



Russia Civic Hosting Themes

The 2009 **Russia Civic Hosting Program** will offer the same themes as the 2008 Russia Civic Hosting Program: **accountable governance**, **rule of law**, and **social issues**. A small number of delegations will be formed in a cross-theme approach with a focus on child protection, foster care, and the legal framework for international adoptions. A number of the exchanges hosted under the **accountable governance** theme will have a special focus on community economic development, environmental management, or libraries. The **rule of law** theme has two major hosting components: (1) the specialized rule of law program, which focuses on judicial reform, and (2) the civic rule of law program, which focuses on specific rule of law issues such as anti-human trafficking, legal advocacy, and legal training. The **social issues** theme is composed of three sub-themes: *social services*, *health-care provision*, and *elementary and secondary education*. The hosting of delegations with a special focus on “women as leaders” will be an option under the accountable governance and social issues themes.

The cross-cutting thematic programs that focus on *child protection*, *foster care*, and *the legal framework for international adoptions* are intended to give delegates a thorough understanding of the social services and legal institutions charged with ensuring the safety and well-being of both American-born children in need and foreign adoptees. Additionally, the programs will seek to promote partnerships between the delegates and others involved in child welfare in their home countries, and individuals and institutions in the United States who work in these areas, for the purpose of fostering future ongoing collaboration and the exchange of ideas and information.

The host-community visit should give delegates firsthand experience with their professional counterparts’ daily work routines and offer a view of American life through community and cultural activities and home-stays.

The Russian delegates will prepare for their host-community activities by attending a pre-departure program in Moscow, respectively, and an orientation program conducted in Washington, D.C. If feasible, grantees will meet with their delegates and make brief presentations on their organizations during the domestic orientation. The domestic orientation program will provide an overview of the delegations’ focus theme(s); federal, state, and local governments and their interrelationships; the balance of powers; current issues in U.S. governance and politics; the rights of individual citizens; and American culture. Delegates will be introduced to the Center’s initiatives to foster ongoing professional and community networks, including Open World’s Digital Directory (dd.openworld.gov). The delegates will also learn about American home life and practices to prepare them for their home-stays.

Hosting themes: their rationales, target groups, and suggested activities

Accountable Governance

Rationale: In recent years, Russia has started implementing local self-governance reforms that expand the number of municipalities and give local authorities both more autonomy and more responsibility for providing basic public services. As a result, new and established local governments need to hire and train staff; take on new budgeting, planning, and service-delivery

responsibilities; promote local business development; and become more proactive, responsive, and accountable. Publicly supported libraries need to provide free, equal, and equitable access to information for all people in the community, to help enable an educated citizenry to exercise their civic rights.

Target Group: Mayors, city managers and other municipal administrators, regional and local legislators, civic and political activists, policy researchers, journalists, government spokespersons, public services providers, NGO leaders, local business leaders involved in community development, environmental managers, and library professionals. Delegations may be composed of people from the same community or region (to support sister-city partnerships, specific projects, or cross-sectoral programming) or of people holding similar positions in different cities or regions. Within this theme, Open World may also host a limited number of delegations with a special focus on community economic development, environmental management, or “women as leaders.”

This theme may also include delegations of national- or regional-level leaders and policy experts involved with policies affecting local self-governance.

Possible Grantee Activities: Local programs on accountable governance would emphasize administrative capacity-building, transparency, service delivery, financing of government services, government spokespersons, community economic development, and environmental management. Possible topics include local-government planning; state-local relations; citizen participation in government; constituent services; budgeting, accounting, and auditing; government-employee training; government recordkeeping and public records; revitalization; public-private economic development partnerships; government communications; and election administration and procedures. Programs should emphasize the particular types of local governance, economic development, or environmental management activities being undertaken by delegation members.

Appropriate activities for accountable governance delegations include: meeting with national, state and local legislators and other elected officials; job-shadowing county executives, mayors, and city managers; having workshops with independent government auditors, city planning and zoning officials, press officers, voter registration and election officials, and state municipal-league officials; visiting private voluntary organizations involved in community development and improvement; touring wastewater plants and volunteer fire departments; attending budget hearings; and holding Q and A with city-desk editors, reporters, and political party representatives.

