

affixed to the vehicle near the left windshield post and a reference and certification label must be affixed in the area of the left front door post to meet the requirements of 49 CFR Part 565.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9 am to 5 pm]. It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 30141 (a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: August 2, 1999.

**Marilynne Jacobs,**

*Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance.*  
[FR Doc. 99-20180 Filed 8-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program; Request for Proposals

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division (E/PY), of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program (CBYX). For applicants' information, on October 1, 1999, the Bureau will become part of the U.S. Department of State. The integration will not affect the content of this announcement or nature of the program described. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501c may submit proposals to facilitate academic exchanges between American and German high school students and young professionals.

### Program Information

#### Overview

The CBYX program supports the exchange of American and German young people in order to sustain and strengthen German-American friendship

based on common values of democracy and to convey lasting personal and institutional relationships to the successor generation. The primary objective of the program is to encourage American and German youth to learn about each other's society and culture through educational exchange. Additional goals for this competition include a renewed effort to promote the participants' roles as young ambassadors and the impact they can have on US-German relations, and to enhance Congressional involvement in the program and strengthen the linkages between US Representatives and their Bundestag counterparts. The program provides a full scholarship for an academic year experience of living and studying in the host country. CBYX is administered by the U.S. Information Agency and the German Bundestag Administrative Office, PB4. Known in Germany as the Parlamentarisches Patenschafts-Programm (PPP), the CBYX program was inaugurated in 1983 through a bilateral agreement between the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. Each government provides funding to exchange organizations through assistance awards for the costs of participant recruitment and selection, international airfare, orientation and debriefing, and hosting support for the respective exchange participants. The U.S.-German agreement calls for an open grants competition every four years, and PB4 is holding a simultaneous open competition to select the German counterpart organizations that will manage the program in Germany. High school organizations that are successful in this competition will be awarded start-up grants in FY2000 to administer the recruitment and selection of participants for academic year 2001-02. Organizations for each component will be eligible for renewal grants in FY2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004.

The actual number of participants exchanged each year is dependent on the amount of funding made available by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. Though Congress has not yet determined the budget level for FY2000, the competition for program year 2001-02 will be based on approximately 400 American and approximately 400 German participants. Throughout the four-year grant cycle, representatives of both governments will hold annual discussions to determine the final participant numbers for each academic year. Participants are chosen according to procedures and criteria established by each government. In the U.S. the CBYX program has four components.

#### 1. High School Component

This component provides 300 scholarships for a one-year educational and cultural homestay experience to American high school students ages 15-18. (A reciprocal exchange of approximately 300 American and 300 German high school students will take place annually.) In lieu of the traditional nationwide high-school participant competition, organizations are invited to bid on conducting merit-based competitions in one or more of five designated regions of the United States, as follows:

*Northeast:* Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Delaware, Maryland.

*Southeast:* Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico.

*Central States:* Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska.

*Southwest:* Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Southern California \* (\* the northern border of this region includes the counties of Monterey, San Benito, Fresno, and Inyo).

*Pacific/Northwest:* Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Northern California \* (\* the southern border of this region includes the counties of Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Merced, Madera, and Mono).

Organizations may bid on more than one region, indicating the most preferred area(s) in priority order. A maximum of five organizations will be selected to conduct all aspects of the competition in one of each of the five regions for 60 American participants. Organizations that are awarded a grant will conduct advertising, recruitment, processing of applications, screening, selection, pre-departure orientations and debriefings, and management of all administrative and logistical matters including domestic and international travel.

In the host country, American and German partner organizations will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientation for the respective exchange students, placement of the students in host families and schools (nationwide), arrange program enrichment activities, conduct the recruitment, screening, selection and orientation of host families, provide program monitoring,

supervision and counseling to students and host families, and manage all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel and health and accident insurance. Organizations should secure all host family and school placements at least two weeks prior to the German students' arrival in the U.S. Grantees will be required to submit to USIA a list of these placements one week prior to the students' arrival.

