



**Company:** Lever for Change  
**Conference Title:** Stronger Democracy Award – Pre-Registration Training Webinar  
**Date:** June 7, 2021  
**Conference Time:** 1:00pm Pacific Time

Talia Gibas: Thank you again for joining today's webinar for the Stronger Democracy Award this is a Pre-Registration Webinar.

Talia Gibas: My name is Talia Gibas. I am a program officer with Carrot, the agency that is supporting Lever for Change and ICONIC Capital and Additional Ventures for this challenge.

Talia Gibas: This webinar is being recorded and we will post the recording on the news and updates page of our website Stronger Democracy Award later this week.

Talia Gibas: We will also email the recording to those who have registered for the Stronger Democracy Award we have reserved most of our time over the next hour for your questions.

Talia Gibas: So first Lever for Change will further welcome you and provide some additional background regarding the stronger democracy Award.

Talia Gibas: will also hear from Sasha host of Additional Ventures and then also get some more information about the scoring rubric for this challenge.

Talia Gibas: I will then do a very quick walkthrough of the challenge website highlighting key information, you need to know, and then we will open things up, for your questions.

Talia Gibas: So ask questions come up please type them into the Q&A tab and we will answer as many as we can, within our allotted time and members of our team will also be typing responses to your questions, as we are able.

Talia Gibas: Before we move on some very important dates to keep in mind.

Talia Gibas: The deadline to register for the stronger democracy award is coming up in a little more than two weeks Tuesday June 22, and you must register to be eligible to apply.

Talia Gibas: Then the deadline to submit that application is Thursday July 22.

Talia Gibas: We will also be hosting the Pre-Submission webinar on Wednesday, July 7.

Talia Gibas: At 10:30am Pacific time, please save that date and note that the link to sign up for that session will be emailed to all registrants following the registration deadline.

Talia Gibas: If you have any questions that were not able to answer today or that pop up after we're done, you can always reach us at questions at stronger democracy award.org and with that I am very pleased to virtually turn things over to loosen Hoffman of lever for change.

Muhsin Hassan: Thank you Italia, and welcome again to the stronger democracy or what pre-registration webinar my name is Muhsin Hassan, Awards Director for Lever for Change.

Muhsin Hassan: level for changes that affiliate of MacArthur foundation our mission is to unlock significant philanthropic capital.

Muhsin Hassan: and help bold philanthropists accelerate positive social change around the world's biggest challenges.

Muhsin Hassan: lever for change managers and stronger democracy award on behalf of our competition sponsors and donor partners additional ventures philanthropists support and lie to Herman, as well as others in our iconic in fact.

Muhsin Hassan: We are very excited to have you join today and we look forward to reading your proposed solutions on how to strengthen American democracy.

Muhsin Hassan: Before we continue with our agenda, we have some exciting news to share with you all.

Muhsin Hassan: I'm very happy to inform you that we have received a new sponsor from the iconic impact Community will provide an additional grant to this competition.

Muhsin Hassan: That means that there will be three separate awards two awards worth \$ million dollars, one from additional ventures and then the other one from the new donor from the iconic impact community as well as the third award which would be worth \$ million from support and Florida Herman.

Muhsin Hassan: Before we continue with our agenda, I'd like now to introduce Sasha Post was the program Director of Climate and Democracy at Additional Ventures to give us a brief overview of the award.

Muhsin Hassan: And why and what the competition sponsors are really looking for and hoping to achieve

through this award so at this point I'll turn it over to Sasha.

Sasha Post: who's in thanks so much hi everybody, my name is Sasha post as missing mentioned a direct democracy program at additional ventures.

Sasha Post: So this is a new program we're still getting our sea legs under us but we're excited to be partnering

Sasha Post: With Muhsin in and the Lever for Change team and the Iconic Impact team on this Stronger Democracy Award.

Sasha Post: As I mentioned, you know we are going to be looking in this award for applications for ideas.

Sasha Post: that are innovative, that are really pushing the envelope in terms of the ambition that they are bringing to this work, because when we look around us and we look at them.

Sasha Post: State of American democracy today it's not always pretty, I think, as you guys all know better than we do, and so you know we're looking for things that we think can really help to not only address you know specific.

Sasha Post: aspects of these challenges but have the capacity to scale and have the capacity to really make a large difference at hopefully something you know approaching a national scale, at least at some point in the maturation.

Sasha Post: We are as, as you know, from looking at the materials, looking at the website really open to a wide range of types of interventions that run the gamut from.

Sasha Post: Voting and elections policy making different forms of civic engagement, but I think you know across all these things, what we're looking for.

Sasha Post: Our solutions and ideas that are going to have the potential to release teams that the structures and the underlying rules.

Sasha Post: that govern our democracy or change basic norms and practices of democracy at fundamental levels so.

Sasha Post: Again we're humbled and excited to be able to offer some support to this this prize and competition, and I think I'm just at this point, going to.

Sasha Post: cut this short and hand it back over to Muhsin in to get into the real nitty gritty here, which I think is what people are here to hear about.

Sasha Post: about the scoring criteria and all the ways that we're going to be looking at the application process and proposal so without further ado back over to you.

Muhsin Hassan: So much Sasha, thank you for that overview and Sasha mentioned, we are looking for innovative scalable solutions.

Muhsin Hassan: In the solutions that are really your best place actions to inform us about. With that in mind, I would just like to take a few more minutes here.

Muhsin Hassan: Before Talia walks us through the details of the competition process eligibility criteria and just focus on the scoring rubric.

Muhsin Hassan: As we kind of discuss what we consider to be a strong application and what would make your application or your solution.

Muhsin Hassan: Competitive so without further ado let's just dive into that very quickly, you will see on the website that there are.