Appropriate activities for community economic development delegations include having roundtables at chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and banks; briefings with state and municipal economic development and tax officials; and site tours of public-private economic development projects, business incubators, and local businesses.

Possible focuses for environmental management delegations are environmentally friendly development projects; reclamation efforts; ecotourism; civic initiatives; and the conservation of parks and reserves. Energy and the environment, including the issues of nuclear cleanup and nonproliferation, may also be explored by some of these delegations.

Library delegations hosted in 2009 will focus on how governments in the United States provide online information and other services to citizens. Possible activities include meetings with government officials regarding e-government, visits to public, school, university, and specialized libraries; demonstrations of virtual libraries and electronic access to government documents and services; and discussions with library boards, friends-of-the-library organizations, and library users.

Possible settings for delegate presentations include city council meetings, university seminars, forums at public or academic libraries, and civic-association meetings.

Rule of Law

Rule of law is one of the foundations of civil society. Russia established significant rule of law measures in the early and mid-1990s, and passed major judicial and legal reforms in 2001–2002. Through Open World’s “specialized rule of law program,” individual U.S. federal and state judges host Russian judicial delegations in cooperation with Open World grantees. Open World’s rule of law programming is designed to build on the gains made during the 1990s, to support the implementation of the more recent reforms, and to provide comparative insights into legal education, juvenile justice, and the prevention and prosecution of human trafficking and domestic violence.

- **Specialized Rule of Law (Judicial and Mixed Delegations)**

Rationale: The Russian government, in accordance with its constitution, has separated the judiciary and judicial administration from the executive branch and improved judicial pay in order to enhance judicial independence and curb corruption. In addition, trial by jury for criminal cases has been reintroduced. The Russian government has also given priority to increasing the efficiency of judicial administration, which will require better-qualified and better-trained staff.

Target Group: Specialized rule of law delegations will be composed entirely of judges¹ or be a mix of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other legal professionals.

Possible Grantee Activities: Delegates might explore U.S. approaches to court proceedings, the jury-trial process, the adversarial system, plea-bargaining, alternative dispute resolution, law enforcement and corrections practices, and the legislative process. Other possible topics include judicial independence, judicial ethics, juvenile justice practices, financial dispute resolution, and judicial administration. Appropriate activities include job-shadowing experiences; courtroom observations; judges’ roundtables; site visits to corrections facilities; and group discussions with U.S. judges at both the federal and state level, officers of the court, court administrative staff, and victims’ services providers. Possible settings for presentations, consultations, etc., by delegates include bench and bar association meetings, law-school colloquia, meetings of advocacy groups, and panel discussions.

¹ The hosting locations for the Russia specialized rule of law program will, for the most part, be determined by the Open World Leadership Center in cooperation with the Committee on International Judicial Relations of the U.S. Judicial Conference, and the professional hosting program will be organized by a host judge. Each U.S. host judge will be matched with a local host organization that will provide logistical and administrative support and assist with program planning.

- **Civic Rule of Law**

Rationale: The recent judicial reforms in Russia demand improvements in legal education and practice and a redefinition of the role of the judiciary in civil society. In addition, the judiciary is combating the perception that the courts are still not open and transparent.

A specific rule of law challenge of increasing concern to both Russia and the United States is human trafficking. In Russia, the definition of human trafficking and applicable laws are often vague, making the identification and prosecution of such crimes difficult for law enforcement officials and the legal community.

Target Group: Delegations could consist of judicial department officials, law school faculty, judicial educators, legal specialists from NGOs and the private sector, legislative experts, lawyers, court administrative staff, court press officers, and legal reporters. Delegations participating in anti-human trafficking exchanges may include law enforcement officials (such as investigators and prosecutors); NGO leaders; victims' rights advocates; shelter administrators; and legislative specialists who can shape policy.

