

Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) Program Annual Program Statement

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) Program started in Zimbabwe in 1980. Awards are granted to registered non-governmental, non-profit, community-based organizations to implement short-term (e.g. 12-month), small-scale (e.g. between \$2,000 - \$10,000) sustainable income-generating development projects that include significant community involvement.

Each project is expected to:

- Improve basic economic or social conditions at the community or village level;
- Support high-impact, quick-implementation activities that benefit a large number of people within one year.
- Be capable of continuing without requiring further SSH assistance after one year, or when the grant ends;
- Involve a significant local contribution in cash, labor, or material, and be within the ability of the local community to operate and maintain;
- Be in direct response to the initiative and aspirations of the local community (the local sponsors of the project, who will also be its prime beneficiaries); and
- Not initiate, continue, or supplement technical assistance programs

The SSH Program has several funding sources that provide financial support to grantees. Each funding source has a specific mandate:

- 1. Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) Fund** - Focuses on community-initiated income-generating projects. These projects can relate to natural resource management, wildlife conservation, water/sanitation initiatives, nutrition programs and other community projects.
- 2. United States African Development Foundation (USADF) Fund** - Funds community-initiated income-generating projects.
- 3. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Small Grants Program** – Invests in income-generating activities that improve care, support, and economic conditions for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

Applications for these funding sources can be submitted at any time during the year. Submissions are reviewed in a competitive and transparent manner by technical committees comprised of U.S. Embassy employees. Committees evaluate proposals on criteria such as:

- Alignment with SSH Program Goals
- Feasibility of Design
- Organizational Capacity
- Sustainability/Financial Self-Reliance

The SSH Program receives many applications for funding each year but only a handful can be supported. For complete information including program guidelines, eligibility requirements and forms, please visit the [U.S. Embassy Ambassador's Special Self-Help website](#).