Muhsin Hassan: four key criteria, each with a score of one to five, and I really encourage you all, first to please go ahead and check out the organizational resonance to fill that out.

Muhsin Hassan: And once you've determined that your team is a good fit for this award.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, please go ahead and start working on the application and, as you work on your

application I highly encourage you to refer to the scoring rubric on the website so you can see what are the key criteria that we've outlined and what would make your proposal, strong and competitive.

Muhsin Hassan: So back to the scoring rubric you'll see that the first criterion is transformative and here we're really asking.

Muhsin Hassan: How or you know does your strategy really address systemic barriers to reduce polarization to strengthen institutions improve processes in our democracy and incentive participation.

Muhsin Hassan: To create lasting impact on our democracy, beyond the funding period so as we have you've probably seen from the rules, we hope that the awards here will be over five years.

Muhsin Hassan: However, we recognize that you know this work, you know needs to be funded and needs to continue beyond five years so I'm really hoping to see.

Muhsin Hassan: Innovative solutions that you know will actually tap into whatever networks that you bring to bear, whatever networks that you have.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, at your disposal and continue to have impact beyond the grant period, so a strong application you'll see if you scroll through the kind of difference, or is an application that will really articulate a powerful strategy.

Muhsin Hassan: With well-defined goals and outcomes that get at those systemic barriers and as a result, you know, have the ability to really deliver sustainable results and create this long-term impact that we're all seeking.

Muhsin Hassan: So that's really the first criterion and adjust here is that you know we're looking at solutions that get at the systemic barriers.

Muhsin Hassan: And not just addressing the symptoms of what we see are kind of the problematic elements or symptoms that have you know kind of.

Muhsin Hassan: arise due to the weakening of our democracy, so that's really the first key criteria in there, so if you have any questions, please type them in the box and we can have a fuller discussion around that um the second criteria you'll see is innovative.

Muhsin Hassan: And here, you know we're not asking for entirely new or novel you know ideas you'll see the way we've defined innovative is really.

Muhsin Hassan: A solution that offers yes novel or original concepts either, though in the strategy itself or the approach.

Muhsin Hassan: And that's really to look at how do you how you improve in the effectiveness of existing efforts in a way that fundamentally strengthens democracy in the US so.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, a strong solution will be one that activates original concepts in a strategy that is groundbreaking.

Muhsin Hassan: But on top of that one Australians are also complements and improves existing efforts so.

Muhsin Hassan: We don't want to see we're not expecting an innovative solution to be something you know completely new that nobody's ever heard of I mean.

Muhsin Hassan: We want to be realistic on cost, you know.

Muhsin Hassan: But we are asking you to really outline how are you building upon existing efforts, how are you improving those efforts and really you know, taking them to a whole.

Muhsin Hassan: Other level and that's really what we're defining as innovative and is, as you scroll through the different scores there, you'll see what you know, a strong a score five or four.

Muhsin Hassan: is really something that you know activities original concepts, but really you know compliments and improves existing efforts which goes through our definition of innovative and what we consider to be an innovative strategy.

Muhsin Hassan: The third criterion as you'll see on the site is feasibility or a strategy that is feasible, and this is really where we look at the capacity of your team to implement the solution.

Muhsin Hassan: You know we're also asking you know, do you have a track record or the team that you've put together, does it have a track record the capacity, as well as the relationships to succeed.

Muhsin Hassan: or in the case where these are not there, do you have a strategy to build that capacity.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know we encourage collaborations and partnerships; we understand that you know some of these solutions will entail.

Muhsin Hassan: Different teams that have maybe even not worked together before are coming together to put something strong and competitive and that's fine.

Muhsin Hassan: But you know, under this criterion, we will be looking at what is your strategy to build the capacity in terms of relationships, for example, are to execute and deliver results.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know you'll see that we're asking does the approach also reflect an understanding of the costs right the implementation costs.

Muhsin Hassan: we've asked you to you know to budget for \$ million solution, so we want to see, though, are these realistic costs right if an advocacy program, for example, is budgeting.

Muhsin Hassan: You know very you know small kind of or small figures towards advocacy and or kind of lobbying that will not really be in line with you know, achieving the results that you've outlined, so we ask you to just think about those things.

Muhsin Hassan: In addition to an understanding of the implementation costs, we also want to see a good understanding of the context, and that includes the risks and barriers, and how are you actually you know going to mitigate some of these risks.

Muhsin Hassan: You know how you are, building on the context in which you're operating, and we can discuss in detail later.

Muhsin Hassan: The context is obviously the US we understand some solutions might be focused at the state level others might be more federal others might be within cities or you know a number of states, so you know,

whatever the concepts that you've outlined.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, given your solution, we want to see that you're bringing you know to kind of to work with a strong team that reflects a strong understanding of the context that neutral operating.

Muhsin Hassan: As well as you know, other team that you have and other networks that you're bringing and those relationships so that's what feasibility or a feasible.

Muhsin Hassan: or this criterion is really looking at so it's really around the team and the capacity of the organizations that are working together to really deliver the results.

Muhsin Hassan: And then, finally, are the last criteria and is scalable so here we're really asking you know, is there evidence.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, to demonstrate that you know this solution can be effectively expanded, you know replicated and or adapted to other contexts, really.

Muhsin Hassan: But the key point here is, can we do all these things, while retaining effectiveness arm so that's something that you know, obviously the.

Muhsin Hassan: The sponsors you're interested in We understand that you know, there might be some solutions that you've kind of piloted already.

Muhsin Hassan: You have been you know you've seen some great results in some contexts and maybe this might be the time for you to kind of take it to the next level, and you know, a \$ million grant would allow you to do that, so we would like to see some evidence of.

Muhsin Hassan: You know that that that your solution can do this can be effectively expanded, in addition to that.

