



**Counterpart International – Afghanistan
Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP)**

**Request for Applications (RFA)
Youth Activism Grants (YAG)**

Issuance Date of RFA:	23 February, 2017
Deadline for Submission of Questions:	28 February, 2017 at 14:00 Kabul Time
Date Answers to Questions are Emailed:	02 March, 2017
Application Submission Deadline Date:	16 March, 2017 at 23:59 Kabul Time
Projected Date of Grant Awards:	On or about 01 May, 2017
RFA Number:	17-09

Dear Emerging Civil Society Leader (ECSL) Program Participants and 2016 Graduates:

On behalf of the USAID-funded Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP), Counterpart International, Inc. (Counterpart) would like to invite you to apply for a Fixed Amount Award (FAA) Grant, as described in this RFA. Both members of the 2016 and 2017 ECSL groups are eligible to apply for a Youth Activism Grant to implement activities that promote a sense of responsibility, volunteerism, activism and public interest activities among youth.

Counterpart has decided that the goals and activities in the grant description below meet the criteria for FAA funding. Counterpart International anticipates awarding eleven (11) Youth Activism grants (YAG). A minimum of 4 of these grants will be awarded to 2016 graduates and a minimum of 2 of these grants will be awarded to 2017 ECSL program participants, with the remaining 5 grants selected from the best applications from these 2 cohorts. The grants will be for a duration of five months and a value of up to Afghani six hundred and sixty thousand (AFS 660,000/ USD10,000) to implement the proposed activities around the theme of voluntarism and youth activism. The anticipated start date of the Fixed Amount Award is on or about 15 March, 2017.

You are requested to submit one FAA application for implementation of a project that meets the criteria described below. Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions contained in this RFA.

A sample Fixed Amount Award grant is attached for your review and consideration.

A. ACEP BACKGROUND

The Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP) is a five-year program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Counterpart International, Inc. (Counterpart), in partnership with Internews, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the International Centre for Non-profit Law (ICNL). The goal of ACEP is to promote civil society and media engagement that enables Afghan citizens to influence policy, monitor government accountability, and serve as advocates for political reform. The program aims to achieve this goal through five program areas: (1) Regular Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) Engagement with Government; (2) Increased CSO and Media Thematic Expertise in Democracy and Governance; (3) Expanded Civic Engagement; (4) Improved Access to Independent News and Public Affairs Information, and (5) Increased CSO Organizational Capacity.

B. ECSL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP) in 2013, its first programming year, launched the Emerging Civil Society Leaders (ECSL) program to identify, introduce and support emerging leaders

across the country to become better prepared to participate in policy reform, civic engagement and government monitoring. The program provides the opportunity for youth to increase their personal and professional skills, exchange their views and experiences relative to the challenges in their communities and in the nation. The ECSL participants are selected through an open and competitive process that assesses the applicants' achievements in civil society and community mobilization.

C. GRANT GOAL AND OUTCOMES

The goal of the Youth Activism Grant is to encourage ECSLs to design, develop and implement activities that promote a sense of responsibility, volunteerism, activism and public interest among youth at the community, district and provincial level.

It is anticipated that at least one of the following outcomes will be achieved upon completion of grant activities:

- Youth capacity is developed to monitor government accountability at the provincial level.
- Youth leaders map out a clear advocacy action plan and engage youth in the implementation of the National Youth Strategy.
- Civic activism and volunteerism is promoted to increase a sense of responsible citizenship among youth.
- Youth leadership capacity is developed to undertake community development initiatives and participate in governance and decision making processes.

D. YOUTH ACTIVISM GRANT ACTIVITIES

ECSLs are expected to submit technical proposals outlining projects which include at least three (3) activities. These activities should be designed to promote a sense of responsibility, volunteerism, activism and public interest among youth at community and/or district and/or provincial level. The description of each activity in the technical proposal must include expected outcomes that are in-line with the grant goal described above under Section C. Applicants should provide comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the activities they are proposing and how they contribute to the expected outcomes of the project. Activities that promote social inclusion by including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups are an essential part of this grant.

