

Active Communities



The Active Communities program empowers organized citizens to improve their communities through training and grants. We support them in solving everyday problems, utilizing local resources, and building collaboration. We follow their needs and provide financial and advisory support to help realize their ideas. The projects we support stem from the energy, dedication, and efforts of people in communities—without thematic limitations, guided by real needs.

Who Can Apply?

We support citizen associations and informal groups that:

- Initiate and actively engage citizens in their activities
- Advocate for the common interests of their community
- Have been established for no longer than 10 years
- Have an annual income not exceeding 1,200,000 dinars (for associations)
- Do not have access to significant funding from other donors or direct ties to international agencies and funds
- Are located in Serbia

Informal groups are groups of at least three people gathered around solving a community issue and are not formally registered.

What Topics Do We Support?

A community comprises people united by shared values, needs, and goals. The Active Communities program supports them in launching initiatives that bring about change. A community is not just a group of individuals but a network of interactions based on solidarity, equality, and respect for diversity. Whether connected by space, interest, or need, organized citizens have the power to shape their environment—from local neighborhoods to online spaces and minority groups. Communities can include local communities, ethnic minority groups, marginalized groups, LGBT+ communities, online communities, and more.

The Active Communities program provides space for various topics and approaches in line with the needs identified by organized citizens. The initiatives we support can include:

- **Initiatives aimed at improving conditions and circumstances within communities**, considering the rational use of community resources (including social and natural resources), and ensuring safety for all citizens.
- **Initiatives that engage community members** in the restoration and/or improvement of public spaces are recognized as important gathering and socializing areas. Regardless of their differences, physical or digital spaces for social organization and exchange among community members can be defined as public spaces.

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- **Initiatives that bring people together around common goods** (such as water, air, rivers, shores, parks, green spaces, forests, bike lanes, public spaces, education, knowledge, information, and culture), as well as those that advocate for public and shared interests and the protection of citizens' rights—especially the rights of marginalized and multiply marginalized groups (e.g., the right to housing, access to community services, etc.).
- **Initiatives that adapt their community activities** by introducing new methods, tools, and alternative approaches in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We invite you to collaborate with your community to identify priorities and develop ideas for collective action. Let's make the most of existing resources—time, knowledge, experience, and the support of those willing to contribute.

When planning your project, consider the following aspects:

- **LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT** – How can you create conditions for future community initiatives through collective action to improve living conditions for all?
- **PARTICIPATION**—How can you ensure the active and broad involvement of as many people as possible, allowing them to contribute in different ways to your project and future community activities?
- **EMPOWERMENT** – How can you create opportunities and open space for individuals and groups to recognize and advocate for their rights and attract, gather, and utilize various community resources?
- **DOMINO EFFECT** – How can your ideas and activities inspire others to join you or develop their initiatives based on your example?

Are There Any Restrictions on the Use of the Grant?

Funds cannot be used to support individuals, businesses, or public institutions. They can also not be used for political, discriminatory, religious, or exclusively commercial activities or humanitarian aid.

Grants cannot be used for:

- Purchasing medical equipment or medical services
- Renovating spaces that are not owned by the association implementing the initiative
- Construction and infrastructure projects, except for small-scale construction work that encourages community engagement
- Purchasing equipment, except when it is essential for implementing activities and ensuring future sustainability

Due to ownership concerns, informal groups are not allowed to use the allocated funds for equipment purchases.

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How to Apply?

Present your idea by filling out the online Concept Idea Form, available during open calls.

How Many Times Can You Apply and Receive a Grant?

You can apply multiple times with different ideas. However, you have already received a grant. In that case, you can use it again only after submitting the complete final narrative and financial report. Within the Active Communities program, you can receive support a maximum of two times.

Program Stages

- **Step 1:**

After receiving your concept idea, the Trag team checks whether it meets the program's essential criteria for further consideration.

- **Step 2:**

Following the principle of participation, we want to involve previous program participants—those who have successfully mobilized their communities around shared issues—in the decision-making process. As the Activist Board, they will evaluate projects based on program criteria and select 20 initiatives for further support.

- **Step 3:**

Representatives of the 20 selected associations and informal groups will attend the "Mobilizing Communities" training, led by advisors from Trag Fondacija. This training will equip them with knowledge and techniques for community action, from identifying needs to planning and implementing activities.

- **Step 4:**

After the training, participants are expected to organize community discussions to develop a detailed project proposal and budget with the involvement of community representatives.

- **Step 5:**

The final project proposal is submitted.

- **Step 6:**

An Independent Grant Committee, composed of five members, makes the final decision based on the project proposal, budget, training advisor reports, and evaluations from the Activist Board.

- **Step 7:**

If your project is approved, you will have two weeks to gather the necessary documentation. The grant agreement will be signed collectively at Trag Foundation, where you will be introduced to procedures, support mechanisms, and reporting requirements. The funds will be disbursed upon the signing of the agreement, and the program team will provide ongoing support.

Selection Criteria

Successful projects will be selected based on the following five program criteria:

- **Relevance and importance of the issue for the community** – Is the issue you are addressing relevant to your community, and does the proposed solution meet its needs?
- **Level and method of active community involvement** – Do the activities at different stages (from planning to implementation) involve contact with the broader community? Does the project encourage and engage a wider group beyond those directly affected by the issue, including community members not part of your association or group?
- **Benefits for the community** – Does the project have the potential to bring positive change to the community, how long will its impact last, and can it inspire new models and practices?
- **Coherence and feasibility of goals, activities, and budget** – Will the proposed activities lead to the desired goal, and are the proposed costs aligned with planned activities?
- **Authenticity of the association/group and its connection to the community** – Is the work of the group/association recognized by the community, does it enjoy the trust of community members, and does it respond to their needs?

Priority Is Given To:

- Associations/groups from areas outside major urban centers
- Ideas from newly formed groups and associations
- Initiatives proposing and implementing new approaches to collective action

Grant Amount

The allocated funds range from 200,000 to 400,000 RSD per project.

Project Duration

Your project can last between 6 and 12 months.