

Description: These rules allow certain unincorporated business organizations to elect to be treated as corporations or partnerships for federal tax purposes. The information collected on the election will be used to verify the classification of electing organizations.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1.

Estimated Burden Hours Per

Respondent: 1 hour.

Frequency of Response: Annually.

Estimated Total Reporting Burden: 1 hour.

Clearance Officer: Garrick Shear, Internal Revenue Service, Room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20224.

OMB Reviewer: Alexander T. Hunt (202) 395-7860, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10202, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

Lois K. Holland,

Departmental Reports, Management Officer.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Secondary School Civic Education Curriculum Development Project for Azerbaijan; Request for Proposals.

SUMMARY: The Advising, Teaching, and Specialized Programs Division of the Office of Academic Programs of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for a Secondary School Civic Education Curriculum Development Project for Azerbaijan. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to cooperate with USIA in the administration of a two-year project to support the development and utilization of new curriculum units for a civic education course entitled "Man and Society" for students in the tenth and eleventh grades in Azerbaijan. The grant will award up to \$250,000 to facilitate the project.

The grantee will work with the Azerbaijani Ministry of Education, Department of Curriculum Development and Educational Reform, which is the office of the Government of Azerbaijan directly responsible for national education and teacher training issues. The program will comprise three phases: (1) Preliminary consultations in Baku with a curriculum development

team of Azerbaijani educators; (2) a three-month U.S.-based curriculum development workshop in which the team will produce draft curriculum units; (3) follow-up consultations in Azerbaijan to assist with the training of a larger group of Azerbaijani practitioners in the review and field-testing of the draft curriculum units. Upon the successful completion of Phases I-III, additional funds may be available to the grantee organization for a fourth phase of activity to cooperate with the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, Department of Curriculum Development and Educational Reform, and the Azerbaijani curriculum development team to further review and revise the draft materials as needed and to provide broader training of Azerbaijani teachers and administrators for utilization of the revised curriculum units in Azerbaijani classrooms.

USIA solicits detailed proposals from U.S. educational institutions and public and private non-profit organizations to develop and administer this project. Grantee organizations will consult regularly with USIA and with USIA's office in Azerbaijan (the U.S. Information Service in Baku) with regard to participant selection, program implementation, direction, and assessment. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the issues confronting education in Azerbaijan as well as expertise in civic education and curriculum development.

The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Freedom Support Act as well as USIA's base budget. 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.

Program Information

Overview: The goal of the project is to assist the Ministry of Education, Department of Curriculum Development and Educational Reform in Baku, Azerbaijan, to develop up-to-date curriculum units to be taught at the tenth and eleventh grade levels and to assist in training teachers for the utilization of these units. The rationale for this project is that improving citizenship education at the secondary school level will better prepare Azerbaijani students to participate actively in building a pluralistic, democratic society, and will promote democratic relations among members of the school community, including students, teachers, school administrators, and parents. Applicants may suggest topics to be developed by the Azerbaijani curriculum team in their

proposals; however, final determination of appropriate topics will be made by the curriculum development team and the Ministry in cooperation with the grantee organization during the first phase of the project.

Guidelines

Program Planning and Implementation

Grants should begin on or around September 1, 1999, with Phase I of the project, in which a curriculum development team of six practitioners (e.g., classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and a Ministry official who will serve as the project director) will be selected by a Ministry-led selection committee in Azerbaijan in consultation with the U.S. grantee organization and the U.S. Information Service (USIS) in Baku. In Phase I, the team will undertake preliminary work in Baku over a period of 3-6 months. Members of the curriculum development team, in consultation with a specialist from the grantee organization and the Azerbaijani Project Director, will familiarize themselves with civics curricula and teaching materials used in the U.S. and will select the topics to be explored in the draft curriculum units.

In Phase II, members of the curriculum development team will spend approximately three months in a highly structured U.S.-based workshop to be sponsored and organized by the U.S. grantee organization, and will attend focused curriculum seminars, observe relevant aspects of the U.S. educational system, and draft teacher and student materials for the curriculum units in consultation with U.S. specialists. The grantee organization will be responsible for introducing the Azerbaijani team to leading U.S. civic educators with expertise that is pertinent to the topics to be explored, and to a broad range of relevant resources. The workshop schedule should incorporate time for both individual and group work on materials as well as intensive training on specific approaches to the teaching of civic education topics. In addition, the workshop should include field experiences which are relevant to the materials being produced (such as visits to schools and professional association meetings).

