



**International Foundation
for Electoral Systems**

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for
Women's Access to Justice/Legal Aid Clinic Design and
Establishment in Zambia**

RFA-26-002

February 04, 2026

1. Request for Application (RFA)

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to invite civil society organization(s) to submit applications to implement a project that will design and deliver legal clinics focusing on (but not exclusively used by) women candidates for local government and as Members of Parliament ahead of the August elections. Legal Aid Clinics will cover the legal and policy framework related to party nomination/adoption, nomination filing, campaigns, campaign financing, and avenues/approaches to accessing electoral justice, among other topics as appropriate. The Legal Aid Clinics will also provide opportunities for participants to engage in networking and peer support. The objective of this project is to enhance the participation and success of women candidates in local government and parliamentary elections by providing accessible legal support, training, and peer networking opportunities in Lusaka (Rufunsa District), Copperbelt (Lufwanyama and Masaiti Districts), Eastern (Mambwe and Nyimba Districts) North-Western (Mwinilunga and Kalumbila Districts), Central (Luano and Serenje Districts). The Legal Aid Clinics seek to increase legal literacy and preparedness of women candidates by providing practical, timely support on nomination, campaign compliance and campaign financing, and electoral justice.

The specific objectives of the project are as follows: 1) Provide women candidates with accurate information on electoral laws, nomination procedures, and campaign regulations, 2) Facilitate peer support and networking among women, youth and persons with disabilities candidates for local government to build confidence and solidarity, 3) Increase awareness of electoral justice mechanisms and how to access them effectively, 4) Promote awareness of campaign financing rules and party nomination requirements among women candidates in local government and parliamentary elections, and 5) Provide an avenue where women can report and get legal support with respect to election-related complaints that they face.

The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements.

1.2. RFA Schedule

IFES will conduct a competitive process to identify grantees per the tentative timeline below:

Issuance of RFA	February 4, 2026
Questions Due	February 10, 2026; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	February 12, 2026
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	February 20, 2026; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	March 1, 2026, to November 30, 2026

2. General Information

2.1. Background

IFES is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. IFES supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by Providing technical assistance to election officials, Empowering the underrepresented to participate in electoral and political processes, and Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle.

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

3. Application Preparation Instructions

3.1. Applicant’s Understanding of the RFA

In responding to this RFA, the applicant accepts full responsibility to understand the RFA in its entirety, and in detail, including making any inquiries to IFES as necessary to gain such understanding. IFES reserves the right to disqualify any applicant who demonstrates less than such understanding. Further, IFES reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether the applicant has demonstrated such understanding. Such disqualification and/or cancellation shall be at no fault, cost, or liability whatsoever to IFES.

3.2. Good Faith Statement

All information provided by IFES in this RFA is offered in good faith. Individual items are subject to change at any time. IFES makes no certification that any item is without error. IFES is not responsible or liable for any use of the information or for any claims asserted there from.

3.3. Communication

Verbal communication shall not be effective unless formally confirmed in writing by the IFES officials identified in Section 3.5 of this RFA. In no case shall verbal communication govern over written communication.

3.3.1. Applicant Inquiries

Inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification related to this RFA should be submitted in writing to the representative listed below by the deadline listed in 1.2. RFA Schedule.

Khurram Naz
knaz@ifes.org

And

Rene Travis
rtravis@ifes.org

Questions/Answers and Addenda(s) related to this RFA can be found on [IFES Procurement Notices](#) and [Devex.com](#).

3.3.2. Formal Communications shall include, but are not limited to:

- Questions concerning this RFA
- Expressions of Interest
- Pre-award negotiations under this RFA
- Addenda to this RFA

3.3.3. Addenda

IFES will make a good-faith effort to provide written responses to the questions or requests for clarifications that require addenda by the date set in the RFA Schedule above. All questions, answers, and addenda will be shared with all interested organizations.

