

institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Federal assistance awards, if any. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior USIA award recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. All applicants must demonstrate a minimum of four years of successful experience in conducting international exchange programs.

**8. Cost-effectiveness:** The administrative and indirect cost components of the proposal, including salaries, should be kept as low as possible and should not exceed the amount stated above.

**9. Cost-sharing:** Consideration will be given to proposed cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional contributions.

#### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

#### Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: October 1, 1996.

Dell Pendergrast,

*Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 96-25682 Filed 10-9-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

### Exchanges and Training Program With Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

**ACTION:** Notice—Request for Proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Russia/Eurasia Division, of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, announces a competitive institutional grants program. Public or private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3) may apply to develop training programs for Russia, Ukraine,

and Uzbekistan. Diminished resources have forced USIA to limit the scope of this announcement; regrettably, proposals for other NIS countries will not be considered. Grant awards are subject to availability of funds.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries . . . ; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations . . . and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Fulbright-Hays Act and the Freedom Support Act.

Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

**ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE AND NUMBER:** All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/PN-97-10.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Monday, December 2, 1996. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked December 2, 1996 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Office of Citizen Exchanges, Russia Eurasia Division, E/PN, Room 220, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, tel: 202-260-6230, fax: 202-619-4350, to request a Solicitation Package, which includes: proposal and budget guidelines and all application forms. Please specify USIA Program Coordinator Cassandra Barber on all inquiries and correspondence. Ms. Barber may also be reached at the following e-mail address: cbarber@usia.gov. Interested applicants should read the complete Federal Register announcement before making inquiries to the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Russia/Eurasia Division, or submitting their proposals. Once the

RFP deadline has passed, the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Russia/Eurasia Division may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until after the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Applicants must follow instructions given in the Solicitation Package and send an original and ten copies of completed applications to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/PN-97-10, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 336, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

#### Diversity Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

#### Content of Proposals

**Overview:** USIA is interested in proposals that encourage the growth of democratic institutions in Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Exchange and training programs supported by institutional grants should operate at two levels: they should enhance institutional relationships; and they should offer practical and comparative information to individuals to assist them with their professional responsibilities. Strong proposals usually have the following characteristics: an existing partner relationship between an American organization and a host-country institution; proven track record of conducting program activity; cost-sharing from American or in-country sources, including donations of air fares, hotel and housing costs; experienced staff with language facility; and a clear, convincing plan showing how permanent results will be accomplished as a result of the activity funded by the grant. USIA wants to see tangible forms of time and money contributed to the project by the prospective grantee institution, as well as funding from third party sources.

Unless otherwise specified below, project activity may include: internships; study tours; short-term training; consultations; and extended, intensive workshops taking place in the United States or in Russia, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan. Proposals should reflect the authors' understanding of the political, economic, and social environment in which the program activity will take place.

We encourage applicants to design programs for *non-English speakers*. Programs can take place in the United States or in Russia, Ukraine or Uzbekistan. We want single country programs, not programs that mix Russian, Ukrainian, and Uzbek participants. USIA is interested in proposals whose designs take into account the need for ongoing sharing of information and training beyond the period of USIA grant support. Examples include: "train the trainers" models; support for training centers in Russia, Ukraine or Uzbekistan; plans to create professional networks or professional associations to share information.

Note: While this competition may fund American universities to work with counterpart universities or institutions in Russia, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan, it is not intended to be a university linkage program. Such programs are funded by USIA's Office of Academic Programs (E/A). Proposals whose purpose is to exchange faculty or otherwise support direct academic links should be submitted under E/A's RFP for the College and University Affiliations Programs (CUAP).

USIA will give priority to proposals that respond to the following specific topics for Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. While proposals for other programs will be considered, reduced program budgets will limit funding opportunities.

#### For Russia

USIA is interested in proposals for training programs for Russians in specific areas:

—Implementation of Intellectual Property Rights. Although Russia has enacted legislation committing itself to meeting the TRIP amendment standards of the World Trade Organization, the practical steps to implement and enforce its new criminal statutes have yet to be realized. Judges, law enforcement officials, lawyers, procurators and the Russian business community are uninformed and to a certain extent uninterested in the implications of the new laws. USIA is interested in proposals that: (1) assist the Russian legal community to examine how an IPR case would be handled within the

Russian court system; (2) expose Russian legal experts and others associated with IPR issues (such as officials of state copyright agencies) to the practical side of enforcement of IPR in the United States; (3) establish specialized training for judges who will try IPR cases; (4) contain a public education dimension effort to reach Russians who will have to deal with IPR issues professionally. Proposals submitted to USIA should take care to complement, not duplicate, projects funded in this subject area by other U.S. Government agencies and international institutions.

—US-based Internships for Russian Journalists and Media Managers. USIA is interested in proposals for journalistic training and management for Russian regional media organizations (Moscow and St. Petersburg are excluded). Journalistic training in basic skills and concepts could include: effective writing, investigative reporting, objectivity, the clear labeling of editorials and opinion pieces, intellectual property issues and ethics. Media management training (both print and electronic) should focus on management of media as a business: management techniques, desk top publishing, advertising, marketing, distribution, personnel, public relations, and the financial benefits and pitfalls of journalistic advocacy. USIS Moscow will coordinate selection of journalists with the grantee organization. Preference will be given to long-term internships for English speakers. The US program should be a practical, hands-on experience in an American media organization, not an academic course of study.