In Phase III, the curriculum development team will work in Azerbaijan with Azerbaijani teacher trainers, Ministry of Education officials and U.S. specialists from the grantee organization and other U.S. organizations to provide introductory training for a larger group of practitioners in methods for testing and

utilizing the draft curriculum units in the civics classroom. During this phase the Ministry of Education (MOE) will provide the following assistance to the U.S. grantee:

(1) Facilitate the logistics of in-service training sessions for teachers by providing appropriate space;

(2) Assist in the selection of pilot schools and teachers;

(3) provide leave time/leaves of absence for the curriculum development team and Project Director during their stays in the U.S. and the subsequent in-service training work;

(4) Provide appropriate office space and facilities to house both the civic education reference collection and the materials produced by the curriculum development team.

Visa/Insurance/Tax Requirements

U.S. lecturers and consultants participating in the project must be U.S. citizens. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to Program Specific Guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further information. Administration of the program must be in compliance with reporting and withhold regulations for federal, state, and local taxes as applicable. Recipient organizations should demonstrate tax regulation adherence in the proposal narrative and budget.

Budget Guidelines

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. Awards may not exceed \$250,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program year, component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. The total administrative costs funded by USIA must be limited and reasonable.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

(1) Administrative Costs, including salaries and benefits, of grantee organization.

(2) Program Costs, including general program costs and program costs for each Azerbaijani participant in the U.S.-based curriculum development seminar. Also included are program costs associated with the field-testing of materials in Azerbaijan and with the initial training of Azerbaijani teachers.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package (POGI and PSI) for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE AND NUMBER: All correspondence with USIA concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number E/ASU-99-16.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, Advising, Teaching and Specialized Programs Division, Specialized Programs Branch, E/ASU, Room 349, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, telephone number 202-619-4568 and fax number 202-401-1433, e-mail address jceriale@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package contains detailed award criteria, required application forms, specific budget instructions, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. Please specify USIA Program Officer Jennifer K. Cerialo on all other inquiries and correspondence.

Please 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 with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://e.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 requested from the Bureau's Grants Information Fax on Demand System, which is accessed by calling 202/401-7616. The Table of Contents listing available documents and order numbers should be the first order when entering the system.

Deadline for Proposals

All proposal copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Monday, July 19, 1999. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked the due date but received on a later date will not be accepted. Each applicant must ensure that the proposals are received by the above deadline.

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The original and 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/ASU-99-

16, Office of Grants Management, E/X., 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. These documents must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these file 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. 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 reflect advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Year 2000 Compliance Requirement (Y2K Requirement)

The Year 2000 (Y2K) issue is a broad operational and accounting problem that could potentially prohibit organizations from processing information in accordance with Federal management and program specific requirements including data exchange with USIA. The inability to process information in accordance with Federal requirements could result in grantees' being required to return funds that have not been accounted for properly.

USIA therefore requires all organizations use Y2K compliant systems including hardware, software, and firmware. Systems must accurately

process data and dates (calculating, comparing and sequencing) both before and after the beginning of the year 2000 and correctly adjust for leap years.

Additional information addressing the Y2K issue may be found at the General Services Administration's Office of Information Technology website at <http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov>.

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. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as by the USIA Office of East European and NIS Affairs and the USIA post overseas. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of USIA's 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 the Agency's mission, and responsiveness to the objectives and guidelines stated in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate substantive expertise in civic education.

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 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 and Record/Ability:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. 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.

7. *Follow-on Activities:* Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) to ensure ongoing involvement with Azerbaijani curriculum development projects.

8. *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. The progress of the grant should be monitored closely. The USIA Program Officer should be kept informed of the implementation of each phase 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.

9. *Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing:* The overhead and administrative components of the proposals, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should minimize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

10. *Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:* Proposed projects should demonstrate the need, potential impact, and significance of the project in the partner country.

Authority

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 above is provided through the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1993 (Freedom Support 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.

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 5, 1999.

Judith Siegel,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Teaching Excellence Awards Program

NOTICE: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Division for the NIS Secondary School Initiative, Office of Citizen Exchanges, of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA) program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions