



Request For Proposals

Title: ACCELERATE Action Grants under the Human Rights Defenders Initiative at The Carter Center and DT Institute

Award amount: Up to \$5,000

Number of awards: 10 - 15

Issue date: October 8, 2024

Closing date: None. Review is rolling pending the availability of funds.

Contact information: HRDIGrants@cartercenter.org

Background

As stated in Article I of the United Nation's *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* "Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels." However, throughout the world, there is a rise in authoritarianism, a crackdown on fundamental freedoms, and a restriction on the operation of human rights defenders (HRDs). The internet has transformed the way people and societies interact; global economic growth has not been equitable across regions or within countries; and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how deeply vulnerable the global population is to unforeseen global catastrophes. Moreover, a focus on the human rights impacts of climate change has shifted the way HRDs go about their critical work.

The Carter Center (the Center) and DT Institute have long supported HRDs as they carry out their courageous work in some of the most difficult contexts. Since 2003, the Center has convened the Human Rights Defenders Forum to provide a space for reflection, resilience building, and action planning. Since 2019, DT Institute has been implementing complex global development programs in conflict, fragile, and closed environments. In 2023, the Center and DT Institute expanded our support for HRDs by designing a small grants funding mechanism that includes **ACCELERATE Action Grants**. With this Request For Proposals (RFP), the Center and DT Institute seek to support a select number of HRDs with rapid injection of resources to be used for a variety of needs stemming from their human rights activities.

These Action Grants are open to partners of The Carter Center and DT Institute who meet the eligibility criteria below. Grants will increase the HRDs' security and amplify their work while operating in hostile environments. Successful applicants will contribute to a modest Learning Agenda and participate in an emergent Community of Practice.

Please note, funding is very limited in the pilot phase of the ACCELERATE Action Grants. The Center will not be able to provide awards for all favorably evaluated applications.

Issue date: October 8, 2024

Application deadline: Rolling review pending availability of funds.

Questions: Questions not covered by this website should be addressed to HRDIGRANTS@CARTERCENTER.ORG.

Maximum total amount awarded: \$5,000 USD per award. The Carter Center and DT Institute anticipate awarding up to 10-12 awards for a total ceiling of \$50,000 during the pilot phase of the mechanism.

Duration: Limited duration. Between two to four months post-award, recipient will report on impact to the Center and DT Institute.

Eligibility:

Applications to ACCELERATE Action Grants are limited to The Carter Center and DT Institute programmatic partners. The RFP is open to organizations and individuals who are in good standing with either organization through current or previous work, including through a prime/subrecipient relationship with a private or public donor; organizations who have benefited from technical assistance from either organization; local organizations who have partnered on advocacy campaigns with either organization; independent contractors or consultants of either The Carter Center or DT Institute. If you need help determining if your or your organization is a partner in good standing with either organization, please email HRDIGrants@cartercenter.org with your inquiry.

There is no geographic restriction on eligibility. However, the ACCELERATE fund will prioritize supporting HRDs operating in conflict, hostile, and restrictive environments where there are significant risks to the promotion and protection of human rights. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Regions or countries experiencing a rise in authoritarianism and where government actions have led to a crackdown on fundamental freedoms.
- Areas where there is a systematic restriction on the operation of HRDs, including legal, physical, or digital barriers that hinder their ability to function effectively.
- Contexts where HRDs face direct harassment or violence due to their work in advocating for human rights, peacebuilding, rule of law, or other related areas.
- Environments where there is an urgent need to expand an enabling environment for HRDs, such as providing safe spaces, secure communication channels, or legal support.

Other eligibility considerations:

1. Organizations should be not-for-profit organizations/charities according to national laws. For-profit entities are not eligible.
2. They should qualify as civil society/non-governmental organizations. Governmental entities are not eligible.
3. Public and private educational institutions are eligible if they meet the above criteria.

4. Individuals should be associated with an organization according to the same considerations listed above.

Successful applicants must undergo a pre-award due diligence process from The Carter Center and DT Institute.

Thematic areas:

ACCELERATE Action Grants will provide immediate, one-time funding to enable a human rights defender or an organization to receive immediate assistance. Successful proposals will demonstrate how the financial support directly impacts the recipient's work, either by relieving effects from attempts to restrict promotion of human rights or by enabling a discrete aspect of the work of human rights defenders. The thematic areas on which The Carter Center and DT Institute focus are: conflict resolution, peacebuilding, rule of law, stabilization, and transition.

Illustrative activities:

- Support for strategic planning sessions, including scenario planning and risk assessment, to help human rights defenders (HRDs) and their organizations develop action plans for emergencies.
- Development of advocacy strategies tailored to specific contexts, enabling HRDs to effectively navigate the political, social, and legal challenges of emergencies.
- Support urgent advocacy efforts in response to newly emerging human rights violations and develop and execute digital advocacy campaigns to raise awareness or mobilize support for human rights issues.
- Support for resource mobilization efforts, such as fundraising or building partnerships with other organizations.
- Rapid response funding for HRDs facing unexpected crises such as sudden legal threats, violent attacks, or government crackdowns.

This mechanism will NOT support:

- Expenses incurred prior to the start of the ACCELERATE Action Grant
- Projects which focus on issues that are broader than those affecting human rights defenders

Budget:

The size of each ACCERLATE Small Grant will not exceed \$5,000 USD. Applications over this amount will not be considered. The Carter Center and DT Institute reserve the right to offer grants below the requested amount at their discretion.

Submission:

- A. A **cover page** including:
 - Proposal title
 - Organization name (if applicable)
 - Address
 - Phone number

- Email address
 - Point of contact
 - Total amount of request
- B. A one (1) – two (2) page **narrative proposal**, including but not limited to:
- o Background of working as/with human rights defenders;
 - o Need that the ACCELERATE Action Grant will address;
 - o A description of how the funds will be used to address that need;
 - o Explanation of how the applicant is a current partner of The Carter Center or DT Institute;
 - o *Instead of a narrative proposal, applicants can prepare **five to seven slides** outlining the same information above.*
- C. A **budget** detailing line item and activity costs.
- D. Brief **budget notes** explaining calculation costs in the budget.

Process

- Full application packages should be submitted to HRDIGrants@cartercenter.org with the subject “Action Grant proposal- [NAME OF SUBMITTING ENTITY].
- The Carter Center and DT Institute will acknowledge receipt of the proposal package within two working days.
- Response time will be approximately ten (10) business days from the time of submission. However, in some cases consideration will take longer.
- Proposals will be evaluated on a rolling basis. Any awards are contingent upon the availability of funds.

Instructions to applicants:

1. Basic Parameters

The Carter Center and DT Institute invite eligible organizations and individuals to submit technical and financial proposals to meet the specificities of the RFP above:

- a. Successful applications will align with the specificities as described above.
- b. The Carter Center and DT Institute may, at its discretion, cancel the RFP in whole or in part.

2. Cost of proposal

The costs of preparing a proposal are the applicants’ responsibility, regardless of the outcome.

3. Eligibility

The Carter Center reserves the right to verify any information in the applicant’s proposal or request additional information after the proposal is received.

4. Questions related to RFP documents

A prospective applicant requiring clarification of the required RFP documents may contact The Carter Center in writing at HRDIGrants@cartercenter.org. The Carter Center will publish responses to any requests for clarification of the RFP as they are received on our website.

5. Language of proposal

The proposal and all related correspondence must be in English.

6. Clarification of proposals

To assist in the examination, evaluation, and comparison of proposals, The Carter Center and DT Institute may request further written clarification from an applicant after the proposal submission deadline. To ensure timely review, the applicant must answer any requests for further clarification or information within three business days.

7. Proposal currencies

All prices quoted in the financial proposal must only be in United States Dollars. Any agreements resulting from this RFP will be issued in United States Dollars.

8. Security and Confidentiality

The Carter Center and DT Institute will take measures to ensure all sensitive information is received, stored, and, if necessary, transmitted with appropriate safeguards and confidentiality is maintained. The Carter Center and DT Institute shall operate with need-to-know standards of confidentiality.

9. Evaluation of technical and financial proposal

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Proposals must include the following sections:

- Background of working as/with human rights defenders;
- Need that the ACCELERATE Action Grant will address;
- A description of how the funds will be used to address that need;
- Explanation of how the applicant is a current partner of The Carter Center or DT Institute.

The following supporting materials are not required but may be submitted:

- CVs or descriptions of key project team members (no more than two pages)
- Brief summary of previous awards within the past five years (no more than two pages).

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

The financial proposal must directly address the need described in the technical proposal. The amount of funding per successful applicant depends on the number of awards.

9. Award

The award will be made to the most qualified applicant(s) who can successfully demonstrate their capacity to implement the activities outlined in their proposal with the greatest efficiency and best cost. The Carter Center reserves the right to negotiate with the selected applicant(s) to adjust their proposal to meet The Carter Center and DT Institute's program objectives. The award will only go into effect once all components of an applicant's proposal are agreed upon and an agreement between the applicant and The Carter Center is signed.

The selected applicants are expected to commence implementing successful projects as of the date and time stipulated in this RFP.

The Carter Center

"Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope."

A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in over 80 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide.

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DT Institute

DT Institute is a US-based non-profit organization that operates as both a funder and implementer to advance human rights, build peace, and increase internet freedom through strengthening independent media and technology. Our mission is to partner with communities and leaders to help build and preserve more resilient, equitable, inclusive, and democratic societies. As an implementing partner, DT Institute focuses on strengthening communities and leaders in these areas, working with local organizations to build strong coalitions to effect change. Our philanthropic strategy complements, informs, and expands these initiatives. The impact grants we make to non-governmental organizations and individual researchers aim to build, test, and advance bold, innovative approaches to development.