Muhsin Hassan: What about the team right is the team prepared to position the strategy as a model solution for others, so we don't expect you to be working in all states, for example.

Muhsin Hassan: But if a solution has the ability.

Muhsin Hassan: Or you know can be offers an opportunity for other communities to learn from it and replicated and tailor it.

Muhsin Hassan: And you know achieve some results that would be a very strong and competitive solution as far as we're concerned, and given the criteria that we've outlined here, so you know, this is a very.

Muhsin Hassan: Just brief overview of the criteria, but as I said, I highly encourage you, once you've you know gone through the organizational readiness to and you've determined that you are indeed eligible.

Muhsin Hassan: And you have worked, you know you've started wanting in your application, please go.

Muhsin Hassan: Through this the scoring rubric refer to it and make sure, whatever solution, you are, you know devising when you're developing.

Muhsin Hassan: hits these four criteria and make sure that you know you're really landing at that four to five scoring range and not you know the lower kind of scoring ranges that you have there.

Muhsin Hassan: happy to answer your questions, after this, but at this point I'll hand it over back to Italia from carrot, who will offer more detail on the application itself eligibility criteria and other aspects of the competition process.

Talia Gibas: Thank you so much Muhsin and thanks again to Sasha as well.

Talia Gibas: So as new medicine mentioned your first step in determining whether you are a good fit for this opportunity.

Talia Gibas: Is the organizational readiness tool and I see we've already had several questions in the Q&A tab.

Talia Gibas: about things like what type of organization might be eligible, so you want to pay attention to this deep.

Talia Gibas: The organizational readiness tool is on our website, as you can see, you can access it from the main drop-down menu, and this tool will walk you through several questions.

Talia Gibas: That clarify eligibility for this challenge.

Talia Gibas: So, as has been mentioned, we are looking for projects that are designed to address systemic barriers and advanced structural reforms and voting and elections policymaking.

Talia Gibas: And or civic engagement to help the United States Government fully and competently represents citizens organizations must be within the United States.

Talia Gibas: And they must either be a C three or a C four there's an important note here, though, which is C four registrants must plan to include a C three partner who can receive funds from a donor advised on kidney donor advised fund on their application.

Talia Gibas: Solutions must also be evidence based so that's something I'll have to keep in mind and the organizational readiness tool further clarifies what we mean by that.

Talia Gibas: Individuals for profits and government agencies are not eligible to apply, but they may participate as a partner with an eligible organization.

Talia Gibas: proposed solutions may also include lobbying as a part of their budget, but the lobbying cannot comprise more than % of the overall budget.

Talia Gibas: So you can see, going through this organizational readiness tool on your screen there's several additional questions to please, please, please take the time to go through that.

Talia Gibas: If you answer yes to each of those questions, then we do encourage you to take the next step, which is to complete the registration process.

Talia Gibas: As I mentioned registration is required for you to be able to apply it's a very simple process if you go to the upper right-hand corner of any page on the website.

Talia Gibas: you'll see this button that counts down the number of days to register to you just click on that, and you will then be instructed to create and confirm your account.

Talia Gibas: So quick note here once you have registered using your email address, we do ask that you be sure to add questions at [stronger democracy award.org](https://strongerdemocracyaward.org) to your contact list.

Talia Gibas: This is very important to make sure that you directly receive notifications from us, including important deadline reminders and other updates, so please, please do that as well.

Talia Gibas: So after you've created that registration account, you'll see that there are some prompts to add some additional basic information about your organization, and this was just so that we can better understand our registering community.

Talia Gibas: You will not receive an email confirmation of your registration, if you are able to access the.

Talia Gibas: Online platform, including the forums and the back end of the application, that means that you have registered successfully and again that deadline to register is coming up in a little over two weeks on June at pm Eastern TV Pacific time.

Talia Gibas: So just to talk a little bit more broadly about this challenge the stronger democracy award as all our challenges.

Talia Gibas: is rooted in the values of openness, transparency, and fairness and so we really want to be sure that everyone who registers and applies for this opportunity.

Talia Gibas: knows exactly what is expected of them how they're going to be scored and who will be evaluating their solutions, and so the stronger democracy award website is meant to be an instructional guide for you to understand that process.

Talia Gibas: So there's several places to further dive in to better understand what is being looked for here, I talked about the organizational readiness tool.

Talia Gibas: moment ago, listen also talk through the scoring rubric another great resource to take a close

look at is the application so you can access the full text of the application.

Talia Gibas: Even before you register it's available to any visitor on the site, this includes all the questions the prompts the requirements and the word count limit so you're able to see all of that.

Talia Gibas: And that should help you assess whether or not you want to move forward the application has a number of sections, as you can see, and so you are encouraged to read over all of them, so you have a good grasp of what is required in order to submit a competitive application.

Talia Gibas: And so that will give you a pretty good sense of what you need to do in order to apply the next question, of course, is how your application will be evaluated and here, I will just very quickly refer back to the scoring rubric that we talked about.

Talia Gibas: I won't say much more than he already has other than to reiterate that there are several detailed in the rubric that really.

Talia Gibas: explain what each of these traits mean in this context that context.

Talia Gibas: You can toggle back and forth between the scoring ranges for any given trait and you'll see phrases appear that further.

Talia Gibas: provide further detail on what a high over such a low score means for the strongest democracy award so this really defines of what will make a strong proposal and it is also the same tool that.

Talia Gibas: will be used throughout the evaluation process, as both the peer to peer and evaluation panel of judges review the application so I'll explain right now what that means, and this is really getting into the nitty gritty of what the scoring will look like after the applications are submitted.

Talia Gibas: So, following the application deadline on July seconds all eligible submissions will move into peer to peer review and during this.

