

Russia

OVERVIEW

Russia Program Summary

The International Republican Institute's (IRI) programming in Russia supports the development of a more open, participatory and democratic society. IRI supports the political and civic development of the country by promoting and supporting engagement between citizens and political actors. IRI's programming represents a unique blend of politically-oriented trainings and events designed to promote a nationwide grassroots democratic movement. Grouped under four categories – civic leadership development, youth and women leadership, legislative exchange, and regional and local development – IRI's programs seek out opportunities to foster the leadership, institutions and popular support needed to ensure that Russia achieves the democracy it was promised with the fall of communism almost 20 years ago.

Civic Leadership Development

IRI has been working with Russian civic activists, grassroots organizers and civil society institutions to strengthen the ability of citizens to advocate for needed changes, and increase overall citizen participation and interest in the political processes. Through training in advanced communication technologies, effective campaign strategies and supporting think tanks, IRI has been able to foster and educate civil leaders who are capable of establishing constituent-focused processes and advocating for reforms. IRI has also been supporting Russia's civil society by providing [online](#) and offline networking opportunities and high-quality expert advice.

Youth and Women Leadership Program

IRI is promoting a number of initiatives to involve Russia's young people in all aspects of the democratic process – from voting, to running for office, to starting a nongovernmental organization (NGO). These efforts help regional youth organizations become involved in politics and public affairs, build networks for inter-regional and international youth cooperation and identify future political leaders. IRI has also been contributing to the development of a [Women's Democracy Network](#) chapter in Russia – an umbrella organization that helps women leaders to enhance their role in social and political processes.

Legislative and Executive Exchange

IRI is working to launch legislative and executive exchanges between the legislative and executive bodies of the Russian Federation and the United States. Through the promotion of cooperation and understanding between both sides, it is the objective of this program to encourage the development of sustainable relationships between Russian and American government authorities.

Regional and Local Development

IRI believes that identifying and supporting leaders at the local and regional levels can help lay the groundwork for Russia's next generation of democratic leadership. IRI has therefore created a new network of politicians, NGO activists and elected officials who are interested in the democratic development of municipal governance. Through this network, as well as IRI-sponsored conferences and roundtables, local elected officials, NGOs and party members learn how to contribute to increased public participation in local governance and meaningful interaction between citizens and local and regional deputies. By these efforts, IRI is trying to promote the implementation of local and regional development programs oriented on democratic governance and close interaction between power and citizens.