

Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.
DATES: Written comments should be received on or before May 17, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

OMB Number: 1545-0152.

Form Number: IRS Form 3115.
Type of Review: Extension.
Title: Application for Change in Accounting Method.
Description: Form 3115 is used by taxpayers who wish to change their method of computing their taxable income. The form is used by the IRS to determine if electing taxpayers have met

the requirements and are able to change to the method requested.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, Individuals or households, Not-for-profit institutions, Farms.

Estimated Number of Respondents/Recordkeepers: 6,400

Estimated Burden Hours Per Respondent/Recordkeeper:

Form	Recordkeeping	Learning about the law or the form	Preparing and sending the form to the IRS
Form 3115	20 hr., 34 min	3 hr., 15 min	4 hr., 56 min.
Schedule A	4 hr., 18 min	1 hr., 41 min	1 hr., 50 min.
Schedule B	4 hr., 47 min	46 min	2 hr., 4 min.
Schedule C	27 hr., 1 min	1 hr., 40 min	3 hr., 22 min.
Schedule D	5 hr., 1 min	1 hr., 59 min	2 hr., 9 min.

Frequency of Response: Other (when needed).

Estimated Total Reporting/Recordkeeping Burden: 272,062 hours.

Clearance Officer: Garrick Shear, Internal Revenue Service, Room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20224.

OMB Reviewer: Alexander T. Hunt (202) 395-7860, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10202, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

Lois K. Holland,

Departmental Reports, Management Officer.

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BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

organization, public administration, and business and trade. The grantee organization should work closely with hosts in planning and implementing internships to ensure rich and meaningful educational experiences, professionally and culturally.

Institutions with less than four years of international exchange experience are not eligible to apply for a grant under this program.

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 with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

Announcement Name and Number

All correspondence with USIA concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number *E/P-99-51*.

Deadline for Proposals

All proposal copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Monday, May 17, 1999. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked the due date but received on a later date will *not* be accepted. It is the responsibility of each grant applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Interested organizations/institutions may contact the Office of Citizen Exchanges, (E/P), Room 220, United States Information Agency, 301 Fourth Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547, telephone (202) 260-2745, email: otamches@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package contains detailed award criteria, required certification forms, specific budget instructions and

standard guidelines for proposal preparation. Please specify USIA Program Officer Orna Tamches on all inquiries and correspondence.

To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://e.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 requested from the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System," which is accessed by calling 202/401-7616. The "Table of Contents" listing available documents and order numbers should be the first order when entering the system.

ADDRESSES: 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/P-99-51, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547.

Program Information

Overview

The Office of Citizen Exchanges works with U.S. private sector, non-profit organizations on cooperative projects that introduce American and foreign participants to each others' social, economic, and political structures, and international interests. The Office has launched a new Africa Regional Internship Program, a practical exchange program designed to promote democratic leadership and citizen participation among key sectors of society. The ARIP will link mid-career professionals from Sub-Saharan Africa

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Africa Regional Internship Program; Notice: Request for Proposals

SUMMARY: The Africa/Near East/South Asia 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 to manage the Africa Regional Internship Program (ARIP). One award is anticipated. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to assume management of the citizen exchange program. Grants are subject to the availability of funds. The goal of the ARIP is to promote democratic leadership and citizen participation among key sectors of society. The ARIP will link mid-career professionals from Sub-Saharan Africa with U.S. counterpart institutions and groups for internships in the areas of education, non-governmental

with U.S. counterpart institutions and groups for internships in four broad areas: education; non-governmental organization; public administration; and business and trade. In FY 1999, USIA plans to place a minimum of 20 African participants in practical internships in U.S. communities.

Guidelines

Project activity is conceived of as four- to six-week internships in the United States. Proposals should reflect the applicant's understanding of the political, economic, and social environment of potential African participants. Programs should be designed for English speakers, recognizing that some participants may have greater fluency in French, Portuguese or other languages. USIA is interested in proposal designs that take into account the need for on going sharing of information, training and concrete plans for self-sustainability. Examples include plans to create professional networks or professional associations to share information; establishing ongoing Internet communication; and/or train-the-trainers models.

Africa Regional Internship Program (ARIP)

The ARIP should build expertise and develop skills required for effective leadership in a democratic society, including management, planning, public relations and community outreach, through a comprehensive, in-depth, hands-on experience. A minimum of 20 mid-career African men and women, working in the fields of education, non-governmental organization (NGO), public administration, and business and trade, will participate. Interns will be emerging professionals who demonstrate an interest in working with U.S. counterparts and a capacity to apply new skills to their jobs. These skills would be developed through four- to six-week internship placements in the U.S., matched to the participants' professional development needs and directly related to the interns' jobs at home. It will be the grantee's responsibility to arrange and to ensure appropriate and valuable internships, professionally and culturally. The intern and participating organizations in the United States and in the home country should develop priorities and strategies to meet the training and development needs.

