

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). Applicants should refer to the Bureau's Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI).

V.2f. Follow-on Activities: Applicants should provide a plan to conduct activities after the Bureau-funded project has concluded in order to ensure that Bureau-supported programs are not isolated events. Funds for all post-grant activities must be in the form of contributions from the applicant or sources outside of the Bureau. Costs for these activities must not appear in the proposal budget, but should be outlined in the narrative.

V.2g. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals should include a detailed plan to monitor and evaluate the program. Program objectives should target clearly defined results in quantitative terms. Competitive evaluation plans will describe how applicant organizations would measure these results, and proposals should include draft data collection instruments (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) in Tab E.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1. Award Notices. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements. Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance:

- Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."
- Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

- Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments."
- Circular A-110 (Revised), "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations."

- Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

- Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations.

Please reference http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_circulars/ for additional information:

VI.3. Reporting Requirements. You must provide ECA with a hard copy original plus one electronic copy of the following reports:

VI.3a. Final Reports. A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award;

VI.3b. One-page Report. A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov Web site—as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

VI.3c. SF-PPR. A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet should be submitted with all program reports.

VI.3d. Quarterly reports. Quarterly program and financial reports should be submitted for the duration of the program. For program reports, award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau. (Please refer to section IV.3.d.3, "Program Monitoring and Evaluation"). All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request. All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Officer and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VI.4. Additional Program Data Requirements:

VI.4a. Data on Program participants and activities. Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following: Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by

the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.

VI.4b. Travel. Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Jim Ogul, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C St., NW., Washington, DC 20522-0503, ph. tel: (202) 632-6055, e-mail: ogulje@state.gov. All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C-10-01.

VIII. Other Information

Notice: The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau 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 per section VI.4 above.

Dated: March 31, 2010.

Maura M. Pally,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2010-7981 Filed 4-7-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 6950]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals: The U.S./Afghanistan Professional Partnership Program

Announcement Type: New Grant.
Funding Opportunity Number: ECA/PE/C/EUR-SCA-10-52.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415.

Key Dates:

Application Deadline: May 21, 2010.
Executive Summary: In his December 1, 2009, speech in West Point, New York, President Obama said that a new

diplomatic initiative in Afghanistan would be part of the U.S. strategy to bring peace and stability in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. As part of this initiative, ECA is seeking proposals for a new program, called "The U.S./ Afghanistan Professional Partnership Program." This program will bring young professionals from the two countries together to develop cross cultural relationships and develop professional skills that will positively impact people's lives and will result in stronger ties between the two nations.

Pending availability of funds, the Bureau expects to award one grant for approximately \$1,200,000. The project is focused on professionals working in the judicial system and public administration and will be designed to demonstrate best practices, offer professional development opportunities, and support internships at U.S.-based workplaces for Afghan professionals. The program will involve provincial and district (state, local) public administration officials, district attorney offices, legal aid offices, case workers, and judges where possible.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

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 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." Funding for this competition is provided through special FY 2009/FY 2010 supplemental funds that have been appropriated to the Department of State.

General Program Outlines

Language: This program is for English and non-English speaking Afghan participants. English language ability will not be a requirement to participate. Groups of Afghan professionals should be arranged according to language ability/preference (English and Dari). For the Dari-speaking participants, State Department Language Services interpreters will be assigned through the Office of Citizen Exchanges. There will

be approximately three interpreters assigned for the group orientation portion of the program and about one interpreter to three Afghan participants for the internship portion of the program. Proposals should budget for the appropriate amount of interpreters. See IV.3e.2c. for specifics on budgeting for interpreters.

Visas: Applicants must demonstrate that they can work with ECA and the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for the U.S. visas and directly with the Afghan Embassy for its visas (if necessary). ECA will issue the DS-2019 forms required for J visas; see Section IV.3d.1 for additional information related to the administration of J visa programs.

Travel: The grantee will arrange all round-trip international travel, complying with the Fly America Act, and domestic travel arrangements for the participants. All Afghan and American participants must depart and arrive in Afghanistan through Kabul. Proposals should include plans to house the Afghan participants in Kabul for at least one day to coordinate pre-departure and post program briefings with the Public Affairs Staff of the U.S. Embassy.

U.S. Based Programs: The recipients of grant awards will be responsible for implementing programs from four to six weeks in the United States for the Afghan participants. It is envisioned that the Afghan participants will be grouped in delegations of ten who will travel together to the United States. Each delegation of ten Afghan participants will travel at different times throughout the grant period. The Afghan participants will be placed within relevant, reputable, legally-recognized U.S. organizations where they will gain hands-on experience with legal and public administration professions in the United States, and will have the opportunity to establish relationships with U.S. professional counterparts for on-going collaboration. The grantee may want to engage with a partner or sub-grantee to arrange for the internship placement. The grantee should also include cultural enrichment activities as an integral part of the experience. Such activities could include outings to museums, historic sites, sporting events, cultural exhibits, local schools or community events, volunteering and other opportunities to experience American culture and diversity. Short-term homestays to give participants a personal experience of how typical Americans live are highly desirable.