Talia Gibas: Time each lead applicants with an eligible submission will be required to score and comments on five application from other organizations, using the same scoring rubric that we just looked at this is a requirement of participation.

Talia Gibas: So again, if you do submit an eligible application, you will then later need to review and score five other applications.

Talia Gibas: What happens then is that once peer to peer review is complete a subset of the top scoring applications will move on to the next phase, which is the evaluation panel.

Talia Gibas: And on the website, you can see a list of the confirmed evaluation panel members so not only will you receive scores on your application from.

Talia Gibas: Five of these individuals as well as five of your fellow applicant peers, but you will also get written feedback, so, in addition to the numeric scores.

Talia Gibas: All the written comments that are provided to justify each score.

Talia Gibas: will be provided anonymously to applicants after the evaluation process is over, and we have found in the past that the feedback is one of the most important aspects of participating in our challenges.

Talia Gibas: Even if you are not ultimately selected as a finalist or awarded a grant you walk away with valuable feedback that you can then use to refine your solutions and perhaps pick up other funding or extended support.

Talia Gibas: So of course this does raise another common question, which is the so many people participating and peer to peer review and the evaluation panel, how do we ensure that the process is fair.

Talia Gibas: Here I will also point on our website to a page that we have that's dedicated specifically to the normalization process.

Talia Gibas: So I mentioned that each valid application is scored by five Hello applicants and then a subset is further scored by five members of the evaluation panel.

Talia Gibas: This of course means that not every applicant and not every judge can look at every application, so there is a normalization process, make sure that you are not disadvantaged if by chance you, you are assigned to.

Talia Gibas: A reviewer who is naturally a little bit harsher and another applicant is reviewed by someone who tends to be a little bit more lenient, so we do go through a process of rescaling and normalizing all the sports and.

Talia Gibas: That that this page on our website goes through a lot of detail about how that works, we encourage you to read over that.

Talia Gibas: A few other quick features that I want to point out to you the first is the rules page on our site and this lays out all of the legal stipulations for teams that govern their participation, it also.

Talia Gibas: lays out the eligible eligibility criteria and full and goes into the detailed terms and conditions required of all participating teams.

Talia Gibas: And then, finally, we have a timeline page, and this is extremely useful as we get closer to some of these dates it details each phase of the challenge.

Talia Gibas: So as we've mentioned that registration is required and must be completed by Tuesday June 22

Talia Gibas: Then looking a little bit further the application deadline is Thursday July 22

Talia Gibas: Following that we move into a period of administrative review to ensure that all the applications are indeed met the.

Talia Gibas: eligibility criteria and then peer to peer review takes place over a period of several weeks.

Talia Gibas: In late summer so this has happened, independently over this period, all the applicants will use our online scoring platform to evaluate and comments on their assigned application, so please make a note of these dates.

Talia Gibas: As you move forward and then you can further scroll through the timeline to see some of the other key dates that are related to this challenge.

Talia Gibas: there's also a news and.

Talia Gibas: updates page on the site a series of Frequently Asked Questions So if you have not yet done a deep dive on all of the information that is included here we do encourage you to do so, as you determine whether or not to move forward and hopefully decide to register for this opportunity.

Talia Gibas: And with that I believe this time to move on to the Q amp a portion of the webinars so please continue to add your questions to the Q amp a tab and we'll get to as many as we can in the next half hour or so.

Talia Gibas: Please note that to ensure fairness, we are not able to provide guidance specific to your proposed solution.

Talia Gibas: So we encourage you to take the organizational readiness tool and review the pages on the website to determine if you are a good fit.

Talia Gibas: And I have seen also that we've received a number of questions in the Q&A tab again just asking to clarify before the, the number of awards, given the announcement that was made at the top of the webinar.

Talia Gibas: So again, the website will be updated on Monday to reflect this, but the full award amount is now, awards of million will be made.

Talia Gibas: So with that let's dive into your questions, my colleague Taylor Raul is here to read your questions out loud and we'll get to as many as we can so Taylor.

Talia Gibas: Okay.

Taylor Rowell: First question we are contemplating a submission to the strengthening democracy, competition, but had a question, involving a potential partner that would be working with us.

Taylor Rowell: The partner organization as an independent entity but would be considered a partisan group that works deeply on resolving election issues at the state and local level, is there any restriction in the competition to involve what would be considered a partisan organization.

Muhsin Hassan: Thank you, this is a good question um so strictly speaking, there are no restrictions regarding the partisanship of partners.

Muhsin Hassan: The restrictions that we really have pertain to the eligibility rules of the competition, so I urge you to please go and refer to that section of the website.

Muhsin Hassan: And once you are on that section, you'll see that the requirements or restrictions are really that the lead organization applying must be either a c3.

Muhsin Hassan: we just ask that the team also include a c3 that could receive funds from a death.

Muhsin Hassan: Are we also ask you to please note that any lobbying activities are restricted to up to % of the \$ million budgets so having said that.

Muhsin Hassan: you'll notice that there are no, you know rules around partisanship, if you do have an organization that is part isn't.

Muhsin Hassan: You know that's something to consider, then, as you kind of think about the criteria that we just mentioned.

Muhsin Hassan: Correct So if you think about you know if you are proposing to work on, you know in in areas where you know you kind of have.

Muhsin Hassan: You know mixed constituency, for example, or you need to engage state legislature, that is, you know, have a different party.

Muhsin Hassan: So, you know that would speak to the strength of the application if, in that case.

Muhsin Hassan: All the all the partners that you have, are you know heavily partisan organizations, then it might limit the.

Muhsin Hassan: impact or efficiency right, I mean I'm not going to be a judge on the on the you know competition itself, but I can tell you, you know, this is one thing that you know, a judge might look at and say well.

