

Dated: January 31, 1997.

Catherine C.M. Teti,
Director, Records Management and
Information Policy.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Partners in Education Program

ACTION: Notice—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 program, not to exceed \$850,000. U.S. educational and other not-for-profit organizations with a minimum of four years experience in successfully administering international exchange programs, meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1, may apply to develop a six-week professional internship program for approximately 90 secondary school educators in the social sciences and secondary school administrators, with language proficiency, from Russia and Ukraine, in a 60 to 40 ratio respectively. We envision that some of the hosting U.S. school administrators will visit the schools of their Russian and Ukrainian participants under the grant to strengthen the partnerships. This initiative is intended to provide participants with opportunities to learn about secondary level curriculum development and teaching methodologies in the U.S. The program will add a secondary school teacher component to the Agency's academic programming in Russia and Ukraine, and will build upon USIA's previous linkages in the NIS, such as "Community Connections" and youth exchange. While in the U.S., the teachers and administrators will have the opportunity to pursue curriculum development in their own field of interest and learn new teaching methodologies and approaches through five-week internships in U.S. high schools. The internship duration for the administrators may be less than five weeks, subject to individuals' availability. The proposed program will span three academic semesters, starting in the fall of 1997. The contracted organization will be expected to recruit in Russia and Ukraine. After an orientation in Washington, D.C., grantees will be placed in small groups at various school districts in the U.S.,

and assigned internships in local high schools. Activities for the Russian and Ukrainian teachers and administrators would include: Observing classes, curriculum development, and teaching methods; delivering presentations to student and faculty on their own schools, local educational systems, and communities, either alone or together with their foreign colleagues; reviewing and collecting teaching materials for possible use in their home schools; and collaborating with U.S. school administrators to provide an understanding of the U.S. educational system at the local level. Teachers and administrators should also come to understand the relationship between the community and the educational system. The teachers and administrators would also engage in site visits to other schools, deliver presentations at those schools as well as to local civic and community groups, and attend PTA and school board meetings. We also encourage participants to establish contacts that will foster ongoing school linkages upon their return to Russia and Ukraine. Program participants will be required to meet established criteria upon completion of the program.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries * * *; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations * * * and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world."

The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Freedom Support Act, P.L. 102-511.

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/ASX-97-01.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m., Washington, D.C. time, on Friday, March 14, 1997. Faxed

documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked on March 14, 1997 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Ilo-Mai Harding, Teacher Exchange Branch, E/ASX, room 349, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, telephone: (202) 619-4556, fax: (202) 401-1433, Internet:

IHARDING@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/> or from the Internet Gopher at <gopher://gopher.usia.gov>. Under the heading "International Exchanges/Training," select "Request for Proposals (RFPs)." Please read "About the Following RFPs" before downloading.

Please specify USIA Program Officer/Specialist, Teacher Exchange branch 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/ASX-97-01, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW., 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 this review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

DIVERSITY 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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Grant funding is intended to provide opportunities for 90 committed and engaged—especially younger—Russian and Ukrainian teachers and administrators from secondary schools and pedagogical institutions to actively participate in six-week internships in U.S. high schools. These potential future educational leaders would be placed in various senior high school clusters around the U.S. to experience and gain first-hand exposure to the U.S. educational community. USIA is interested in proposals that foster long-term linkages between U.S. high schools and comparable Russian and Ukrainian schools and pedagogical institutes. The participating U.S. schools should reflect a broad institutional and geographic diversity. Additionally, the recipient institution should be mindful of USIA's goal to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the U.S. in all programs. While the benefits of the exchange may be directly enjoyed by the Russian and Ukrainian participants, the American institutions and individuals will also gain from the cultural and professional expertise which these foreign educators are able to offer.

Guidelines

Eligibility

U.S. non-profit educational and other not-for-profit organizations with a minimum of four years experience in successfully administering international exchange programs are eligible to apply.

Program Planning and Administration

The recipient organization will be responsible for activities related to recruitment, screening, orientation coordination, monitoring in the U.S. and program evaluation. The recipient organization will also be responsible for the identification of up to ten U.S. school districts for participation in the program. However, the recipient organization will maintain overall oversight for the program.

A. *Publicity, Recruitment, Selection, and Placement of Russian and Ukrainian Teachers and Administrators*

USIA will be responsible for the final selection of all Russian and Ukrainian candidates. Participants will be recruited by the recipient organization, based in Russia and Ukraine, under contract with USIA. Special emphasis will be placed on selecting groups of 6 to 8 qualified candidates, from targeted geographic regions, subject to the concurrence of the U.S. Information Services (USIS) in Moscow and Kiev. Priority should be given to recruitment from cities/regions targeted in USIA's Business for Russia and Community Connections programs. For example, in Russia: Altai Krai, Moscow, Kemerovo, Tula, Karelia, Vladivostok, Nizhny Novgorod, Irkutsk, Chelysbinsk, Rostov, Ekaterinburg, and Tomsk; in Ukraine: Cherkasy, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Khmeinytsky, Lviv, Mariupol, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sevastopol, Simferopol, Ternopil, Uzhorod, and Zaporizhia. The recipient organization will be responsive for:

- Formulating applications and publicizing the program;
- Reviewing the Russian and Ukrainian dossiers, and conducting interviews; and
- Placing the teachers and administrators in appropriate assignments after securing the approval of each candidate by the hosting school district.

