

ME.¹ In addition, TI will also acquire incidental trackage rights over PT's rail line between Engineering Station 82 + 03, where it intersects with the line being acquired, and Engineering Station 148 + 72 on Yard 3 Track, in South Portland, a distance of approximately 1.27 miles.

The transaction is expected to be consummated after the January 29, 1998 effective date of the exemption.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to reopen the proceeding to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33545, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Peter A. Greene, Esq., Thompson Hine & Flory LLP, 1920 N Street, NW., Washington, DC 20036.

Decided: January 28, 1998.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-2727 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Request for Proposals

PROGRAM TITLE: Creative Arts Exchange Program.

SUMMARY: The Office of Citizen Exchanges within 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 that demonstrate disciplinary expertise in the arts and humanities and meet the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3) may apply to develop international projects for visual and/or performing artists, educators and arts administrators. These projects will consist of residencies and programs in which selected participants from the United States and other countries work,

learn or create together. An overarching goal of this program is to foster on-going sustainable linkages and partnerships between arts organizations or institutions in the U.S. and other countries. Participant exchanges and residencies offer benefits to artists and arts administrators as well as their sponsoring organizations. Particular emphasis will be placed on projects that closely relate art and culture to furthering public understanding and awareness of global issues and social concerns and/or projects that utilize the arts to promote solutions to societal problems. Interested applicants are invited to request and read the complete Solicitation Package before submitting their proposals. Proposed projects must be eligible in terms of countries/localities and disciplines as described in the section entitled "Eligibility" below.

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."

Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. The package consists of a Federal Register Request For Proposals (RFP); a statement outlining the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI); and Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). 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/P-98-29*.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Thursday, April 2, 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. Approximate program dates: Project timetables should assume

a funding date no earlier than July 15, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Program Officer Jill Johansen in the Cultural Programs Section, Office of Citizen Exchanges, E/PY, Room 568, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, telephone: (202) 205-2209, fax: (202) 619-5311, Internet: jjohanse@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award 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 Jill Johansen on all inquiries and correspondence. 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 three (3) copies of the full package plus (11) eleven additional copies of Tabs A-E of your proposal should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: *E/P-98-29*, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 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. USIA 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

¹ PT received Board authorization to abandon this line through a notice of exemption in *Portland Terminal Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Cumberland County, ME*, STB Docket No. AB-268 (Sub-No. 15X) (STB served Aug. 28, 1997).

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 Creative Arts Exchanges Program within the Office of Citizen Exchanges works with U.S. non-profit organizations to develop cooperative international group projects that provide opportunities for American and foreign participants to work together and increase their understanding of each other's cultural and artistic life and traditions. Proposed projects should include a substantive and integral role for USIA's colleagues stationed at United States Information Service [USIS] posts overseas. Our posts carry out activities that support USIA's mission to increase mutual understanding between the United States and other countries and to promote international cooperation in education and cultural fields. USIS post officers have access to and in-depth knowledge of the arts communities where they are stationed. Their active participation in creative arts exchange projects increases the success and viability of our programs.

We seek proposals from U.S. organizations that have disciplinary expertise in the arts and humanities as well as broad outreach and networking capabilities into American arts and cultural activities nationwide. International projects in the United States or overseas may involve arts administrators, playwrights, theater

directors, arts managers, experts on copyright protection for artists, choreographers, film makers, cultural tourism specialists, visual artists, writers and poets. Arts administration programs can include topics such as fundraising, community outreach, volunteerism, arts management, development and organizational structure. Cultural tourism projects can include topics such as the role of the arts in economic development, marketing, audience and program development, art preservation and cultural patrimony.

Visual and performing arts projects should demonstrate a relationship to societal and/or global concerns such as: conflict resolution, global cooperation, energy conservation and environmental management, the role of women in society, teaching tolerance and race relations. Proposals including performances and/or small exhibitions need to demonstrate that the performance or exhibition is integral to the creative process. Projects in which exhibitions and/or performances are the sole program activity will not be supported under this competition.

Organizations interested in museum/curatorial projects should contact the American Association of Museums [AAM] International Partnerships Among Museums [IPAM] Program at: 1575 Eye Street, NW., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005; telephone [202] 289-1818; FAX: [202] 289-6578. We will not accept direct applications from museums for international projects.

Guidelines

Proposed projects should involve the following components:

1. An international exchange of professionals in the fields listed above;
2. The development of institutional linkages between American organizations and their counterparts in other countries;
3. Travel of participants to or from the United States, preferably in both directions;
4. Assurances of quality, fairness, balance and openness in the selection of project participants;
5. Residencies that provide substantive learning opportunities for participants.

Drafts of all printed materials developed for this program using USIA funds should be submitted to the Agency for review and approval. USIA must receive a royalty-free, non-exclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so. Funded projects must acknowledge USIA

sponsorship in all printed project materials and official project documents.

Special Conditions and Exclusions

1. USIS posts should be given the option of nominating foreign program participants. Final participant selection decisions will be made by the grantee organization in consultation with USIS posts.