## 2. Vocational Component

This component provides approximately 20 scholarships to graduating American high-school seniors with a vocational specialization for a one-year professional study and training experience in their fields of interest. One organization will be selected to conduct all aspects of the nationwide competition and programming, including advertising, recruitment, processing of applications, screening, selection, pre-departure orientations and debriefings, and management of all administrative and logistical matters including domestic and international travel. (During the selection process the grantee is encouraged to work with vocational educational offices at the state level, as well as administrators of secondary schools with vocational education in their curriculum.)

The German partner organization chosen for a grant will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientation for the students and their placement in host families and schools, arrange a practicum in the participants' field of study, arrange program enrichment activities, and conduct the recruitment, screening, selection and orientation of host families, provide program monitoring, supervision and counseling to students and host families, and manage all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel and health and accident insurance.

## 3. Young Professional Component

This component provides approximately 80 scholarships for a one-year professional study and training experience in business, technical, vocational and agricultural fields to young Americans, ages 18–24. (A reciprocal exchange of approximately 80 Americans and 100 Germans will take place annually.) One organization will be selected to conduct all aspects of the nationwide competition and programming, including advertising, recruitment, processing of applications, screening, selection, pre-departure orientations and debriefings, and management of all administrative and

logistical matters including domestic and international travel.

In the host country, the American and German partner organizations will coordinate arrival and re-entry orientation for the students, the placement of the students in host families (or other suitable living quarters) and schools (colleges/universities), arrange a practicum in the participants' field of study, arrange program enrichment activities, and conduct the recruitment, screening, selection and orientation of host families, provide program monitoring, supervision and counseling to students and host families, and management all administrative and logistical matters including in-country travel and health and accident insurance.

In the U.S. each German participant will be placed in a two or four-year college for one semester of full-time study or a minimum of 12 credit hours (which may include an English class) throughout the academic year. The organization is encouraged to seek tuition waivers and cost sharing with cooperating colleges. The organization will coordinate with each participant to assure that his/her practicum is based on a prospectus of the specific skills and functions that will be mastered and that there is a structured learning component that enables the participant to gain a perspective on the overall operation of the business. The organization will also coordinate a six-week Congressional internship on Capitol Hill for three to five young professionals. A stipend for some meals, incidentals and reasonable local transportation expenses may be included in the budget, but it is anticipated that the stipend would be substantially reduced or eliminated during the second half of the program when the participants receive allowances for living expenses from the firms or agencies hosting their practicums. The current stipend range is \$250 to \$300 per the regional cost of living. Where possible, hosting arrangements should be found that do not require subsidization.

## 4. Administrative Component

One organization will be awarded an administrative grant to produce materials for program advertisement, recruitment and orientation for the high school component, to set up and maintain an alumni database for all CBYX participants, and procure and administer a special health and accident insurance plan required by the German Government for all German CBYX participants.

The organization will produce program specific informational

materials for the high school component. Each organization selected for the high school component will distribute the materials to a wide audience within its appointed region, including public and private secondary schools, the media, and key networks such as the American Association of Teachers of German. (Innovative methods of publicizing the program are welcome, within funding limitations. Organizations are encouraged to utilize their volunteer networks and alumni to promote the program.) The organization will coordinate information and input from the high school organizations for the production of general briefing and orientation materials for American high school participants. The organization will set up and maintain a master database listing of all CBYX participants with a corresponding list of the Congressional Representatives from whose districts the students are selected and a similar list of German participants and the Congressional districts in which they are hosted. The organization will also be responsible for securing and distributing to all CBYX organizations the special health and accident insurance for the German students.

Please see the POGI (Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation) for further details and guidance regarding each of the four program components.

## Guidelines

Prior German language skills are not required. The German partner organizations will provide up to two months of intensive language training, which is covered by German Government funds, to American participants upon their arrival in Germany. German participants are expected to be sufficiently proficient in English and therefore will not require (but may elect) an English language course as part of their regular studies. (No USIA grant funding will be provided for English training under this program.) The pre-departure orientation for American students and the debriefing for German students should take place in Washington, DC and include CBYX students only. The Washington programs, which are designed to introduce the participants to the federal government and issues in the U.S.-German relationship, may be subcontracted out by the grantee organizations.

