



Veterans For Peace
Howard Zinn Fund Committee
April 28 2013

HOWARD ZINN FUND PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The VFP Zinn Fund committee has developed these guidelines to help chapters develop effective projects that make a concrete impact for the VFP mission of peace and justice. We realize that many people do not have a strong background in setting goals, project planning to achieve these goals, and proposal writing. So we provide the following information assist those VFP chapters who are considering submitting a proposal to the Howard Zinn Fund to support their projects. Note that the Zinn Fund committee is continually discussing these guidelines and trying to update them to be as helpful as possible... so please keep checking back!

THE HOWARD ZINN FUND

In keeping with the VFP mission, the main purpose of the Howard Zinn Fund is to **further peace and justice**.

- The Zinn Fund provides **small grants** to VFP chapters and members to support events, programs, and projects that result in greater peace and justice.
- Grants will be awarded **twice a year**, the first of March and September, and must be submitted by the announced deadline in order to be considered for that review period. Normally, proposals must be submitted through chapters, and all applications must be submitted [online](#) through the Veterans For Peace website (under the "Zinn Fund for Chapter Activities" tab). Applicants are limited to one award within a two-year period.
- The main intent is to provide **seed money** up to \$1,000 to help innovative projects get started, depending on funds available. In general, the Zinn Fund does not support ongoing projects.
- Applicants are required to provide **matching funds** of 50% of the total amount requested. (For example, if a grant request is for \$1,000, the applicant must raise or contribute an additional \$500 towards the project.)
- The Zinn Fund does **not** support operational costs. For example, the fund does not support chapter administrative staff, volunteers costs, rental of facilities, equipment, furnishings, and utilities.
- Grant recipients are required to submit **progress reports** to the Zinn committee on their project twice a year. A **final report** must be submitted to the Zinn committee within two months of the completion of the project, and any unused funds must be returned to the Howard Zinn Fund at this time.

HOW WILL THE ZINN FUND COMMITTEE SEE YOUR PROPOSAL?

The Howard Zinn Fund Committee uses the following **criteria** to evaluate each proposal, in comparison with the others submitted during the particular review period:

Project Goal

- The applicant defines the planned outcome of the project for peace and justice, and clearly explains exactly how the project will result in greater peace and justice, including any multiplier effects towards this end. (The applicant does not simply assume that peace and justice will somehow result from their activities.)
- The applicant indicates the specific measures that will be used to determine how much difference has been made for peace and justice as a result of the project.

Project Plan

- The applicant clearly explains the specific audiences to be impacted by the project, the activities that will make the desired impact on these audiences, and a schedule for implementing the project and realizing the outcome for greater peace and justice.
- The applicant clearly explains how the larger community will be effectively mobilized to support peace and justice, and indicates the specific roles each of the participating parties will have in achieving changes for peace and justice.

Project Budget

- The applicant provides a detailed budget for the expected costs of the project, the funding sources for covering these costs, how the required 50% matching funds will be raised.
- The applicant explains how the project will be self-sustaining (rather than relying on a continuous infusion from the Zinn Fund).

We recommend that you **use these criteria** to review your own project planning... before the Zinn Fund committee sees your proposal. Even better, get others to review your draft proposal, and give you feedback on how well your project meets these criteria. Keep in mind:

- We are deciding which projects are most likely to result in greater peace and justice. We will be comparing your proposal with the others submitted for review, and so will be asking ourselves which of these project will produce the best outcome for peace and justice?
- Our focus is not necessarily the particular issue itself, because in general most issues are relevant to the VFP mission. So we are really looking at how well the applicants are able to plan and pull off their project so it results in greater peace and justice.
- You are the one who has to help us see and understand how your project will make a difference for peace and justice, and that you are able to pull this off. We have an intense period of reviewing all the proposals submitted, and we should not have to guess whether you yourself see the potential outcomes of your project or have a sound plan to achieve these outcomes.

What **questions** do we have we ask ourselves when we compare different proposals?

