TARGETED Request for Proposals

MSM Initiative Community Awards - Asia-Pacific Region

Deadline: 4 May 2011

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amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, is pleased to announce new funding for innovative projects that address HIV/AIDS among gay men, other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender (TG) individuals in the Asia-Pacific region. Grassroots organizations led by or closely linked to MSM/LGBT communities in low- and middle-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region are encouraged to submit relevant proposals. Funds for this round of awards are made available through the generous support of the ViiV Healthcare Positive Action and Aids Fonds.

Each organization may apply for an award of up to $20,000 USD to support project-related costs for up to 12 months. Only one application may be submitted per organization. Proposals for general operating support will not be considered.

Approximately $150,000 is available for this round of awards in the Asia-Pacific region; amfAR anticipates funding from six to eight proposals. Funding recommendations will be announced in September 2011. Organizations that are approved for awards can expect to receive funds to begin activities as early as October 2011.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

• Community-based organizations located in low-and middle-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region (click here to see list of eligible countries);
• Non-profit organizations (e.g., NGOs, CBOs, and other charitable organizations) that are the equivalent of U.S. tax-exempt non-profit organizations;
• Organizations comprised of MSM or LGBT community members and/or that have established links to MSM/LGBT communities and experience directly involving members of those communities in the development and implementation of programs and activities;
• Organizations with strong management and leadership;
• Organizations with capacity to carry out the proposed activities and effectively manage award funds.

Who Is Not Eligible and SHOULD NOT APPLY?

• Individuals;
• Government organizations or units;
• For-profit organizations;
• Organizations based in countries that are not on the list of eligible countries;
• Organizations with annual operating budgets of more than $1 million USD;
• Organizations that do not involve MSM or members of the LGBT community in the development and implementation of programs and activities.

Background

The MSM Initiative was begun by amfAR in 2007 and benefits from collaboration with various international and regional agencies including UNDP, UNAIDS, the Global Forum on MSM & HIV, and other partners. The MSM Initiative’s
community awards program seeks to address HIV among gay men, other MSM, and/or transgender individuals by supporting the planning and delivery of prevention, treatment, care, and support services; policy, advocacy, and human rights efforts; and community-led research. The term “MSM” describes a broad range of male-male sexual behaviors and identities, each with specific cultural contexts and with specific HIV risks, prevention strategies, and needs related to access and rights; included in amfAR’s definition of MSM are gay men and transgendered individuals, among others. amfAR’s MSM Initiative provides vital support to grassroots MSM efforts that are committed to serving individuals whose needs have often been ignored. For more information about the MSM Initiative, visit www.amfAR.org/msm/.

**Funding Priorities and Areas of Interest**

This request for proposals (RFP) solicits proposals for innovative community-led projects relevant to reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS among gay men, other MSM, and/or transgender individuals.

amfAR’s MSM Initiative has changed its RFP process in an important way. In the past, funding priorities were determined only by a community-based peer review panel formed specifically to review applications. However, in feedback provided to the MSM Initiative, many colleagues recommended that priorities should be determined before the RFP is issued and that they should be developed by a larger group than the review panel alone.

Using e-mail and listservs, amfAR solicited recommendations for funding priorities for the Asia-Pacific region. Many colleagues responded with thoughtful, informed, and clear suggestions. Below is a synthesis of these identified priorities, which will be used as a guide for the community-based peer review panel in making recommendations for applications to be funded by amfAR. **Well-designed applications that address these priorities will be more likely to be funded by the MSM Initiative.**

**Colleagues from the Asia-Pacific region suggested that the following kinds of projects be prioritized for support:**

- Advocacy and communication-based programs aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination among gay men, other MSM, and transgender individuals;
- Programs with robust monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Programs that show clear linkages between human rights interventions and access to health services;
- Research programs that are both participatory and innovative for transgender individuals, including HIV-positive transgenders;
- Programs using online outreach strategies;
- Direct service programs for gay men, other MSM, and transgender individuals that have clear distinctions between services for gay men and other MSM, and transgender populations; transgender populations should not be grouped together with gay men and other MSM;
- Programs that address drug and alcohol use and abuse as substantial barriers to HIV prevention, particularly among street youth, gay men, other MSM, and transgender populations (both HIV negative and positive);
- Care and support programs for HIV-positive gay men, MSM, and transgenders;
- Innovative programs – using a concrete strategy to reach the target audience – such as those that utilize social/new media, internet, mobile phones, etc.;
- Programs that support capacity building for leadership, youth-specific, and youth-led interventions.

**It was recommended that projects involving the following sub-groups of gay men, other MSM, and transgender individuals should be prioritized for funding in the Asia-Pacific region:**

- HIV-positive transgender individuals, gay men, and other MSM;
- Transgender individuals;
- Gay, other MSM or transgender youth;
- Hidden or non-gay-identifying MSM;
- Male sex workers;
- Transgender sex workers;
- Homeless youth;
- Ethnic minorities or migrant populations.

In addition, priority will be given to proposals that reflect innovative approaches, helping to create a set of evidence-based models of interventions and research findings to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS among gay men, other MSM, and/or transgender individuals. Since amfAR’s investment is relatively modest, priority will also be given to projects that can be sustained after the conclusion of amfAR funding, and to projects that help to inform local, national, regional, or
international advocacy activities. Each proposal must clearly explain the involvement of local MSM/LGBT communities in project design, development, implementation, and evaluation.