3.4. Eligibility

Locally registered Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Political Party Organizations or other similar not-for-profit institutions are invited to apply. If a DPO, CSO, or NGO is not locally registered, a signed letter stating the reason why must be included as part of the application.

Individuals and the following organizations are **not eligible** to access funding:

- Governmental and semi-governmental institutions
- International organizations
- Political parties or organizations affiliated with or engaging in partisan activities
- Organizations running on a for-profit basis

3.5. Application Instructions

All applications should include the following, in order for their application to be considered:

3.5.1. Technical Application

The Technical Application must include a written application in English describing in detail the applicant's (a) Technical Approach, (b) implementation timeline, and (c) results framework to implement the Program Description as described in Article 4 of this RFA. The evaluation criteria can be found in Article 3.6. Applicants should use the technical narrative template in Attachment A.

3.5.2. Cost Application – Budget & Budget Narrative

- The Budget should reflect costs associated with the technical activities and deliverables. All applicants must use the budget template provided in Attachment B and submit it in Excel format as part of their application. The Budget should be presented in **Zambian Kwacha (ZMW)**, with applicable taxes/charges clearly identified. Unit costs are required and, in the case of discrepancies between unit costs and total costs, the unit cost will be taken as the reference basis in the evaluation.
- The applicant must agree to keep these costs valid for a minimum of **90** calendar days.
- The Cost Application should include a Budget Narrative that describes each cost element of the Budget (see column G of Attachment B).

3.5.3. A brief outline of the applicant's organization and experience.

Organizations should demonstrate prior experience working with young people from a wide range of states and regions, particularly rural areas, facilitating training programs, and working on programming such as youth leadership, civic education, and/or elections.

3.5.4. Additional documentation

- When available, a copy of the organization's most recent final, signed audits/financial statements
- Proof of organization's registration or a signed letter indicating why the organization is not registered.
- CVs of key personnel including the organization's Director and anticipated program manager
- Any other supporting document that will strengthen the application

3.6. Application Submission

Applicants must send final applications in electronic copy via e-mail to the point of contact identified in 3.3.1 on or prior to the closing date and time shown in the *Schedule of Events*.

3.7. Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of each response to this RFA will be based on its demonstrated competence, compliance, format, and organization. The purpose of this RFA is to identify those organizations that have the interest, capability, and financial strength to implement the project as described in Article 4 of this RFA.

- 1. Technical Approach, Implementation Timeline, Results Framework** **40 points**
 - Demonstrated understanding of the RFA and of IFES' requirements
 - Soundness and feasibility of technical approach
 - Reasonable implementation timeline and results framework

- 2. Competitive Budget with efficient and reasonable cost structure** **30 points**
 - Cost realism in response to RFA requirements
 - Clear budget presentation of necessary, allocable and reasonable costs
 - Appropriate balance of budget between operational/personnel costs and activity costs

- 3. Past Performance and Organizational Capacity** **30 points**
 - Extent to which proposed personnel have relevant qualifications and experience. Provide a list including qualifications of the critical personnel that will deliver the assignment.
 - Experience in conducting legal clinics especially at the local levels for women will be desirable given that the program will predominantly target women councilors and members of parliament
 - Demonstrated capacity to organize, manage and implement full range of activities required to achieve program goals and objectives
 - Demonstrated flexibility to adjust implementation in response to changing environments
 - Demonstrated strong past performance in implementing programs of similar size, scope and complexity
 - Demonstrated presence and/or networks in the proposed target districts. Having regional offices at the provincial and district levels will be an added advantage. The offices will be critical as referral centers where women candidates could seek information or support relating to elections.

3.8. Selection and Notification

Applicants determined by IFES that possess the capacity to compete for this project will be selected to move into the negotiation phase of this process. Written notification will be sent to these applicants via e-mail. Those applicants not selected for the negotiation phase will also be notified.

