

and its staff will meet both programs' objectives. Proposed personnel and organizational resources must be adequate and appropriate to implement the program in each country.

3. Organization's track record:

Relevant USIA and outside assessments of the organization's experience with academic exchanges with the NIS, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts.

4. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposed programs must demonstrate an impact on the wider community through the sharing of information and the establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

5. Cost-effectiveness: A key measure of cost-effectiveness is USIA's cost per participant. This is the total funds requested from USIA divided by the number of participant-months (number of participants multiplied by the number of program months). Overhead and administrative costs, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

6. Cost-sharing: Preference will be given to proposals that seek to maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

7. Value of U.S.-partner country relations: The assessment by USIA's geographic area office of the need potential impact, and significance of the project with the partner country.

8. Support of diversity and pluralism: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity through the recruitment, selection and placement of participants, to the extent feasible for organizations.

9. Follow-on activities: Proposals should provide a plan for alumni activities and other follow on programs (without USIA support) which ensures that USIA supported programs are not isolated events. Proposals should include a plan for alumni tracking that demonstrates the willingness to provide data to and coordinate tracking with USIA and USIS posts.

10. Program evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's success. A draft survey questionnaire plus a description of a methodology to be used to link outcomes to original project objectives is required.

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.

Options for Renewals

Subject to the availability of funding for FY 1999 and FY 2000, and the satisfactory performance of grant programs, USIA may invite grantee organizations to submit proposals for renewal assistance awards for two fiscal year cycles.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: December 1, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-31787 Filed 12-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

FY 1998 Ron Brown Fellowship Program

ACTION: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: Subject to the availability of funds for FY 1998, the Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. American public or private nonprofit organizations with at least four years of experience in conducting international academic exchange programs and meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to develop and administer the FY 1998 Ron Brown Fellowship Program. Preference will be given to organizations that have placement experience at the graduate level and a demonstrated ability to conduct academic exchange programs in Central and Eastern Europe. Organizations are invited to submit a proposal with a budget not to exceed \$2,000,000 to develop and administer the final selection (from a pool of

applicants), placement, orientation, monitoring, evaluation and follow-on/alumni activities of at least 42 Fellows from the following countries: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. Participants will be enrolled in two-year degree programs, or in one-year non-degree professional development programs (except for the one-year degree programs in law) at accredited U.S. academic institutions for study at the Masters' level in the fields of business administration, economics, education administration/civic education, environmental policy/resource management, journalism/mass communication, law, public administration and public policy.

Please Note: This program will not support Ph.D. studies.

Overall grant making authority for the Ron Brown Fellowship 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 Support for East European Democracies (SEED) Act of 1989, targeted to advance the democratic and economic transition of Central and Eastern Europe. In order to comply with mandates for this program, grantee organization is required to keep track of the spending for each of the ten countries under the FY98 Ron Brown Fellowship Program. Specific country allocations will be provided at the time of the award. Funds allocated for one country should not be used to support Fellows from other countries.

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 NAME AND NUMBER: All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to: The Ron Brown Fellowship Program, reference number E/AEE-98-05.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Monday, January 26, 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Branch, E/AEE Room 238, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547; Telephone: (202) 619-4420; Fax: (202) 619-4927; Internet: TREED@USIA.GOV to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed information. Please request required application forms and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

TO RECEIVE A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA FAX ON DEMAND: The entire 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 Effie Wingate 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 seven copies of the completed application, including required forms, should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AEE-98-05, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 336, 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) formatted with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to U.S. Information Service (USIS) posts and Fulbright Commissions overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing

the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grant 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, socioeconomic 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 FY 1998 Ron Brown Fellowship Program will provide funding for at least 42 fellowships to citizens from Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. Fellowships will be distributed according to specified country-quotas. The goal of the Ron Brown program is to provide an opportunity for university graduates and young professionals who are selected through open, merit-based competition in the aforementioned nine European countries to participate in quality graduate study programs in the fields of business administration, economics, education administration/civic education, environmental policy/resource management, journalism/mass communication, law, public administration and public policy at accredited universities throughout the United States. Fellowships will be awarded for one-year, non-degree professional development programs, except for one-year degree programs in law, or for two-year degree granting programs. Program enhancements such as workshops, professional enrichment

activities, internships, alumni conferences, networking, etc. are integral components of the Ron Brown Fellowship Program and highly encouraged. Internships of up to six months for Fellows in one-year programs and up to three months for Fellows in two-year programs are recommended. USIA's goal for 1998 is to award the greater number of Fellowships for two-year degree programs, and to attain equitable representation of the eight eligible fields while achieving wide distribution among the U.S. host universities. Clustering of Fellows should be avoided with no more than three Fellows at any one university.