The MSM Initiative will provide support for organizational development activities if they are directly related to the project and linked to longer-term goals related to HIV among gay men, other MSM, and/or transgender individuals. In addition, amfAR provides technical and capacity-building assistance to successful applicants, which may include organizational development activities if needed.

As always, the MSM Initiative is receptive to feedback and suggestions regarding the RFP process, so please do not hesitate to let us know what you think.

Previous Award Recipients
Organizations that received an MSM Initiative community award in current and previous funding years are eligible to submit an application for continued funding if their total annual operating budget is under $1 million USD. Applications from current MSM Initiative community award recipients should include a summary of work completed to date and accomplishments resulting from amfAR funding, as well as details of how the organization plans to build upon successes or challenges from prior awards.

Sponsor Organizations
Grassroots groups that are not yet formally registered may consider partnering with a “sponsor” organization that is eligible to receive funding. The sponsor organization would receive and manage funds, provide general oversight for execution of the funded project, and potentially provide technical support to the applicant. In such cases, the non-registered organization should apply directly. However, the application should clearly identify the sponsor organization, describe in detail all technical support that the sponsor will provide (including monitoring and oversight of expenditures), and include a letter of agreement from the sponsor.

Review Process
Funding decisions will be based upon recommendations generated by community-based peer review involving experts in the region who share the same or similar expertise, perspectives, and focus on HIV amongst gay men, other MSM and/or transgender individuals, as the applicants. Applications from current MSM Initiative community award recipients will be prioritized for review when their proposals clearly build on accomplishments from previous years. However, the peer review panel will consider all applications competitively in making final funding recommendations.

Forms and Instructions
Please use the links below to download a copy of this RFP, the application form, and instructions. Please read all of the instructions carefully as they contain the information necessary for the proper preparation and submission of a successful proposal.

Applications and budget and justification forms must be submitted in English. Although not optimal, approximate translations generated by a web-based translation tools (e.g., Google Translate) will be accepted.

Applicants must also provide the names and contact information of at least three external references who are familiar with the organization and its work but who are not affiliated with the organization or the project for which funding is requested. Please do not include letters of support or other documents from your references. References may or may not be contacted as part of the proposal review.

Application form (in English; to be used by all applicants) (Microsoft Word document)
Budget and justification form (in English; to be used by all applicants) (Microsoft Excel document)
RFP (PDF document)
Application instructions (PDF)
Sample application (PDF)

Application Submission
E-mail submission (preferred)
E-mail the completed application as an attachment to:
msm.awards@amfAR.org

Hard copy submission
Send by mail or courier to:
amfAR / MSM Initiative Community Awards
120 Wall Street, 13th Floor
New York, NY 10005-3908 USA
Please remember to mail or ship hard copy submissions with adequate time for delivery by deadline.

All applications (e-mail or hard copy) must be received no later than:

4 May 2011, 5:00 p.m. in New York City, USA (GMT/UTC 21:00)

Deadlines are strictly observed. Applications that are received late, are incomplete, or exceed page or budget limitations (see instructions) will not be reviewed. Proposals may include citations, listed references, and resumes (curricula vitae) for key personnel. Web links to important documents and articles may be listed, but they should not be included as physical attachments.

Applicants are encouraged to e-mail msm.awards@amfAR.org if they have any questions or seek advice about this RFP, program design, or the application requirements.

Confidentiality and Communications
Throughout the review and award process, amfAR routinely respects the privacy of the applicant and is committed to protecting from disclosure any confidential or proprietary information contained in a submitted proposal.

However, the MSM Initiative also recognizes that many organizations working to address HIV among gay men, other MSM, and/or transgender individuals are doing this work in complex and sometimes dangerous or volatile social, political, and legal environments. Groups that require special measures to protect confidentiality, particularly due to security and safety concerns, should indicate this need in the application for funding. In such instances we will inform reviewers that extra confidentiality is needed, and we will limit what we communicate about your organization with other funders, partners, and the public. Indicating that extra confidentiality is not needed means that we will maintain routine confidentiality about the funding proposal, but will feel free to communicate about the proposal and the organization to other funders and partners in the interest of mobilizing support.

While we will make every effort to ensure confidentiality in these situations, amfAR, the MSM Initiative, and its partners cannot guarantee complete confidentiality and/or be held liable for the disclosure of information that causes harm to individuals or groups associated with funded projects. Groups should be aware that any information provided carries the risk of being shared publicly through open dialogue about funding priorities, peer review processes, and communications about MSM Initiative directions, decisions, and reported outcomes. Submission of a funding application is deemed to indicate the applicant’s understanding and acceptance of these risks.

Requirements and Restrictions
The MSM Initiative aims to encourage, support, and document activities of the highest quality. Therefore, all organizations funded by the MSM Initiative will be required to provide interim and year-end progress reports of program activities and expenditures. Organizations should be able and ready to document appropriate financial and accounting controls, including measures to prevent duplicated use or misappropriation of funds. Any renewal of funding will be contingent upon careful adherence to these reporting requirements. In addition, the MSM Initiative will work with partners within the region to be in contact with award recipients, to monitor and document any needs for technical support and assistance, and, if possible, to provide this support.

Funding for the MSM Initiative is made possible primarily through the private donations of individuals and philanthropic foundations. The MSM Initiative will report regularly to these funding partners about the use of funding and all supported organizations and activities (except where confidentiality is specifically requested).