- Did the applicant even **examine these Proposal Guidelines**? For example, we try to make it clear that a project has to make a difference for peace and justice, but we regularly see proposals where applicants want to have an art event, make signs, take a "peace trip", or other activities without any mention of how it will impact on peace and justice. Sometimes, we may see great potential in projects for peace and justice, but if the applicants do not see this themselves should we gamble with the Zinn funds when that the potential will not be realized?
- Did the applicant **examine the actual questions in the Application Form**? For example, the application form calls for an explanation of the audiences to be impacted, for matching funds to be committed, etc., but many times these questions are not addressed at all. So the proposal will get a lower rating than other applications, and has little chance of the limited Zinn Funds being awarded for that project.
- Did the applicant **plan the project thoroughly**, or throw the proposal together at the last minute? Developing a project that will make a significant impact for peace and justice takes in-depth critical thinking, comprehensive planning, and coordination with others to make sure it will effectively impact on the public, political policy, etc. We make announcements about application deadlines a couple of months in advance, and offer workshops to help VFP chapters and members develop their projects. Those proposals that are carefully planned are far more likely to get high ratings and be funded, compared to a project that is all enthusiasm and no substance.
- Does the applicant recognize that making an impact for peace and justice usually involves **changing the public mindset and political policy**, and building popular support for peaceful alternatives to armed conflict? What is the buy-in of the larger community that will lead to success? How will the project actually change people's views and feelings? How will the project change political policy?
- Does the applicant recognize that a **collective effort** usually has a broader and deeper impact than a one-man show? How will the group work together and with others in the community to make a difference for peace and justice?
- Does the applicant see the Howard Zinn Fund as a resource for charity or arts only, or as a **resource for achieving greater peace and justice**? While a particular charity or arts project in themselves may be worthy, these do not fall within the purpose of the Zinn Fund.
- Is this a project only to make the applicants feel good about themselves, or will it actually **make a difference for peace and justice**? Feeling good about ourselves may be valid, but this does not fall within the purpose of the Zinn Fund.
- Do the applicants **expect the reviewers to be psychic**? ☺ We recognize that it is human nature to assume others think like we do and know what we know, but the reality is that people experience life differently. As reviewers, we unfortunately have limited time to devote to any one proposal, and are not mind readers or clairvoyants. As you put yourself in our position, you can see that it really helps us when the project goal, plan, and budget are explained clearly for a broad audience. We simply cannot do the work for you. The committee discusses each proposal and shares our assessments with each other, but if we all get a point right away we can come to a conclusion much quicker. This is why we strongly recommend that applicant **ask others to look over draft proposals** and explain back what the project is all about. When several others understand clearly, then we are more likely to understand clearly.

HOW TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE PROJECT

Based on the proposals we have received, the Zinn Fund committee urges chapters who are considering a project to address several issues in their planning:

- We strongly urge chapters to plan your project well in **advance** of the deadline, months instead of days. It is obvious that most proposals are prepared at the last minute, and so when we compare projects that is not clearly thought to the few that are comprehensive in their planning, it is clear where to invest the Zinn funds to make a difference for peace and justice.
- What is the **goal** of your project? We have found that many projects are based on enthusiasm and good intentions, but often lack adequate thought about what will be the actual outcomes for peace and justice. What results do you want to make for peace and justice when the project is done? How will you know you actually made an impact... and how will you know that you have actually made a difference for peace and justice?
- Make your project a **team** effort. You will ask yourselves the questions that the committee will ask in reviewing your proposals. In some cases, we have had proposals from different members of the same chapter who had obviously not talked with each other, much less had the proposals approved by their chapter.
- Also, **ask others** (particularly those who have had experience with grant proposals) to review a draft of your plan. Ask them to evaluate your ideas based on the criteria that the Zinn Fund committee use ourselves. Then ask them to explain to you what they think you want to do and to ask you questions about your project. This will let you know whether your ideas are clear (or not) so others (like the Zinn committee) can understand them. This will help you to better plan what you plan to achieve and how you will go about effectively achieving your goal as you prepare a proposal.
- In writing your proposal, check to make sure you address each of the **review criteria** and each question in the Application Form. We will! And we will compare your proposal with the others being reviewed. Put yourself in our place - how will we decide which projects have the greatest potential for peace and justice?

We regret that the Zinn Fund can currently provide only limited resources. So Zinn Fund awards will be made on the basis of which projects are most likely to have concrete results for peace and justice, and the demonstrated ability of the applicant to achieve these impacts, as indicated by thoughtful planning for the project.

In order to be fair to all applicants, the Howard Zinn Fund committee cannot comment on the particular contents of your project, but we are happy to explain the purposes and procedures of the Zinn Fund. We are also happy to discuss the above guidelines so you can think through your planning more comprehensively. If you have any questions about the application form or process please feel free to contact us at:

Zinn Fund Committee
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