**Announcement of Call for advocacy proposals under**

**COVID-19 Solidarity Program in the Eastern Partnership countries**

*A Comprehensive Response to Emergencies Threatening Key Populations in Eastern Partnership countries*

**About the Program**

*AFEW International* in cooperation with *AFEW-Ukraine* has launched the regional **“COVID-19 Solidarity Program in the Eastern Partnership countries”** with the financial support of the European Union. This project will support community-based organizations (CBOs) to respond to the immediate and longer-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the **Eastern Partnership** countries. ***AFEW International*** together with ***AFEW-Ukraine*** the **Netherlands Helsinki Committee** is part of the consortium led by **People in Need**. The consortium has the goal of enhancing the capacities of CSOs to effectively respond to short- and medium-term needs and influence longer-term policy reforms that support vulnerable groups and those disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 as a disease may have consequences linked to its pathophysiology for those with a health condition such as people living with HIV (PLWH), people with (history of) tuberculosis or with viral hepatitis, or other health conditions. The impact of COVID-19 on their individual medical condition is not likely to be different in EECA then elsewhere in the world. However, the epidemiology of some of the risk factors in EECA is such, that they are likely to have a substantial impact on certain populations, e.g. because of the relatively high burden of tuberculosis, especially drug-resistance TB.

Marginalized groups of people, including **Key Populations** have poor access to health services, in particular in the Eastern Partnership countries. Hence, it is commonly believed that marginalized groups are more likely to also have hindered access to COVID-19 related services. This can be influenced also by the stigma and discrimination

COVID-19 Solidarity Program in Eastern Partnership countries strives for a comprehensive response to emergencies threatening Key Populations as the aftermath of COVID-19. It includes the long-term pandemic influence on their operations, including challenges related to maintaining their sustainability, such as policy changes limiting basic civil society freedoms, the safety of activists and human rights defenders’ concerns, stability of funding and growing refugee and health system crisis in the region.

Through **small grants** to CBOs, working with Key Populations, with activities ranging from advocacy and prevention, to treatment and care in terms of COVID-19 implications, based in Eastern Partnership countries, *AFEW International* together with *AFEW-Ukraine* respond to arising and anticipated post-pandemic challenges.

As a final activity of the program, *AFEW International* together with *AFEW-Ukraine* launches **this call for advocacy proposals** to disburse grants to CSOs that address the immediate COVID-related health and socio-economic needs of Key Populations, and enable them to continue supporting their usual constituents by advocacy activities focused on their further sustainability.

The list of Key Populations whose rights will be advocated within the project:

* **Sex Workers**
* **LGBTQI**
* **MSM**
* **Women vulnerable to HIV**
* **Migrants**
* **Adolescents and/or Youth**
* **People Using Drugs**
* **People Living With HIV**

**Project goal and activities**

The proposals should serve for advocacy and advocacy communication purposes in order to provide prompt response to the most pressing public health and human rights issues related to Key Populations in the post-COVID environment and be related to the most pressing emergencies in the region.

The activities can include advocacy and communication online and offline campaigns and strategies and cover additional staff members to plan and implement such activities. We encourage the use of social networks as advocacy platforms and collaboration with other organizations to create visibility and attract as much stakeholders' attention to the most pressing issues as possible.

The activities for advocacy and communication should seek to achieve the communication goals: to inform, to persuade and move to action selected target audiences (e.g. decision makers, opinion leaders, specific professionals etc.) with specific developed messages and visuals.

**Funding available**

With this call for proposals *AFEW-Ukraine* aims at supporting advocacy projects of previous program subgrantees from Ukraine with small grants in the period of **September 2022 – November 2022**. The maximum amount per grant is **€ 4 200**.

**Assessment of Applications**

Call for advocacy application to promote the COVID-19 Solidarity Program for the Eastern Partnership countries in Ukraine is restricted to civil society organizations from Ukraine, who successfully completed their projects financed in the previous calls for proposals within COVID-19 Solidarity Program in the Eastern Partnership countries in Ukraine during 2020-2022. Applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be scored based on the selection criteria by independent Selection Commission. Applications will be assessed after the **deadline (14 August 2022 at 23:59 (Kyiv time)**. Decisions will be made within 2 weeks. We aim to initiate transfer of the funds within **14 days** after a positive decision.

