



RESILIENCY GRANTS FOR EMBATTLED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund provides resiliency grants to that allow high-risk civil society organizations (CSOs) proactively take steps to avoid or mitigate the threats they face. Successful initiatives seek to establish or maintain the ability of civil society continue its work in high-risk environments where state or non-state actors seek to limit civil society's influence

EVALUATION CRITERIA

I. General Evaluation Criteria

All applications will be evaluated along the general guidelines below, as well as fit under II. **Eligible Activities** below.

- a) **Proposed initiative is urgent and responds to emerging or intensifying threats to civil society or opportunities to expand civic space.**
Urgency is defined by threatening conditions or a time-bound opportunity for resiliency support, not the financial need of the organization. Initiatives should respond to clear challenges rather than general insecurity or a general desire for increased technical capacity.
- b) **Activities should be short-term (<6 months), and clearly address the conditions they seek to change.**
Application must present a clear, step-by-step plan of action. Grants that aim to lay the groundwork for longer term initiatives will only be considered if there is a clear plan for follow-up once Lifeline assistance ends.
- c) **Cost Effectiveness**
Rapid Response funding is not intended to support a CSO's core operations costs; excessive admin, equipment, and personnel will not be considered. Average awards are around \$9,000.
- d) **Address the needs of "high-risk" CSOs**
High-risk CSOs include those which have faced a track record of recent, verifiable threats; CSOs whose peer organizations have faced significant, verifiable threats; or CSOs in countries where an event has clearly changed the risk landscape, such as passage of repressive legislation, new policies targeting civil society, or violent conflict, military action, or coup.

II. Eligible Activities

Lifeline encourages applicants to propose creative solutions to support CSOs at high-risk to avoid or mitigate the threats they face. That said, activities should fall under one or more of the following:

- a) **Developing, expanding, and/or bolstering protection networks and local support mechanisms.**
Initiatives may support key organizations to set up protection and coordination networks in response to threats, expand the geographic or thematic reach of these networks during a crackdown on civil society, or add extra capacity to a network responding to a new or unmet need.
- b) **Providing direct aid to civil society activists at risk or mapping/coordinating civil society access to pro-bono services and support.**



Initiatives may support organizations to provide direct assistance to at risk civil society activists, such as setting up safe houses for activists pursued in a crackdown, helping to facilitate the safe relocation of activists in-country or abroad, or providing direct legal, medical/psychosocial, or other support to mitigate the threats CSOs face. Initiatives may also mobilize pro-bono support such as medical and legal professionals and/or coordination with international programs providing support when attacks on civil society mount or are expected.

c) **Implementing joint protection strategies, contingency plans, and/or protocols.**

Initiatives may support CSOs to plan for an escalation of threats, such as potential passage of a draft law or key events such as elections or planned protests and to develop joint strategies or agree on standards around cooperation to protect CSOs.

d) **Sharing protection and resiliency strategies nationally, regionally, and or/internationally.**

Initiatives may support CSOs to come together to share these experiences and build the capacity of organizations to effectively avoid or respond to threats.

e) **Supporting disrupted CSOs to safely reestablish and reorient their work.**

Initiatives may give CSOs that have had to relocate the opportunity to convene and plan how to reestablish and reorient their work after crises to operate safely and effectively in new contexts.

f) **Organizational Risk Assessments and Protection Training**

Resiliency grants will enable CSOs to bring in technical experts to complete an organizational risk assessment to determine their areas of vulnerability and develop plans to meet these threats. Either as follow-up to an organizational risk assessment or as a standalone activity, resiliency grants will also enable CSOs to access protection training for staff and peer organizations.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Submit a one-page concept note with summary budget (see *Lifeline Rapid Response Grant-Concept.doc*) to advocacy@csolifeline.org. We will review the concept, and if approved, will request a complete application.
2. Complete [Rapid Response Grant: Application](#), including the following forms:
 - *Lifeline Resiliency Grant – Application.doc*
 - *Lifeline Resiliency Grant – Detailed Budget.xls*
3. Lifeline will review the application, and respond with comments or questions to further define grant activities and objectives. When/if the application is strong and comprehensive, Freedom House will put the project forward to the Lifeline Consortium for approval.
4. Once Lifeline has consortium approval, we will begin the internal approval process, which may require the Applicant to submit documents relating to financial capacity.
5. The process is complete when the grantee has received a Grant Agreement detailing the terms of the grant, and signed by an authorized Freedom House representative.

Until an Agreement is signed, no funding is guaranteed.