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Dated: May 29, 1997.

**Stuart P. Seidel,**

*Assistant Commissioner, Office of Regulations and Rulings.*

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BILLING CODE 4820-02-P

## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Census of Foreign Students in the United States

**ACTION:** Request for proposal.

**SUMMARY:** The Advising and Student Services Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. U.S. educational, cultural, public, and private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations with significant substantive experience in international education may apply to conduct a statistical survey (census) of foreign nationals affiliated with institutions of higher learning in the United States. The census should identify in the most economical way possible the number of foreign students and scholars studying, conducting research, or teaching at all accredited universities and colleges in the United States starting in the 1997-1998 academic year; it must provide detailed individual student profile data which should include which students are first-time entrants to the U.S. higher educational system, country-specific aggregate data in the form of Country Locator Reports, and survey the number of American students studying abroad. Proposals should describe the methodology which will be used to collect the data and how the material will be analyzed and presented to the public. The proposals must also include plans to establish an advisory board to provide assistance in identifying and framing policy issues to be addressed.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Overview

As the Federal agency tasked with promoting international educational exchange, USIA considers it essential to have an accurate picture of foreign study and scholarship in the United States, such as that provided by the statistical survey. This survey should

provide a detailed and comprehensive picture of the number and characteristics of foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents and refugees) affiliated with American institutions of higher learning and the number of U.S. students studying abroad. Topics of interest include the number of students and scholars, their gender, countries of origin, and fields of study. Information about students' academic level (undergraduate, graduate, post-doctorate), primary source of financial support, financial contributions they make while in the United States, and location of study should be included. A survey of students in intensive English language programs would be of interest but is not required.

The Agency will consider funding a publication, database, newsletter, or any other medium presented as a viable vehicle for making census data about the U.S. and foreign student population widely available in a timely manner and in a clear and concise format. Continued support, assuming availability of funding, will be contingent upon accurate data collection, quality of presentation of that data, and prompt publication of the census. The Agency reserves the right to reproduce, publish or otherwise use any work developed under this grant for Government purposes.

#### Guidelines

Proposals should include a description of the methodology to be used to canvass colleges and universities for information about their statistics. Provision should be made for securing the highest possible response rate. Data collected from the surveys of foreign students enrolled in regionally accredited U.S. institutions of higher learning should be collected annually with 650 copies of the first edition being published in hard-copy and shipped to USIA in the fall of 1998. For a more detailed analysis and cross tabulation of the characteristics of the foreign student population, individual student profile data should be collected annually with the first data appearing biennially in computerized diskette format along with the hard copy in the fall of 1999. This individual student profile data should also be provided to USIA in a format that is country-specific on diskette in the summer of 1998 and should specify detailed information showing the number of students from a specific country attending institutions of higher education in each state of the U.S.

The Agency is interested in a clear presentation of the data collected as well as a rigorous analysis of the data

which will draw conclusions about the trends in international study in the U.S. and make data recommendations for policy for both government and academia. An advisory board must be established to provide assistance in identifying and framing policy issues to be addressed and should meet at least once a year. Board members would likely be drawn from a broad range of disciplines and organizations such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and would be expected to provide fresh perspectives on topics that are related to the internationalization of higher education.

Scholarly analyses of census data addressing pertinent policy issues should be included, taking into consideration a wide range of prospective readers and policymakers in government, academia, and business. The publication should include a section on the mechanics and uses of data analysis, highlighting how conclusions can be drawn from the data collected, what some of the limitations of that analysis can be, and how the data can benefit those supplying it, i.e. as a campus advocacy or recruiting tool.

Please include with the proposal a complete list of proposed chapter headings and sample analyses. We welcome innovative approaches to the presentation of material. Topics we would like to see addressed might include:

- (1) Relationship to immigration flows
- (2) Global competitiveness: How changing patterns in preferred fields of study among international students reflect sociological and economic trends in other countries;
- (3) The impact on the U.S. economy and labor market;
- (4) Global trade;
- (5) A comparative analysis of readily available statistics on foreign student enrollment in countries with significant international student presence;
- (6) How demographics of the international student population in the U.S. is affected by visa control;
- (7) U.S. faculty and students lecturing and researching abroad: The countries/regions they are going to, the fields of study, and who pays for it.