The Ron Brown Fellowship Program will not support Ph.D. programs.

Guidelines

For 1998, program advertisement and participant recruitment will be the responsibility of the United States Information Service (USIS) posts and/or the Fulbright commissions. USIS posts and/or commissions will screen applications for eligibility, arrange for TOEFL, GMAT and GRE testing where possible, conduct personal interviews, and compile a dossier on each qualified applicant. Each USIS post and/or commission will compile a pool of applicants to be forwarded to the administering organization for the final selection.

Applicants are asked to develop a program plan to conduct the final selection, placement, monitoring, follow-on and alumni activities. The duration of the program should be for two academic years, 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The program may not begin before May 1, 1998, and must be completed by December 31, 2000. Proposals should address and discuss in detail the following areas:

1. Final Selection

Describe in detail the process for the final selection of Fellows including method of reviewing a pool of qualified applications submitted by USIS posts and/or Fulbright commissions; specific details about the final selection committee(s); and notification of selectees and non-selectees.

Please note: As in previous years, advertising, recruitment, screening and semi-final selection will be conducted by the USIS posts and/or Fulbright commissions in the participating countries.

2. Placement of Fellows

Describe criteria for selecting host universities and measures to ensure participants' academic and cultural needs are met.

3. Notification

Describe plans for notifying applicants who have been selected for an award, including timely confirmation of placement, scheduling of pre-departure orientation, and all logistical arrangements.

4. Special Programs

Describe provisions for ESL or pre-academic programs, if necessary;

5. Orientation

Describe plans for pre-departure, post-arrival and/or pre-academic orientation programs.

6. Enrichment Activities

Describe arrangements for cultural and professional development activities, internships, and other program enhancements including recommendations for workshops and alumni activities.

7. Monitoring/Evaluation/Tracking

Describe methodologies for on-going monitoring and evaluation and adjustment of program accordingly. Mechanisms for alumni networking and alumni tracking should also be detailed.

8. Alumni Activities

Ron Brown Alumni Associations were formed in several participating countries in October 1997. Describe plans to assist the development and expansion of these fledgling associations.

9. Program Identity

Describe ways you will ensure that participants and alumni identify themselves as Ron Brown Fellows or Ron Brown Alumni.

10. Personnel

Proposals should include curriculum vitae of personnel assigned to administer the Ron Brown program.

Participants

Fellows will be selected from a pool of applicants with a variety of professional and educational backgrounds. Since one of the purposes of the fellowships is to promote the development of professional expertise among the future leaders of Central and Eastern Europe, grant recipients should ideally be in the early stages of their careers, with perhaps a few years of work experience, a demonstrated ability for leadership, a clearly expressed purpose for studying in the United States, and a commitment to return home at the end of their fellowships to share their knowledge and skills in the development of their countries. Fellows

must be under the age of forty, possess the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate fluency in spoken and written English (or the ability to attain such a level following a limited ESL program prior to the beginning of their studies).

Visa/Insurance/Tax Requirements

All foreign participants must be sponsored under an Exchange Visitors Program on a J visa. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations and should reference this adherence in the proposal narrative. Ron Brown Fellows must comply with the two-year home residency requirement as stipulated by the J-visa guidelines. It is the expressed intent of this program that Fellows return immediately to their home country following completion of the academic and professional components of their program. Please refer to program specific guidelines in the Application 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. Organizations should demonstrate tax regulation adherence in the proposal narrative and budget.

Participants will be covered by USIA-sponsored Health and Accident Insurance. The administering organization will be responsible for enrolling the participants in the insurance program.

Proposed Budget

Funding for the FY 1998 Ron Brown Fellowship Program is anticipated at \$2,000,000. Applicants must submit a comprehensive line item budget for general program costs, participant program cost, alumni costs, and administrative costs. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. Please refer to the application packet for complete formatting instructions. Preference will be given to organizations whose administrative costs, including indirect costs, are less than 20% of the total request from USIA.