Muhsin Hassan: You know if all these organizations are republican organizations, for example, how are you going to be efficient, you know if you're trying to deal with you know.

Muhsin Hassan: Other constituencies or other entities that might not be of that you know party or what have you so Those are the questions I would urge you to ask.

Muhsin Hassan: yourself as you think about the strength overall strength of your application your solution, however, there are no restrictions around partisanship per the rules of this competition.

Taylor Rowell: Great next question I'm a postdoctoral fellow at a university we do a lot of psychological research on political polarization.

Taylor Rowell: And we're currently designing projects on collective action and peaceful versus violent protest I'm curious if you are funding this type of psychological research or if you're interested in funding projects that are more at the structural institutional level.

Muhsin Hassan: This is, this is another good question um so as you can see, or you've heard from this webinar and the speakers have gone.

Muhsin Hassan: before me what we're looking for, are you know these innovative solutions that that really are you know, trying to address.

Muhsin Hassan: or Dr structural reform to help the US Government more fully and effectively represent its people.

Muhsin Hassan: um it's a strong solution are those that will address the systemic barriers and help advance some of these structural reforms.

Muhsin Hassan: With the objective of you know incentive, the government to be more responsive to the broader electric and really ensure that our government is staffed with high quality, high functioning institutions and people.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know these are the solutions that you know I would say, would be competitive.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, we also hope that the solutions that are kind of you know, put forth a do have evidence that you know.

Muhsin Hassan: The solution is a model that could be expanded replicated So if you think about scalability and what we just discussed right; those are the key kind of factors that will make your

Muhsin Hassan: Your application or your proposal, a strong one or competitive one, so you know, while psychological research isn't really the primary focus of this award.

Muhsin Hassan: If you do have robust evidence that shows you know, a specific course of action is effective.

Muhsin Hassan: Right and could help, for example, address one of the three focus areas, whether it's civic in the engagement as an example here.

Muhsin Hassan: You know I would you may consider submitting an application that supports that course of course of action, so you know what I would encourage you, is.

Muhsin Hassan: Whatever the approach if it's a psychological research project, please refer to the scoring rubric and ask yourself.

Muhsin Hassan: Do you really you know, would you do, would you score highly on each of those criteria that we just outlined and we and we kind of did a very brief overview on and that should really help guide you and inform whether or not you know your application will be competitive.

Taylor Rowell: Great this next one's a little long so bear with me.

Taylor Rowell: Section five of the Rules notes that award funds may not be used to make a grant to an organization not involved in the implementation of the proposed solution.

Taylor Rowell: To make a grant to any individual for travel, study, or other similar purposes or to make a grant to any organization, except in compliance with the provisions of Section G or H.

Taylor Rowell: However, Section applies to private foundations, and we are a public charity so I'm not sure how this would be interpreted for us.

Taylor Rowell: Additionally, five seen notes that aggregation to philanthropic capital by organizations that re grant to nonprofit organizations is a prohibited use of funds.

Taylor Rowell: Whereas the FAQ specifies that funds may not be used for aggregating philanthropic capital for the purpose of re granting to other organizations who are not partners in your application.

Taylor Rowell: We are hoping to understand if this is fully prohibited or just limited to re granting to partner applicants, can you please clarify what would be permissible in terms of three grants or sub granting if the primary applicant is a public charity C three.

Muhsin Hassan: Thank you this, this is a good question it's a long question, but the answer is actually not that long so I'm in case it's not clear what we're basically trying to say here is that I'm.

Muhsin Hassan: REE granting or sub granting to other organizations is an eligible use of.

Muhsin Hassan: The award funds, so it can have you know some grants, or one should rebrand to other organizations, the only condition, though, is that these grants or sub brands that you're offering.

Muhsin Hassan: Are for the implementation of the proposed solution that you've put forth in your application so you know where it's simply saying you can't.

Muhsin Hassan: Your solution cannot be you know, give us \$ million, so we can create this fund and then just start giving money to other organizations.

Muhsin Hassan: We would like to know what is the end that these organizations are trying to achieve.

Muhsin Hassan: And you know so we're asking that the solution, you know the sub granting or the grants that you know re granting mechanisms that are employing.

Muhsin Hassan: Be still focused at the implementation of the solution that you've proposed and now for general activities that are not.

Muhsin Hassan: unrelated to the project so that's really the key kind of directive there or restriction around some granting or rebranding.

Muhsin Hassan: Also, we do ask that you know you notice that all of the rules do apply to the some grants so, for example, you could not use award funds to grant to an organization that will then turn around and issue.

Muhsin Hassan: And issue an academic scholarship to individuals right because we've said those would not be you know that's not an eligible use of grants for of the awards.

Muhsin Hassan: The funds from this award so again, you can rebrand to other organizations to partner organizations, provided that.

Muhsin Hassan: That re granting is still trying to address the proposal is part of the solution that you've proposed and not really for kind of you know just unrelated or.

Muhsin Hassan: General operating activities and what have you and that the restrictions around funding individuals for studying or fellowships or you know scholarships those restrictions would also apply in the case of re granting to other organizations.

Taylor Rowell: Okay next question can evidence for the proposed solution draw upon comparative international experience, which is in the early stages of testing in the United States is the expectation to operate at a federal level or state and or more locally focused initiatives welcome.

Muhsin Hassan: Yes, so it is perfectly fine to draw from evidence from other countries provided you, you make a convincing case and explain why and how you think you know such.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, such an approach, you know, is applicable in the United States, so you know just tie it to the context that we're addressing and that should be fine.

Muhsin Hassan: The second component of the question around expectations, the answer is that no, you do not need to operate the federal level, we understand that you know.

Muhsin Hassan: transformative impact, you know it doesn't necessarily mean.