Afghanistan-Based Programs: Proposals should also describe a selection process and logistics for a one

to two-week Afghanistan-based program for a smaller number of U.S. participants. The U.S. participants will be selected from among the internship host organizations for the Afghan participants and will travel several months after the Afghans return home. The Afghanistan-based program may include public presentations, joint skills development programs, and media interviews, if possible. All details and specifics on Afghanistan-based programs will be arranged in close coordination with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Note: Because of the changing nature of the security situation, U.S. participants may not be able to travel to Afghanistan. Therefore, proposals should include a contingency plan to bring U.S. and Afghan participants together in a third country (preferably within the South and Central Asia region) for this program component. See VI.1b for additional information on Assistance Awards in Afghanistan.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: The Bureau places high importance on monitoring and evaluation as a means of ensuring and measuring a project's success. Proposals must include a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the project. Please refer to section IV.3d.3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation below.

Follow-up Activities: The grant recipients will develop enhancement activities that reinforce program goals after the participants' return to Afghanistan. This includes informing participants of the Bureau's Alumni program, facilitating their enrollment, and encouraging their on-going participation. Please refer to the PSI for additional information on Alumni, Outreach, and Engagement.

Fiscal Management: Applicants must demonstrate competency to manage all financial aspects of the project, including participant costs and transparent arrangements of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.

Contact ECA: All interested organizations should contact ECA Program Officer Brent Beemer before the submission of proposals. ECA will also put the organizations in contact with appropriate colleagues at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Brent Beemer: 202-632-6067, BeemerBT@state.gov.

Specific Program Details

Professional Partnerships: The Judicial System and Public Administration.

This program will provide approximately 100 participants from Afghanistan and the United States the

opportunity to study the legal systems and public administration techniques and processes in both countries and for Afghan professionals to take part in internships with legal and public administration professionals in the U.S. Successful programs will achieve the following:

- Demonstrate Afghan and American legal and public administration systems and approaches each country uses at the regional and local levels.

- Share strategies employed by American and Afghan professionals to counter corruption and bureaucratic entanglements in the legal and public administration systems.

- Establish structured interaction among American and Afghan participants designed to develop enduring professional ties.

Proposals should include a comprehensive U.S.-based group educational and internship program for legal and public administrative professionals. One grant will be awarded for this project for a period of two to three years.

Competitive proposals will demonstrate experience and contacts with relevant legal and public administration professionals, organizations, and educational institutes to program the U.S. components of this program. If a subcontractor is proposed for the internship placement, its experience and relevance with public administration needs to be explained. Competitive proposals should also demonstrate an understanding of the structure of the Afghan government, civil service, and legal systems.

Each U.S.-based component will begin with a group orientation (preferably in Washington, DC) with workshops, lectures, and site visits to introduce participants to the basics of the legal system and public administration in the United States. This should be followed by hands-on internship components at appropriate host U.S. work sites to see these practices at work. Internships should be developed for small groups consisting of not more than three persons. A final debriefing session in Washington, DC, for each group should also be included in the proposal.

Audience: Participants should be professionals, who currently hold positions within administrative or legal bodies, and have at least five years of active experience in the field. **Note:** Afghan groups should be arranged according to the professional level in which they work, and by their language ability. Proposals should demonstrate an ability to implement programs based in the provincial and local levels.

Possible audiences for recruitment should include provincial and district (state, local) public administration officials, district attorney staff, legal aid professionals, case workers, and judges where possible.

Afghanistan Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection for this program in Afghanistan is to be closely coordinated with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Proposals can include information on a proposed in-country partner organization that would recruit program participants, and include a proposed plan and budget for this recruitment and selection. However, applicants may ultimately be asked to work with an alternate organization recommended by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to recruit program participants. In either case, final selections (including possible interviews of program finalists) should be done in conjunction with the Public Affairs Section. All participants must be approved by ECA and the Public Affairs Section in Kabul.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Grant Agreement.

Fiscal Year Funds: 2010.

Approximate Total Funding:

\$1,200,000 (pending availability of funds).

Approximate Number of Awards: One.

Approximate Average Award:

\$1,200,000.

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2010 (pending availability of funds).

Anticipated Project Completion Date: September 1, 2013.