#### For Russia and Ukraine

—Staff Exchange between the United States Congress and the Russian Parliament (Duma) and Federal Assembly and the Ukrainian Parliament (Rada). USIA is interested in proposals from American organizations to provide organizational support in Washington, DC for an annual exchange of congressional and parliamentary staff between the US and Russia and between the US and Ukraine, based on the Congress-Bundestag model developed by Germany and the US. The program would provide an annual opportunity for two congressional staff delegation visits to Russia and Ukraine and one delegation visit each for Russian and Ukraine. Each delegation would number 5-10 staff members who would have a chance to observe and

learn about the workings of the other's political institutions and convey the views of members on both sides on issues of mutual concern. Russians and Ukrainians will be programmed separately (i.e., no mixed groups). The length of each exchange would be approximately two weeks. The organization selected to administer the program would be responsible for all logistics in the United States for visiting groups (travel arrangements, accommodations, interpreters, local transportation), as well as appointments and meetings with local media, business, academic and media representatives. The organization would also be responsible for facilitating the outbound travel of US congressional staff delegations to Ukraine and Russia.

#### Selection of Participants

(1) US Congressional Staff. The program will be announced in the Congressional Record. Staffers should have a demonstrable interest in Russian or Ukraine, but they need not be working in the field of foreign affairs. A review committee will be convened by USIA to select the participants, which in subsequent years of the program would include alumni of the exchange. Participants must be willing to host a group of staffers from Russia or Ukraine for two weeks, assist in arranging meetings and facilitating a visit to the home district of a member.

(2) Duma and Rada Staff Members. Participants must be current staff members of the State Duma or Rada. USIS offices in Moscow and Kyiv will work with the Duma and Rada to select participants.

#### For Ukraine

—Constitutional Project. Ukraine recently enacted a new constitution. USIA is particularly interested in proposals to support the new Constitutional Court in Ukraine, which was created under the new constitution. Priority will be given to proposals that establish a dialogue with policy makers, government officials, and educators on the meaning of a constitutional form of government and its practical ramifications for governing at national and local levels. USIA encourages proposals for organizations to develop specific materials in Ukrainian and conduct in-country seminars in partnership with Ukrainian institutions to promote public understanding of the new constitution and its implications for Ukrainian society. These efforts would be closely coordinated with the U.S.

mission in Kyiv which has made this a top priority.

#### For Uzbekistan

—Exchanges and Training for Working Journalists. Priority consideration will go to proposals for working journalists, particularly those covering economic issues. Acquisition of news gathering and reporting skills should be emphasized, along with other important skills such as effective writing, investigative reporting, objectivity, the clear labeling editorials and opinion pieces, intellectual property issues and ethics. US-based practical internships for journalists with a working knowledge of English are encouraged.

#### Selection of Participants

Proposals should describe clearly the type of persons who will participate in the program as well as the process by which participants will be selected. We recommend that programs with internships in the US include letters of commitment from host institutions, even if tentative. In the selection of foreign participants, USIA and USIS posts abroad retain the right to nominate all participants and to accept or deny participants recommended by grantee institutions. However, grantee institutions are often asked by USIA to suggest names of potential participants. Priority will be given to foreign participants who have not previously traveled to the United States.

#### Visa Regulations

Foreign participants on programs sponsored by the Office of Citizen Exchanges are granted J-1 Exchange Visitor visas by the American Embassy in the sending country.

#### Proposal Budget

Please refer to the Budget Guidelines in the Program Submission Instructions for complete information.

Applicants must submit a detailed line item budget based on the specific instructions in the Program and Budget Guidelines sections of the Instructions. Proposals for less than \$80,000 will receive preference. Programs with strong cost-sharing will be given priority.

Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000.

#### Review Process

USIA will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be

considered ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Proposal Submission Instructions. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will also be reviewed by USIA's Office of East European and NIS Affairs and USIA posts in Moscow, Kyiv, and Tashkent. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the Associate Director, Educational and Cultural Affairs, USIA. Final technical authority for grant awards resides with the USIA grants officer.

#### Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered.

##### 1. Program Planning and Ability To Achieve Objectives

Program objectives should be stated clearly and precisely and should reflect the applicant's expertise in the subject area and the region. Objectives should respond to the priority topics in this announcement and should relate to the current conditions in each of the countries. They should be reasonable and attainable. A detailed work plan should explain step by step how objectives will be achieved, including a timetable for completion of major tasks. The substance of seminars, presentations, consulting, internships, and itineraries should be spelled out in detail. Responsibilities of in-country partners should be clearly described.

##### 2. Institutional Capability

Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's goals. The narrative should demonstrate proven ability to handle logistics. Proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and knowledge of the conditions pertaining to it in Russia, Ukraine or Uzbekistan.

##### 3. Cost Effectiveness

Overhead and administrative costs for the proposal, including salaries, honoraria, and subcontracts for services, should be kept low. While this announcement does not proscribe a rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, in general, priority will be given to proposals whose administrative costs are less than twenty-five (25) per cent of the total requested from USIA. Proposals should show cost-sharing, both contributions from the applicant and from other sources.

#### 4. Support of Diversity

Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity throughout the program.

#### 5. Project Evaluation

USIA is results-oriented. Proposals must include a plan and methodology to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. USIA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire and/or plan for use of another measurement technique (such as a focus group) to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

#### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funding. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

#### Notification

Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: October 4, 1996.

Dell Pendergrast,

*Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 96-26082 Filed 10-9-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation, Notice of Charter Renewal

This gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) of October 6, 1972, that the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation has been renewed for a 2-year period beginning September 30, 1996, through September 30, 1998.