2. Proposals involving more than one country are preferred. However, single-country projects that have strong USIS post support and clearly demonstrate the potential for creating and strengthening linkages between foreign and U.S. institutions are also welcome. Organizations are strongly urged to consult posts prior to submission of any proposals, especially when considering single-country projects.

3. Proposals involving foreign organizations should identify them and clearly define their role in the project. Letters of commitment from these organizations should be included in the proposal package. Prospective applicants should consult with USIS posts regarding such organizations prior to submitting their proposals.

4. Proposals centering on films or videos must deal with the creative aspects of film or video making. Projects may include story development, other aspects of the creative process, or management issues like funding and distribution. They should not include installations, screenings, competitions, full scale film production or distribution, or any other type of project prohibited in this announcement.

The following types of projects are ineligible for support:

1. Projects consisting solely of vocational and technical training;
2. Scholarly programs, long-term academic study or training programs, and student and/or faculty exchanges (Organizations interested in programs of this nature should contact USIA's Office of Academic Programs—202-619-6409);
3. Projects that solely consist of speaking tours, conferences, research projects, research for project development purposes, festivals, publications and international arts competitions;
4. Youth or youth-related activities (participants under age 25) or projects for the exchange of amateurs or semi-professionals;
5. Study tours and observerships;
6. Projects in the fields of historical conservation and preservation;
7. Projects for Eastern European or NIS countries other than those specified under our geographic guidelines, which

are: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

USIA provides support to Sister Cities International and Partners of the Americas. It has agreed to partially fund administrative expenses of these organizations' national offices, but will not fund projects arising from sister city and partner state relationships once they are established.

Geographic Guidelines

Proposals which address themselves to various geographic regions of the world, and allow across-the-board participation from all areas are preferred. In addition, preferred or eligible specific geographic areas are:

1. Africa: Proposals are especially encouraged for projects in Africa, specifically those dealing with indigenous arts, copyright protection for artists, arts management and efforts to develop long-term strategies for protecting the archaeological and ethnological cultural patrimony including, but not limited to, sustainable cultural tourism initiatives for economic development.

2. Northern Africa, Near/Middle East and South Asia [NEA]: Region. Proposals are also especially encouraged for the NEA Region. USIA's preference is for performing or visual arts projects in Morocco and/or Tunisia. These North African countries enjoy a long history of excellent relations with the U.S. as well as rich and diverse cultures. Projects which will demonstratively result in improved understanding of U.S. values and strengthening civil society in one or both of these countries will be given priority. Examples might include, but are not limited to, projects which promote the use of theater or music to increase environmental awareness or similar civic responsibilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact USIA posts in Tunis and/or Rabat as they develop these proposals.

3. American Republics (South America, Central America and the Caribbean): Preference will be given to proposals that focus on the following topics listed in priority: arts administration; cultural patrimony; cultural tourism; and ethnic and indigenous arts.

4. Western Europe and Canada: Proposals focusing on Turkey will be given strong preference.

5. Eastern Europe and New Independent States: Proposals will only be accepted for projects focusing on arts management and designed to create institutional partnerships between U.S. arts organizations and arts organizations in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

6. East Asia: Preference will be given to proposals that focus on intellectual property protection in emerging Asian democracies.

Visa/Insurance/Tax Requirements

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details. Administration of the program must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes as applicable.

Proposed Budget

Detailed budgetary requirements and guidelines are included in the Solicitation Package. Organizations must submit a comprehensive line item budget based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. The maximum amount for a grant reward under this competition is \$75,000. However, Creative Arts Exchange grants awarded through open competitions are on average approximately \$58,000 with many successful proposals coming in at well below this level. Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000. Organizations submitting proposals with administrative budgets that are significantly less than the grant amount requested from USIA and cost-sharing that equals at least 33% of the entire project budget will be given preference.

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.

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 Area Offices and the USIA posts 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.

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 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 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 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-up 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 technique plus description of a methodology to use 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(ies).

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. USIA 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. USIA should process grants for successful proposals by mid-summer.

Dated: January 26, 1998.

John P. Loiello,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 98-2358 Filed 2-4-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Summer Institute for Educators From South Africa and Namibia

ACTION: Notice—Request for Proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, Africa Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Accredited, post-secondary educational institutions meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to develop a Summer Institute for Educators from South Africa and Namibia. The Summer Institute will provide a six-week academic training/development program for up to 28 educators implementing educational reform in South Africa and Namibia.

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 Fulbright-Hays Act.

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 announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/AEA-98-01.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Thursday, March 19, 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 the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

The Summer Institute for Educators should be programmed to encompass about 45 days and should begin on or about June 13, 1998. A variation in start date up to one week beyond June 13, 1998 will be considered if it is necessitated by the host institution's academic calendar. No funds may be expended until a grant agreement is signed with USIA's Office of Contracts.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, Africa Branch (E/AEA), Ellen S. Berelson, Branch Chief, Room 232, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, phone: 202-619-5376, fax: 202-619-6137; or e-mail: eberelso@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria, 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 the information provided before downloading.

To Receive a Solicitation Package by FAX: The entire Solicitation Package may be requested 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 Branch Chief Ellen S. Berelson on all inquiries and correspondence. 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/AEA-98-01, 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. USIA 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