



The U.S. Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund General Guidelines

Dear Self-Help Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the **Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund**. This document provides program guidelines, instructions, and contact information. Applications are available online at <https://cm.usembassy.gov/education-culture/small-grants-program/>, upon request via email to grantsyaounde@state.gov, or at the embassy's main entrance. This program is highly competitive; therefore, please read the program guidelines and application instructions carefully. All applicants with strong projects matching the fund requirements may complete and submit their application for consideration via email or to the address indicated below:

**Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817, Yaoundé**

Selection Timeline

Application deadline: April 30. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.
Selection period: May-July
Award period: August-September

We receive a high number of proposals each year and we try to respond to each applicant. If you have not heard from us within one (1) year of submitting your application, please request the status of your application via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Important Reminders

The Self-Help Application Form is FREE of charge and the Embassy DOES NOT require any payment to receive and evaluate a project.

- Submit a filled, typed, and signed Self-Help application form.
- Include a current mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- Complete and sign the Ambassador's Self-Help Fund application form.
- Complete and sign form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.
- Do not submit any documents not requested in these instructions.
- If your project is chosen for consideration, someone will visit the site to talk to you about the proposal and verify the information on the application.
- Include a sketch and/or a description of how to locate your project's site.
- Include current mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address, if available.
- Make a copy of the application and all supporting documents for your records.
- Send the original completed application to the Embassy, preferably via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Contact Information

Address: **Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund**
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817, Yaoundé

Email: grantsyaounde@state.gov

Telephone: 2220-1500 Ext. 4171

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm and Friday 7:30 am - 12:30 pm

Thank you for your interest in the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund. We look forward to hearing from you.



Funding Opportunity Description:

The Special Self-Help Fund (SSH) provides small-scale assistance to Cameroonian communities as part of the U.S. Government's commitment to support development activities in Cameroon. Since 1983, the U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon has funded small community projects under this program in all ten regions of Cameroon. The maximum support available for most projects is USD 10,000 (or about five million francs CFA). A single community/group cannot receive more than one grant in a given funding period.

Basic Project Requirements

- Initiated by the community and benefits the community, vulnerable population, and minorities by increasing income or improving economic and living conditions;
- Benefits a large number of people;
- Involves a significant local contribution such as labor, materials, land, equipment, or money;
- Within the ability of the community to operate and maintain;
- Completed within one year without requiring further Self-Help Fund assistance; and
- Respects environmental norms.

Project Categories and Acceptable Activities

- 1. Water Supply and Sanitation:** Ensures broadly accessible, reliable, and economically sustainable water and sanitation services to bolster healthy, secure, and prosperous communities.
 - **Safe Water Access:** Wells, boreholes, taps and distribution systems, catchments, spring capping...
 - **Basic Sanitation:** Toilets, sinks, etc. Innovative approaches to building demand for sanitation-related products and services are encouraged.
- 2. Social Services**
 - **Education and Training:** Construction and/or equipment of classrooms, vocational training workshops/centers.
 - **Health:** Construction and/or equipment of health facilities.
 - **Community Development:** Foot bridges, community centers, solar energy, etc.
- 3. Income Generating Activities:** Food storage facilities, grinding mills, vocational training activities that produce employment and marketable skills.
- 4. Environment/Agriculture:** Financial or technical support for reforestation and soil conservation including post-conflict or post-disaster settings, waste management, biodiversity conservation, community agricultural projects.



Unacceptable Activities and Items

- Repair of existing facilities that are in poor shape as the result of neglect or lack of funds
- Payment of recurring operating costs such as rent, salaries, administrative or operating costs, ongoing training/education needs, medications, fuel, animal feed, or seeds
- Religious, political, or military activities, as well as those relating to police, prisons, or law enforcement
- Revolving credit schemes
- Office equipment and supplies such as computers, film projectors, stereos, pencils, paper, forms, folders, etc.
- Equipment or uniforms for national sport teams or national musical or dance groups
- Land
- Vehicles, luxury goods, gambling, or surveillance equipment
- Abortion-related equipment and services
- Pesticides, fungicides, or herbicides

Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed in two phases according to their administrative compliance and their quality assessment. Projects, which fail to fulfill the administrative compliance requirements, will be excluded from further consideration.

➤ **Administrative Compliance**

The application was submitted on the form posted on the embassy's website or collected from the Embassy and submitted within the announcement's deadline; form is complete, proposal meets program requirements, and application includes all the supporting required documents.

➤ **Quality Assessment (50 points)**

Assessment will be conducted by an evaluation panel on a scale from 0 to 50 points and recommendation for an award will be based on highest scores and total program funding:

A. Project justification, goals and benefits (20 points)

The proposal addresses a specific problem that affects the community and proposes a project that will improve the economic and/or social conditions at the community or village level. It targets an adequate number of people and describes how it will benefit the target population.

B. Sustainability and community ownership (10 points)

Ideal projects will demonstrate a high degree of community involvement to develop, implement, and monitor the project to assure successful completion and sustainability. The project has a concrete and realistic strategy for maintenance and follow-up to assure sustainability beyond project completion.

C. Budget and budget justification (10 points)

The budget description should detail all funds requested, as well as all community matching funds and in-kind contributions. The estimated expenditures of the proposed activities are necessary, reasonable, and realistic for the implementation of the project. Budgets submitted should follow the budget format provided. Please also specify whether matching funds and other contributions are pending or secured.

D. Organizational capacity and experience (5 points)

Applicants must show capacity to implement the scope and scale of the proposed work and the ability to successfully complete the project within the proposed budget and timeline. Organizations that have previously carried out similar or other development projects with a proven record of project completion may be ranked higher during the evaluation process.

E. Timeline and Readiness (5 points)

Project timeline should be feasible, appropriate and connected to project goals and budget. Readiness is the degree to which the project is ready for implementation in terms of land ownership, willingness, designs, and authorizations.



Selection and Award Process

The program is highly competitive; historically, less than ten percent of the applications received each year are selected. If a project is chosen for consideration, someone from the U.S. Embassy will contact the applicant, verify the information, and visit the site. The stages in the selection and award process are:

- The SSH staff review all the applications and select a preliminary list of projects.
- The SSH committee reviews the preliminary list and selects the finalist projects.
- The SSH staff conduct site visits and work with potential grantees on suggested updates to the proposals. During this phase, the SSH coordinator makes the final recommendation to the committee and submits a final list of projects for the Ambassador's approval.
- The Ambassador, the Grants Officer, and the organization's representative sign the agreements.
- The grants are awarded.

How to Apply for the Fund

- Complete the application form (preferably typed). The application form is available online or you can request one in person at the U.S. Embassy. A Word document can also be requested by email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.
- Type or write clearly and answer every question as best as possible.
- Include a specific budget with cost estimates and a timeline.
- Include a sketch or a description of how to find the project's site.
- The project's representative must sign the Ambassador's Self-Help application form and give it to a local administrative authority for his or her signature. Examples of local administrative authorities are the Community Development Officer, the Senior Divisional Officer, the Divisional Officer, or the Mayor.
- Complete and sign form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.
- Make a copy of the application and all supportive documents for your records.
- Send the original completed application to the U.S. Embassy, preferably via email to: grantsyaounde@state.gov.

The Self-Help Application Form is FREE of charge and the Embassy DOES NOT request any payment to receive and evaluate a project.