

## **The 2014 Audience Engagement Grant Program**

Deadline: July 8, 2014 at 5p.m. EST

### **UPDATES & OVERVIEW**

#### **Who We Are**

The Open Society Documentary Photography Project is uniquely positioned at the cross-section of international human rights, activism, media, and the arts. A distinguishing feature of **our mission is to support individuals who strive to go beyond documenting a human rights or social justice issue to enacting change.**

#### **Audience Engagement: A Mode of Practice**

Since its inception in 2004, the Audience Engagement Grant has come to promote a mode of practice for photographers seeking more concrete impact with their work. Through this grant we acknowledge **how an individual's actions and reach are strengthened through collaboration.** We hope to encourage a wide range of ideas and approaches, and seek the following:

- ◆ Documentary photographers, photo-based artists, and socially-engaged practitioners using photography who move target audiences beyond the act of looking, to directly participate in activities or processes that lead to change around an issue.
- ◆ Individuals who establish meaningful partnerships with others committed to realizing change and who bring a complementary set of skills and expertise.
- ◆ Projects that use photography or photo-based art creatively and innovatively, but strategically in order to reach a project's unique audience.
- ◆ Projects with goals that are ambitious, yet realistic and achievable.

#### **Audience Engagement: The Grant**

We recognize that cultivating collaborations and effectively executing these projects requires significant effort, time, and strategic planning. **In response, beginning in 2014, we will offer two tracks of grant support for individuals at different phases of their work.**

**Track One: Project Development. NEW!** Grantees will receive funding to attend an OSF-organized retreat in December of 2014 where they will participate in training workshops geared toward moving their projects and career goals forward. Attendees will also become part of our Audience Engagement Grant cohort.

**Track Two: Project Implementation.** Grantees will receive funding to execute (or continue executing) their projects as well as attend December's retreat.

## **TRACK TWO: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

**DEADLINE: JULY 8, 2014 at 5p.m. EST**

### **Grant Participation**

The Audience Engagement Project Implementation Grant is a year-long funding relationship and learning exchange.

### **Financial Support**

Each year, we typically award 4 to 5 grants of up to \$30,000.

### **Community & Capacity Building**

**NEW!** In early December of 2014, the Open Society Documentary Photography Project will organize a retreat at our New York City office for this year's Project Implementation Grantees, as well as those selected for the newly launched [Project Development Grant Program](#). When appropriate, we will facilitate opportunities for sharing, feedback, and co-assessment between grantees and program tracks, nurturing a larger cohort of individuals committed to this mode of practice. This retreat will be planned and presented in collaboration with [Creative Capital's Professional Development Program](#) whose nationally recognized career development workshops have served more than 7,000 artists and are designed to provide participants with essential practical tools and strategies to help them effectively move their project and career goals forward. OSF will cover related and reasonable costs incurred for travel, accommodation, and meals.

### **Networking**

Grantees are introduced to relevant Open Society Foundations staff as well as our external network of colleagues in the human rights, arts, philanthropy, and media communities.

### **In return, grantees are expected to:**

- Sign a grant agreement and submit reports.
- Complete your project within the grant term.
- \*Attend the early December retreat. **This is required, so please make note of the event's timeframe and flag in your application if you already know you will not be available.**
- Participate in the grantee cohort both during the retreat and after through co-assessments with your peers.
- Provide exit interviews with DPP staff (or selection committee members).
- Write / speak about your experiences so that practitioners and funders alike can learn how to move this work – and support for it – forward.

### **Application Requirements**

**1) A Work Sample** that demonstrates your artistic ability and practice **as well as a written narrative** explaining your knowledge of and commitment to a social justice or human rights issue.\*

- 20 images + corresponding captions.
- A description of the issue as well as your own experience working on this topic and

with the communities it has impacted.

- \*Preference will be given to projects that address issues and geographic areas of concern to the Open Society Foundations.

Questions to consider for the written narrative:

**2) A Target Audience** should be strategically identified as the group or community that partners want their work to reach and actively involve. Projects whose only goal is to fundraise and/or raise awareness in a general way or to a general audience are not eligible.

Questions to consider when determining a target audience:

**3) A Team.** The project's design as well as goals should reflect the relationships you have cultivated as well as the contributions your partner or partners are making. Each partner should have the skills, track record, and capacity to realize the project. We recommend at least 1 and not more than 3 official project partners.

