

6. Office of Primary Interest.

Disclosure Services, Administrative Operations Division, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (Administration), Office of the Assistant Secretary (Management) and Chief Financial Officer.

George Muñoz,

Assistant Secretary (Management) and Chief Financial Officer.

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BILLING CODE 4810-25-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program

ACTION: Notice—Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Programs Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to recruit, select, place, monitor, evaluate, and provide follow-on activities for 150-175 undergraduate students from Armenia, Azerbaijan,* Belarus, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan in the fields of agriculture, business, computer science, criminal justice studies, economics, education, environmental management, EFL/TEFL, journalism and mass communication, library and information science, political science, public health, and sociology. Organizations applying must be able to recruit students via open, merit-based competition throughout all the New Independent States, as listed above, and should be able to place the students at diverse institutions of higher education in the United States, including public and private universities, colleges, and community

colleges. Proposals for programs involving fewer than the 12 countries listed, or limited to university-to-university exchange will not be accepted. This program is subject to the 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 Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program cited above is provided through the FREEDOM Support Act incorporated into the Foreign Relations Act of 1992-1993.

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/AEE-97-03*.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Tuesday, November 26, 1996. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked November 26, 1996 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

Grant and Program Duration

Grant awards are anticipated to begin on or about January 15, 1997 and terminate on or about August 31, 1998. Student programs are based on the "junior year abroad" model. It is expected that students will arrive in the U.S. in August for pre-academic programs, spend the full 1997-1998 academic year in program, and hold an

internship during the summer months before returning home. Participants must return to their home country immediately following the completion of the USIA-sponsored program. No extensions or transfers for additional study, academic training, or new programs will be allowed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: The European Programs Branch, Academic Exchanges Division, E/AEE, Room 246, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, telephone: 202/205-0525, fax: 202/260-7985, e-mail: treed@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria, required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/> or from the Internet Gopher at [gopher://gopher.usia.gov](http://gopher.usia.gov/). Under the heading "International Exchanges/Training," select "Request for Proposals (RFPs)." Please read "About the Following RFPs" before downloading.

Please specify USIA Senior Program Manager Mr. Ted Kniker on all inquiries and correspondence. Interested applicants should read the complete Federal Register announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

SUBMISSIONS: Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and nine (9) copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: *E/AEE-97-03*, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

* Please note: Programs with Azerbaijan are subject to restrictions of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act: Employees of the Government of Azerbaijan or any of its instrumentalities are excluded from participation, and no U.S. participant overseas may work for the Government of Azerbaijan or any of its instrumentalities. In addition, the Government of Azerbaijan or any of its instrumentalities will have no control in the actual selection of participants.

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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

The Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program provides full scholarships for one year of non-degree, undergraduate study in the United States at professionally accredited institutions in the fields of agriculture, business, computer science, criminal justice studies, economics, education, environmental management, EFL/TEFL, journalism and mass communication, library and information science, political science, public health, and sociology. The purpose of the program is to support the economic and democratic development of the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union by exposing students to key transition fields and enhancing their education with a practical training component. Students will have a pre-academic orientation program, full academic course load beginning in the fall, and as possible, an internship in a related area in the summer following their academic year. It is expected that students will return home to complete degrees at their home institution. Students must receive academic credit for their experience in the U.S.

Funding for undergraduate programs has been steadily declining over the last two years. In order to ensure that students from the NIS have an opportunity to study in the United States, USIA's goal is to keep the number of participants as high as possible and to keep costs as low as possible. Therefore, USIA encourages proposals that demonstrate innovative ways to maintain a high quality, high volume program at the lowest possible costs.

Guidelines

Applicant organizations must demonstrate the ability to administer all aspects of the Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program—advertisement, recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, Fellow monitoring and support, financial management, evaluation, follow-on activities, and alumni tracking and programming. Applicant organizations should demonstrate the ability to recruit and select a diverse pool of candidates from various geographic regions within the NIS through an open, merit-based competition. The program does remain flexible so that recruitment can target specific institutions deemed by the USIA and the United States Information Service to be of critical importance. Additionally, the applicant organization(s) will be asked to assist in the recruitment and selection of diverse host institutions throughout the U.S. where students may be clustered in groups of 10–20 for their academic programs. Placement will remain flexible so that universities that accept fewer students, but have low costs, or high cost-sharing, can participate in the program. The successful applicant organization(s) will act as the principal liaison with the host institutions.

