

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) ensuring 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.

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).

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 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>.

Authority

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 above is provided through legislation.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures. For further information, please contact my designee for this program, Tim Gerhardson, at (202) 619-5406, or tgerhard@usia.gov on e-mail.

Dated: June 18, 1999.

Judith Siegel,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 99-14836 Filed 6-9-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Future Leaders Exchange Program Administrative Components

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 Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to conduct a package of Administrative Components for the recruitment, selection and other related activities listed below for approximately 930 high school students from the 12 New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union who will come to the U.S. for the 2000/2001 academic year under the FLEX program. This RFP is only for the package of administrative components described in this solicitation. Grants for other program components, including placement and supervision of the students while they are in the United States, will be competed separately. Final award of the grant or grant(s) is subject to the availability of funding.

Program Information

Overview

The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program has been sponsored by USIA since 1992, when it was authorized and funded under the Freedom Support Act. The 2000/2001 FLEX program will be its eighth cycle. The program provides an opportunity for high school students aged 15-17 from the 12 countries of the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union to live with an American host family for eleven months and attend a full academic year of high school. The scholarship covers all aspects of the students' program, including recruitment and selection, orientation, travel, family and school placement, supervision while in the U.S., maintenance allowances, health and accident insurance, cultural and educational enhancements, and alumni activities upon return to their home countries. Placement, supervision,

maintenance, and enhancements are not part of the package covered by this solicitation. For budgeting purposes, applicants should assume that the number of participants will be 930, with about 33% coming from Russia, 20% from Ukraine, and the remaining 47% from the other ten NIS countries. Details can be found in the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation guidelines. Applicants must address the complete package of components outlined below.

The objectives of the FLEX program are:

1. To foster interaction between young people from the United States and the former Soviet Union and promote a greater understanding of one another so as to contribute to our common future through our greatest resource, our youth.

2. To provide high school students from the former Soviet Union with an opportunity to live with American host families, attend a U.S. high school, and learn about American society, history, culture, and the economic and political foundations of the United States.

3. To integrate the people of the former Soviet Union into the global citizenry by assisting young people of the NIS countries in building a new and open society and by promoting democratic values and the development of democratic institutions at the grass roots level.

4. To provide opportunities for a diverse group of youth from the NIS to acquire values and skills and enhance those personal qualities that will make them successful citizens and future leaders of their societies.

Through participation in the FLEX program, students should:

1. Acquire an understanding of important elements of a civil society. This will include concepts such as volunteerism, the idea that American citizens can and do act at the grass roots level to deal with societal problems, and an awareness of and respect for the rule of law.

2. Demonstrate a willingness and a commitment to serve as agents for change in their countries after they return home.

3. Develop an appreciation for American culture.

4. Interact with Americans and generate enduring ties.

5. Teach Americans about the cultures of their home countries.

Eligibility

Applicants may be public institutions or organizations that are legally incorporated and recognized by the IRS as not-for-profit. Applicants may be single organizations or two or more

organizations working in consortium. For consortia, each organization should submit a separate proposal for its components and indicate clearly how these dovetail with the other consortium member(s).

Guidelines

The package of components for this solicitation encompasses the following:

1. Recruitment and selection of student finalists through a merit-based competition in each country.

2. Documentation—assistance with passports, visas; assistance to USIA with preparation of IAP66 forms on finalists and alternates.

3. Medical screening and clearance to ensure that the students are healthy; immunizations as necessary.

4. Orientation—Programming for all participants prior to departure from the NIS.

5. Travel—Ticketing and all arrangements from the students' homes to their host communities and return.

6. Communications and liaison with the students' natural families during the program year.

7. On-program counseling for students and the staff and volunteers of the placement organizations in dealing with problems.

8. Information management—Tracking and database maintenance on all applicants through their selection as finalists, their placement, and travel.

9. Tracking of, support for and follow-up programming with alumni upon their return home.

The following considerations apply to these responsibilities:

1. The grantee organization(s) must coordinate overall planning with the USIS staff in each country at the outset and ask USIS to indicate where the staff would like to have input or play a role.

2. The ongoing communications with natural parents, follow-up activities with alumni, and relations with foreign government officials all require that the organization(s) maintain a year-round presence in the NIS countries. The grantee(s) should seek to conduct these functions efficiently and cost-effectively. An American staff person should head each permanent office in the NIS with FLEX program responsibilities.

3. All on-the-ground operations in the NIS of this administrative machinery must be staffed by non-U.S. Government personnel in such a way as to ensure that USIS and American embassy personnel are not encumbered by the day-to-day functioning of the program.

4. The aim of the program is to select students who have the personal qualities, motivation, and the

academic, language and social skills to be successful on the exchange. Recruitment and selection must be conducted on the basis of merit and be free of political influence and corruption; to accomplish this, the process must be under the overall direct control of Americans at all times. Selection of finalists will be conducted in the U.S.