Muhsin Hassan: You know the size, or you know, the number of states we you know we understand that one can truly have transformative impact just focusing on.

Muhsin Hassan: Specific states or even specific counties within states so that's completely fine, we do not expect that you know folks are working at the federal level and engaging you know each partner in the space.

Muhsin Hassan: We do ask that whatever solution you put forth you just think about the holistic kind of nature.

Muhsin Hassan: And the key stakeholders that would need to be engaged for you to be you know effective in implementing that solution so that's all that's all we're asking for, but there is no expectation that.

Muhsin Hassan: You know folks are operating at the federal level meaning state or local initiatives are more than welcome to kind of apply and would be considered.

Muhsin Hassan: competitive and strong, provided they meet those you know they would score highly based on the rubric that we've outlined and provided for you on the website.

Taylor Rowell: next question to clarify how many grants will be awarded in total, who is the donor and what is the amount of the third award.

Muhsin Hassan: So I believe Talia already answered this but to just clarify again there will be three different awards.

Muhsin Hassan: One award will be worth \$ million coming from additional ventures another award the second one would also be \$ million coming from an anonymous donor.

Muhsin Hassan: In the iconic impact community, and then a third award of \$ million from support and vital Herman so there'll be three separate awards two awards of \$ million each and one award of \$ million.

Taylor Rowell: We are a C three and are considering identifying and supporting candidates to represent communities and local elections, could you clarify the lines and limitations between these activities lobbying and other activities supported by the grant.

Muhsin Hassan: This is a good question, so the restrictions around you know lobbying, for example, are so that we ensure that organizations are complying.

Muhsin Hassan: With its rules and operating in a way that does not compromise their C three status, so you know we can offer you legal advice.

Muhsin Hassan: What I would say here is that you know you are best placed to understand as a C three how you've navigated you know lobbying and advocacy and your best you know you know this.

Muhsin Hassan: better than I am I do really on what you can do and the limitations, you know that surround you know you as an organization or the IRS has placed really given that your C three so always saying is.

Muhsin Hassan: We want to make sure that folks don't compromise their C three status, so if you are planning on doing significant lobbying.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, we would encourage you, then, to partner with the five months before.

Muhsin Hassan: Because they do have a lot more flexibility to do those activities, so you know we cannot offer legal advice here, but we do urge you to go back.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, as folks who work on these issues and on the ground, you know you know best how to navigate these questions.

Muhsin Hassan: We don't have any restrictions from the competition's perspective or the award itself we're just making sure we want to make sure that.

Muhsin Hassan: We do not compromise your c3 status, if you are a 501c3

Muhsin Hassan: And in the case that you want to do more, lobbying that's where we've you know we've created the room for you to be able to partner with five once the forest and then have them do kind of the bulk of the lobbying activities.

Muhsin Hassan: The only other restriction that we've mentioned, is that, whatever your approach you know at least % of the \$ million.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, need to be able to be funded to work through a death, meaning the recipient must be a C three organization, so those activities.

Muhsin Hassan: Are you know, should be able to allow you to retain your C three status as you continue functioning and operating so that's really the that's really the rationale behind these restrictions.

Taylor Rowell: If an organization has two unique ideas, is it possible to submit both with the understanding that only one might get funded.

Muhsin Hassan: So I would urge you, here, to refer to the rules of the competition where you'll see that we do have a paragraph providing some direction on.

Muhsin Hassan: In the case of organizations that would like to submit multiple applications and the simple answer is that an organization can only submit one application as the lead applicants.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know you could serve as a partner on a different application.

Muhsin Hassan: Provided that that application is proposing a separate and distinct solution, so if these are two unique ideas are, we would urge you, then, to you know really focus on.

Muhsin Hassan: One idea that you think as a team and the team that you've put together.

Muhsin Hassan: offers you the best chance really to you know to succeed and put together a competitive

application so that would be our you know advice to you that.

Muhsin Hassan: Please focus on one solution and in the case that you know you're still want to kind of pursue the other solution.

Muhsin Hassan: You cannot really do that as a lead applicant, so you know, maybe think about another organization that you can partner with and they could submit that as the lead applicants and you could be on that application as an as a partner organization.

Muhsin Hassan: But the short answer is that you can only submit one application as the lead applicant.

Taylor Rowell: Realistically speaking what size or scale of organizations are you expecting will be strong candidates I work for a small organization that focuses on the state level.

Muhsin Hassan: This is a good question and I would encourage you to maybe you know go through.

Muhsin Hassan: On the level for change website, you can you can check out the ball social network and see some of the organizations that have risen to the top of our competitions and you know all competitions and you'll notice that.

Muhsin Hassan: There isn't really you know restriction around small organizations, you know, one of our competitions that we recently just concluded.

Muhsin Hassan: The Larson lamb iconic impact award awarded the \$ million award to an organization whose operating budget is around \$ million annual operating budget.

Muhsin Hassan: And you know, in the pool of finalists you had large organizations with budgets have over \$ million, so you know this really shows that it, you know.

Muhsin Hassan: Our process really looks at the strength of the solution based on the rubric and, if you look at the rubric there's not really any reference to.

Muhsin Hassan: The size of an organization, so you know, again, I understand the concern here, but I think we

can confidently say as level for change that we're really trying to.

Muhsin Hassan: make this play a level playing field and make sure that all organizations, regardless of their size, can participate and rise to the top and move on to the to the final stage.

Taylor Rowell: Is registration include title of the project or other project details or just information about the organization.

Taylor Rowell: As part.

Talia Gibas: Of the registration form is quite brief, it does not include any details about the project it's only some basic information about your organization.

Taylor Rowell: How many applicants have registered so far and how many groups are you expecting to apply.

Muhsin Hassan: A we don't really release this information, especially at this stage, you know we recognize that you know there's still.

