

Dated: November 6, 1997.

John F. Atwood,

Chief, Intellectual Property Rights Branch.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Elementary-Level Teacher Education in Armenia

ACTION: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Academic Programs of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to develop an approximately two-year program to train a group of Armenian educators of elementary level teachers, to develop a manual for elementary teacher education for use in Armenia, and to assist the Armenian educators to pilot-test the manual in Armenia.

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 funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Freedom Support Act (FSA).

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/AS-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 Friday, January 16, 1998. 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. It is anticipated that program activities will begin approximately in March, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

The Advising, Teaching, and Specialized Programs Division, Room 349, Office of Academic Programs, U.S. Information Agency, 302 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547; or 202-619-6038 (telephone), 202-619-6790 (telefax), or sukux@usia.gov (Internet) to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed information and instructions. 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 Sally Kux 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 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AS-98-02, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th 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 to 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 objective of this project is to work in partnership with the Armenian Ministry of Education to update Armenian in-service and pre-service training for elementary-level teachers (grades 1-4) by training a core team of Armenian teacher educators and by assisting them to develop a handbook on elementary education. The project will comprise three phases which are describe in detail in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI).

Participants

The Armenian team will consist of approximately 6 educators representing the general content areas of elementary education in Armenia. These areas are mathematics, language (Armenian, Russian, and English) natural science, arts, and physical education. Armenian participants will be proficient in English.

Guidelines

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Proposed Budget

Applicants must submit a comprehensive line item budget based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. The award will not exceed \$300,000. Administrative costs may not exceed 25% of the total USIA-funded expenses.

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

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 USIS Erevan. 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. Quality of the Program Idea

Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, relevance to Agency mission, and responsiveness to the objectives and guidelines stated in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate substantive expertise.

2. Program Planning and Evaluation

Detailed agenda and work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity and should adhere to the program overview and guidelines stated above. Proposals should include a plan for continuous and summative evaluations.

3. Ability To Achieve Program Objectives

Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program objectives and how continuous evaluation will be used to adjust program plans as needed.

4. Multiplier Effect/Impact

Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

5. Support 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. Institutional Capacity

Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals.

7. Institution's Record/Ability

Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

8. Follow-on Activities

Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) to ensure ongoing communication and involvement with Armenian teacher education projects.

9. 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.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this REP 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: November 6, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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