Applicant organizations should demonstrate the ability to work with private sector organizations in the United States and NIS to facilitate Fellows' practical training and post-program re-entry. Further details on specific program responsibilities and goals can be found in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) Statement which is part of the formal Solicitation Package available from USIA.

Programs must comply with J–1 visa regulations.

Awards

USIA anticipates awarding one to two grants for this program. Should an applicant organization prefer to work with other organization's in the implementation of this program, USIA prefers that a subcontract arrangement be developed. USIA will entertain separately submitted proposals for joint program management, but the proposals must demonstrate a value-added relationship and must clearly delineate responsibilities so as not to duplicate efforts.

Proposed Budget

The total budget for the Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program is \$2,800,000. Each applicant organization must submit a comprehensive line item

budget based upon the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. For better understanding or further clarification, applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. Organizations whose proposals include an administrative budget that is less than 20% of the grant amount requested from USIA will receive preference. Please note that indirect rates are considered part of the administrative costs and should be kept to a minimum or cost-shared as is possible. Detailed guidance on budget preparation is included in the POGI Statement. Please refer to the complete Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Please note that the ability of an organization to document and provide cost-sharing will be a major factor in determining the final grant award(s). This includes the organizations' ability to leverage costs from universities, colleges, community colleges, private sector organizations, and other sources. USIA will also look to applicant organizations to propose additional ways to keep costs to a minimum. A low unit cost will also be a decisive factor in determining funding.

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 deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Office of East European and NIS Affairs and USIS posts overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) 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 and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. **Quality of the Program Idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, innovation, and relevance to Agency mission.
2. **Program Objectives and Planning:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
3. **Multiplier Effect/Impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
4. **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity.
5. **Institution's Record/Ability:** Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.
6. **Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) which insures that USIA supported programs are not isolated events.
7. **Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan 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 or other technique plus description of a methodology to use 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.
8. **Cost-effectiveness:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as

possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

9. **Cost-sharing:** Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

10. **Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:** Proposed programs should receive positive assessments by USIA's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

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

Dated: October 9, 1996.
Dell Pendergrast,
Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.
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Exchanges and Training Program With Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

ACTION: Amendment—Request for Proposals.

This is an amendment to the request for proposals (RFP) published on October 10, 1996, concerning exchange and training programs for Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (Announcement Number E/PN-97-10). The second sentence under REVIEW CRITERIA, 3. Cost Effectiveness, reads "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." That sentence should read as follows: "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."

Notification

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

Dated: October 9, 1996.
Dell Pendergrast,
Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.
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Summer Institutes for the Study of the United States

ACTION: Notice—Request for Proposals (RFP).

SUMMARY: The Branch for the Study of the U.S. of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for three (3) assistance awards. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to develop and implement one of the following three six-week post-graduate level programs designed for multinational groups of 18 experienced foreign university educators:

1. Summer Institute on the U.S. Political System
1. Summer Institute on the U.S. Economy
1. Summer Institute on U.S. Society

The Programs are intended to provide participants with a deeper understanding of American life and institutions, past and present, in order to improve courses and teaching about the U.S. abroad. Participants will have had few prior opportunities to formally study or visit the U.S., and most will be coming from institutions that are just beginning to introduce the study of the U.S. into the curriculum. Tentative program dates are June 28 to August 8, 1997.

USIA is seeking detailed proposals from colleges, universities, consortia of colleges and universities, and other not-for-profit academic organizations that have an established reputation in the institute subject field, and that can demonstrate expertise in conducting post-graduate programs for foreign educators. *Applicant institutions must have a minimum of four years experience in conducting international exchange programs.* The project director or one of the key program staff responsible for the academic program must have an advanced degree in a discipline directly related to the subject field of the institute. Staff escorts traveling under the USIA cooperative agreement support must be U.S. citizens