4. Scope of Work and Deliverables

The applicant is expected to undertake the following activities in close collaboration with IFES and deliver the following:

4.1 Establish Legal Clinics in Ten Sites: Set up and operationalize legal aid clinics in Lusaka (Rufunsa District), Copperbelt (Lufwanyama and Masaiti Districts), Eastern (Mambwe and Nyimba Districts) North-Western (Mwinilunga and Kalumbila Districts), Central (Luano and Serenje Districts) This will be coordinated with IFES.

4.2 Develop Accessible Materials: In collaboration with IFES, produce rights-based guides, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheets, and checklists and ensure accessibility.

4.3 Set up a Helpdesk & Case Referral Mechanism: Set up a centralized hub to receive, track, and escalate election-related complaints from women candidates, voters, and campaign managers; provide real-time legal guidance and coordinate responses with relevant institutions.

4.4 Awareness raising: Create awareness raising to ensure that the women candidates (and others) are aware of the clinics thus enhanced accessibility and usability of the clinics.

4.5 Develop and Utilize a Monitoring & Evaluation Framework: Develop tools and processes to track clinic attendance, service delivery, and impact on women’s electoral participation. Collect gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries and produce periodic progress reports

4.6 Develop a Post-Election Review and Lessons Learned Report: Undertake a comprehensive review of the legal aid clinics’ operations and their contribution to inclusive and credible elections. Produce a detailed report highlighting successes, challenges, and actionable recommendations to strengthen future electoral cycles and gender-responsive access to justice support.

5. Functional Requirements

5.1. Timeline:

Applicants must submit a detailed timeline in their Application showing the time required to implement the services requested. IFES requires all deliverables to be completed not later than November 30, 2026.

5.2. Monitoring & Evaluation

- As part of its due diligence, IFES conducts pre-award surveys on all potential grantees to assess capacity and inform the appropriate grant mechanism. In addition, applicants expected to expend \$750,000 or more in U.S. funded awards during their fiscal year must have an audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F—Audit Requirements. If Applicable, applicants must ensure that funds are included in the grant budget for an audit.
- IFES will issue the appropriate grant mechanism depending on the nature of the work, the capacity of the grantee, the duration of the grant, and the overall value of the grant.
- IFES will provide continuous mentorship, training and oversight to ensure grant management practices are in line with anti-corruption principles as well as to build capacity of local grantees to fully manage and implement their programs in adherence to donor regulations and with a view towards sustainability.

5.3. Deliverables:

Specific deliverables and reporting will be determined based on the grant activities proposed and negotiated during the negotiation phase.

6. Additional Terms & Conditions

6.1. Non-Disclosure Agreement

IFES reserves the right to require any applicant to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.

6.2. Zero Tolerance for Fraud

IFES has zero tolerance for fraud. Fraud is any act or omission that intentionally misleads, or attempts to mislead, to obtain a benefit or to avoid an obligation. If you have concerns about potential fraud in any way related to IFES projects, contracts, or activities, please contact IFES’ Compliance Hotline at compliance@ifes.org or at +1 202-350-6791.

6.3. Intellectual Property

Applicants should not use any intellectual property of IFES including, but not limited to, all logos,

registered trademarks, or trade names of IFES, at any time, without the prior written approval of IFES, as appropriate.

6.4. Applications

All accepted applications shall become the property of IFES and will not be returned.

6.5. Governing Law

This RFA and the applicants' applications shall be governed by the laws of the District of Columbia, USA.

6.6. Partial Awarding

IFES reserves the right to accept all or part of the application when awarding the grant. IFES also reserves the right to issue multiple awards and procure only items or services from selected applicants.

6.7. No Liability

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute a commitment on the part of IFES to make an award nor does it commit IFES to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any application in response to this RFA. Further, IFES reserves the right to reject any or all applications received or stop solicitation process at any time, without assigning any reason or liability.

IFES shall not be liable to any applicant, person, or entity for any losses, expenses, costs, claims, or damages of any kind:

- Arising out of, by reason of, or attributable to, the applicant responding to this RFA; or
- As a result of the use of any information, error, or omission contained in this RFA document or provided during the RFA process.