Muhsin Hassan: A few weeks left before the deadline so you know, we do expect a robust participation, based on previous competitions, but at this stage we don't really, really, you know inform you release this type of information around numbers are, but we do expect a robust participation.

Taylor Rowell: Can the grant period be less than five years we are likely applying with multiple groups and so million over five years across multiple groups would not have the impact we want.

Muhsin Hassan: Yes, this is a good question, so I'd like to clarify that there is flexibility break free regarding the grants period.

Muhsin Hassan: And details on the frequency, as well as the size of disbursements will really be worked out with a donor team.

Muhsin Hassan: If you are selected as a finalist and are selected as the body or award recipient, one of the three awards, so this flexibility here are there isn't a requirement that you fill out.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, every year, we do expect that this should be a multi-year grant.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know if your solution, for example, you know makes sense to be implemented over three years, if you make a compelling case as to why three years you know makes sense.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, please, please go ahead and do that we don't expect you to kind of develop a very detailed budget, not at this stage, especially so if you do you know move on to the next stages and especially if you are.

Muhsin Hassan: One of the finalists organizations that will be selected after the evaluation panel.

Muhsin Hassan: there'll be room for flexibility here and we'll be working with you over a three-month period to really refine.

Muhsin Hassan: Your ideas and revise your proposals, so these details will be answered at that point, but to just answer the question, right now, the budget is very high level and does not really need to be broken down by year, so this flexibility here.

Taylor Rowell: Should all applications budget for million and then will you have to readjust if you get the million grant or what we submit to different budgets.

Muhsin Hassan: So at this stage of the competition all budgets are that are being submitted must be submitted for \$ million, as I mentioned, or maybe we did not but.

Muhsin Hassan: After the evaluation panel is conclude it concludes in January of, we will be working with the donor team to select up to five finalists' organizations.

Muhsin Hassan: And these five up to five finalists again, so these could be three or four or five, but these finals organizations will then work with our team at Level four change, as well as a technical partner.

Muhsin Hassan: over a three-month period where we'll be revising your proposals will be also considering the comments that you've received from peer to peer as well as the evaluation panel.

Muhsin Hassan: take those into account, and you know, strengthen your proposal, and refine it so it's really at that stage that you know we can get into the details of.

Muhsin Hassan: Multiple budgets and what have you, but at this stage we're asking every applicant to Please submit a budget of \$ million on the application that you're filling out.

Taylor Rowell: I understand that the team must include a C three to receive funds from a death, but a C three cannot transfer funding to a see for so can part of the award be distributed from an entity, other than adapt so that the part of the award can go to a see for.

Muhsin Hassan: Yes, part of the award will be distributed from other than a death, we expect that at least \$ million.

Muhsin Hassan: will be coming from a death and that's why we asked that adapt see three be part of the team, so you know you're right on the money here that part of the award will be district just will be distributed from an entity that is not a bath.

Muhsin Hassan: So if you are a see for don't really be concerned, we will be able to you know to award the funding towards your team, so you know that's not really.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, a huge obstacle here and that's all we ask that you do have a C three as a partner organization, so we can leverage the different entities that we have in terms of you know, funding and make sure that you know the full proposal is able to be funded.

Thank you.

Taylor Rowell: Can lobbying also include a ballot measure campaign.

Muhsin Hassan: yeah again so you know our restrictions around lobbying, you know cannot really are not meant to provide you know legal advice here it's fine.

Muhsin Hassan: If you can include a ballot measure campaign if you're able to do so if you're a C three, for

example, and that does not compromise the C three status.

Muhsin Hassan: Please, you know feel free to do so if you're a C for arm and you know you're able to do this without any repercussions really in terms of.

Muhsin Hassan: You know kind of IRS regulations, then you know that's fine.

Muhsin Hassan: We simply asked that whatever activities that you know are classified under lobbying also be part of you know.

Muhsin Hassan: Also fit in well with the overall strategy right so that's really what we're aiming to do here that whatever strategies folks are proposing.

Muhsin Hassan: Are you know strategies that are robust, are you know strong prayer the criteria that we've outlined on in the scoring rubric.

Muhsin Hassan: And are ones that would be you know feasible and you know, can be implemented successfully, so it can include an array of activities.

Muhsin Hassan: But you know we leave it up to you as folks who work on these issues, or you know, honestly, you know best, you know place to kind of figure out the nuances here to decide what types of activities, you want to include as part of lobbying or outside of the lobbying activities.

Talia Gibas: This is telling you I also just want to point out folks might not have seen it, there is also a lobbying policy that is referenced in the application so it could go to the application page.

Talia Gibas: And do a quick search for lobbying you'll be able to see some further and further details there's the provides a little bit more information.

Taylor Rowell: Alright next question can you speak more to the relationship part of feasibility, do we need to work in a coalition with others to be feasible.

Muhsin Hassan: So this really depends on whatever solution you're proposing, so I would say, you know the

direction would offer here is, you know as you develop your application as you develop your solution.

Muhsin Hassan: Are we want you to ask yourself, you know who are the key stakeholders that would be necessary for this, for your proposed solution to succeed.

Muhsin Hassan: And then you know ask yourself what relationships, do you have with those stakeholders so that's really what you know what we want to we're trying to drive the point that we're trying to drive home here.

Muhsin Hassan: There is no requirements that you work in a coalition, but we have seen that you know the strongest applications from most of our prize competitions have been those that you know, have had.

Muhsin Hassan: a good strategy that engages key stakeholders in whatever you know focus area or avenue.

Muhsin Hassan: The approaches or solution is focused on so that's really what we're aiming to do here by emphasizing, you know relationships capacity and stakeholders under the feasibility criteria, but it is not a requirement that that folks working coalition's.

