at http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.
- Ground transportation expenses, such airport transfers in origin and destinations cities and local taxis are based on....
- Other travel costs include visa costs ...

D. EQUIPMENT

This is for equipment and commodities at \$5,000/unit threshold and a service life of more than one year. Please provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental in the budget narrative.

E. SUPPLIES

List each item separately for photocopying, postage, printing, and office supplies.

F. CONTRACTUAL

Consultant (s) – please explain role, responsibility and how rate is determined.

G. CONSTRUCTION – these costs are not allowable or applicable.

H. OTHER DIRECT COSTS

Please add explanation and justification of each cost.

Other Direct Costs category includes:

- Office rent, utilities, cleaning services as applicable – add explanation
- Communications – add explanation
- Audit - note audit costs can be included as a separate line item if they are not part of organization’s indirect costs.
- Translations – add explanation
- Meetings costs– add explanation. Typically costs of space rental, training materials, projectors, banner, supplies, working coffee breaks and lunches.

J. INDIRECT CHARGES, if applicable