The following activities are only examples for illustrative purposes and ECSLs are encouraged to propose other activities:

- **Government accountability.** The following are examples of interventions for youth monitoring of government accountability:
 - Identify a law that is relevant to the community and the region and develop an advocacy plan to assist in the enforcement of its implementation.
 - Mobilize youth to advocate for the enforcement of compulsory education for children with emphasis on education of girls.
 - Monitor public institutions' service delivery and the implementation of public projects at community, district and/or provincial level.
- **Implementation of National Youth Strategy.** The following are example of interventions youth can engage in, to assist with the implementation of a national youth strategy:
 - Increase youth awareness about National Youth Policy and Strategy.
 - Engage youth in the implementation of the National Youth strategy at the sub-national level.
 - Establish a network of Youth Groups to monitor, evaluate, and report on the implementation of the national strategy at the community level.
- **Civic activism and volunteerism among youth.** The following are examples of interventions to promote a sense of responsibility among youth:



- Initiate community based projects led by youth and focused on important social issues, such as: combating the sexual harassment of boys and girls, increasing awareness of trafficking in persons and its impact on social life, increasing school enrolment for both boys and girls.
 - Develop youth volunteer service programs in public service institutions such as municipalities, hospitals, etc.
 - Develop youth activism skills, interventions and programs to enable youth to be agents of change for positive social and political reforms in their communities.
- **Community development, good governance, and decision making process.** The following are examples of interventions to engage youth in their community development and empower their participation in the CSO's decision making process:
- Integrate youth in CSOs' management or other civil society governance bodies.
 - Encourage the participation of youth in provincial council meetings, peace council meetings, district level shuras, and/or shuras and jirgas at the community level.
 - Build youth capacity through implementation of small community development projects.
 - Establish youth-led advocacy groups for effective implementation of quick impact advocacy initiatives.
 - Empower youth to become active members in Community Development Councils.

E. FUNDING AND OTHER LIMITATIONS

E.1. Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs)

Eleven (11) Fixed Amount Awards shall be issued. Each FAA grant shall be for a five-month period of time (01 May – 30 September, 2107) and cannot exceed Afghani AFS 660,000 (Six Hundred Sixty Thousand Afghani). Payments shall be made based on the successful achievement of the deliverables identified for each milestone.

Please note the following points regarding ACEP's issuance of FAAs, according to USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS 303.3.25):

- FAAs are intended to support very specific program elements; there is no requirement for ACEP to monitor the actual costs subsequently incurred. This type of award reduces some of the administrative burden and record-keeping requirements. Accountability is primarily based on performance and results.
- FAAs are used to support specific projects, where there is a certainty about cost, and where the accomplishment of the purpose or outcomes(s) in the grant is readily discernible and feasible.
- ECSLs are paid a set, fixed amount (determined by the final value of the approved budget) upon the accomplishment of the approved deliverables.
- There is limited risk that the grant activity will change.
- International airfares and indirect costs are not eligible for ACEP financing.
- Real property may not be purchased with FAA funding. Real property means land, including land improvements, structures and accessories thereto, but excludes movable machinery and equipment.

E.2. Preventing Terrorist Financing

Individuals and organizations are reminded that they must not engage in transactions with, or provide resources or support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism, including those individuals or entities that appear on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury (online at: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>), or the United Nations Security designation list (online at: http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml).



E.3 Prohibition to Fund Banned Activities

Counterpart will not fund activities that are described as banned activities by the NGO Law and other Laws of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ([Article 8](#)).

E.4 Other Limitations

To avoid duplication of funding, applicants that have active grants/programs and/or planning to receive grants/programs of similar nature from USAID or other donors will not be considered for this opportunity at this time. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFA, the applicant certifies that it has not received a grant of a similar nature from USAID or other donors.

F. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

FAA applications shall consist of a Technical Proposal and a Cost Proposal (Budget and Narrative), as described below. An application containing all of the required information in the following Application Requirements shall be considered a complete application.

F.1 Application Requirements

To be considered, applications must meet the following criteria and/or submit the following documents:

- a. **Applicants must either be a current participant of 2017's ECSL Programs or be a graduate of the 2016 ECSL Program.**
- b. **Applications can be in English, Dari or Pashtu.**

Where applications are provided in Dari or Pashtu they will be translated into English by ACEP professional interpreters in order that ACEP's Grants Technical Evaluation Committee (GTEC) members and representatives of Counterpart's Grants, Contracts and Compliance (GC&C) department who are not able to read the language of the application can review the application in English. The application in this case will be evaluated based on the translation of the original application into English from the original Dari or Pashtu version. While every effort will be made to ensure that the translation is as accurate as possible to the original, there may be some slight change in the nuances of meaning as is always the case with translation from one language to another.