USIA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase the proposal budget in accordance with the needs of the program.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- (1) General Program Costs
- (2) Participant Program Costs
- (3) U.S. Administrative Costs
- (4) Overseas Administrative Costs
- (5) Alumni Activities

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

Medical insurance for participants will be paid directly by USIA and, therefore, should not be included as a line-item cost in the program budget. However, a modest line-item may be included for health insurance for universities not accepting the USIA policy.

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 and NIS Affairs and the USIS posts overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may also 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

Proposals should include academic rigor, thorough conception of project, demonstration of meeting participant needs, contributions to understanding the partner countries, specific details of selection, placement, monitoring, follow-on plan, alumni activities, alumni tracking, evaluation plan and relevance to USIA's mission.

2. Program Planning/Institutional Capacity

A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the organization's logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Proposed personnel and organizational resources should be adequate and appropriate to implement the program and achieve project goals.

3. Organization's Track 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.

4. Multiplier Effect/Impact

Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term linkages.

5. Cost-Effectiveness/Cost-Sharing

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

6. Area Expertise

Proposals should demonstrate the organization's expertise and capacity to conduct graduate level academic exchange programs in Central and Eastern Europe.

7. Placement Experience

Proposals should demonstrate the organization's ability and experience with placements at U.S. universities at the graduate level.

8. Professional and Academic Contacts

Proposals should demonstrate substantive staff knowledge of the relevant academic fields and professions to ensure productive engagement with professional and academic contacts in every phase of program planning and implementation, including the arrangement of internships and selection panels.

9. Support of Diversity

Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity through the selection and placement of participants, to the extent feasible for organizations.

10. Project Evaluation/Follow-On Activities

Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's success. A draft

survey questionnaire plus a description of a methodology to be used to link outcomes to original project objectives is required. Proposals should provide a plan for alumni activities and other follow-on programs (without USIA support) which ensures that USIA-supported programs are not isolated events. Proposals should include a plan for alumni tracking that demonstrates the willingness to provide data to and coordinate tracking with USIA and USIS posts and/or Fulbright commissions.

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 proposed 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. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Notification

All applicants will be notified of the results of the review process on or about May 1, 1998. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: December 1, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director, Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-31786 Filed 12-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Notice of Meeting of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee

In accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 2603 *et seq.*) there will be a meeting of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee on December 19, 1997, from approximately 9:00 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m., at the United States Information Agency, Washington, D.C. Pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 2605(g), the Committee will review the status of

implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of El Salvador Concerning the Imposition of Import Restrictions on Certain Categories of Archaeological Material from the Prehispanic Cultures of the Republic of El Salvador, signed in March 1995. This portion of the meeting will be closed pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B) and 19 U.S.C. 2605(h).

The Committee's agenda will also include a discussion of its internal procedures for developing findings and recommendations for bilateral cultural property agreements and emergency measures. This portion of the meeting will be closed pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(2). The closed portions of the meeting will be from approximately 10:30 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m.

In addition, the Committee will review a CD-Rom image database project and a worldwide website project being developed in support of the ongoing efforts of the Committee and the Agency to implement the 1970 UNESCO Convention. This portion of the meeting will be open from approximately 9:00 a.m. to approximately 10:30 a.m. during which time public comment concerning matters before the Committee will be invited. Seating is limited. Persons wishing to attend this portion of the meeting must notify Cultural Property staff at 202-619-6612 by 12:00 Noon (EST) Thursday, December 18, 1997, to arrange for admission.

Dated: November 28, 1997.

Penn Kemble,

Deputy Director, United States Information Agency.

Determination to Close a Portion of the Meeting of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee, December 19, 1997

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), 19 U.S.C. 2605(h), and 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(2), I hereby determine that portions of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee meeting on December 19, 1997, during which there will be discussions involving (a) information the premature disclosure of which would be likely to significantly frustrate implementation of proposed actions, and (b) the internal operating procedures of the Committee, will be closed.

Dated: November 28, 1997.

Penn Kemble,

Deputy Director, United States Information Agency.

[FR Doc. 97-31785 Filed 12-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M