

The Agency is seeking proposals from organizations that are not currently receiving administrative E/V project grants. Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000. Since this RFP is for an award greater than \$60,000 all applicants must have four years of experience as stated. It is therefore incumbent on organizations to demonstrate: a capacity for programming visitors from all geographical regions of the world; proven fiscal management integrity; and an ability to have close consultation with USIA staff throughout project administration.

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 also be reviewed by the E/V program officer, as well as one or more of USIA's geographic area offices. 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 program design:* Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and be responsive to requirements stated in the RFP and the 1998 Solicitation Package.

2. *Program planning:* A detailed and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive intent and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines.

3. *Ability to achieve program objectives:* Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the goals of the International Visitor Program.

4. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration

(selection of resources, program venue and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

5. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.

6. *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 any past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the potential of new applicants for effective program administration. All applicants must demonstrate: a minimum of four years in existence, with proven project management ability and demonstrated fiscal soundness and accountability; a potential for programming visitors from all geographic regions of the world; a Washington, DC presence or ability to have consultations with USIA staff on a regular basis (including face-to-face) throughout the development of each group or Individual project.

7. *Cost-effectiveness:* The administrative and indirect cost components of the proposal, including salaries, should be kept as low as possible.

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

Notification

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

Dated: September 27, 1997.

John P. Lioello,

Associate Director for Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-26153 Filed 10-1-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Program Title NIS Training Program: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

ACTION: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Russia/Eurasia Division of the Office of Citizen Exchanges 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) may apply to develop training programs. Grants are 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 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.

Announcement Title and Number: All communications with USIA concerning this RFP should refer to the announcement's title and reference number E/PN-98-5.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Friday, December 12, 1997. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by December 12, 1997, but received at a later date, will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: The Russia/Eurasia Division, Office of

Citizen Exchanges (E-PN), Room 224, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington DC 20547, attn: Cassandra Barber, tel: (202) 619-5327 and fax: (202) 619-4350, or Internet address: cbarber@usia.gov, to request a Solicitation Package which includes: proposal and budget guidelines and all application forms.

To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

To Receive a Solicitation Package via Fax on Demand: The entire Solicitation Package may be received via the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System", which is accessed by calling (202) 401-7616. Please request a "Catalog" of available documents and order numbers when first entering the system.

Please specify USIA Program Officer Cassandra Barber 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 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/PN-5-98, Office of Grant Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy 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. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide

opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

USIA is interested in proposals that encourage the growth of democratic institutions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. Exchanges and training programs supported by Office of Citizen Exchange's institutional grants should operate at two levels: they should enhance institutional relationships; and they should offer practical 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 an in-country institution in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, or Moldova; a proven track record of conducting program activity; cost-sharing from American or in-country sources, including donations of air fares, hotel and/or 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, Belarus, or Moldova. 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 the four countries. With the exception of the Women's Leadership Training Project described below, we want single country programs, not programs that mix NIS participants together. USIA is interested in proposals whose designs take into account the need for ongoing sharing of information and training. Examples include: "train the trainers" models; support for training centers in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus or Moldova; plans to create professional networks or professional associations to share information; and/

or establishing ongoing internet communication

USIA will give priority to proposals that respond to the following specific topics for Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

For Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

Women's Leadership Training

Women must take their place in the political arena if democracy is to take root in these countries. USIA is interested in proposals that offer leadership training skills to women active in their own communities in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus or Moldova. In Russia, the majority of program activity should not take place in Moscow, but rather focus on helping women in Russian regions. The focus of the training programs should be on how to identify priorities, organize and form coalitions, and to influence decision makers about issues and problems affecting the well-being of people in local communities. Proposals are not limited to a one-country focus, but may also address how to build networks among women's organizations in these four countries. Prospective grantee institutions should identify the NIS local organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate and describe in detail previous cooperative programming and contacts. Program activity may take place either in the NIS or in the United States. This activity is intended to follow up on issues addressed in the Vital Voices Conference held in Vienna from July 9-11. For more information on the conference, please see the Vital Voices Homepage at <http://www.usia.gov/vitalvoices/> for more information.

For Russia

US-Based Internships for Russian Journalists and Media Managers

USIA is interested in proposals for journalistic training and management for Russia regional media organizations (Moscow and St. Petersburg are excluded), and we particularly welcome proposals for Samara and surrounding regions and Khabarovsk. 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. Radio internships would be especially welcome. USIS Moscow will coordinate selection of journalist 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.