- c. **Technical Proposals should be limited to no more than ten (10) pages, submitted in font Times New Roman, point 12. Technical Proposals must be written using Attachment A1, Grant Activity Proposal.**

A Technical Proposal shall be submitted per the Program Description above using Attachment A1 *Technical Proposal Template*. Technical proposals should include the following information:

1. Name and contact information of ECSL applying (address, telephone number, email address).
2. Grant Goal, Analysis and Understanding: this section presents the applicant's analysis and understanding of the goal of the grant and why they have chosen the activities they have to contribute to achieving this goal.
3. Grant Outcome: this section describes what the outcome of the implementation of the grant will be and how the grantee will evaluate if this outcome has been achieved. Reference should be made to how the outcome will be achieved in a gender aware and responsive manner and how the outcome will impact on youth and people living with disabilities.
4. Activities and their Outputs: this section describes the activities that will be implemented under this grant and what the specific outputs will be from each activity. This section should also describe how these outputs contribute to achieve the outcome of the grant. Reference should be made to how activities will be implemented in a gender aware and responsive manner and how the activities will include youth and people living with disabilities. A description of how the applicant will monitor and evaluate the activities and their outputs should be included.
5. Implementation Plan: this section presents a detailed plan, including a timeline for the implementation of the grant activities.

Note: All technical proposals must be the original work of the ECSL applying. Instances of plagiarism



(the use of others work/writing without correct referencing) will not be tolerated and any part of a proposal that has been plagiarized will not be considered as part of the technical proposal when the proposal is evaluated by the Grant Technical Evaluation Committee (GTEC).

d. Budget and Budget Narrative (Using Attachments B1, Budget and B2, Budget Narrative):

1. Using Attachment B1, please develop a five-month budget with a proposed start date of 01 May, 2017, in an amount not to exceed AFN 660,000. Please note the Sample Budget tab including in the template that shows what the budget should look like. Please ensure that only costs that are directly related to the proposed grant activities are budgeted. Indirect costs are not allowed under this Program. The budget should reflect all the resources necessary for project implementation. Budgets are to be developed based on the specific needs associated with the applicant's proposed activities.
2. Please develop a Budget Narrative using the template provided in Attachment B2. The budget narrative should provide details on all types of costs planned, cost per unit and cost justification.

F.2 Questions and Answers

Questions regarding the RFA or the selection process must be submitted in writing to applications.acep@counterpart.org with subject line: **“Question RFA 17-09 Youth Activism Grants (YAG)”** by no later than **28 February, 2017 14:00 (Kabul time)**.

All Questions & Answers (Q&A) shall be emailed to the ECSLs **on 02 March, 2017**.

During this RFA process, interested applicants may not contact, speak with or ask questions of any Counterpart ACEP staff. Any contact is grounds for disqualification of the organization's application.

F.3 Deadline Date for Responding to this RFA

Complete Applications must be emailed to applications.acep@counterpart.org. The email and attachment total size should not exceed 20 MB. If needed, an application may be submitted through multiple emails. Please include in the submission email the following subject line: **RFA 17-09 Youth Activism Grants (YAG)**.

The deadline for submitting Complete Applications is 16 March, 2017, 23:59 PM Kabul Time.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications and accompanying documentation will not be returned.

All applicants will be notified on outcome once the grant recipients are determined.

F.4 Application Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Only complete applications received by the Application Submission Deadline Date will be accepted and submitted to the Grant Technical Evaluation Committee (GTEC) for review. GTEC members will thoroughly review and evaluate the applications in accordance with application evaluation procedures.

Applications will be reviewed based on the following evaluation criteria:



Application selection criteria and scoring	Scoring
1. Grant Goal analysis and understanding	18
1.1. Does the proposal show an in-depth understanding of the goal of the grant?	9
1.2. Does the proposal show a thorough understanding of how to promote a sense of responsibility, volunteerism, activism and public interest activities among youth?	9
2. Outcome, Outputs and Activities	30
2.1. Is the expected outcome realistic and sustainable?	8
2.2. Is it clear how the expected outputs will contribute to achieve the outcome?	8
2.3. Are the expected outputs from activities realistic?	8
2.4. Is there a plan in place to monitor and evaluate the grant outputs and outcome?	6
3. Implementation Plan	16
3.1. Is the implementation plan realistic?	8
3.2. Is the implementation plan in line with the expected grant outcome and does it include all the activities described in the technical proposal?	8
4. Gender sensitivity and responsiveness	10
4.1. Does the proposal show an understanding of gender dynamics in the contexts where the activities will be implemented?	5
4.2. Does the proposal demonstrate sufficient responsiveness to gender dynamics?	5
5. Integration of youth	5
5. Does the proposal explain how youth will be included in activities and be beneficiaries of the achievement of grant objectives?	5
6. Integration of disabled	5
6. Does the proposal explain how people living with disabilities will be included in activities and/or be beneficiaries of the achievement of grant objectives?	5
7. Budget Reasonableness and Cost Effectiveness	16
7.1. Is the total budget in line with the activities and objectives of the project?	8
7.2. Are the line items in the budget reasonable?	8
Maximum Score	100

Using the above evaluation criteria, GTEC members will score and rank each application and recommend up to eleven (11) ECSLs for funding.

As applicable, GTEC may request ECSLs to provide additional information and refine their proposals within an established deadline for re-submission of a revised application.



G. AWARDING FIXED AMOUNT AWARD GRANTS

Up to eleven (11) Fixed Amount Award types of grants will be issued for the Youth Activism Grants.

The total value of the Fixed Amount Award grant will be equal to the value of the final approved FAA budget. The ECSL will be paid based on achievement of the deliverables as outlined in the FAA and not on actual costs incurred. The focus will be on performance and results and not on cost. Payment will be based on successful completion and reporting of the established deliverables outlined in the FAA.

A sample Fixed Amount Award Grant template is included as part of this RFA package.

G.1 Post-Award Orientation Meeting

After the award of the fixed amount award, ACEP shall conduct a post-award orientation meeting with the ECSLs. The meeting may be held in person or by phone. The post-award orientation meeting is an essential tool to help ACEP and the recipient achieve a clear and mutual understanding of the fixed amount award's requirements. The meeting helps the ECSL understand the roles and responsibilities of ACEP who is administering the grant and reduces performance risks and future problems. It is an opportunity to review, discuss and clarify key aspects of the grant and its administration, help the ECSL meet the intended goals and outputs of the grant and contribute to building the ECSL's advocacy and activism capacity. In addition, it should identify those areas where the ECSL may need additional help in meeting the grant's conditions. Items to be discussed at the meeting may include, but not be limited to, the authority of ACEP personnel who administer the grant, the specific terms and conditions of the grant, ACEP's monitoring and evaluation plans, milestones, requests for payment, voucher approval, and payment procedures.

G.2 Monitoring and Site Visits

Because monitoring of the grant activities is based on fixed-cost deliverables, and is not tied to incurred costs, it is important that appropriate monitoring and oversight of the ECSL and the activities are conducted. As part of the technical oversight, site visits by Counterpart staff may be conducted to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made and the milestones are being met.

G.3 Payment

All requests for payment must correspond to a deliverable specified in the fixed amount award. Invoices (also referred to as Vouchers) must list the deliverable, not costs, as the product, task, deliverable or objective for which payment is being made. ACEP shall independently verify and document that the deliverable has been completed; however, it may choose to rely on verification by a third party verifier. Only ACEP may give administrative approval of recipient vouchers.

Since fixed amount award payments are for fixed-amount deliverables, ACEP will not verify that the ECSL incurred the costs as estimated in making the award. Any actual differences between the estimated costs used to set the payments and the ECSL's actual incurred costs cannot be used to adjust the agreed upon amount for the milestone or the FAA. The documentation required for payment, per the Deliverable Schedule in the FAA, relates to proof that the deliverable was completed. Because payment follows verification of deliverable completion, the timing of verification shall be planned and conducted in a manner so that payment is received as soon as possible.

H. DISCLAIMERS

Please note that the issuance of this Request for Application does not constitute an award or a commitment on the part of Counterpart International, Inc. for funding or an award.

All costs associated in the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this RFA is the sole responsibility of the applicant.



Counterpart International reserves the right to reject any or all applications received.

I. RFA ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A1: Grant Activity Proposal Template
- Attachment B1: ACEP Budget Template
- Attachment B2: ACEP Budget Narrative Template
- Sample Fixed Amount Award