Participants should experience the interaction among government agencies, the private sector, NGOs and the community at large in order to observe

the process of policy development and implementation as well as examine funding, investment, administration and regulatory issues relevant to the specialized field. It is anticipated that relationships would be established that would lay the groundwork for continued collaboration between the interns and their professional counterparts in the United States, and that linkages would be established between institutions to promote continued professional development and training opportunities.

Implementation should begin in the summer of 1999.

Participant Selection

Close coordination and communication will be needed among the grantee organization, USIS posts in Africa, African nominees, and U.S. hosts. Nominations for participation in the program will be welcome from the grantee organization, but major responsibility for nominations and ultimate authority to approve or disapprove participation will be with USIS posts in Sub-Saharan African countries. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa which do not have USIS posts will not be eligible to participate.

Visa Regulations

Foreign participants on programs sponsored by the Office of Citizen Exchanges are granted J-1 Exchange Visitor visas by the U.S. Embassy in the sending country. All programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

Budget Guidelines

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 more competitive than those with less such support. A program of this magnitude will require more funding than USIA can provide, and significant cost sharing is expected; a minimum of 33 percent cost sharing of total program expenses is required.

Applicants are requested to submit proposals not to exceed \$250,000 in funding from USIA. 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 \$160/day for program participants or the published U.S. Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. For activities outside of 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. *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 receive these benefits.

4. *Consultants.* 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.

5. *Room rental.* Room rental for group activities should not exceed \$250 per day.

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

7. *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.

8. *A return travel allowance of \$70* may be provided to each participant to be used for incidental expenditures during international travel.

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

10. *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 are described in the detailed instructions in the application package. While this announcement does not prescribe 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) percent of the total requested from USIA. Proposals should show costs-starting, including both contributions from the applicant and from other sources.

Please refer to the Application Package for complete budget guidelines.

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. Pub. L. 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 reflect advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Year 2000 Compliance Requirement (Y2K Requirement)

The Year 2000 (Y2K) issue is a broad operational and accounting problem that could potentially prohibit organizations from processing information in accordance with Federal management and program specific requirements including data exchange with USIA. The inability to process information in accordance with Federal requirements could result in grantees' being required to return funds that have not been accounted for properly.

USIA therefore requires all organizations use Y2K complaint systems including hardware, software, and firmware. Systems must accurately process data and dates (calculating, comparing and sequencing) both before and after the beginning of the year 2000 and correctly adjust for leap years.

Additional information addressing the Y2K issue may be found at the General Services Administration's Office of Information Technology website at <http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov>.

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. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA area office(s) and the USIA post(s) overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of USIA's 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, and relevance to the Agency's mission.
2. *Program Planning:* 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. *Ability To Achieve Program Objectives:* Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
4. *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.
5. *Support for 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 participants, program venue and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).
6. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.
7. *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.

8. *Follow-on Activities:* Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) ensuring that USIA supported programs are not isolated events.

9. *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. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended. Successful applicants will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

10. *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.

11. *Cost-Sharing:* Proposals should maximize cost-sharing, in cash or in kind, through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. The grant recipient must provide a minimum of 33 percent cost sharing of the total program expense.

12. *Ability for Institutions To Develop or Enhance Linkages With African Institutions:* Proposals should demonstrate how hosting institutions will develop follow-up plans with African participants, to further strengthen existing programs/activities that they develop through the ARIP.

Authority

Overhaul 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 above is provided through legislation.

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: April 12, 1999.

William B. Bader,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Special Medical Advisory Group, Notice of Meeting

As required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Pub. L. 92-463, the VA hereby gives notice that the Special Medical Advisory Group has scheduled a meeting on April 27, 1999. The meeting will convene at 8:30 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 830 at VA Central Office,

810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. The purpose of the meeting is to advise the Secretary and Under Secretary for Health relative to the care and treatment of disabled veterans, and other matters pertinent to the Department's Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

The agenda for the meeting will include discussion of annual ethics briefing; systematization of VHA's quality network; integration of academic affiliations; and national scopes of practices for non-physician providers.

All sessions will be open to the public. Those wishing to attend should contact Celestine Brockington, Office of the Under Secretary for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs. Her phone number is 202.273.5878.

Dated: April 9, 1999.

By Direction of the Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-9526 Filed 4-15-99; 8:45 am]

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