

passengers who are not listed and approved on the application. (To allow for the proper accounting of last-minute personnel changes to an application already on file with Customs, an Application Addendum form must be completed and sent to the Customs office at Detroit Metropolitan Airport). Further, aircraft owners/operators must agree not to allow persons to carry dutiable/commercial merchandise, restricted or prohibited food products or other articles, or monetary instruments of \$10,000 or more on test flights.

If an application is denied for any reason other than because a particular airport is not designated for GATE-test use (for example, a denial based on information concerning passengers, pilots, or the aircraft), the applicant may appeal the decision to the Detroit Port Director within 10 working days from receipt of the denial letter. If the appeal to the Port Director results in another denial, then the applicant may appeal directly to the Passenger Process Owner at Customs Headquarters within 10 working days from receipt of the second denial letter.

IV. Test Evaluation Criteria

Customs will review all public comments received concerning any aspect of the test program or procedures, finalize procedures in light of those comments, form problem-solving teams, and establish baseline measures and evaluation methods and criteria. After the second test period is concluded, evaluations of the test will be conducted and final results will be made available to the public upon request.

Dated: June 26, 1998.

John B. McGowan,

Acting Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Vietnam Fulbright: Foreign Student Exchange Program

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 manage a student exchange program. The program would bring 20-25, mid-career

Vietnamese each year to the U.S. in order to pursue a Master's degree, or in some cases a Ph.D., in fields related to economic development to include—but not limited to—economics, business, public policy, public administration, law, and international relations. The proposal must also include renewal costs for approximately 30-35 Vietnamese Fulbright students currently studying in the U.S. (mostly second-year, but some third-year students).

Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Pub. L. 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 Fulbright-Hays Act.

The program 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/AEF-99-01.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Friday, July 31, 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. The grant should begin on or about October 1, 1998.

Duration: October 1, 1998-September 30, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchange Programs Divisions/East Asia Fulbright Branch, E/AEF, Room 208, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, phone: (202) 619-6788/5404, fax: (202) 401-1728; email: sborja@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 Program Officer Sue Borja* 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/AEF-99-01, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIS will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including—but not limited to—ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Pub. L. 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 United States Information Agency has supported a Vietnamese student exchange program since 1992 which has enabled over a hundred and fifty Vietnamese students to pursue two-year Master's degrees (as well as some Ph.Ds) in economics, business, public policy and administration, law, and international relations at a wide range of U.S. colleges and universities.

The goals of the program are to foster mutual understanding and strengthen ties between the two countries and to support the U.S. foreign policy goal of promoting the establishment of a modern market economy in Vietnam.

Guidelines

The program should focus on selection 20–25 mid-career scholars and managers each year from throughout the country from those Vietnamese institutions critical to the economic transition. The program must include the following components: recruitment, selection, pre-academic and academic placement, pre-departure support and orientation, grantee administration, and evaluation. The grantee must maintain continuous liaison with the United States Information Service (USIS) in Vietnam and with the USIA Fulbright Office in Washington concerning the management of the program. The Vietnam Fulbright program is a component of the U.S. government's foreign policy with Vietnam as well as a member of the overall Fulbright Program which currently operates in over 140 countries worldwide.

Recruitment

Through continued and regular negotiation and resulting agreement with the Vietnamese government (including the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training), the recruitment and selection process has been, and must remain, an open and independent operation. Recruitment must include continued efforts to stimulate interest in the Fulbright program and careful interviewing, testing, and application counseling in

order to develop a pool of qualified applicants to submit to a panel review for final recommendation to USIA. Recruitment should include in-country workshops and group meetings with potential candidates who have submitted curricula vita and initial essays, including an impromptu writing test for English ability. This should be followed by in-depth, one-on-one interviews from which a pool of applicants is invited to submit full applications for review by a selection panel.

Recruitment begins in the spring, 18 months prior to the fall semester in which the students are to begin their academic program (most, if not all, students will need to enroll in a summer English and/or pre-academic program). Please note that for the FY99 program, the current grantee already began recruiting students in the spring of 1998 for academic year 1999–2000. Therefore, if a new grantee is selected by USIA, then the former grantee and USIA would work out the transfer of the student information and files to the successor grantee.

Selection

The final pool of applicants is prepared for panel review complete with TOEFL scores and a written evaluation from each applicant. Panels are held in the fall one year prior to the academic year in which the award is due to begin.

The independent selection panel must consist of a group of scholars experienced in the fields of study and professional education programs targeted in this program. The panelists should also have some knowledge of, or experience with, U.S.-Vietnam educational exchanges, the Vietnamese education system, and other education systems in which the Vietnamese might have studied as undergraduates—such as those of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. USIA reserves the right to review the panel member selection. The selection panel reviews the applicants' files, selects awardees for final approval by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, and advises on university placement for the awardees.

Pre-academic and Academic Placement

The grantee will place the selected students at English language summer programs and pre-academic programs, as necessary, and at academic programs at a range of appropriate universities and colleges in the U.S. Placement includes negotiating for cost share (tuition reduction/waivers, etc.) from the universities and colleges.

Pre-departure Support and Orientation

The grantee will provide pre-departure orientation counseling (academic, social, and cultural adjustment) and logistical support for the selected Vietnamese students. The grantee will ensure personal contact and follow-up contact with the Vietnamese authorities, maintain contact with the U.S. Embassy Consular Office and the Vietnamese officials who process the students' visas, make travel arrangements to the U.S. for the selected Vietnamese students and provide them with any other assistance needed.

Student Administration/Supervision

During the period of the award, the grantee organization will maintain regular contact with the students to provide assistance, monitor academic work, and deal with any problems that might arise. The grantee will establish a series of mailings to students regarding taxes, financial payments, reports, exit travel arrangements, and invitations to meetings/orientations. Students are required to submit one formal report at mid-point of their award which is to be shared with USIA.

Evaluation

During the period of their award, the students will report on the progress of their research and the quality of their reception at their institutions of affiliation. The grantee will organize an exit interview before the student departures from the U.S.

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

Proposed Budget

Organizations must submit a comprehensive line-item budget based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. The award may not exceed \$1,800,000 for both new and renewal students.

"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 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.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

(1) Program participant costs: travel, test fees, pre-departure expenses, pre-academic/English training, tuition, stipend, tax withholding, educational materials, enrichment programs;

(2) Renewal costs for current Vietnamese Fulbright students (estimate 30–35);

(3) Staff salaries and benefits;

(4) Domestic/International travel and per diem for recruitment, selection, orientation of students;

(5) Reproduction, communication, supplies; and

(6) Overhead/Indirect costs.

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 Asian and Pacific 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

Technical 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 Agency mission.

2. *Program planning:* 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.

3. *Ability to achieve program objectives:* Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

4. *Multiplier effect/impact:* Proposed programs hold 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). The Vietnamese Fulbright students should come from throughout Vietnam, from a variety of institutions, and represent both genders as equally as possible.

6. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's 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) which ensures that USIA-supported programs are not isolated events.

9. *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 evaluation technique plus description of

a methodology that will be used to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended. Successful applicants will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded, or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

10. *Cost-effectiveness:* 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.

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

12. *Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:* Proposed projects should receive positive assessments by USIA's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country.

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 budget 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, then allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: June 26, 1998.

John P. Loiello,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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