

Grant policy¹

Description of the Grant Program “Media in a Changing World”

The Foundation for Democracy and Liberal Values, a US-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (hereinafter – the FDLV), has launched a Grant Program to support: 1) independent media outlets led by Russian exiles; 2) New media technologies/innovations; 3) Creative and impactful standalone projects aimed at audiences inside and outside Russia.

The main goals of the Program are to preserve the existing Russian-language media ecosystem, introduce cutting-edge technologies for content distribution, media management, and/or commercially viable solutions, and support impactful standalone projects and media projects that can generate program-related revenue for charitable non-profits.

Important Definitions

An independent media outlet is an editorially independent organization that has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to fact-based, unbiased journalism and provides information in a trustworthy manner. It should be transparent about processes, finances, and policies.

The media ecosystem presents a food chain of media organizations of different sizes and focuses (both general interest and niche) that ensures the publication of exclusive media content and its distribution to wider audiences.

Standalone projects include thematic platform-agnostic blogs, documentary/ photo projects, and books aimed to educate broad audiences on various topics or talk in an appealing and entertaining manner about political, social, and cultural issues. Applicants **MUST** demonstrate a successful track record of implementing similar projects or have recognition in the industry for their journalistic, filmmaking, photography, or literary work.

New media technologies or innovations are IT-based solutions that help maintain and expand audiences in countries that prevent the free flow of information by securing existing distribution channels or/and creating new approaches to content distribution or innovations that have market viability, i.e., the potential to generate additional revenues for media organizations. Applicants **MUST** demonstrate adequate experience and/or capacity to design IT-based technologies or innovation.

¹ The Grant Policy is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of the FDLV. Any amendments to the Grant Policy shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of the FDLV.

Types of support

Emergency support to fill in the financial gap that has appeared for objective reasons. The goal of this effort is to provide media organizations with more time to recalibrate their financial models and strategies while continuing their operations uninterrupted.

Dedicated funding for new media technologies or innovations is a one-time grant to support the development, commercialization or scaling-up of the product. This form of support should not foresee creating permanent job positions. Depending on the required resources, cost-share can be either a requirement or a preference.

Dedicated funding for standalone projects is a one-time grant to support existing or new projects implemented by media organizations or individuals.

Eligibility criteria

Media organizations led by Russian exiles and individuals working for the Russian-speaking audience can apply.

The audience and country of origin criteria do not apply to media technologies or innovations project area. The FDLV awards grants to non-profit organizations, media organizations, or individuals.

Organizations that have no infrastructure for receiving grants directly have to submit written consent from intermediary organizations that are officially registered as nonprofits. Intermediaries could charge up to 6% (max) of the grant amount for administration.

For emergency funding, the FDLV considers ONLY applications from existing media organizations established before January 1, 2023. The FDLV will coordinate with other donors to avoid duplication of funding.

For dedicated funding, the FDLV considers applications from organizations or individuals with a proven and well-recognized track record in journalism, IT solutions design, or literary work.

The FDLV doesn't consider applications received from organizations that promote any specific political agenda or led by a perceived politician/politicians, affiliated with such individuals or a group or its editorial policy is influenced by this type of actors. (*read more about this policy in the Disclaimer Section*)

Grant awards

The FDLV awards grants of varying sizes based on the type of submitted project and the requested type of support. Based on the abovementioned criteria, different conditions are applied. The maximum grant for any project doesn't exceed \$200K.

Grants below \$ 50K. Neither co-share nor a diversity of funding requirements apply.
Grants in the range of \$50K—\$100K. The FDLV will prioritize projects with co-donors.
Grants in the range of \$ 100K– \$ 200K. An applicant should demonstrate the capacity to manage such funds and have a diversity of sources of funding.

The Grants Allocation Committee (GAC) decides on the final awarded amount based on a submitted budget evaluation and available resources.

The grant duration ranges from six months to one year.

Principles of grant-making decisions

The FDLV complies with all applicable laws and regulations in its operations and reporting, including U.S. laws applicable to 501(c)(3) organizations. The FDLV adheres to the principles of competitiveness, transparency, and equal treatment of grantees in the grantmaking process. The FDLV shall announce open calls with comprehensive information to be published on the official website and disseminated widely. All required documentation will be available on the FDLV's website. Applicants should submit their applications in English before the stated deadlines. Applicants can reach out to the FDLV for meaningful inquiries. Only complete applications will be assessed by the FDLV.

The FDLV sets up a Grant Allocation Committee (GAC) of seven members. The GAC includes the representative of the donor to FDLV supporting this program and the Grants Director. Five members shall be recruited externally. The FDLV convenes online meetings of the GAC (*the Terms of Reference provide a detailed description of the GAC's role and responsibilities*).

Applicants are notified about the decisions within 7 days after the decision was made. Grantees will sign grant agreements or fellowship contracts (including other supporting documents) with the FDLV. Grantees are required to submit mid-term and final reports to FDLV. The FDLV can set up calls or schedule monitoring visits.

The Grants Manager conducts an overall performance review of each completed grant cycle and submits the report to the GAC. The GAC shall convene to evaluate the Grant Program's performance and offer recommendations.

Disclaimer

The FDLV doesn't consider applications received from media organizations or other applicants that have a specific political agenda, led by perceived politicians or have

clear signs of using the propaganda toolbox. We acknowledge that sometimes, there is a fine line between propaganda and journalism. The GAC judgment will be based on identifying the long-term intention of content producers. A content producer's goal should be to inform its audience what has happened or is happening regardless of whether it aligns with a media organization's or a journalist's views or convictions. This program will not support content producers whose intention is to impose views on its audience by distorting facts or selecting some facts while ignoring others on purpose, mimicking journalism and not highlighting that it is an opinion.