

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

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

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

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

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

11. Administrative Costs. Other costs necessary for the effective administration of the program, including salaries for grant organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the application package. While this announcement does not proscribe a rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, in general, priority will be given to proposals whose administrative costs are less than twenty-five (25) per cent of the total requested from USIA. Proposals should show cost-sharing, both contributions from the applicant and from other sources.

Please refer to the Application Package for complete budget guidelines.

Review Process

USIA will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be considered ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Office of East European and NIS Affairs and the USIA post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (granted or cooperative agreements) resides with the USIA grants officer.

Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered.

1. Program Planning and Ability to Achieve Objectives

Program objectives should be stated clearly and precisely and should reflect the applicant's expertise in the subject area and the region. Objectives should respond to the priority topics in this announcement and should relate to the current conditions in each of the countries. They should be reasonable and attainable. A detailed work plan should explain step by step how objectives will be achieved, including a timetable for completion of major tasks. The substance of seminars, presentations, consulting, internships, and itineraries should be spelled out in detail. Responsibilities of in-country partners should be clearly described.

2. Institutional Capability

Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's goals. The narrative should demonstrate proven ability to handle logistics. Proposal should reflect the institution's expertise in the subject area and knowledge of the conditions pertaining to it in Russia or Moldova.

3. Cost Effectiveness

Overhead and administrative costs for the proposal, including salaries, honoraria, and subcontracts for services, should be kept low. While this announcement does not proscribe a rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, in general, priority will be given to proposals whose administrative costs are less than twenty-five (25) per cent of the total requested from USIA. Proposals should show cost-sharing, both contributions from the applicant and from other sources.

4. Support of Diversity

Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity throughout the program.

5. Project Evaluation

USIA is results-oriented. Proposals must include a plan and methodology to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. USIA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire and/or plan for use of another measurement technique (such as a focus group) to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements. Organizations will be expected to cooperate with USIA in evaluating their programs under the principles of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which requires federal agencies to measure and report on the results of their programs and activities.

Notification

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

Dated: September 25, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

USIA-Bosnia Undergraduate Development Program; Request for Proposals

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

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

democracy, market economy, and civic society per the intent of the SEED funding. The USIA is holding an open solicitation for all universities and colleges giving preference to those that have demonstrated experience in hosting Bosnian students, partnerships with Bosnian higher education institutions, or expertise and interest in the region. Increase in program expenses together with reduced overall government funding for exchange programs make cost-sharing arrangements with host institutions a critical part of the USIA-Bosnia Undergraduate Development Program. Preference will be given to institutions that can provide cost-sharing toward tuition, fees, room and board expenses and/or other direct participant expenses. Cost-sharing may also be in the form of direct administrative and program costs.

The proposed funding will support one academic year of study in the fields of agriculture, business administration, civic education, criminal justice, economics, education, environmental resource management, journalism/mass communications, political science, and public administration. Similarly, the grant will support international round-trip travel of students, the housing of the students on campus or with host families, a four to twelve week internship in the students' field of specialization, culturally enriching activities, including but not limited to community outreach and service projects, and additional activities such as an orientation program.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries * * *; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations * * * and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world."

The grant and funding for this program has been allocated by the Support for the East European Democracy (SEED) initiative. The SEED initiative is special funding targeted to advance the democratic and economic transition of Central and Eastern Europe. The funding authority for the

USIA-Bosnian Undergraduate Development Program is provided through the Support for East European Democracy Act of 1989.

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/AEE-98-02.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Thursday, December 4, 1997. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted. Grants should begin April 1, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, European Branch, E/AEE Room 246 U.S. Information Agency, 301 Th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, (202) 205-0525, fax (202) 206-7985, E-Mail: treed@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed information. 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 Senior Program Manager Mr. Ted Kniker, and Program Associate Ms. Jaime Lofstrand 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 8 copies of

the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AEE-98-02, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 Th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy", USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

The Bosnia Undergraduate Development Program is a one year educational exchange that aims at bringing Bosnian students to study at American universities or colleges in specified disciplines pertaining to democracy, market economies, and civil society per the SEED funding initiative.

Guidelines

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations and the host institutions are responsible for ensuring the 10-15 students' return to Bosnia. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Proposed Budget

Institutions desiring to host students from Bosnia must submit a comprehensive line item budget based on the specific guidelines listed in the Solicitation Package. "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 a break-down 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.

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 Office of East European and NIS Affairs and the USIA post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (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. *Strength of Academic Program:* Proposals should exhibit academic rigor

and a demonstrated capacity to meet the participants needs.

2. *Cost Effectiveness:* Plans should indicate a high level of cost-sharing and a competitive level of cost per individual student for the USIA.

3. *Ability to Provide Support Services:* Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the advisement and support needs of the international students.

4. *Ability to Provide Support for Securing Internships:* Proposed programs should demonstrate that they can strengthen and reinforce what has been learned in the classroom by aiding students in obtaining internships for the summer session.

5. *Ability to Provide Cultural Enrichment and Community Outreach Opportunities:* Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to planning, implementing, and supporting the Bosnian students in participating in cultural and community outreach programs.

6. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

7. *Institution's Record/Ability:* Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs or a potential to meet this standard. This includes responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and

the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

8. *Ability for Institutions to Develop or Enhance Linkages with Bosnian Institutions:* Proposals should provide a plan for developing or enhancing a relationship with Bosnian institutions.

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Options for Renewals

Subject to the availability of funding for FY 1999 and the satisfactory performance of grant programs, USIA may invite grantee organizations to submit proposals of renewals of awards.

Notification

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

Dated: September 25, 1997.

Robert Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-25988 Filed 10-1-97; 8:45 am]

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