Additional Information: At this time, support for this program is being provided from special one-time FY 2009/FY 2010 supplemental funds that have been appropriated to the Department. In the event that additional funds become available in fiscal years 2011 and 2012, and pending successful implementation of the FY 2010 funded program, ECA reserves the right to renew this grant for two additional fiscal years before openly competing it again.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau

encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs 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 A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23—Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

(a) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$60,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award for approximately \$1,200,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

(b) Technical Eligibility: Applicants may only submit one proposal under this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 form and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1 Contact Information To Request an Application Package: Please contact

the Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C, SA-5, Third Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20522-0504, (202) 632-6067, BeemerBT@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/EUR-SCA-10-52 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

Please specify Brent Beemer and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/EUR-SCA-10-52 located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's Web site at <http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov Web site at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF-424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please refer to the solicitation package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA Federal assistance awards must include in their

application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

(1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

(2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov Web site as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1. Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J Visa.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR part 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR part 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR part 62.

Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR part 62 *et seq.*

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should *explicitly state in writing* that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR part 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR part 62 *et seq.*, including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, recordkeeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from: Office of Designation, ECA/EC/D, SA-5, Floor C2, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-0582.

IV.3d.2. 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 disabilities. 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 your 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,” the Bureau “shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries.” Public Law 106–113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation. Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project’s success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project’s objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are “smart” (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program *outputs* and *outcomes*. *Outputs* are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. *Outcomes*, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs

and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. Participant satisfaction with the program and exchange experience.
2. Participant learning, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. Participant behavior, demonstrating concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. Institutional changes, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it (1) specifies intended outcomes; (2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; (3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and (4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF–424A—“Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs” along with 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.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

IV.3e.2a. Travel. International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J–1 visas for participants in Bureau sponsored programs.

IV.3e.2b. Per Diem. For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. *Domestic per diem rates* may be accessed at: http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=17943. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. *Foreign per diem rates* can be accessed at: http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78.

IV.3e.2c. Interpreters. As stated previously, ECA anticipates that most participants coming to the U.S. on this program will not have command of English. ECA is requiring that eventual award recipients ask ECA to assign State Department interpreters for this project. One interpreter is typically needed for every four participants who require interpretation. When an applicant proposes to use State Department interpreters, the following expenses should be included in the budget: Published Federal per diem rates (both “lodging” and “M&IE”) and “home-program-home” transportation in the amount of \$400 per interpreter. Salary expenses for State Department interpreters will be covered by the Bureau and should not be part of an applicant’s proposed budget. Bureau funds cannot support interpreters who accompany delegations from their home country or travel internationally.

IV.3e.2d. Book and Cultural Allowances. Foreign participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50. Interpreters should be reimbursed up to \$150 for expenses when they escort participants to cultural events. U.S. program staff, trainers or participants are not eligible to receive these benefits.

IV.3e.2e. Consultants. Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed

that figure. Subcontracting organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and sub-grantee should be included in the proposal. Such sub-grants should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget.

IV.3e.2f. Room rental. The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.

IV.3e.2g. Materials. Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop and translate materials for participants. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget. Grantee organizations should expect to submit a copy of all program materials to ECA, and ECA support should be acknowledged on all materials developed with its funding.

IV.3e.2h. Equipment. Applicants may propose to use grant funds to purchase equipment, such as computers and printers; these costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.

IV.3e.2i. Working meal. Normally, no more than one working meal may be provided during the program. Per capita costs may not exceed \$15–\$25 for lunch and \$20–\$35 for dinner, excluding room rental. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one. When setting up a budget, interpreters should be considered “participants.”

IV.3e.2j. Return travel allowance. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each foreign participant may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

IV.3e.2k. Health Insurance. Foreign participants will be covered during their participation in the program by the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE), for which the grantee must enroll them. Details of that policy can be provided by the contact officers identified in this solicitation. The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the grant proposal budget. However, applicants are permitted to include costs for travel insurance for U.S. participants in the budget.

IV.3e.2l. Wire transfer fees. When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to partner organizations overseas. Grantees are urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

IV.3e.2m. In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes. Given the

requirements associated with obtaining J–1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with visa interviews or DS–2019 pick-up.

IV.3e.2n. Administrative Costs. Costs necessary for the effective administration of the program may include salaries for grantee organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the Application Package. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, proposals in which the administrative costs do not exceed 25% of the total requested ECA grant funds will be more competitive under the cost effectiveness and cost sharing criterion, per item V.1 below. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources. Please also include in the administrative portion of your budget plans to travel to Washington, DC, to meet with your program officer within the first 45 days after the grant has been awarded. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: May 21, 2010.

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/EUR–SCA–10–52.

Methods of Submission: Applications may be submitted in one of two ways:

- (1) In hard-copy, via a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (*i.e.*, Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, or U.S. Postal Service Express Overnight Mail, etc.), or
- (2) Electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

Along with the Project Title, all applicants must enter the above Reference Number in Box 11 on the SF–424 contained in the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) of the solicitation document.