Organizations may include other program elements such as mid-year enrichment and follow-on activities in their proposals, but should bear in mind that funding is limited. Mid-year enrichment activities may include

informal local or regional gatherings, volunteer community projects, and volunteer internships in local congressional offices. For follow-on activities organizations are encouraged to involve former participants in the organization's alumni activities as well as CBYX-specific activities by volunteering in various capacities such as promoting the program in their communities and/or serving on the selection committees or as local or regional representatives. Organizations should also utilize their individual web sites and newsletters to track and/or keep in touch with alumni. To be eligible for consideration in this competition an organization must:

1. Be legally incorporated and identify a legally incorporated affiliate in Germany and/or indicate its willingness to be partnered with a German organization approved by PB4 and USIA.

2. Have a not-for-profit status, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service; the German affiliate must also be not-for-profit (gemeinnützige).

3. Be financially solvent, have a demonstrated track record of responsible fiscal management and be able to meet the accounting and reporting requirements for Agency grants.

4. Have a minimum of four years of experience in conducting long-term exchange programs (of at least nine months duration) between the United States and Germany.

5. Have well-established volunteer and host family networks to carry out various aspects of the program; regional representatives must be situated in such a way to handle expeditiously any problems that arise regarding host family accommodations, schooling and language problems, or difficulties concerning internships.

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

#### **Budget Guidelines**

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

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Costs for U.S. and German students are to be listed separately. Organizations should be

familiar with grant regulations described in OMB circulars A110, A122, and A133.

Cost sharing is encouraged. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. The grant recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which are claimed as being in contribution to cost participation, as well as cost to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A100, Attachment E. Cost Sharing and Matching should be described in the proposal. In the event the recipient does not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, the Agency's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution. The recipient's proposal shall include the cost of an audit that: (1) Complies with the requirements of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Institutions; (2) complies with the requirements of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement of Position (SOP) No. 92-9; and (3) complies with AICPA Codification of Statements on Auditing Standards AU Section 551, "Reporting on Information Accompanying the Basic Financial Statements in Auditor-Submitted Documents," where applicable. When USIA is the largest direct source of Federal financial assistance—i.e. the cognizant Federal Agency—and indirect costs are charged to Federal grants, a supplemental schedule of indirect cost computation is required. The audit costs shall be identified separately for: (1) Audit of the basic financial statements, and (2) supplemental reports and schedules required by A-133.

USIA's Office of Inspector General has provided supplemental guidance for conducting A-133 audits and recovery of related audit costs in a separate "Dear Colleague" letter dated January 24, 1995.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

#### **Announcement Title and Number**

All correspondence with USIA concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number *E/P-00-03*.

**For Further Information Contact:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, E/PY, Room 568, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547, (202) 619-6299, fax: 619-5311 to request a

Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package contains detailed award criteria, required application forms, specific budget instructions, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. Please specify USIA Program Officer Shalita Jones on all other inquiries and correspondence.

Please 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.

#### **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.

#### **Deadline for Proposals**

All proposal copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on *Friday, September 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. Each applicant must ensure that the proposals are received by the above deadline. Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The original and 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: *E/P-00-3*, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 336, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. These documents 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.

#### **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 POGI for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

#### **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 compliant 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 and the USIA post 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 Education 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 their conformance with the objectives and guidelines stated above and the review criteria stated in the POGI.

#### **Authority**

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 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**

All applicants will be notified on the results of the review process on or before December 31, 1999. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: July 30, 1999.

**William Kiehl,**

*Acting Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 99-20144 Filed 8-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

#### **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

[OMB Control No. 2900-0353]

#### **Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an

opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed revision of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed to determine if a student is eligible for work-study benefits.

**DATES:** Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before October 4, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0353" in any correspondence.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

**Title:** Certification of Lessons Completed, VA Forms 22-6553b and 22-6553b-1.

**OMB Control Number:** 2900-0353.

**Type of Review:** Extension of a currently approved collection.

**Abstract:** VA Forms 22-6553b and 22-6553b-1 are used to determine the number of lessons completed by the student and serviced by the correspondence school, and if necessary to determine the date of completion or