**How can CBOs apply**

In order to apply, please follow these simple steps:

1. Fill out the application form. An application shall be submitted in Ukrainian (or English). The deadline for submitting the form is on **14 August 2022 at 23:59 (Kyiv time)**. All proposals submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.
2. Send the form to the following email address: **Iryna.nerubaieva@afew.org.ua** **(responsible Project Manager of *AFEW-Ukraine*)**. Once submitted, you will receive a notification of receipt.
3. Wait for the decision of the Selection Commission regarding your application. The review of the applications will be done within **2 weeks** after the deadline. The decisions will be announced no later than **by the end of August 2022.**
4. If you have questions, please refer them to the above-mentioned email address.

The proposal should be sent before deadline and should include:

* completed Application Form;
* drafted Budget;
* the organizational and banking details.

NOTE: All the mentioned above documents need to be submitted at once.

**Eligibility Criteria for COVID-19 Emergency Grants**

**Eligibility criteria for the applicant**

* Applicant is a **Community based organization (CBO)** or represents the interests and needs of the following groups:
	+ Sex workers
	+ LGBTQI
	+ Men who have sex with men (MSM)
	+ Women vulnerable to HIV
	+ Migrants
	+ Adolescents and/or youth
	+ People using drugs
	+ People living with HIV (PLHIV)
* Applicant is based in *Ukraine*. Only projects submitted by organizations who were previously subgrantees of *AFEW International* and/or *AFEW-Ukraine* under this program will be considered. COVID-19 Solidary Program for Eastern Partnership countries operational team shall be able to receive sufficient information about an applicant and can request information about applicant’s capacities from mentioned partners. An applicant can be a national or regional network. Proposals by individuals will not be taken into consideration for funding.

**Eligibility criteria for the application**

* Projects address the immediate COVID-19 related health and socio-economic needs of Key Populations by advocacy activities enabling them to continue supporting their usual constituents.
* Advocacy activities respond to a situation that threatens the health, and/or the physical or juridical safety of one or more people from the above target groups, addresses the challenges related to the refugee crisis or threatens the financial and/or legal situation of an NGO/CBO.
* The activity will be used as a tool for local, national and/or international advocacy for preventing similar emergencies occurring in the future.
* The activities to relieve an emergency will be immediately implemented (starting no later than 1 September 2022) and will last no longer than **3 months**.
* The proposal is submitted in **Ukrainian or English**.
* The proposal is submitted through the provided email before the deadline on **14 August 2022 at 23:59 (Kyiv time).**

Organizational information is collected with care and delicacy. Information will be stored in a secured database.

**Selection Criteria for Emergency Grants**

After an application is found to be eligible, the application will be assessed by the Operational Team based on the selection criteria for COVID-19 Emergency Grants.

**Selection criteria**

1. The situation is qualified as **emergent** according to provided background information.
2. **Relevance** of proposed activities: Are the proposed activities in the given context relevant for solving the emergency situation by advocacy?
3. **Sustainability** and **Advocacy**: Is proposed plan sustainable for this activity and for the advocacy? How likely is that the situation will improve after the activities have ended?
4. **Budget** is clear and reasonable and the demonstrated need for items is clearly indicated, and is **within the limit of 4200 EUR.**
5. **Capacity** to implement the proposed activities. Does the applicant have sufficient capacity to implement proposed activities?

Each criterion is scored from 1 to 5. Only applications with an average score higher than **3.5** will be considered for funding.

Reviewing the applications, we will keep the following in mind:

* We will prioritize activities which are not (easily) fundable through other means.
* We will prioritize activities that will present measurable results, addressing the causes of and striving to find more structural solutions for an emergency, and thus benefiting larger target groups.
* In the portfolio of grants, we strive to have all mentioned key populations represented.