6.8. Entire RFA

This RFA, any addenda to it, and any attached schedules, constitute the entire RFA.

6.9. Attachments

Attachment A: Technical Narrative Template

Attachment B: Budget Template

Attachment C: Organizational Capacity and Past Performance Template

End of RFA

ATTACHMENT A
Technical Narrative Template

I. General Information

Complete Legal Name of Applicant Organization

Office Address

Legal Mailing Address (if different)

Office Telephone Number(s)

E-Mail Address(es)

Director of Organization

Project Manager/Contact Person

Project Dates (month/year – month/year)

Project Title

Certificate of Registration Number

PAN/TPIN Number

II. Technical Approach:

Please include the following components in in a maximum of **5 pages**

- A. Project Summary:** describe in details how you are going to rollout the activities highlighted under the scope of work (section 4) and how the implementation of the planned activities will achieve the project objectives.
- B. Need for the project:** Elaborate why the legal aid clinics focusing on women’s access to justice are important?
- C. Project’s Goal and Objectives:** what is the specific goal of your effort? Does it comply with the goals and objectives of the competition as outlined in section 1.1?
- D. Target Audience and Stakeholders:** Given the target group is pre-determined by the call i.e. women candidates (councilors and Members of Parliament), elaborate how do you plan to design and launch the legal clinics?
- E. Activities:** identify and describe in detail each activity to be undertaken to produce results, justifying the choice of activities aligning with the Section 4 – Scope of Work provided above.
- F. Expected Deliverables:** The required deliverables are predefined (see Section 4 – Scope of Work and deliverables). Please make sure these deliverables are addressed in your application.

Note that IFES will work with successful applicant to co-develop training modules and prior to the rollout of the planned activities IFES will conduct a Training of Trainers.

III. Implementation Timeline

Please use the following format to provide an implementation timeline. CSOs are expected to confirm they can adhere to the below timeline.

Project Month	Activity	Expected Result	Involved Stakeholders
March 2026	Legal Clinic Design & Establishment		
March 2026	Draft and finalize rights-based guides, FAQ sheets, checklists; ensure accessibility (Braille, sign language)		
August 2026	Election-period legal helpdesk operational; referral mechanism established		
April to November 2026	Create awareness raising to ensure that the women candidates (and others) are aware of the clinics		
September 2026	M&E framework deployed; gender-disaggregated data collected; progress report		
November 2026	Stakeholder coordination meeting; final lessons learned report; financial report		

IV. Results Framework

Please identify specific results that you expect to realize upon completion of your project and the quantitative and qualitative criteria for the project's success. How will you determine that the project goals have been accomplished? The framework should include:

- A list of results you expect to accomplish throughout the project
- 1-2 performance indicators for each result including a detailed definition for each
- The source, method, frequency and schedule of data collection,
- Staff responsible for collecting data.
- How the performance data will be collected
- How data will be reviewed, analyzed and reported

ATTACHMENT B
Budget Template

[CLICK HERE](#) to visit IFES Procurement Notices page and download the budget template

ATTACHMENT C
Organizational Capacity and Past Performance Template

I. Summary

Briefly present your organization’s mission, its core activities, and why it is best suited for this project

II. Human Resources

- A. *Please provide full legal name of organization’s Director and / or Chief Executive Officer.*
- B. *Please provide CVs for the core technical members of the team (the director of the organization training or curriculum experts, project manager etc.).*
- C. *Please provide hiring plan for full and part-time positions the organization including a list of positions and recruitment plan or cost-share with existing positions.*

III. Past Performance

- A. *Briefly describe how your organization’s previous experience prepares it to successfully implement the proposed project; highlight the organization’s relationship and work experience with lawmakers, political parties or government officials if applicable.*
- B. *Please specify previous work in the relevant field.*
- C. *Please list the organization’s major projects from the past five years in the following format:*

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Project Activities</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Award Amount</i>	<i>Period of Award</i>

IV. References:

If applicable, contact information for three references from donor funded projects similar in scope.