Taylor Rowell: If the lead applicant does not have current does not currently have the capacity, the organizational capacity to administer million will you accept a strategy for how to access that how to access that capacity, excuse me.

Taylor Rowell: For example, through a fiscal agent.

Muhsin Hassan: Yes, that would be acceptable, and you know if you look at the application, you know, there are risks, for example, our risk and various section I believe.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know, this would be something to highlight there and you know this would.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, in my consideration be a strength, where you, it shows that you're realistically, looking at the risks that you know your solution faces and you've outlined a mitigating.

Muhsin Hassan: mitigating strategy here, so you know, this would be perfectly acceptable, also known as a

multi-year grant \$ million over five years is not.

Muhsin Hassan: You know a lot of money, so you know those are points there to consider, but to answer the question, a strategy that you know shows how an organization is mitigating the risk here in terms of absorption capacity for funds would be acceptable and very encouraged actually.

Taylor Rowell: Can you talk about the kind of evaluation that is recommended and is there opportunity for any research and the expenditures of the grant.

Muhsin Hassan: So I believe the organizational readiness tool, as well as a website outlines the types of evaluation that we're asking.

Muhsin Hassan: So you know they range from in rigor really, they could be.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, external assessments of impact, so you know if it's rct or quasi experimental studies and what have you so really that's really at the high end of rigor.

Muhsin Hassan: To just even you know internal evaluations depending on you know where your solution is, so somebody had asked for example around a question around.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, looking at international examples and using a solution that is really in the early stages of implementation in the US, so in such a case.

Muhsin Hassan: You know you you're probably not going to have a rct or even an external evaluation.

Muhsin Hassan: But you might have internal evaluations or outcome assessments and that would be okay so we're simply just asking for people to think about.

Muhsin Hassan: How to discuss their evidence and present evidence that you know would just add to the convincing or add to you know, making a.

Muhsin Hassan: convincing argument as to why your solution would be effective and deserves our funding.

Muhsin Hassan: So that's really the expectation around evaluations as to the question around opportunity for research, we do emphasize monitoring, evaluation and learning so if you are including such.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, such an opportunity, or you would like to pursue some research, for example in terms of monitoring and evaluation, especially.

Muhsin Hassan: That would be an acceptable use of funding, so you know just outline that please in the in the solution that you're proposing you know highlight why.

Muhsin Hassan: Research, or whatever you know, research, you want to do is important for your solution and how you hope to benefit from that and have that informs kind of the larger strategy, so those would be acceptable uses of the funds.

Taylor Rowell: A tire how we have four more minutes left, would you like to take one or two more.

Talia Gibas: I would say that two more.

Taylor Rowell: Okay perfect so next one, is there a required format for the MOU agreements with partner organizations.

Muhsin Hassan: There is a required format, and I also since we're not asking for Emily us at this stage of the competition, I really.

Muhsin Hassan: You know, urge you to not really focus too much on that piece, but we have given some guidance on MOU on the website, so I would urge you to refer to that guidance, but as you'll see it's quite broad We simply want to see.

Muhsin Hassan: A document or something that would be legally binding that outlines that you've thought about working with different partners and outlines the different responsibilities that these partners would have.

Muhsin Hassan: That you know would ensure the implementation of the project is successful, however, this is not a requirement at this stage, so when you do submit your application in July.

Muhsin Hassan: we're not going to ask you to submit and will you so please you know don't worry too much about this piece at this stage.

Muhsin Hassan: This is.

Talia Gibas: Talia for folks who are looking for that guidance, it is also on the application page of the website so if you go to that page and do a quick search for memorandum, you will find a link to that page.

Taylor Rowell: All right man lead organization based in the US work with international partners, whose goals mirror their principles of the stronger democracy award in terms of promoting democracy at a global scale.

Muhsin Hassan: So the focus of this competition is strengthening democracy in the US.

Muhsin Hassan: If you have international partners who would you know, be brought in, and work on solutions that again are targeting strengthening democracy and these barriers that we've addressed or talked about.

Muhsin Hassan: In the United States that would be acceptable, however we're not really looking for solutions that would be working outside the US, the scope and focus of the competition currently is strengthening American democracy, so we hope that the solutions are going to be focused on the US.

Taylor Rowell: I will pass it back to you at this point.

Talia Gibas: Thank you, sorry it took me a second to unmute myself so sorry about that, so thank you so much to everyone who submitted questions and thanks to everyone.

Talia Gibas: Who are taking the time to join us this afternoon, so if you have more questions our email address is questions at stronger democracy award.org we will get back to as soon as can.

Talia Gibas: If you have not already done so, please complete that organizational readiness tool.

Talia Gibas: If you do find that you are a strong fit the deadline to register is Tuesday June 22, it is a requirement to be eligible to apply.

Talia Gibas: Once you register, please add questions at [stronger democracy award.org](https://strongerdemocracyaward.org) to your contacts, this will help ensure that you receive messages from.

Talia Gibas: A recording and a transcript of this webinar will be made available to register via email, it will also be posted on the news and updates page of [struggling democracy award.org](https://strongerdemocracyaward.org) in the coming days.

Talia Gibas: Thank you again so much for joining us we really look forward to learning more about your efforts and I'll hand things back to Muhsin for some closing remarks.

Muhsin Hassan: Thank you so much, on behalf of lovely change additional ventures support on Florida, as well as the economy impact community, I would just like to thank you again for taking your time.

Muhsin Hassan: to join us today, please you know feel free will share our recording of this webinar so please feel free to share it with your partners.

Muhsin Hassan: and colleagues and as Talia mentioned, we will follow up with answers to other questions that we did not get to but thank you again for your participation, and we really look forward to reading your applications once you submit them into Thank you again.