Selected participants will be fluent in English. Teachers need to have a minimum of two years experience and should be from such disciplines as the social studies and history. Administrators need to have been in leadership positions in their home schools for a minimum of two years. Special emphasis should be placed on candidates displaying the commitment to follow-on activities who will apply elements of the exchange experience to his/her classroom or school activities with a demonstrated impact on students, other district teachers and the community.

B. *Logistics, Orientation and Maintenance*

The recipient organization will be responsible for:

- Arranging in-bound and out-bound international travel for all participants;
- Coordinating domestic transportation in Russia and Ukraine to and from the point of international travel with USIS in Moscow and Kiev, if requested by USIS;

- Arranging U.S. domestic and local travel for all participants;
- Preparing and sending necessary pre-departure orientation materials to all participants;
- Conducting an orientation seminar on the U.S. educational system upon arrival in the U.S.;
- Disbursing stipends and administering tax withholding and reporting as required by Federal, State, and local authorities and in accordance with relevant tax treaties;
- Providing assistance to Russian and Ukrainian participants regarding tax procedures;
- Enrolling participants in USIA insurance programs and preparing insurance identification cards;
- Communicating clearly the guidelines and information regarding visa regulations and the participants' expedient return upon completion of the program.

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

C. *Identifying and Coordinating the Activities of the Host U.S. School Districts*

The recipient organization will be responsible for:

- Identifying, recruiting, and selecting up to ten school districts, to collaborate, on a sub-contractual basis, in hosting selected groups of teachers for the school-based internships;
- The sub-contracted organizations will also organize homestays and participant visits to several local high schools during the five weeks following an orientation/workshop in Washington, DC.

Each segment has approximately 30 participants, and takes place during one school semester (there will be three segments conducted in three sequential semesters). We envision a program agenda guided by the following:

Six-Week Program Agenda

(30 Working days—12 weekend days)

- Three groups of 8–12 arrive in Washington, D.C., preferably, for an intensive orientation/workshop that will include sessions on cross-cultural training, education in the U.S., curricula and methodology in U.S. schools, and administrative matters [each group will include one or more administrator(s)].
- Groups then proceed to school districts, for twenty working days, to shadow professional colleagues, observe educational and

administrative activities, and talk and teach about their respective professional expertise.

—At least five days, during the assignment to school districts, must be devoted to workshops, in-service training, curriculum development training, etc. Training can be interspersed during the program or conducted in five consecutive days.

—*Working days:*

Orientaiton/Workshop—3–4 days

Training—5 days

In classroom—20 days

(Weekends are reserved for traveling and homestays)

The grantee organization is expected to solicit the services of educational/curriculum specialist(s) to design and advise about program content. The advisor(s) will also serve as a consultant for program participants to enhance the professional aspects during the training days. We envision the following thematically focused professional activities:

(1) *Civic Education:* Visit local, municipal government and learn about local control of education. Interact with civic education teachers, observe their classes, and collect curricula materials.

(2) *Methodology/Curriculum Development Seminar:* Participate in local, or district workshop/seminars on methodology and curriculum development/implementation.

(3) *Site Visits:* Visit local professional organizations, educational institutions in order to supplement the learning experience.

All hosting U.S. high schools will be required to submit a brief written proposal that outlines commitment and program goals. The grantee organization will be authorized to offer a financial incentive (not to exceed \$5,000) for each participating U.S. school district.

Proposed budget: The contracted organization must submit a comprehensive line-item budget based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. For better understanding or further clarification, applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. Administrative costs should be kept low; this will be an important factor in grant competition. Also, the ability to maximize the number of grantees within budget guidelines will enhance competitive proposals.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

(1) *Participant Costs:* Total (per participant)= \$6,175.

—Stipends: \$3,000

—Airfare (international/domestic):

\$1,900

—Health Insurance: \$75

—Book Materials Allowance: \$1,000

—Misc: \$200

(2) *Program Expenses:* Total = \$75,000.

—Sub-Contracts with School districts: \$50,000

—Academic Advisor: \$25,000

(3) *Orientation/workshop Costs:* Total (per participant) = \$660.00.

—Per diem and logistical expenses: \$165 a day

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Review Process

USIA will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Office of East European 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

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 principles in the Freedom Support Act.

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 U.S. participating institutions, program venue and program evaluation) and program content.

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 techniques 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. 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: January 31, 1997.

Dell Pendergrast,

Deputy Associated Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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