IV.3f.1. Submitting Printed Applications. Applications must be shipped no later than the above deadline. Delivery services used by applicants must have in-place, centralized shipping identification and tracking systems that may be accessed via the Internet and delivery people who are identifiable by commonly recognized uniforms and delivery vehicles. Proposals shipped on or before the above deadline but received at ECA more than seven days after the deadline will be ineligible for further consideration under this competition. Proposals shipped after the established deadlines are ineligible for

consideration under this competition. ECA will *not* notify you upon receipt of application. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that each package is marked with a legible tracking number and to monitor/confirm delivery to ECA via the Internet. Delivery of proposal packages *may not* be made via local courier service or in person for this competition. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Only proposals submitted as stated above will be considered.

Important note: When preparing your submission please make sure to include one extra copy of the completed SF–424 form and place it in an envelope addressed to “ECA/EX/PM”.

The original and 10 copies of the application should be sent to: Program Management Division, ECA–IIP/EX/PM, Ref.: ECA/PE/C/EUR–SCA–10–52, Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20522–0504.

Applicants submitting hard-copy applications must also submit the “Executive Summary” and “Proposal Narrative” sections of the proposal in text (.txt) or Microsoft Word format on CD–ROM. As appropriate, the Bureau will provide these files electronically to Public Affairs Section(s) at the U.S. embassy(ies) for its (their) review.

IV.3f.2. Submitting Electronic Applications. Applicants have the option of submitting proposals electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Find” portion of the system.

Please Note: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

Please follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application

deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov Web site includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the Web site. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov Web site, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to: Grants.gov Customer Support; *Contact Center Phone:* 800-518-4726; *Business Hours:* Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Eastern Time; *E-mail:* support@grants.gov.

Applicants have until midnight (12 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. *There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.*

Please refer to the Grants.gov Web site, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. *Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.* ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov Web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Optional—IV.3f.3. You may also state here any limitations on the number of applications that an applicant may submit and make it clear whether the limitation is on the submitting organization, individual program director or both.

IV.3g. *Intergovernmental Review of Applications:* Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Review Process

The Bureau will review all proposals 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 Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance award grants resides with the Bureau's 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 Bureau's mission.
2. *Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives:* 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. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
3. *Institutional Capacity and Record:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
4. *Cost-effectiveness and Cost-sharing:* 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.

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

5. *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 participants, program venue and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

6. *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.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1a. Award Notices

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.1b. The following additional requirements apply to this project:

Special Provision for Performance in a Designated Combat Area (Currently Iraq and Afghanistan).

All Recipient personnel deploying to areas of combat operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense (currently Iraq and Afghanistan), under assistance awards over \$100,000 or performance over 14 days must register in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients of federal assistance awards shall register in SPOT before deployment, or if already in the designated operational area, register upon becoming an employee under the assistance award, and maintain current data in SPOT. Information on how to

register in SPOT will be available from your Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative during the final negotiation and approval stages in the federal assistance awards process. Recipients of federal assistance awards are advised that adherence to this policy and procedure will be a requirement of all final federal assistance awards issued by ECA.

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, grantees are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations.

Please reference the following Web sites for additional information: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>; <http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>.

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with a hard copy original plus one electronic copy of the following reports:

(1) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award;

(2) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov Web site—as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

(3) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet with all program reports.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3)) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Officer and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VI.4. Optional Program Data

Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. As a minimum, the data must include the following:

(1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.

(2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Brent Beemer, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C, Third Floor SA-5, Third Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20522-0504.

Brent Beemer: 202-632-6067, BeemerBT@state.gov. All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C/ EUR-SCA-10-52.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts

published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the government. The Bureau 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 per section VI.3 above.

Dated: April 2, 2010.

Maura M. Pally,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. FRA 2010-0005-N-8]

Proposed Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration, DOT

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and its implementing regulations, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) hereby announces that it is seeking approval of the following information collection activities. Before submitting these information collection requirements for clearance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), FRA is soliciting public comment on specific aspects of the activities identified below.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than June 7, 2010.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on any or all of the following proposed activities by mail to either: Mr. Robert Brogan, Office of Safety, Planning and Evaluation Division, RRS-21, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE., Mail Stop 17, Washington, DC 20590, or Ms. Kimberly Toone, Office of Information Technology, RAD-20, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE., Mail Stop 35, Washington, DC 20590. Commenters requesting FRA to acknowledge receipt of their respective comments must include a self-addressed stamped postcard stating, "Comments on OMB control number 2130-New." Alternatively, comments may be transmitted via facsimile to (202) 493-6216 or (202) 493-6497, or via e-mail to Mr. Brogan at Robert.Brogan@dot.gov, or