Distance Learning in the Field of Business Management

USIA is interested in proposals that establish or expand distance learning programs in business and management at Russian universities or institutes outside of Moscow. The beneficiaries of such a program would be both students and professionals already working for enterprises. Specific programs could include the delivery of management and business content through e-mail, video or text-based internet. Travel to the United States by Russian providers and trips to Russia by American course organizers are essential. Proposals should address in detail: technical requirements for delivery of business/management content through distance learning mechanisms; training requirements for instructors and faculty on how to use the media, i.e., train the trainers; how appropriate print materials might be integrated with a distance learning approach, and; language of instruction issues. Proposals should show Russian institutional commitment (written letters of support) and tangible Russian cost-shares in the form of space, security, salaries, and support for visiting Americans such as local housing and transportation. Interested American organizations should plan trips to Russia of at least 2 weeks duration to get programs underway and to monitor progress. Short-term visits of a few days duration are discouraged. Grantee institutions are expected to consult closely with USIS Moscow on the development of this program. USIA is interested in a maximum utilization of low end technologies so that the project model might be replicated in other regions.

Because of the complexity of this program, USIA will consider funding proposals in the \$150,000–\$200,000 range. See Project Funding section below for additional guidance on funding levels.

For Moldova

Creation of an Independent Broadcaster's Association

USIA is interested in proposals that strengthen independent journalism in Moldova, specifically by assisting in the

establishment of an independent broadcasters' association. An audio-visual council to govern broadcast media has recently been established, and the industry has recognized the need to establish an association to interact with the newly-formed industry regulator. In addition, the association could work to provide continued professional training and even attract advertising money to the industry. This project would help the association develop a statute and regulations, train a Moldovan staff to run the organization and create ties between Moldovan broadcasters and American broadcasters' associations.

USIA envisions most of the project activity taking place in Moldova. Project organizers would assist in helping set up the association and educating Moldova broadcasts on what an association actually does. In-country training of several months in duration by American experts could be followed by a month-long visit to the US by 3–4 Moldovans (who have demonstrated the potential to lead the effort) for further training and contact with American professional counterparts. A follow-up visit six months later by American trainers to ensure the effort has taken hold would be a natural third phase of the program.

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 usually 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.

Project Funding

Since USIA grant assistance constitutes only a portion of total project funding, proposals should list and provide evidence of other sources of financial and in-kind support. Proposals with substantial private sector support

from foundations, corporations, and other institutions will be considered highly competitive.

Although no set funding limit exists, proposals for less than \$80,000 will receive preference. Organizations with less than four years of successful experience in managing international exchange programs are limited to \$60,000. Applicants are invited to provide both an all-inclusive budget as well as separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. While a comprehensive line item budget based on the model in the Solicitation Package must be submitted, separate component budgets are optional.

The following project costs are eligible for consideration for funding:

1. International and domestic air fares; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs.
2. Per Diem. For the U.S. program, organizations have the option of using a flat \$140/day for program participants or the published U.S. Federal per diem rates for individual American cities. For activities outside the U.S., the published Federal per diem rates must be used. NOTE: U.S. escorting staff must use the published Federal per diem rates, not the flat rate. Per diem rates may be accessed at <http://www.policyworks.gov/>.

3. Interpreters: If needed, interpreters for the U.S. program are provided by the U.S. State Department Language Services Division. Typically, a pair of simultaneous interpreters is provided for every four visitors who need interpretation. USIA grants do not pay for foreign interpreters to accompany delegations from their home country. Grant proposal budgets should contain a flat \$140/day per diem for each Department of State interpreter, as well as home-program-home air transportation of \$400 per interpreter plus any U.S. travel expenses during the program. Salary expenses are covered centrally and should not be part of an applicant's proposed budget.

4. Book and cultural allowance: Participants are entitled to and escorts are reimbursed a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a participant book allowance of \$50. U.S. staff do not get these benefits.

5. Consultants. May be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria generally do not exceed \$250 per day. Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and subcontractor should be included in the proposal.

6. Room rental, which should not exceed \$250 per day.

7. Materials development. Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials for participants.

8. One working meal per project. Per capita costs may not exceed \$5–8 for a lunch and \$14–20 for a dinner, excluding room rental. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one.

9. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each participant which is to be used for incidental expenditures incurred during international travel.

10. All USIA-funded delegates will be covered under the terms of a USIA-sponsored health insurance policy. The premium is paid by USIA directly to the insurance company.

11. Administrative Costs. Other costs necessary for the effective administration of the program, including salaries for grant organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the application package. 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.

Please refer to the Application Package for complete budget guidelines.

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 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 the USIA post 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 (granted 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.

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 or Moldova.

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 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 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. Organizations will be expected to cooperate with USIA in evaluating their programs under the principles of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which requires federal agencies to measure and report on the results of their programs and activities.

Notification

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

Dated: September 25, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-25989 Filed 10-1-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

USIA-Bosnia Undergraduate Development Program; Request for Proposals

SUMMARY: Subject to the availability of funds, the Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Branch, of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Colleges and universities (including community colleges and/or four year institutions) meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to host between two and five Bosnian students in a one year, non-degree undergraduate program for the academic year 1998-1999.

The USIA-Bosnia Undergraduate Development Program is designed to allow Bosnian students an opportunity to obtain knowledge, insight and cultural enrichment through their academic studies at American colleges and universities. The USIA strongly encourages institutions to guide students to courses in American studies, or other courses which emphasize