Possible Grantee Activities: Delegations should receive an overview of the U.S. judicial system and court operations. Other possible topics include case management, legal advocacy, judicial-media relations, law enforcement, domestic violence awareness, and legal/judicial training. Appropriate activities include observing court proceedings and press briefings; meeting with judges and court administrators; visiting law schools, law firms, corrections facilities, media outlets, and legal advocacy NGOs; and taking workshops on courtroom technology.

Topics for anti-human trafficking programs include U.S. approaches to human-trafficking prevention and prosecution, prevention of child exploitation, victims' assistance, and U.S. cooperation with other nations to address these issues on a global level. Delegates should have the opportunity to interact with their U.S. counterparts. Appropriate activities include meetings with U.S. and state government agencies, law enforcement specialists, legal officials, legislative specialists, and NGO leaders who work on this issue; site visits to shelters and NGOs providing services to human-trafficking victims; and workshops on prosecuting human traffickers.

Possible settings for presentations, consultations, etc., by civic rule of law delegates include bench and bar association meetings, law-school colloquia, meetings of advocacy groups, and panel discussions.

Social Issues (Health-Care Provision, Elementary and Secondary Education, Social Services)

Although in recent years Russia's economic growth has raised overall living standards in some places, significant quality of life problems remain for vital segments of the population. In addition, both Russia and the United States share an interest in preventing the spread of communicable diseases and making information technology, education, and proper health care accessible to all. Open World seeks to address some of these issues by giving exchange participants new strategies for strengthening health-care practices and delivery, elementary and secondary education, and social services in their regions and communities. Some delegations may have a special focus on "women as leaders."

- **Health-Care Provision (sub-theme)**

Rationale: High rates of chronic and communicable diseases, outdated medical equipment, facilities and practices, and inadequate health-care financing have contributed to a health-care crisis in Russia. Issues relating to the delivery of services for patients with non-communicable or communicable diseases as well as at-risk individuals will be a major focus of this sub-theme.

Target Group: Government officials (with an emphasis on regional and local executive-branch officials), heads of health and medical associations, health-care administrators, health-care providers involved in policy-making, health educators, women's health advocates, members of patient advocacy organizations, NGO leaders, and journalists.

Possible Grantee Activities: Local programs might include visits to major medical centers, community-based clinics, county health departments, women's health centers, and volunteer organizations. Topics for consideration include health-care management and financing, disease monitoring and control, prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases and communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and TB, substance abuse prevention, hospice care, and health-care quality monitoring and reporting. Appropriate formats for information exchange include site tours; conferences; workshops; and group discussions with health-care providers, health-care system managers, and government officials overseeing health-care programs and financing. Possible settings for presentations by delegates include panel discussions, roundtables, and scheduled meetings at health-care facilities or institutions.

- **Elementary and Secondary Education (sub-theme)**

Rationale: Russian education has a proud tradition, with graduation rates and literacy levels that are among the highest in the world. Russia's educational system, like that of the United States, faces challenges with financing, administration, teacher recruitment and retention, access to and integration of information technology, and outdated teaching materials. Open World delegates from the federal, regional, and local levels will examine educational issues within the context of the highly decentralized American model, with a focus on educational policy, technology integration into classrooms, alternative financing of public education, equity/access, the role of testing in educational assessment and access to higher education, community involvement, extracurricular and after-school activities, and school-to-work programs.

Target Group: Regional and local government officials involved in education policy and reform, school administrators, teachers in leadership roles, heads of public-private sector initiatives, NGO leaders, and journalists.

Possible Grantee Activities: Appropriate activities include attending school board and parent-teacher association meetings; viewing learning activities for special populations; discussing financing issues with mayors and legislators; visiting community college school-to-work and other transitional programs; sharing ideas with potential private sector partners; and meeting with curriculum development specialists, state education officials, and education

researchers. Possible settings for delegate presentations, consultations, etc., include faculty and parent-teacher association meetings, classroom lectures, and university seminars.

