



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL OPEN WORLD PROGRAM



Russia Civic 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. The reforms described above have also increased the responsibilities of regional and local legislative bodies. It is also important that a free, fair, and vigorous press be established to help promote transparency and openness at all levels of government.

Target Group: Mayors, city managers and other municipal administrators, regional and local legislators and their staff, civic and political activists, policy researchers, journalists, government spokespersons, public services providers, NGO leaders, local business leaders involved in community development (including rural development), and environmental managers (including those involved in energy efficiency/management projects). 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 will host a limited number of delegations with a special focus on community development, environmental management, or “women as leaders.” Open World will also offer a new sub-theme on the role of a state legislature. This sub-theme is open to regional legislators and their staff, administrative staff of regional legislatures, and municipal/local legislators.

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

Possible Grantee Activities: Local programs on accountable governance would emphasize the legislative process, administrative capacity-building, transparency, service delivery, financing of government services, media relations, community 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, community development, or environmental-management/energy-efficiency 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 legislators, 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 development delegations include participating in roundtables at chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and banks; having briefings with state and local economic and rural development officials; meeting with state and local tax officials; and going on site tours of public-private economic development projects, business incubators, and local businesses, including agribusinesses.

Possible focuses for environmental management delegations are environmentally friendly projects; energy efficiency/energy management initiatives; 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.

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

- **The Role of a State Legislature (sub-theme)**

Rationale: The regional legislatures (*dumas*) in Russia create laws that both establish greater local governmental autonomy and provide a legal structure for basic public services at the local level. While Russia's regional legislatures have not played as large a role in their country's governmental system as state legislatures play in that of the United States, they are increasingly involved in deciding how to (a) raise and distribute revenue, and (b) settle land and property ownership issues, while taking on other governmental responsibilities that have devolved from the federal to the regional level.

Also, because the Open World Leadership Center resides in the U.S. legislative branch and serves the U.S. Congress, its historical mission includes a special focus on the role of legislatures and legislators in successful democracies. Open World has a unique ability to introduce Russian regional legislators and regional legislative staff and administrators to the legislative process at the national level during their Washington, DC orientation, and to demonstrate how that process links to and affects state legislatures. Also, numerous state legislators and legislative staff across the country have experience presenting to Open World delegations.

Target Group: Regional legislators, legislative staff to regional legislators, administrative staff of regional legislatures.

Program Structure: Most programming will take place in a state capital during the legislative session, with a focus on the role of a state legislature in governance and the formulation of public policy. Open World seeks proposals for two types of delegations: one type would consist of legislators who share an interest in a particular public policy issue, such as health care or education; the second type would include legislators, legislative staff, and legislative administrators. Programming for the legislator delegations would allow the delegates to meet with their American counterparts; attend committee meetings and legislative sessions; and learn how their counterparts interact with relevant state executive agencies, interest groups, and constituents. Programming for the "mixed" delegations of legislators, legislative staff, and legislative administrators would focus on the operations of a legislature, on how legislatures receive independent information and analysis to support decision-making, and on constituent services.

Possible Grantee Activities: For legislator delegations: Observe state legislative sessions and committee meetings and have follow-up meetings with participating state legislators; attend panel discussions with the legislators, legislative counsel, and committee staff who played a role in the successful passage of a law; meet with the legislative liaisons for state executive agencies; meet with lobbyists and interest groups and shadow their meetings with state legislators/legislative staff; attend town hall meetings; meet with mayors or city council members to discuss their relations with the state legislature; meet in-state with Members of Congress and/or their field staff.

For mixed delegations of legislators and regional legislative staff/administrators: Job-shadow their counterparts; attend panel discussions with legislative officials, executive agency administrators, political scientists, and political journalists on the role of the legislature in the host state; meet with political party and elections officials; observe the constituent services operations in a state legislator's office; discuss budgeting, information services, enforcement of ethics rules, and other administrative issues with legislative officials; meet in-state with Members of Congress and/or their field staff.

Possible settings for delegate presentations include university seminars, special meetings with state legislators and legislative staff, political party meetings, and civic-association meetings.

Social Issues (Health-Care Provision, Higher Education, Social Services)

Russia and the United States share an interest in preventing the spread of communicable diseases, making health care accessible to all, and improving education and social services delivery. Open World seeks to (a) give exchange participants new strategies for strengthening health-care practices and delivery, education, and social services in their regions and communities; and (b) enable participants to share their own expertise in these areas with their American counterparts. Exposing participants to models of effective public and private sector cooperation in their assigned sub-theme will be an important component of these exchanges. Some delegations may have a special focus on “women as leaders.”

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

Rationale: Russia’s high rates of chronic and communicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and cancer, highlight the need for preventive education, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, early diagnosis, better maternal and prenatal care, and affordable/accessible medical treatment. Inadequate health-care financing and outdated medical equipment, facilities, and practices have also contributed to a health-care crisis in Russia. Building Russian-American cooperation in the medical field can benefit both countries and improve the response to global health threats.

Target Group: Government officials (with an emphasis on regional and local legislative and 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, and NGO leaders in the field of health care.

Possible Grantee Activities: Issues relating to the delivery of quality coordinated services by skilled professionals utilizing modern technology for patients with non-communicable or communicable diseases as well as at-risk individuals and pregnant women will be a major focus of this sub-theme. Local programs could include visits to major medical centers; community-based clinics; county health departments; women’s health centers; maternal, prenatal, and pediatric care facilities; 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, healthy lifestyles (including proper diet and nutrition, especially for children), 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. Delegates should also have opportunities to discuss health care legislation and financing with federal and state legislators. Possible settings for presentations by delegates include panel discussions, roundtables, and scheduled meetings at health-care facilities or institutions. Participants should be able to see demonstrations of medical technology and have ample opportunities to question—and share their own expertise with—their American counterparts.

- **Higher 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 system of higher education, like that of the United States, faces challenges with financing, administration, preparation of students for a career and employment, and integration into a global educational system. Open World delegates from the federal, regional, and local levels, together with their American counterparts, will examine the United States’ higher education system and the many models it provides for preparing young people for their future. Delegates will explore the community college as an effective model for remedying knowledge and skills gaps created by a changing global economy. Community colleges are responsive to the needs

of a continuously changing job market, assist in local community development, and provide educational opportunities for a broad cross-section of society.

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

Possible Grantee Activities: Appropriate activities include attending city/county council meetings on higher education funding and policy issues; visiting universities/colleges, community colleges, and local businesses participating in internships and other training programs; exploring learning opportunities for special populations; discussing higher education financing issues with mayors and legislators; and meeting with curriculum development specialists, state education officials, and education researchers. Possible settings for delegate presentations include university/college faculty meetings, classroom lectures, university/college seminars, and civic-association gatherings.

- **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, abandoned and missing children, homelessness, and elder care—have also affected many Russian communities. Open World will invite mixed delegations of legislators, executive branch and NGO officials, and other community leaders to the United States to see how their counterparts here work to address 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 Congress, state and local legislatures, 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 their 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 life-threatening diseases and conditions).

Other preferred activities for delegates include attending county commission and city council meetings or hearings on social service issues; meeting with legislators and legislative staff; 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.