- For each individual partner, we will need a letter of commitment and CV/resume.
- For each organizational partner, we will need a letter of commitment and mission statement.

Questions to consider when building a team:

**4) A Project Proposal** detailing how an existing or new body of work will be used creatively to move target audiences beyond the act of looking, and directly engage them in activities or processes that lead to change around an issue.

**IMPORTANT: Funding can be used to produce images or new work IF done to serve the project's goals.**

Questions to consider when designing your project:

### **5) A Detailed Budget & Timeline**

Proposed projects can be part of a larger or broader effort, but applicants must submit a focused plan, with a realistic timeframe and budget, tailored for this specific grant.

Questions to consider when organizing a budget & timeline:

**6) Additional materials (optional).** We encourage you to submit any text, video, or imagery that might help to visually aid the explanation of your project's design, presentation, engagement and/or distribution.

## **Application Process**

### **Review & Selection**

Applications will be initially reviewed by the Documentary Photography Project and other Open Society Foundations staff whose work coincides with the proposal topics. A shortlist of semi-finalists may be contacted by email or phone for follow-up questions in August or September, 2014. Finalists will be selected by a committee of outside experts in the fields of documentary arts, education, human rights, and journalism in late September, 2014. If the Selection Committee determines an applicant is better suited for a track other than the one he or she applied for, the applicant will be notified of the Committee's determination.

### **Notification & Announcement**

Grantees will be publically announced in October or November, 2014.

The Open Society Foundations values diversity and encourages applications from all countries. In our selection, we do not discriminate against otherwise qualified applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, or any status that may be protected by applicable law.

**Ready to Apply?** Completed applications are due July 8, 2014 (at 5p.m. EST) using the online system Submittable: <https://osf.submittable.com/submit/28405>

**Does Your Project Need More Development?**

**DOWNLOAD AND READ TRACK ONE GUIDELINES:**

<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/audience-engagement-grant>

**Still Unsure or Have Questions?** Contact Anna Overstrom-Coleman at:

[anna.overstrom-coleman@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:anna.overstrom-coleman@opensocietyfoundations.org)

(Include the subject line, "Audience Engagement Grant")

**We will hold a webinar information session on Monday, May 19, 2014 to explain more about these two tracks of support as well as answer any questions. Please check our page on [Facebook](#) in early May for details on this event.**

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

### **For the written narrative:**

- How is the issue of global, national, or local significance?
- Do the images portray the issue/problem with depth and sensitivity?

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### **When determining a target audience:**

- Who is most directly affected by the problems addressed in your work, and who is most directly responsible for these problems?
- Who can improve the situation you are documenting?
- Who are you trying to reach and activate with your work?

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### **When building a team:**

- What organizations or people does your audience have an existing relationship with?
- Who does your audience trust (or not trust)?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are those of your team?
- What resources or skills do you need to reach your goal and audience, and who can provide them?
- How will you and your partners make your unique roles clear to everyone involved?
- Have your partners ever worked with artists? If not, how can you bring them into your creative process?
- What are the goals and values shared by all partners? What is your team's shared theory of change?

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### **When designing your project:**

- What do you and your partners want to achieve with this project – what would success look like to everyone involved? What would failure look like?
- How do you and your partners define effectiveness in this particular project? How do you measure it? How do you plan to evaluate the impact of your project?
- How will you incorporate the community and audience into your project's goals? How will the community you photographed inform and participate in the design and execution of your project? How will you bring them into the art/change-making process, but still maintain your own authorship?
- How will you and your partners translate your goals and message visually?
- What presentation and distribution tools, platforms, and/or venues make the most sense for your specific audience and goals?
- How can you create an innovative, interactive, memorable experience for your audience?

- How can your project sustain your audience's interest and engagement over time?  
How can your team create a sustainable project?
- Does the project connect to existing campaigns around the issue you are addressing? Who could take the lead on carrying your project forward after the grant is over?
- Are there artists or activists who have done similar kinds of work to draw on for inspiration? Do you have a way to ask for their guidance or support?

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**When organizing a detailed budget & timeline:**

- How much time can you and your partners commit?
- Who has the skills and capacity to oversee the finances and time management of this project?
- What are benchmarks for the project that can be used to check-in with partners and assess what's working/what's not?

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