- **Social Services (sub-theme)**

Rationale: Russia is facing a demographic crisis, with decreases in population and life expectancy. At the same time, more responsibility for social services delivery has been shifted from the national government to regional and local governments without a corresponding transfer of funds. Challenges that American communities face—including substance abuse, the care and inclusion of people with mental and physical disabilities, unstable home environments, homelessness, and elder care—have affected the viability of many Russian communities. Open World will invite mixed delegations of government, NGO, and other community leaders to the United States to see how their counterparts here work to address both social services delivery and funding issues.

Target Group: Social service officials and providers; municipal executives; regional and local legislators; NGO leaders, including leaders of social services advocacy organizations; and editors and other journalists.

Possible Grantee Activities: Host organizations are encouraged to schedule an overview session at the beginning of the community visit to provide background on the roles that government agencies (federal, state, and local) and nongovernmental organizations play in funding and providing social services in the host community. Programs should enable delegates to learn on-site about the operations, structure, and funding of leading public and private social service agencies; job-shadow professional counterparts; and meet with NGO leaders who work with or advocate for special populations (e.g., disabled, elderly, or economically disadvantaged citizens; adoptive families and children in the foster care system; abused, neglected, or abandoned children; victims of domestic violence; substance abusers; and those with HIV/AIDS and other social diseases).

Other preferred activities for delegates include attending county commission and city council meetings or hearings on social service issues; visiting women's centers and shelters; participating in or observing workshops on recruiting, training, and managing volunteers; taking part in a volunteer activity; having briefings on, and, if possible, observing NGO fundraising and marketing activities; and developing work plans for improving social-support services in their home communities.

Possible forums for delegate presentations include panel discussions, university seminars, and roundtables.

Cross-Cutting Theme: Child-Protection, Foster-Care, and International Adoption Focus

Rationale: Each year the United States welcomes more children into homes through intercountry adoption than any other nation. Last year alone, Americans adopted nearly 20,000 children from other countries. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *Hague Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* provide the framework for services to at-risk

children. All children—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, health, nationality or socio-economic standing—have an inherent right to a safe, permanent, and loving family by birth or adoption.

The Hague Convention, which entered into force in the United States on April 1, 2008, governs all adoptions between the United States and other countries party to the Convention. As international adoptions continue to increase, the need to respond to country issues, specific case problems, and requirements for conforming legislation and regulation has increased as well.

Russia is also a signatory to both Conventions, but has placed tight restrictions on foreign adoptions of Russian children and recently closed down some foreign adoption agencies. Tragic isolated incidents of maltreatment and deaths of Russian adoptees in the United States have resulted in mistrust on the part of Russian officials and citizens.

Target Group: Delegations will include professionals usually hosted under each of the above three major themes, hence the “cross-cutting” designation. Delegations may include government administrators who work in the ministries that oversee child welfare programs and adoption procedures; nongovernmental agency workers from orphanages and organizations that provide protection and support services to children-at-risk; and judges who provide the final approvals for adoptions.

Possible Grantee Activities: Meetings with state/county departments on health and human services can provide an overview of the laws on foster care and adoption, and of the structure of the federal, state, and county programs that deal with these issues. All aspects of the government’s handling of child protection cases can also be discussed, from the termination of parental rights, to the role of the county attorney, to the training of foster families, to mandated reports, to the merits of foster care and adoption. Private, nonprofit adoption agencies can provide details from the point of view of the private sector on domestic and foreign adoptions, and show both training of and follow-up on adopting families, and group/cultural orientations for children from a common country. Additional meetings can be arranged with individual foster families. Visits to the homes of families who have adopted Russian children can offer a firsthand look at how children are cared for in the United States. Visits to juvenile justice centers and family courts can highlight the advantages of specialty courts in protecting the rights of children; the types of cases before the court, interventive and preventive justice; and the innovative processes (family conferencing, community service, etc.) through which some of the cases are resolved. Delegations may also have the opportunity to observe actual court proceedings and cases and interact with the parties involved (judges, guardian ad litem, lawyers, social workers, etc.) to discuss the cases and how they were resolved.