Grant should begin on or about October 1, 1997 and run through September 30, 1999.

Proposed budget: Budget may not exceed \$175,000. Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. For

further clarification, applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. The \$175,000 is expected to constitute only a portion of the total project funding. Cost sharing is required and the proposal should list other anticipated sources of support. Grant applications should demonstrate financial and in-kind support.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- (1) Salaries and fringe benefits; travel and per diem;
- (2) Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, etc.;
- (3) Overhead expenses, auditing costs, subject to limits outlined above.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions. Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000.

#### Review Process

USIA will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Area Offices and the USIA post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (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) Cost-Sharing

Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through host institutions and other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions and may include marketing the data.

##### (2) Overall Quality

The content, definition, and organization of all aspects of the project, appropriateness of project plan and

content to program objectives; extensive academic and professional involvement of the staff assigned to the project in the U.S. educational community; evidence of understanding of the dynamics of trends in international education.

##### (3) Institutional Capacity

Adequacy of proposed resources, including professional staff and available educational network(s), to administer the census successfully, based on achieving a high response rate from those institutions surveyed, in the most economical way possible. Development of an appropriate method and format for presentation and analysis of the data.

##### (4) Institution's Track Record/Ability

Clear evidence of applicant institution's track record of successful projects and experience with international education. Demonstrated expertise of the project director to assume the administration of this undertaking.

##### (5) Cost-Effectiveness

The indirect costs and administrative components of the program, as well as salaries, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. In-kind contributions should also be included.

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 use with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations \* \* \* and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the legislation.

Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

**ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE AND NUMBER:** All communications with USIA concerning this RFP should refer to the announcement's title and reference number E/ASA-98-01.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information

Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on July 25, 1997. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by July 25, 1997 but received at a later date will not be accepted.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Advising and Student Services, E/ASA, Room 349, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, Tel: (202) 619-5434, Fax: (202) 401-1433, e-mail: [advise@usia.gov](mailto:advise@usia.gov). to request a Solicitation Package containing more details. Please request required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

**TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET:** The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

**TO RECEIVE A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA FAX ON DEMAND:** The entire Solicitation Package may be received via the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System", which is accessed by calling 202/401/7616. Please request a "Catalog" of available documents and order numbers when first entering the system.

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

**SUBMISSIONS:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and twelve copies of the proposal plus one extra copy of the cover sheet should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/ASA-98-01, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547.

#### Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly

encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy", USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

#### 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: May 30, 1997.

#### Dell Pendergrast,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0569]

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

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) 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 on requirements relating to customer satisfaction surveys.

**DATES:** Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before August 4, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments on the collection of information to Lynne R. Heltman, Veterans Benefits Administration (243F), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0569" in any correspondence.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lynne R. Heltman at (202) 273-5440.

**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:** Generic Clearance for the Veterans Benefits Administration Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

**OMB Control Number:** 2900-0569.

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

**Abstract:** The VBA administers integrated programs of benefits and services, established by law for veterans and their survivors, and service personnel. Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, requires Federal agencies and departments to identify and survey its customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing service. The VBA uses customer satisfaction surveys to gauge customer perceptions of VA services as well as customer expectations and desires. The results of these information collections lead to improvements in the quality of VBA service delivery by helping to shape the direction and focus of specific programs and services.

**Affected Public:** Individuals or households, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, veterans' service organizations, and businesses or other for-profits.

Year	Number of respondents	Estimated annual burden (hours)	Frequency of response
<b>Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction With the VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process</b>			
1997 .....	22,800	5,700	One-time.
1998 .....	22,800	5,700	One-time.
1999 .....	22,800	5,700	One-time.
<b>VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups</b>			
1997 .....	200	400	One-time.
1998 .....	200	400	One-time.
1999 .....	200	400	One-time.