5. Selection must reflect the cultural, ethnic, national and geographic diversity of the NIS. The recruitment process must be open in allowing and making it possible for any student who meets the eligibility criteria to apply. A serious effort must be made to include qualified students with physical disabilities. A pre-academic English enrichment program will be offered to a small percentage (approximately 3%) to ensure that the weaker language qualifications of students with disabilities and students from more remote areas is not an excluding factor in their selection. [The English program is competed separately.] It is not necessary or even possible, given budget constraints and areas of civil unrest, to cover every oblast. The grantee(s) should focus recruitment on major population areas, while keeping the process open to applicants from all areas.

6. Uniform predeparture orientation programming conducted regionally for all FLEX students is essential because it reinforces their identity as participants in a government scholarship program enables the dissemination of information, policies and procedures critical to the students' success.

7. What happens to participants once they return home is critically important to ensuring the program's success in fulfilling its objectives and to reinforce the transfer of the American experience to the NIS. The grantee(s) must provide a clear, systematic plan for alumni tracking. USIA will expect reports on alumni to include dates of re-entry into the NIS, current places of residence, and current educational/professional activities. Some follow-on activities will be centrally funded and managed by USIA. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Participants travel on J-1 visas. As the sponsor is USIA, IAP66 forms are prepared using the Government program designation number. As noted above, the grantee is responsible for assisting USIA in the preparation of these forms.

Timetable

The recruitment and selection process must be concluded by March 1, 2000, so that finalist applications can be

disseminated to the organizations responsible for placing the students in host families and schools. Travel to the U.S. is expected to take place in July/August 2000, in conjunction with the needs of the placement organizations. Return travel should be similarly undertaken in May/June 2001. All component should be planned in accordance with the dates and deadlines set by the needs of the program (e.g., the date by which students need to apply for passports, the timing of arrival in the host families, the conclusion of the school year).

Proposed Budget

The per capita cost of this whole package of components excluding travel and orientation must not exceed \$3,000 per finalist. Travel must be arranged in compliance with laws on the use of American flag carriers.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive line-item budget for the entire package of components. There must be a summary budget as well as a break-down reflecting both the administrative and program costs and an indication of participant per capita costs. Cost-sharing is encouraged, cash contributions and in-kind. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions and POGI for complete budget and formatting instructions and for allowable costs.

Organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be deemed ineligible.

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 instructions. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Office of NIS Affairs and the USIS posts in the NIS countries. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. Proposals also may 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, and relevance to Agency mission and design outlined above.

2. *Program planning:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate organizational competency and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview, timetable and guidelines described above.

3. *Ability to achieve program objectives:* Proposals should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the program's objectives stated above and how the organization will achieve them.

4. *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 (e.g., staffing, program venue) and program content (especially selection of participants and orientation).

5. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. The proposal should clearly explain how the organization will make use of and coordinate with other related NIS and U.S. operations it may be conducting. Proposals should reflect substantial area expertise, a grasp of cross-cultural issues, the needs of the hosting community (including the American host schools and the placement organizations), and a thorough understanding of how to work effectively with NIS authorities and complexities of the environment.

6. *Institution's Record/Ability:* Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful activities that are relevant to this program, as well as 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. *Project Evaluation:* The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the success of the organization in achieving the stated objectives. The grantee(s) will also be expected to cooperate with USIA in evaluating the program under the requirements of the Results Act (GPRA). Proposals should reflect an understanding and grasp of these responsibilities.

8. *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.

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

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

Announcement Title and Number

All correspondence with USIA concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number E/PY-00-02.

For Further Information, Contact: The NIS Secondary School Initiative Division, E/PY, Room 568, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, tel: (202) 619-6299, fax: (202) 619-5311, e-mail: <daronson@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 Diana Aronson 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 12, 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, one fully-tabbed copy (Tabs A-F) and eight copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/PY-00-02, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 568, 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. These documents 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 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 that all organizations use Y2K complaint 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>.

Authority

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 above is provided through legislation appropriating funds annually for USIA's exchange programs, including the Freedom Support Act.

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: June 7, 1999.

Brian J. Sexton,

Acting Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 99-14775 Filed 6-9-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

South Africa Teacher Training Program; Notice; 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 training program for primary school teachers of math and science in South Africa. The program will target the upper primary level which comprises grades seven through nine. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501 (C) may submit proposals to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate a primary teacher training program for teachers of math and science in South Africa. The program will comprise three phases: (1) Preliminary consultations in South Africa to discuss a detailed implementation strategy; (2) the development and execution of South Africa-based teacher training workshops; and (3) the development and execution of U.S.-based teacher-training summer institutes. The grant award will be up to \$300,000 for year one, and may be renewed for two additional years pending availability of funds and successful implementation.

Program Information

Overview

In response to President Mandela's efforts to raise the level of math and science education, and in support of the United States-South Africa Binational Commission, USIA and grantee organization will develop, in collaboration with the South Africa Department of Education (DOE), a primary school teacher training project for teachers of math and science. The grantee will work with the DOE, its respective entities, and supporting ministries and organizations that are directly responsible for national education and teacher training.

The project will span a three-year period and will consist of yearly two-week in-country skills development workshops for 100 teachers, followed by